AN ADVENTURE OF INSIGHT IN
ETHNOGRAPHY AND PEDAGOGY:
LEARNING/TEACHING RELATIONSHIPS AND
THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE
IN THE CROSSCULTURAL CLASSROOM

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work herein, now submitted as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Northern Territory University, is the result of my own investigations, and all references to ideas and work of other researchers have been specifically acknowledged. I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

Dated the 9 May 2002

Neil Harrison
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ABSTRACT

This study is set in a university context. It is divided into two parts: ethnography and pedagogy. It draws on extended interviews with nine indigenous students studying at the Northern Territory University to examine the parallel relation between the informant and the ethnographer, and the student and the teacher. Different theoretical positions are taken, including crosscultural and critical theories as well as Lacanian psychoanalysis, in an endeavour to explore how a relation is actually produced in a crosscultural pedagogy.

I began the research as a crosscultural ethnographer. Accordingly, I assumed that I had access to the informants' knowledge and that I could transmit this knowledge to readers. After I wrote my first interpretation of the data (see Preface and Appendix One) I had to reassess these two assumptions. The research then is a critique of transmission-based theories of knowledge and learning where indigenous students are trained in the knowledge and power of the pedagogue. While most research in crosscultural education has been directed at finding out how an indigenous student can learn from the non-indigenous teacher, this study focuses on a different question:

*How does an indigenous student learn outside the non-indigenous pedagogue's knowledge and power in the crosscultural classroom?*

The study turns to critical pedagogic theories for some insight. These theories bring us to the point of understanding that knowledge and learning are produced through a crosscultural relation but they do not show us how this relation is actually produced in the classroom nor how a student can learn outside transmission-based theories of education. This research compares the interview data and critical pedagogic theories to investigate the disparity between what the pedagogue wants in the theories and what the informants want in classroom practice at the Northern Territory University. This raised another key question for the research:

*What does the student want?*

The research examines how a discourse of negotiation is always already at work, albeit hidden, in the relation between the student and the pedagogue in the classroom. Intersubjective knowledge and a type of learning are produced through
this relation between them. The thesis examines how the relation is produced through speech and dialogue.
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PREFACE

In 1993 I interviewed nine indigenous students who were studying in Higher Education at the Northern Territory University. I conducted three extended interviews with each informant and these were audio-taped and transcribed. In 1994 I used these transcriptions to write a preliminary interpretation of the data for my informants and friends to read (see Appendix One). This preliminary interpretation and in particular, the critical responses that I obtained from the readers (see below and Chapter Three) constituted a key moment in my thinking and planning and this is documented throughout the thesis. The following is a brief summary of this interpretation.

Summary of my first interpretation of the data

The interpretation began with a collection of short quotes to illustrate how the informants were alienated from family, society and from themselves. For example: You are born into a family which puts you in an orphanage (Jully) or adopts you out (Kiara). You are told that you are dumb (Jully), a bit slow (Jonathan), you're white (Karen, Trudy, Stacey), you're sex-crazed (Ellie) or you just get flogged and punched (Nathan). The interpretation then turned to discuss how the informants were also alienated from themselves. Jully observed that 'You become your own worst enemy'. You believe that whites are smarter (Jonathan, Karen, Willy). And 'if you're told something long enough you believe it, eh. It's true, it works that way' (Jully). In the interpretation the informants were constituted as objects of what other people say and do.

But, according to the interpretation, once the informants enrolled at university they were able to take charge of their own lives. They were repositioned in relation to themselves rather than in relation to stereotypical standards and norms established by others. The informants began to believe in themselves at university. The interpretation suggested that the Northern Territory University provided the informants with 'choice and control' over their lives where they could be themselves. They were able to think outside the traditional boundaries of 'us and them' or 'black and white': 'You make your own standards'. Karen observed that university gives you 'the power to break out of the system that has enveloped you so long'. Study at
university provided Ellie with the opportunity to gradually climb 'up those stairs'. Success at university was equated with 'being aware of yourself, going through self-examination and having control'.

After I wrote the interpretation I distributed it to the informants and friends to read. Their responses produced a major shift in my thinking and these are summarised below (also see Chapter Three).

*Critical responses from the readers of my first interpretation*

Most readers felt that while the interpretation pathologised the home life of the informants it privileged their life at university. Their (indigenous) lives were overcome with problems at home, but were redeemed once they got to university. Education was constituted in the interpretation as an antidote to failure in their home lives. The readers asked: Are the informants inserted into the discourses of progress and enlightenment through their studies at university or by me as the writer of the interpretation, or do the students position themselves within these discourses? Some readers suggested that to interpret the move from home to university as a progressive one could be read as presenting the informants and readers with a choice between Aboriginality and assimilation. The interpretation implied that indigenous students would have to assimilate in order to succeed at university. This presented the possibility of an underlying racialised discourse running through the interpretation and one that was associated with a discourse of power.

The critical responses to my first interpretation brought me to reflect on my own epistemological and methodological positioning and to consider the ways in which I could think and write differently about the informants of this research for the reader (also see Chapters One and Three). The adventures of insight arising out of the critical responses to my first interpretation constitute the thesis that follows.
CHAPTER 1

2002

INTRODUCTION
Chapter 1: 2002 – INTRODUCTION

1.1. An initial statement of the problem

Research in crosscultural education has often been devoted to examining how the student learns from the teacher\(^1\). The focus of research over the last thirty years has been driven by the problem: how can an indigenous student learn from a non-indigenous teacher? But the question for my research has a different focus. I ask:

*How does an indigenous student learn outside the non-indigenous pedagogue's knowledge and power in the crosscultural classroom?*

The crosscultural classroom is defined here as one where the students and the teacher come from different cultural backgrounds. This study is based on a classroom where the students are indigenous and the lecturer is non-indigenous. I take the position throughout the thesis that there is already a crosscultural relation between the students and the teacher before they walk into the classroom, and this is why I choose not to maintain the separation of the term crosscultural with a hyphen. I also use the term *crosscultural ethnographer* in a similar manner to refer to the situation where the informants and the ethnographer come from different cultural backgrounds. Most crosscultural ethnographies referred to in this research include indigenous subjects and a non-indigenous ethnographer.

This research suggests that teaching and learning in most classrooms at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels consist of a transmission of knowledge and skills where ‘learning proceeds by way of direct apprehension’ (Britzman 1998, p. 4). It is assumed that there is a conduit between the student and the teacher and knowledge passes freely along the conduit from one to the other. Students are expected to learn on the assumption that ‘the mind can mirror the world’ (Ellsworth 1997, p. 75). Transmission-based theories attempt to make the learner strong again through the centering of identity. They focus upon the building of self-esteem and the offering of role models and heroes (Britzman 1998, p. 4). Drawing on the Freudian notion of the

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\(^1\) Chapter Two introduces some of the research conducted in crosscultural education in Australia and Chapters Seven and Nine provide extended reviews of the literature.
impossibility of teaching, Ellsworth (1997, p. 55) argues that addressing students ‘as if mutual and full understanding are indeed achievable when they’re not sets up an impossible situation between teachers and students’.

Transmission-based education has already been extensively researched and it is not the intent of this thesis to conduct further research in this area. Rather, my aim is to explore and illuminate an area of learning that in the past has been under theorised in educational research. This area refers to the relation between the student and the teacher in the crosscultural classroom. Learning for Britzman (1998, p. 4) ‘is best considered as a frontier concept: something between the student and the teacher’ (emphasis added). Yet transmission-based theories of education position the student’s mind or the teacher’s methodology as the motivation for learning.

This research does not propose a new methodology or any new theory of learning and teaching. Rather, it attempts to recognise a practice that is already at work in the relation between the student and the pedagogue. To this end, I attempt to develop a crosscultural pedagogy that does not perpetuate unequal power relations in the classroom. I look to the theories of Jacques Lacan, a French psychoanalyst, to gain some insights into how the relation between the student and the pedagogue functions in classroom.

1.2. The relation between pedagogy and psychoanalysis

My interest in the relation between the student and the teacher led me to explore the relation between the analysand and the analyst in Lacanian psychoanalysis. There are a number of writers who have highlighted the parallel between pedagogy and psychoanalysis. These include Felman (1987), Metzger (1994), Salecl (1994), Gallop (1995), Ellsworth (1997), Todd (1997), Britzman (1998) and Bracher (1999). The American journal College English devoted its 1987 October and November editions to exploring the place of psychoanalysis in the writing classroom. In the context of Lacan’s theories, I explore the parallel relation between the analysand and the analyst, and student and teacher. While Lacanian psychoanalysis has been applied to theories

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2 Fink (1997) provides a lucid introduction to Lacanian psychoanalysis while Lee (1990) and Fink (1995) offer two excellent introductions to Lacanian theories of language.
of learning and teaching mainly in the United States (see above), such applications are yet to be made in the crosscultural classroom in Australia.  

I draw on the relation between the analysand and analyst to examine the possibility of a learning which is produced outside transmission-based education.

1.3. The relation between the analysand and the analyst

In the Lacanian picture, the analysand enters the consultation presupposing an analyst who knows. The analysand expects that the analyst will be able to find out what is wrong with him or her and to be able to offer a cure (Fink 1995, p. 87). Lacan says that as soon as you impart to another human the ability to interpret baffling behaviour, you have entered a transference relationship (Felman 1987, p. 85). Following this, how you understand what you think the analyst thinks will be more important than his or her actual response. This is the process known in psychoanalysis as transference (Brooke 1987, p. 681). The important relationship in transference is between you and your idea of the subject supposed to know. All interaction will be understood within the context of this 'internal' dialogue (Brooke 1987, p. 681). Large (1991, p. 83) emphasises that 'the analyst is a function, in a position called Other, not a person'. Thus the analysand communicates with a stand-in, an imagined Other rather than with the 'real' analyst.

The informants of this research enter the classroom expecting a teacher who knows and is able to impart his or her knowledge to the student (see the data of Chapter Six). The student presumes that he or she will be able to learn from the teacher. He or she will be cured of his or her ignorance if he or she listens carefully to what the teacher says. The informants tell how they understand the learning process as one where they must attend lectures and tutorials and take in all the information given out to them. This is how a student gets a qualification at a university (see the data of Chapters Six and Eight). In both the clinical and classroom relation the patient and the student presume that certain imaginary powers reside in the analyst and teacher respectively. The imaginary is dominated by the analysand's self-image and the image he or she forms of the analyst (Fink 1997, p. 33). Analysis aims at getting rid of these imaginary relations

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3 McWilliam (1997) examines the role of desire in teaching and learning but not in the context of developing a crosscultural pedagogy.
between self and other and bringing the analysand to focus on his or her relation to language (Fink 1997, p. 34). In positioning the analysand in relation to the symbolic rather than the imaginary, the analyst aims to bring the analysand to focus on what he or she thinks and wants rather than on what he or she thinks the analyst thinks and wants.

Crosscultural and critical theories of pedagogy assume that a methodology can be transmitted from the pedagogue to the student. Knowledge is transmitted to others when the pedagogue is explicit about what he or she wants and says (for example, see Hudspith 1996). Critical theories of pedagogy assume from the outset that the student can be taught to critique (see The New London Group, Chapter Nine). The student has direct access to the pedagogue's knowledge and skills because the student and the pedagogue are linked through language. The responsibility for understanding and learning are ultimately placed upon the student. Further, the individual student is positioned as the source of knowledge and learning in both crosscultural and critical theories of education (see Chapters Seven and Nine). I draw on Foucault's theory of the gaze in Chapters Five and Nine to show that the student is becoming increasingly individualised in the educational system. However, the gaze is not only a way of looking at others, but rather becomes a means of controlling and disciplining the individual informant as he or she becomes isolated in the stories of ethnographers and educational theorists. As an ethnographer I know that as soon as I begin to look, I am, myself, being looked at by the informants, my supervisors, examiners and other readers. This is the dialectical aspect of the power of the gaze and it is produced through a relation. This thesis is directed towards examining the nature of this relation and how it is produced through speech in the crosscultural classroom.

1.4. Power relations in the crosscultural classroom

Lacanian analysis of the analysand-analyst relation provides some valuable insights into how we can interpret the intractable problem of the indigenous student's historical relation to the pedagogue as an authority. In Chapter Seven I explore the ways in which crosscultural educational theories position the teacher and the student in relation to a methodology (see the data of Chapter Six). Hudspith (1996) argues that an explicit methodology will facilitate the transmission of knowledge between an indigenous student and the non-indigenous teacher in the crosscultural classroom. Knowledge and
learning are constituted through the teacher's methodology. While crosscultural theories of education show us how the student can learn from the teacher, they perpetuate an unequal power relation in the crosscultural classroom. I thus turn to critical pedagogic theories for some insight into how indigenous students can learn outside the knowledge and power of a non-indigenous pedagogue. These theories show promise but they leave a number of crucial issues unexamined.

Critical pedagogic theories are based on the position taken in critical theory that we are motivated to reflect critically on our own social situation (see Chapter Nine). To this end, these theories attempt to develop a learning context which encourages critical, independent learning in addition to transmitting the knowledge and skills that students need to learn. They learn the scientific discourses of the classroom but they also learn to critique these discourses. When I returned to my interview data to see how the informants of this study learn to critique, I found a hidden discourse at work in the classroom at the Northern Territory University (see Chapter Nine). This discourse has already been explicated in the research of Christie (1984).

In the classroom at Milingimbi both the student and the teacher each develop coping strategies to deal with the expectations of the other (see Chapters Two, Seven and Nine). As the teacher demands academic, purposeful learning, the student retreats from the teacher’s demands. The teacher then responds to the student’s retreat by reducing his or her demands for academic knowledge. Both student and teacher ‘adjust to each other in order to survive long periods together in the classroom’ (Christie 1984, p. 353). Both are trained through a hidden discourse in the classroom to negotiate their position in relation to the other. Both constitute themselves in relation to what they think the other thinks and wants and through this discourse a negotiated position is produced between them. This discourse is presented in Chapter Nine as the discourse of negotiation. Through the discourse of negotiation a position or relation is produced outside what either the student or the pedagogue know and intend. Langton (1993) explains how a third position or relation is produced through dialogue.

In a discussion of the production of intersubjectivity, Langton (1993) takes the position that ‘Aboriginality’ arises from the experience of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who engage in any intercultural dialogue. For Langton, (1993, p. 81) ‘Aboriginality’ is not a fixed thing but ‘is remade over and over again in a process of
dialogue, imagination, representation and interpretation’. One of the ways in which this occurs is when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people test and adapt imagined models of each other through dialogue to find satisfactory forms of mutual recognition (Langton 1993, p. 81). Through these crosscultural and reciprocal exchanges, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals ‘test their own imagined models of the other, repeatedly adjusting the models as responses are processed to find some satisfactory way of comprehending the other’ (Langton 1993, p. 83). In this model Aboriginality is produced as intersubjective knowledge as each tries to understand and account for the position of the other. Subjectivity is negotiated through a crosscultural dialogue and does not exist before or outside speech.

For Lacan, the subject appears in the enunciation rather than in what is said (Fink 1995, p. 39). Lacan (1977, p. 166) contrasts Descartes’ famous proposition: ‘I think, therefore I am’ with his own aphorism: ‘I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think’. Here, the I comes into being through unconscious discourse. Lacan equates the ego with conscious thought and being with the unconscious. But the Lacanian subject is not the subject of the statement. While the ego or self is what is referred to when we say ‘I think that…’ or ‘I’m the kind of person who…’, that ‘I’ is not the Lacanian subject (Fink 1995, p. 37). It is not the ‘I’ in ‘I think therefore I am’. This is merely the subject of the statement. It is the ego talking but not the Lacanian subject. The subject appears in the very act of enunciating (Fink 1995, p. 39). It is produced through the very act of talking and so the teacher’s facilitation of speech in the classroom is absolutely crucial. It is critical insofar as students want to learn something beyond the simple transmission of facts and skills. They do this through speech in the classroom (see Chapters Nine, Ten and Eleven).

Speech is not simply a conveyor of information; it establishes a relation between speaker and listener. Speech act theory provides the insight that saying something is doing something (Cherryholmes 1988, p. 167). For Habermas ‘the very act of engaging in a discourse presupposes a communicative rationality’ (Young 1990, p. 22). That is, both the speaker and listener assume four things: firstly, what is being said is comprehensible; secondly, that it is true; thirdly, that what is said is appropriate to the context; and fourthly, that the speaker is not trying to deceive the listener (Carr 1995, p 116). Here Habermas focuses on what is said, the signified, rather than the way it is
said (the enunciation). Lacanian psychoanalysis (1977), on the other hand, focuses on the path of the signifier, that is, on how the subject is produced through our reciprocal practices of talking and negotiating. That is, it focuses on how the subject is produced through an intersubjective relation between the analysand and the analyst.

Lacan states that in order to be myself I must recognise another person who recognises me (Miller 1996, p. 13). He presents his notion of discourse as a social link (Miller 1996, p. 18). Speaking to someone is more important than speaking about something. It's not so much the thing referred to that is important as the other to whom one speaks. Speech constitutes a connection with others (Miller 1996, p. 18). It is the anticipation of reciprocal recognition or the thought of reciprocity that drives us to speak. This echoes another of Lacan's (1977, p. 264) famous aphorisms that 'man's desire is the desire of the Other'. We desire to be desired by those whom we deem to be authorities like a teacher or even a father or elder brother or sister. We are motivated by the desire for 'mutual human recognition' (Lee 1990, p. 77). Desire motivates the student to talk and write to get the recognition of the pedagogue as an authority. The desire for recognition is constituted at a crucial stage in the child's psychological development where he or she is forever divided between the desires of others and what he or she wants. Lacan refers to this as the mirror stage.4

The concept was first developed by Lacan in 1936 and reformulated in 1960 (Fink 1997, p. 87-88). It refers to the formation of the ego via the process of identification. It also introduces Lacan's concept of the divided subject. The ego, according to Lacan, is the result of identifying with one's own specular image. It is the child's mirror image that first presents the child with an image of its own unity and coherence. The mirror image is internalised and invested with libido because of an approving gesture made by the parent who is holding the child before the mirror. The mirror image takes on importance as a result of the parent's recognition, acknowledgement or approval, expressed in nodding gestures and smiles from the

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4 Lacan delivered a paper in 1949 entitled 'The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience'. This is presented as Chapter One in Ecrits (Lacan 1977). There are many excellent interpretations of this famous paper including Gallop (1985), Ragland-Sullivan (1986), Lee (1990) and especially Muller and Richardson (1994).
parent. The child internalises its parents' ideals and judges itself according to these ideals. The child comes to see itself as its parents do, and comes to call on his or her parents and significant others to ratify this image. The child is inserted into a partially unconscious discourse of desire where it will oscillate endlessly between a sense of fragmentation and unity. The subject is forever divided between a feeling of fragmentation and the promise of future wholeness, between being and wanting or between the desires of others and what he or she wants (Fink 1997, p. 87-88). The child is inserted into a partially unconscious discourse of desire where he or she is constantly engaged in negotiating a place for him or herself in relation to a parent or some other authority. Throughout this thesis I refer to the discourse of desire as the discourse of negotiation.

The informants of this research are always already engaged, albeit unconsciously, in a discourse of negotiation as they negotiate a place in relation to what they think the pedagogue as an authority thinks and wants (see Chapters Eight and Nine). The informants come to the Northern Territory University because they feel that something is lacking in their lives and that a degree will provide them with what they want. For a student to come to university, he or she must have the idea that something is missing or lacking in what he or she already knows (see Miller 1987, p. 15). In addition, the student is divided between an image of self and an image of what he or she is to become. That is, the student is constituted between a self and an ideal other through the discourses of university. He or she is motivated to talk, write and learn in the classroom by the teacher as a subject supposed to know who acts as a stand-in for the student's ideals and for his or her own perceived lack of knowledge. Through the discourse of negotiation the student talks and demands in an attempt to get the recognition of the teacher whom he or she deems to be an authority. Transmission-based education is driven by the student's desire for the recognition of the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know. The student's imaginary fantasies of the pedagogue as an authority constitute the very motor force of education at all levels of schooling.

The desire for recognition is affirmed in Schleifer's (1987, p. 805) narrative of a friend who goes in to psychoanalysis. At each session she would pay her fee and lie down and talk. The analyst rarely responded and Schleifer's friend found herself becoming more and more anxious. In each session she tried harder and harder to get a response so that in
retrospect it became clear to her that her discourse was directed not at making some statement but at making the analyst hear her. That is, her discourse primarily sought to achieve an intersubjective relation rather than a cognitive process; it eschewed the content of the enunciated for the enunciation itself. As she and her discourse became more and more demanding in pursuing the analyst's personal recognition she discovered herself doing all the things she had learned from her father as a child to gain his attention. This is an example of the psychoanalytic transference: it is not so much the transference of pre-existing feelings from one object to another as the transference of discursive strategies from one situation to another. What is repeated is something we cannot remember. It is not the content that is forgotten, rather it is the unconscious ways of talking and writing to catch hold of the subject supposed to know that is re-cognised in the discourses of the unconscious. As a learning the woman recognises something already there of which she was previously unaware. This is learning as recognition. Felman (1987, p. 15) defines learning as 'the constant struggle to become aware' (see conclusion to this chapter).

Instead of using words to communicate meanings to someone else, Schleifer (1987, p. 806) notes that his friend's speech acts suddenly began to mean something to herself, something different from what she would regard as the ordinary meaning of her words, something of which she had been unconscious. She recognised that she was repeating a discursive strategy for getting the recognition of others. The aim of analysis therefore is to get the analysand to work through his or her transference or imaginary relations to a subject supposed to know, such as parents and other ideals, in order to bring into focus the analysand's symbolic relations (Fink 1997, p. 34). Mellard (1991, p. 92) suggests that a cure hinges on the patient re-cognising her or his desire, that is, what drives the student to say the things he or she does, and to behave in a particular way.

But recognising one's desire is not an easy task since people do not always know what they want or desire. Desire appears only as enigmatic motivations or intentions (Ragland-Sullivan 1988, p. 484). Desire does not represent itself directly, but rather as a dialectic: 'Well yes, I want that; on second thought, I don't really; come to think of it,

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5 Also see Large (1991) and Fink (1995, 1997) for an analysis of the discursive methods used by the analysand to get the recognition of the analyst.
what I really want is...' (Fink 1997, p. 26). Desire never settles or fixes on an object, it seeks only more desire (Fink 1997, p. 26). Desire works like language moving from one signifier to another without settling on a permanent signified (Zavarzadeh and Morton 1991, p. 119). Lacan says repressed desire in the form of 'what do I want' constitutes the unconscious. What the student wants is repressed as he or she negotiates a place in relation to the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know but it is also revealed through these same partially unconscious negotiations. It is revealed through the difference between what the student wants and what he or she thinks the pedagogue wants (see Chapters Nine and Eleven).

There is a disparity between what the pedagogue wants in critical pedagogic theories and what these informants want in practice. Critical pedagogic theories want the students to be critical agents of their own knowledge and learning but what does the student want? What the student wants is hidden (and revealed) in what he or she says in the classroom (see Chapters Nine and Eleven). The student is divided between what he or she wants and what he or she thinks the teacher wants.

1.5. The structure of this thesis

The thesis has two sections. The first section refers to my ethnographic research. The second part is devoted to a study of the theories and practices of pedagogy. I outline crosscultural and critical theories of teaching and learning and compare these with the data (see Chapters Seven and Nine).

The separation of the data and my interpretation is an experiment which I decided to employ soon after I wrote the first interpretation (see Preface). There are strengths and limitations associated with this. One of the benefits is that informants speak for themselves rather than being spoken for by me, as the ethnographer (also see Chapter Five). Given that indigenous students have been, in the past, denied a voice in schools and universities, the data should stand alone without being manipulated by me as the ethnographer. The separation of the data and the interpretation attempts to avoid perpetuating the historical power relation where the white anthropologist speaks for 'his' or 'her' subjects (see Chapter Five for further analysis of this relation). But this raises the problem of whether the informants (data) can speak for themselves in the context of a thesis. Malin (1989) argues that the informants' words take on more power...
through the ethnographer's pen in the context of a non-indigenous audience. What can the data do on their own apart from being offered up for the gaze of the reader? There is a danger that the informants' voices will be marginalised by the separation. The separation can even be read as perpetuating the absence of a crosscultural relation and that I begin by assuming that I am already separated from the indigenous informants with whom I work.

The dates for each chapter reflect my own methodological, ethical and epistemological insights at the time of writing. There is constant tension between the need to historicise an ethnography and at the same time, to avoid making it appear as a journey of progress and enlightenment. Ethnographies are often criticised for being ahistorical (see Chapter Five). To this end, the thesis is structured in terms of shifting positions and adventures of insight. The positions of the crosscultural ethnographer and teacher, and critical ethnographer and pedagogue reflect my movement from the imaginary world of the phenomenologist to the position of a discourse analyst. A phenomenologist tries to capture and represent what is going on in the mind of informants without any preconceptions (see Chapter Five). When I adopt the position of a critical ethnographer, I analyse discourses rather than the informants' mind or the teachers' methodology.

Each time I return to the data (1995, 1997, 1998, 1999), I find that my original position as a crosscultural ethnographer or as a critical pedagogue is just one of many possibilities. The data can be interpreted in different ways, and there is not just one best way or 'most plausible explanation' (see Chapter Five). Crosscultural ethnographies are often criticised for their single, fixed interpretation of the data (see Chapter Five). I take the position in Chapter Five that many of the positions and voices that constitute an ethnographic narrative have been eliminated by crosscultural ethnographers. They, in turn, are constituted as the ones best able to speak for their informants. Do I want to repeat and perpetuate this unequal historical power relation in my thesis? How can it be avoided?

Felman (1987) refers to learning as the recognition of something already there of which we are unaware. The thesis begins with a question. I find that as soon as I answer it, a gap or discontinuity arises in what I find, and I am then faced with another question. I produce an answer only to find that another question arises from within the very
answer that is produced. As we attempt to answer why and to choose the best solution, yet another set of why's come, and the space of possibility is opened once again (Martusewicz 1997, p. 100). Learning occurs in the discontinuity, ruptures, breaks, refusals and failures in what we know, say and write (Felman 1987; also see Ellsworth 1997, p. 187). This is learning as recognition where the student is engaged in a constant struggle to become aware (see Chapters Nine and Eleven).

The thesis is a movement back and forth, and up and down (like writing) where I am faced with a problem. I am then pleasantly surprised by an insight as I read and write only to find again that my joy inevitably evaporates as I discover another gap in the epistemology. Ignorance inevitably returns but with the insight that I am driven by the desire to know and to answer yet another question. The chapters are dated to signify how my insights were gained at that time only. For example, what I thought in 1996 is not necessarily what I think now. The periodisation reflects my attempt to historicise the changes in my own thinking and theoretical positioning throughout the thesis.

My insights are often definitive but these sometimes fade into uncertainty as I critique my original position and adopt another. This is part of my effort to know and to understand the project and to be able to tell others about it. At times, I am positioned as an authority through my writing but I turn to critique this very position. This is a style that develops throughout the thesis. I critique what I say and do as I attempt to negotiate a relation to the informants, supervisors, examiners and other readers.

There are two major discourses at work throughout the thesis. One is a scientific discourse that talks about learning/teaching relationships and the production of knowledge. The other is a self-narrativisation of my own explorations and insights gained through writing this thesis. The self-narrativisation is an attempt to negotiate my (shifting) position in relation to the informants, supervisors, examiners and other readers throughout the thesis. I narrativise what I am actually doing and thinking while I write about others. There is a discourse within a discourse, stories within a story. In this way, I am trying to negotiate a relation to others through my writing. I gain the insight that my relations to others are produced through the ways in which I talk and write about them (see Chapter Nine).
In writing about one’s own autobiographical implication in the text, Felman (1993, p. 18) writes that people tell their stories which they do not necessarily know or cannot speak through others’ stories. We can miss our own implication in the very texts that we ourselves write. In a reading of Adrienne Rich’s *Of Woman Born*, Felman (1993) highlights how she was both praised and attacked for her attempts to combine personal testimony with theoretical research. Rich responded that this approach never seemed odd to her: ‘what still seems odd is the absentee author, the writer who lays down speculations, theories, facts, and fantasies without any personal grounding’ (Felman 1993, pp. 134-35). In wanting to talk about herself, ‘de Beauvoir realises that it is impossible to write a female autobiography without passing, first, through the theory’ (Felman 1993, p. 138). This chapter provides some of the theoretical context for this thesis and in the following chapter I turn to my own personal experiences in indigenous education to provide some personal grounding for the research. The thesis then attempts to link the personal and the political, the art with the science, the practice and the theory.

After my first interpretation of the interview data, I looked for a way of talking and writing about others outside the scientific discourses of the classroom. I take the position that the ethnographer and the teacher can provoke participation and learning through *how* they talk and interpret in an ethnography and in the classroom. While ethnographers and teachers so often feel the need to give an interpretation, this can be deferred so that the interpretations of others are not preempted by their own. To this end, each interpretation chapter is structured so that my own explanations and conclusions are deferred until the description, classification and comparisons have been presented in the preceding pages of the chapter. Thus, this thesis is written in a scientific format.

This is an experimental thesis that attempts to work both within and outside the genre of an ethnography. I work inside this genre in the way that each chapter is structured through and by the scientific method of description, classification, comparison and conclusion. I work outside the genre insofar as I explore ways of writing about the informants of this research outside the discourses of culture, progress and enlightenment. I also attempt to work outside the genre in the way I present the data and my interpretation in separate chapters throughout the thesis. This thesis represents
an attempt to avoid following in the footsteps of others and repeating what has already been found before\(^6\).

I gained the insight from the data of Chapter Four that the discursive methods I used to talk about the informants of this study would govern the ways in which they would come to be seen. The problem with my first interpretation was not really with the content. Rather, in using a previously recognised set of methods to interpret the data and write the interpretation, I repeated a way of talking about indigenous people as a pathology. I repeated, without thinking, a set of discursive techniques which inserted the informants into the discourses of progress and enlightenment. And in doing so I also repeated a power relation where I could talk about the informants from a position of authority. Like the woman who underwent psychoanalysis, I put myself under analysis in this thesis as I critique the ways in which I write about others.

Lacanian analysis is about learning to say things better and through this process which Lacan refers to as the talking cure, we learn to say it in a new way (Miller 1995, p. 235). The end of analysis can be attained when one follows the ethics of speaking well as opposed to an ethics of well-being (Miller 1995, p. 235). Speaking well involves the reconstruction of master signifiers where the subject assumes a new position in relation to language, that is, in relation to concepts and categories like Aborigines, gender, the individual, freedom and autonomy (see Bracher 1993).

My desire to transgress the boundaries of scientific discourse when I started this thesis was influenced by my reading of the famous debate between Foucault and Derrida which took place in the 1960s and 1970s. This is outlined below\(^7\).

1.6. The Foucault-Derrida debate

In 1961 Foucault published a history of madness which he titled *Madness and Civilisation*. According to Foucault the mentally ill were first confined to special

\(^6\) See Chapter Two for a discussion of this problem. However, in setting such ambitious sights, it is only partially successful.

\(^7\) See Foucault (1977, 1979b, 1989b), Derrida (1978) and Boyne (1990) for a thorough analysis of the debate.
institutions in the classical 'Age of Reason' between 1650 and 1789. Madness was an invention of that era. He says: 'I have not tried to write the history of that language, but rather the archaeology of that silence' (Foucault 1989b, p. xiii). Foucault attempts to represent madness through a reading of the techniques used to represent and exclude madness from history. He tries to say what madness is by saying what it is not. He argues that his methods give him access to what others think and know.

Like the anthropologist and the ethnographer Foucault wants to understand others by 'making the strange familiar'. He wants to give madness a voice. Foucault believes that a study of madness can give him insights into his own society and into himself. Foucault's work is motivated by the right to be different (Boyne 1990, p. 33). His work is 'a protest against the violence that is levelled against others so as to force them to become the same as us' (Boyne 1990, p. 33).

Two years after the publication of *Madness and Civilisation*, Jacques Derrida, a student of Foucault's, delivered his famous lecture on 'The Cogito and the History of Madness' (Derrida 1978). Derrida takes the position that madness must be signified in such a way that we can read its meaning. And its meaning can only be read through the language of western reason. To use the language of reason to study madness is to use the very method that previously excluded it.

In trying to know and to speak for the mad through the voice of reason, Foucault excludes and silences the voice of madness (Derrida 1978, p. 34). In his attempt to investigate the silence of madness Foucault repeats the original exclusion of madness by reason. According to Derrida Foucault rationalises the irrational. He assimilates difference by making those who are different the same as himself. He makes the strange familiar for the gaze of others just as the ethnographer presents indigenous people as accessible for non-indigenous consumption. Derrida accuses Foucault of assimilating difference.

Foucault can speak of madness and its silence only from outside it, from the position of order and rationality (Derrida 1978, p. 59-60). His project will always be contained within the limits of reason. Foucault, on the other hand, is committed to the possibility of thinking outside his own framework of thought. For Derrida 'the revolution against reason can be made only within it' (Derrida 1978, p. 36). We cannot go beyond our
own form of reason. Reason is the condition of possibility of history (Derrida 1978, p. 36). Any attempt to think beyond the limits of reason is doomed from the beginning. But for Foucault, to be totally reasonable in the ancient Greek tradition is to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

The language of reason is the 'language of exclusion' (Derrida 1978 p. 61). The confidence of western reason is based on exclusion (1978, p. 62). We have recourse only to methods. A knowledge of madness can only be constituted through exclusion because presence depends on absence. And a knowledge of difference can only be constituted through the same. Foucault can never know what madness means. He is caught in the structuralist bind of same-difference.

As far as Derrida is concerned Foucault makes the double mistake of not only acting as though he were the link between reason and madness but that he can also represent an unmediated voice of madness for his readers. Foucault tries to teach what he thinks he knows that the insane know without it being an assimilation to the language of reason. He attempts to occupy an insider's perspective of madness. Derrida accuses Foucault of believing that he can know what madness is. Whereas Foucault assumes a conduit or a direct line of communication between self and others, Derrida argues that any such link is entirely arbitrary (Derrida 1978). And like Foucault the ethnographer cannot know what the informant thinks and knows. Foucault's claim to an insider's view of madness is for Derrida 'the madness aspect of his project' (Derrida 1978, p. 34). Derrida argues that there is nothing outside the text. We cannot see outside our own position. Foucault clings to the possibility that he can transgress the limits of reason. There must be something outside the limits of self.

Derrida's critique of Foucault's project is a rejection of referential theories of language where each word uttered has a one-to-one relation with a thing existing in 'reality'. In the context of the classroom, the debate offers a critique of transmission-based theories of teaching and learning where it is assumed that there is a conduit between the teacher and student, and between the student and his or her own mind. The debate raised several important questions for my thesis and for the ethnographic and pedagogic relation in particular.
The crosscultural ethnographer believes that he or she can occupy an insider's perspective. Derrida suggests in the debate with Foucault that this is an impossibility. He accuses Foucault of thinking he knows what madness is, and acting as the link between madness and reason. Foucault believes that he can produce an objective account of what madness is, and pass this onto readers. This raised a double question for my thesis: *As a non-indigenous researcher, how can I know what indigenous informants think and know? How can I tell others about what I have found?* This raised a parallel question for my work on pedagogy:

*How does the student learn from the pedagogue in the crosscultural classroom?*

Derrida argues that in trying to speak for the insane, and in having the best intentions, Foucault assimilates their voices into his own language of reason. He excludes and silences the voice of madness. This brought me to consider the question: *How can I talk about the indigenous informants of this research without assimilating them to my own epistemological, methodological and ethical structure?* This raised a parallel question for teaching and learning:

*How does the student learn outside the knowledge and power of the pedagogue?*

The thesis explores these key questions.

1.7. Conclusion

After I wrote the first interpretation (see Preface and Appendix One), it became obvious to me that I was already doing what others had done before me. I was continuing to follow in the footsteps of other ethnographers and PhD students. Nothing much had been happening in indigenous education because we were repeating the same lessons and the same mistakes. For me, indigenous education was at a stage where researchers needed to produce something that was truly different from everything else that had been done before. I wanted to do this and I felt that I could begin by writing a doctorate that was different. I was inspired by the way Foucault (1990b, pp. 8-9) approached his own writings in order to transgress the boundaries and to think differently:

As for what motivated me, it is quite simple ... It was curiosity - the only kind of curiosity, in any case, that is worth acting upon with a degree of obstinacy: not the curiosity that seeks to assimilate what it is proper for one to know, but that which
enables one to get free of oneself. After all, what would be the value of the passion for knowledge if it resulted only in a certain amount of knowledgerableness and not ... in the knower's straying afield of himself? There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all ... But, then, what is philosophy today - philosophical activity, I mean - if it is not the critical work that thought brings to bear on itself? In what does it consist, if not in the endeavour to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known?

Felman (1987, p. 15) discusses reading as 'a constant struggle to become aware'. She attempts to read Lacan, like Lacan attempts to read Freud, beyond the limits and limitations of its own awareness. For her, Lacanian psychoanalysis, in its practice, 'teaches people how to think beyond their means' (Felman 1987, p. 15). In this thesis I attempt to become aware of positions which are outside my own field of vision. In Derrida's terms I attempt the impossible. Nothing much has changed in indigenous education because researchers continue to ask the same questions within the same frames of thinking (see Chapter Two). Our questions help to set the boundaries for what we can know. Once the question is asked, the answer is already given. I attempt to ask different questions throughout this thesis; to think beyond my means.

1.8. Outline of the thesis

Chapter Two outlines how the problems for this thesis arose out of my early teaching experiences at Numbulwar, Galiwin'ku and at the Northern Territory University.

Chapter Three describes the methodology I adopted as a crosscultural ethnographer.

I gain the insight from the interview data of Chapter Four that while the informants are constituted in relation to my own ethnographic gaze I am positioned by the informants as responsible for the ways in which I interpret the data.

Chapter Five analyses how we come to know and to represent others in the discourses of crosscultural ethnography.
The data of Chapter Six outline the informant's historical relation to the teacher as an authority.

Chapter Seven explores the ways in which crosscultural theories of education position the student in relation to the teacher's methodology. But while these theories show how the student learns through the knowledge and power of the pedagogue, they perpetuate an unequal historical relation in the classroom.

The data of Chapter Eight highlight the disparity between what the pedagogue wants in critical theories of education and what the informants want in practice.

I outline in Chapter Nine how students at university are always already engaged, albeit unconsciously, in negotiating a position which is outside the knowledge and power of the pedagogue.

The data of Chapter Ten emphasise the importance of speech to the production of knowledge and learning in a crosscultural pedagogy.

Chapter Eleven summarises the insights gained through writing this thesis. It continues to explore the question of what does a student want?
CHAPTER 2

1978

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL SETTING
CHAPTER 2: 1978 - HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL SETTING

What can I find out about the experiences of indigenous students at the
Northern Territory University?

2.1. My arrival in the Northern Territory

Who am I? What knowledge do I bring to the Territory?

In 2002 I finished a narrative of my desire to know and talk about indigenous people. It began in Melbourne in 1978 when I was appointed as a teacher to Numbulwar, an Aboriginal community located in the southeast corner of Arnhemland. As I prepared to leave Melbourne I devoted most of my time to finding out about Aboriginal culture. I was fascinated with other cultures as much as I was with myself. I read The Australian Aborigines by A. P. Elkin (1974) because my friends were reading it. When I arrived in Numbulwar I was able to understand what the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers told me about kinship and marriage systems, moieties and clans, and sacred areas. The knowledge that I got from Elkin made me feel that I could understand where people were coming from. I could ask informed questions because Elkin's book seemed to apply to Aborigines at Numbulwar. And I was able to question, in my own mind at least, some of the presumptions held by several white teachers whom I thought had become disillusioned with their work. At that time the authority of a book carried more weight than my own experiences.

Elkin helped me to read the culture after I had arrived at Numbulwar. I had brought my knowledge with me. I was reading Aborigines before I arrived and now continued to do so in accordance with a structure of knowledge which I had brought with me and applied to the scene. Elkin taught me what to listen for and to whom. But the longer I worked at Numbulwar, the stranger things became. I began to depend more on others to interpret what I observed. As a teacher I was bewildered by the students' approach to learning. I wanted to be able to interpret what they said and did for myself. Elkin was becoming less meaningful. While his book helped me to understand my introduction to Aboriginal social life at Numbulwar, it did not help me to interpret the children's classroom learning behaviour. A new set of questions were arising from my practice in the classroom, ones which could not be answered
by Elkin. This chapter indicates the direction of this thesis. The literature will be reviewed as an ongoing process throughout the study.

*How could I find out about how Aboriginal children learn in the classroom?*

**2.2. Reading Harris**

I remember lying on my bed one night feeling frustrated with the kids at school. While I recognised they were culturally different, what could I do about it? A housemate came into my room and started talking about a book on the rules of traditional Aboriginal learning which he had found in the storeroom at school. He must have been experiencing similar problems to me because the longer he spoke about his new discovery the more excited we both became. It seemed as though the thesis by Stephen Harris (1977) provided answers to many of the questions we had both been asking since we arrived at Numbulwar.

We spent countless hours reconciling our experiences with those of Stephen Harris, occasionally laughing at the mistakes we had been making in our classroom practice. The rules of classroom learning outlined in his thesis provided us with a way of interpreting the unfamiliar behaviour in the classroom. His knowledge of Yolngu (Northeast Arnhemland Aboriginal) learning styles gave us a new confidence in our teaching because we could now interpret and explain classroom cultural behaviour. I remember how my friend and I would fit our daily experiences into one or another of the texts described in the thesis.

Harris' study of Yolngu learning styles at Milingimbi has served as a model for other researchers in the field of educational anthropology, including Coombs, Brandl and Snowdon (1983), Christie (1984), Malin (1989) and Hudspith (1996). His findings continue to be applied by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and teachers in classrooms in urban and remote areas of Australia. Nicholls, Crowley and Watt state that every teacher with a serious professional interest in Aboriginal education in this country has heard of, and has at some level been influenced by Stephen Harris' theory of Aboriginal learning styles (1996, p. 6). His influence is also evident at the level of national policy formation (DEET 1994).

*How did Harris structure my understanding of the Aboriginal classroom?*
Harris' work had a significant influence on my teaching methods in Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal culture became less mysterious insofar as I presumed I could know what they think and know. His thesis gave me a new visibility by organising Aboriginal life so that it could be seen by me. The rules gave me a structure to interpret and understand Aboriginal culture inside and outside the classroom, and to anticipate and predict what people would do and say. Its test of validity lay in its capacity to constantly provide answers to my continuing questions. I became an amateur ethnographer as well as an informed teacher. Harris helped me to return to the classroom feeling that I could competently teach Aboriginal children. I came to recognise through Harris that what I had to say as a teacher in the classroom depended on my teaching methods. I was also to recognise later in the thesis how easy it is to become inscribed in someone else's structure. While Elkin introduced me to Aboriginal culture, Harris provided me with specific answers to my questions about how Northeast Arnhemlanders learn in the classroom.

I stayed at Numbulwar for two years. I then taught from 1980-81 at Galiwin'ku on the north coast of Arnhemland. I later taught at a high school in Darwin before travelling overseas to study in Greece. I returned to Australia in 1990 to begin teaching in a bridging course for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the Northern Territory University. The course had the aim of preparing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for entry into Higher Education courses. It was a relatively new course offered by the university and like other lecturers at the Centre for Aboriginal and Islander Studies (now the Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) I hoped that I could give students what they needed to undertake a degree.

*As a lecturer how could I prepare Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for Higher Education?*

**2.3. Starting off as a lecturer at the Northern Territory University**

When I began teaching at the Northern Territory University I regarded tertiary education as an answer for one's ills. Individuals could progress via education. I thought tertiary education was an inherently good and positive step for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The educated were more conscious of their
surroundings and how they could interact with them. Education for me was character building. If people were educated in the human sciences then the problems of racism and sexism, and the inequalities of capitalist society could be confronted. Education produced a better society and a liberated, reflective individual. I didn’t stop to question the possibility that education might not be, necessarily, a good thing for people, or that some people might not be remotely interested in the kind of education offered by educational institutions like the Northern Territory University.

Pedagogy for me was largely a matter of opening the students' eyes to the wider world. Students could be transformed through a process of reflective learning and consciousness-raising. I often considered students who returned to study to be going forward but nevertheless to be on the narrow-minded side and in need of education. I had explored more of the world and experienced more of its people than they had. Pedagogy became a process of introducing the wider world to students so that they could become more critical of the way things worked as well as the conditions of their everyday existence. I wanted students to develop a voice. Students could be taught to be critical thinkers. Only later did I challenge the notion of western enlightenment (see Chapters Five and Nine).

I had learned through my undergraduate course to be critical of capitalist society. I had become a Marxist and the work of Paulo Freire inspired my approach to teaching since I first arrived at Numbulwar (see Freire 1972, 1973; Bowles and Gintis 1976). Freire worked as a literacy teacher among the poor in Brazil in the 1960's. In his famous book, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, he discusses an emancipatory approach to research where 'teacher' and 'student' teach each other through negotiation and dialogue to produce a 'deepened consciousness of their situation' (1972, p. 53). The heart of the research process begins with the problems of people in their own social setting. They become jointly responsible for a process in which they both grow, and arguments about authority and domination are no longer valid. Both become teacher and student (see Chapter Seven).

As a Marxist, I thought I understood the oppressive nature of capitalist society and its impact on Aboriginal societies since invasion. As a teacher, I could therefore expose society's structural inequities and injustices to students. Once they were in a position to recognise their oppression then they could do something about it.
assumed I could transmit this knowledge to students. I also thought that they were more oppressed than me. They seemed vulnerable to the outside world and I believed that education could empower the student to get what he or she wanted from this world. While I considered that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students should take control of their own lives, I assumed that I already had control of my own and that I could show them the way.

If I could understand where students were coming from culturally, be responsive to their particular cultural needs in the classroom, and most importantly, teach the meaning of capitalist society then I could begin to 'crack the code' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. I had a contribution to make. Things could be changed and I could assist this change. A culturally responsive classroom and a bag of tricks to take with me would produce success at school along with increasing the retention rate of students. But the knowledge which I had brought with me to the Northern Territory University did not prepare me for what I was to experience.

2.4. A restatement of the problem

During my first two years of teaching at the Northern Territory University I was often overwhelmed by the stories from some students about 'being taken' and growing up in a children's home, and about their experiences of racism at school. My feelings would oscillate from anger to despair at the degree of 'victimisation' that Aborigines endured. I was later to recognise through the work of Nakata that I had been talking about Torres Strait Islanders as Aborigines in my writing, and in my classroom practice (Nakata 1991, 1995).

I was overwhelmed by the way students sometimes laughed about such experiences because I only saw anger and sorrow in their stories. Some lecturers argued that all students should be treated the same. But the same as what? Were these lecturers suggesting that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students be treated in terms of white (institutional) definitions of equality and social justice? I felt they didn't understand; they were locked into their own comfortable middle-class world. They could afford not to understand. But how could I afford to pathologise them? And how would that help? Had I not been faced with the same problem: a lack of understanding of indigenous people?
Stories from the students about their experiences of growing up in an unequal world made me all the more committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. I could see the value in a university education for people who had experienced such trauma and hardship. It offered a way out and an uplifting so that students could reassert their Aboriginal identity and make choices for the future. I thought that students deserved better and I could give them better. What could I do about it? I became 'a lecturer with a mission', as one student later described me. As a lecturer, my aim was to produce changes in the university classroom for Aboriginal students. Somehow I thought that I could succeed where others had failed.

I spent many hours planning and preparing lectures and tutorials. I devoted many more hours to thinking about how I could teach. I emphasised the methods of teaching more than the content. I thought about how I could explain things to students, and about how students come to understand the books they read. It seemed like I could give an infinite number of examples for every question that arose in the classroom. I tried to find books which were both readable and interesting. I looked for material which could link the students' own experiences to those of others. I tried to give teaching and learning a wider context. I would read reviews from other teachers discussing their experiences in the Aboriginal classroom. I always compared my own teaching practice with that of others. But I could never determine how Aboriginal students made sense of what was said and done in the classroom. How could I find out about their experiences of learning and teaching at university? Even the question itself becomes a very important part of the problem for the critical ethnographer. This will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Despite my best efforts, things never turned out the way I wanted and expected. Students withdrew from the course, some stopped coming to class, some came every now and again, while most did not seem to have the drive to complete a degree course but continued to attend. They were enrolled in a course which was specifically designed to prepare indigenous students for degree courses, but only three from an initial enrolment of fifteen continued their studies (for a critique of bridging courses, see Keeffe 1990; also this chapter). We both seemed to want different things. Could I find other teaching methods more appropriate to the learning styles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?
After two disappointing years of teaching in the bridging course, I decided to undertake research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education at the Northern Territory University. I turned to the literature to gain some insight into how I should proceed in the light of the main questions raised in Chapter One. These were:

*How does an indigenous student learn outside the non-indigenous pedagogue's authority in the crosscultural classroom?*

*What does the student want?*

The following section is not intended to be an exhaustive search of the relevant literature. This is ongoing throughout Chapters Five, Seven and Nine, and is grounded in the data that precedes each of these chapters.

### 2.5. Following in the footsteps of others

I followed the recommendation of other ethnographers and began my study by reading the past research into indigenous education. I started off by reading those non-indigenous ethnographers who had conducted their research in the Northern Territory. This included Harris (1977), Bain (1979), Christie (1984), and Hudspith (1996). Along with the work of Malin (1989) whose study was undertaken in Adelaide, I thought that their work was relevant to my own situation as a teacher here in the Territory. I also found the writing of Malin, Christie, and Harris interesting and easy to understand while I felt excluded by those who were difficult to read. I was also influenced by Trouw's research into her own classroom practice (1997, 1998). Each of the above research projects are closely related insofar as they try to work out what knowledge, learning and teaching are in the crosscultural classroom. They are specifically concerned with how indigenous students learn in the western classroom, and with the mismatch of expectations between indigenous students and the non-indigenous teacher.

In his study of Aboriginal learning at Milingimbi, Harris outlines five main methods of Yolngu learning and compares these to the western classroom. He identifies the first as learning through observation and repetition rather than through verbal instruction; secondly, learning through personal trial and error rather than through
verbal instruction and demonstration; thirdly, learning through real-life performance of the activity rather than through practice in contrived settings; fourthly, focus in Yolngu learning is on context-specific skills rather than directed at producing general, context-free principles; and fifthly, Yolngu learners are more person-oriented than information-oriented, and there is no institutionalised office of 'teacher' in Yolngu society (1977, p. 523). Harris argues that the classroom teacher must be aware of these learning techniques employed outside the school.

Christie's PhD study analyses the 'breakdown' between the Yolngu child and the western education system (1984, p. 385). He argues that there is a disparity between the Yolngu child's expectations of knowledge and learning in the classroom and those of the teacher. For Yolngu children in Christie's study:

academic learning is effected through physical presence at school, the ritualised completion of stereotyped academic activity, and the age grading process of moving up through the school grades. The child most likely to succeed is conforming, passive, independent of teachers and other children, and remains silent (1984, p. 383).

On the other hand, the Yolngu student either didn't know what the teacher expected in the classroom, or was reluctant to meet the following expectations of the white teacher:

Firstly, the teacher expected the student to know what he or she has to learn. The student must be goal-directed before effective purposeful learning can take place. The goal must be communicated verbally to the student, and the student must be able to understand what the teacher wants, and to position him or herself accordingly. Secondly, the teacher expected the student to exert personal and individual control over his or her attempts to reach the goal rather than relying on the teacher and others to do this for them. The teacher assumed that motivation must come from self. Thirdly, the student must learn to recognise how the teacher provides feedback in the classroom, to understand what it means in terms of his or her own work, and to reapply it before purposeful learning can take place (1984, p. 60-65).

But Christie identifies a catch. While purposeful behaviour is the means and also the goal of western education, it also represents the opposite of what is valued and
preferred by Yolngu in their own culture. He adds that if the Aboriginal student is to learn through western methods then the student may have to relinquish his or her own ways of learning (1984, p. 387). His participant observation of classroom behaviour at Milingimbi school focused on the ‘coping strategies’ employed by Yolngu children when the teachers demand academic behaviour which they are incapable of, or unused to performing, and on the teachers’ responses to the children’s constant failure to respond as expected (1984, p. 384). The teachers develop explanations for the children’s failure which protect their own self-image as teachers. The children in turn cope with the teacher demands through retreating and ritualising strategies. The teachers then respond to the children’s strategies by justifying and legitimating them in their minds, and by developing classroom programs which demand a minimum of purposeful academic involvement (1984, p. 384).

As the teacher demands academic, purposeful learning, the student retreats from the teacher’s demands. The teacher then responds to the student’s retreat by reducing his or her demands for academic knowledge. Each develops coping strategies to deal with the expectations of the other. Both are trained by the other’s coping strategies (Christie 1984, p. 391). I take the position in Chapter Nine that both are trained through a discourse of negotiation. Learning and teaching in the Yolngu classroom become dependent upon the ritualised conformity to classroom procedure (1984, p. 397). For Christie, the Yolngu student must be taught the purposeful learning skills which he associates with western education (1984, p. 400).

Malin (1989) compares the home socialisation of Aboriginal and white families to argue that there is a cultural and linguistic mismatch between the student’s home and the school. The Aboriginal children’s ways of knowing and learning at home ‘handicapped’ them in the classroom (Malin 1989, p. 601). Most of the Aboriginal children in the study displayed an autonomous orientation to teaching and learning. Malin’s findings of how the Aboriginal students learn in an Adelaide classroom mirror the learning methods documented by Harris in his Milingimbi study. The students in Malin’s research assumed that they would learn through: ‘observing and listening in on the teacher and students; by imitating them; by doing what needs to be done; by being assisted by others and in return assisting them; by the explanations of others; and by relying on their own selection of what to attend to and when’
(Malin 1989, p. 556). But Malin found that these assumptions often clashed with the Anglo teacher’s assumptions about teaching and learning in the classroom to the point where the Aboriginal students were forced to learn the teacher’s ways of doing things if they were to be successful.

In contrast to the white children who were attuned to ‘external regulation’ both inside and outside the classroom, Aboriginal children were expected to be ‘self-reliant’ outside the school while at school the white teacher considered their self-regulating behaviour as an infringement (1989, p. 407-15). This finding concurs with the work done by Harris (1977, p. 294) who notes the absence in Yolngu society of the institutionalised office of teacher. Malin also shows how the teacher’s interpretation of the Aboriginal student’s behaviour in the classroom led to conflict, and a disproportionate number of punishments and reprimands, with a resulting stigmatisation of the student. Aboriginal success at school is posited as an effect of the teacher’s ability to understand how the Aboriginal child is raised at home.

Sandra Hudspith in her PhD research builds on Malin’s work. She begins her thesis by stating that 'Aboriginal students' experience of mainstream schooling is generally marked by failure' (Hudspith 1996, p. 2). She points to the lack of research into urban Aboriginal education compared to remote Aboriginal education (1996 p. 2). She employs a similar argument to that of Malin (1989) and Christie (1984) to suggest that the social and cultural practices which Aboriginal children learn at home do not fit with the assumptions and expectations of the classroom teacher. Hudspith argues for a 'reciprocal understanding' in the classroom where pedagogical instruction and control are made visible to Aboriginal students, and the 'cultural interests' of Aboriginal students are made visible to the teacher. When the culture of each is in the consciousness of the other then Aboriginal students may learn 'to belong in the classroom and in the school' (1996, p. 309-313). I will later question the possibility that the culture of each could ever be in the consciousness of the other (see Chapter Five).

Trouw conducts a doctoral study of the teaching practices of three teachers (1999). Each of these teachers has students from a variety of cultural backgrounds including Aboriginal students in the class. Each is considered by peers and their principal to be exemplary in providing a learning situation where all students achieve
academically as well as emotionally and socially. Trouw is looking for a culturally inclusive pedagogy which not only reproduces the cultural knowledge of the teacher but includes the knowledge and voices of all the students in a multicultural classroom. She is searching for a way of producing knowledge which is neither partial and selective, nor constituted before the students and teacher enter the classroom. She finds that scaffolding is an effective method for getting the students, including the Aboriginal students, to talk and write and to produce a negotiated knowledge which is different to what either the students or the teacher start with (see Chapter Seven). In her search for an inclusive pedagogy, Trouw is searching for a metapractice. In her literature review, she devotes careful and detailed attention to the different theoretical positions to ensure that the position of each is heard and fairly represented in a negotiated and harmonious manner. Trouw shows us what a culturally inclusive pedagogy can look like in practice as she performs what she is looking for.

The development of a culturally inclusive pedagogy is particularly relevant to my thesis and my own teaching practice. This research developed out of my teaching as a non-indigenous pedagogue working with indigenous adults at university.

Harris (1977) explains Aboriginal failure at school in terms of what the teacher doesn’t know about how Aboriginal students learn at Milingimbi. Christie (1984) argues that the Aboriginal student doesn’t know what the teacher expects in the classroom and is reluctant to engage in the kinds of purposeful behaviour expected by the white teacher. Malin attributes failure to the white teacher’s lack of knowledge of the Aboriginal student’s culture practised outside the school but denied a place within the classroom. Hudspith is arguing that teaching and learning must be made explicit in the classroom. Each researcher maintains that either the teacher or the student’s knowledge is hidden from the other, and that this knowledge must be made explicit to the other in order for learning to occur in the Aboriginal classroom. Each believes that their informants have got the knowledge they are searching for. The individual student is positioned as the source of knowledge and learning. And each assumes that knowledge can be transmitted between individuals. I will later produce a critique of transmission-based theories of knowledge adopted in ethnography and pedagogy (see Chapters Five, Seven and Nine).
Each contribution from the Harris-Christie-Malin-Hudspith sequence of educational research builds on and extends the work that has come before it. Each thesis begins by investigating the reasons for Aboriginal student failure at school, or the teacher's failure to teach, and ends with the hope that things will improve. The next major work to appear dashes this hope with facts and figures to show that things are still the same (for example, Hudspith 1996, p. 308). Abdullah and Stringer state that 'in the last thirty years, the failure of education systems to meet the educational needs of Aboriginal people in Australia has become a national disgrace' (1997, p. 1). A meeting of ten prominent educators from the United States, England and Australia in 1994 stated in regard to the purpose of their meeting that: 'we were able to agree on the fundamental problem, that the disparities in educational outcomes did not seem to be improving' (The New London Group 1996, p. 2-3). Should I follow in the footsteps of Harris, Christie, Malin and Hudspith or should I look outside this methodological structure? Could there be something else that hasn't been found by researchers in the under-researched university context?

2.6. Indigenous tertiary education

There has been a dramatic increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in tertiary education over the last thirty years. In 1966 there were only nine indigenous students enrolled in Australian universities (Tatz 1969, p. 3). By 1987, there were 2000 indigenous higher education students and this had increased to almost 8000 by 1998 (DETYA 1999, p. 4). Gale attributes the increased participation in indigenous education to a shift from a policy of welfare towards an emphasis on access and equity (1996, p. 117). This shift was accompanied by an increase in the allocation of resources to tertiary education directed at increasing indigenous student enrolments, and an associated emphasis on the role of enclave and support units within these institutions. These units were developed through the recommendations of the Jordan Report (Jordan 1985) on support systems for Aboriginal students in higher education.

While there has been a dramatic increase in the number of indigenous students participating in tertiary education, the attainment of quality outcomes is more difficult to assess (Keeffe 1990; Northern Territory Department of Education 1999). Qualitative analysis of indigenous tertiary education has been limited to a small
number of studies. McConaghy’s doctoral thesis (1997) is based on an examination of the fundamental assumptions and strategies of indigenous adult education in the associated literature. She takes the position that while indigenous adult education has become a highly contested terrain over the last twenty years a number of intractable problems remain, not least of which is how we talk about indigenous education ‘outside the discourses of “race”, difference, enlightenment and progress’ (Harris and Christie 1994, p. 11). This raises the following question:

*How can a crosscultural pedagogy be developed outside the discourses of race, culture, progress and enlightenment?*

While McConaghy (1997) brings together the threads of poststructuralist retheorising of indigenous education, her research concentrates on community-based adult education rather than tertiary education.


Gale’s PhD research explores the policy shift towards equity in tertiary education to argue that indigenous participation in tertiary education is shaped by public representations of Aboriginality (1996). The research is based on interviews with tertiary educators and administrators, and on an analysis of representations of Aboriginality in government reports, the Northern Territory News, and in a wide range of other literature associated with education (Gale 1996, p. 335). Gale demonstrates how representations of Aboriginality through film, literature, and the media govern the ways in which indigenous people participate in tertiary education (Gale 1996, p. 342). Competing representations of Aboriginality as a traditional cultural minority, or as a disadvantaged group, or as a collective of indigenous people with indigenous rights do
not just reflect the way things are in Australian society. Rather, these representations in
the discourses of education and the media actually constitute and govern the ways in
which indigenous people come to be seen and interpreted by others (Gale 1996, p. 348-
49). Gale argues that representations of indigenous people in discourse are not just
reflections of what already exists; they are interpretations that both produce, and
constrain, relations between indigenous and non-indigenous people (Gale 1996, p. 339).
Representations in discourse actually produce the meaning that comes to be.

Arnott’s doctoral thesis (1994) investigates the work and training of adult educators in
community-based education. He begins with the assumption that theory should always
be derived from practice to argue that there is a disparity between the theories of adult
education and what adult educators are actually doing in the field (1994, p. 200). Bin-
Sallik’s research (1990) examines the low level of Aboriginal participation in the higher
education system. Her study is based on a national questionnaire distributed to
graduates and current students of the Aboriginal Task Force program at the then South
Australian Institute of Technology, and to administrators of Aboriginal tertiary
education programs across Australia. Her main question is ‘To what extent is the
Aboriginal tertiary education sector serving the needs of Aborigines?’ Bin-Sallik
concludes that it is failing the needs of Aborigines education (1990, p. 153-54). She
recommends more Aboriginal academic leadership and role models in tertiary
education, and greater commitment from tertiary institutions to Aboriginal education
(Bin-Sallik 1990, p. 153-54). McClay’s doctoral study develops a model of Aboriginal
adult education based on his ethnographic research with Walpiri in the Northern
Territory (1988). He contrasts a teacher dominated, content oriented model with the
problem-solving, consciousness-raising model to argue for a program which assists
Aboriginal people to pursue their own aspirations.

Research into indigenous education at the Northern Territory University has been
limited. There have been two Master of Education theses by Thibodeaux (1995) and
Wren (1992). Thibodeaux’s ethnographic research argues that racism is perpetuated
in the university’s Faculty of Education through two discourses, the discourse of
western science and the discourse of Aboriginalism. While the author undertakes
the important work of identifying the discourses that drive students and pedagogues
to speak and write in the ways they do within the Faculty of Education, she does not
offer any solutions as to how students learn to 'deconstruct' and critique the discourses that condition the racist practices that her informants have identified in the research. Wren examined the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS) as it operates at the Northern Territory University (1992). The study makes very specific recommendations on the implementation and effectiveness of the ATAS scheme. It does not investigate learning, teaching or the production of knowledge at the university.

There have been very few researchers working in the field of indigenous adult education. McConaghhy (2000, p. 5) notes that there are perhaps only thirty or forty people within Australia who published academic research in indigenous adult education in the 1990s. Significant among these researchers are Lampert and Lilley (1996) who are concerned with the incorporation of indigenous knowledges within university curricula (also see Abdullah and Stringer 1997). The Koori Centre and Yooroang Garang (1996) identify some key pedagogical issues for indigenous Australians in higher education. McDaniel and Flowers (1995) provide a socialist interpretation of the 'long-running struggle in Australia' between the 'colonial capitalist state' and indigenous people over their respective expectations in adult education.

Craven (1996) has edited a kit in indigenous studies for trainee teachers at university (also see Craven 1999). Bourke, Burden and Moore (1996) investigate the performance of indigenous students at the University of South Australia. They interviewed over one hundred indigenous students to establish the factors affecting their performance. Inadequate support services were identified as the major issue for the students interviewed. Staff attitudes were seen as a problem by almost one third of the students interviewed (1996, p. xiii). Feelings of isolation and perceived discrimination were also factors affecting the performance of the students (1996, p. xiv). However, these texts do not engage with the theoretical discourses in the field nor with what is actually going on in the classroom at university.

A small number of discussion papers in indigenous higher education have been published, including Harris (1988), Tucker (1992), Bin-Sallik (1994), Abdullah and Stringer (1997), Kemmis (1997a, 1997b), and Walker (1998). Harris presents an interesting point of view. He argues that the 'white curriculum' at the tertiary level
should be presented as 'a giant role play, like a very big game' (1988, p. 176). He proposes that lecturers could be telling indigenous students: "You are not learning this because it is better, but because this is the way you can learn to handle industrial culture" (1988, p. 176). Harris suggests indigenous students would do better at university if they were taught the rules of white culture which would then allow them to play the game at university. He proposes that students must learn how to play the game in order to be successful at the tertiary level (Harris 1988, p. 177). I later came to ask: How can students learn outside the rules of the classroom?

Keeffe (1990) and Garbutcheon Singh (1990) debate the effectiveness of bridging courses in higher education. Keeffe argues that such courses fail statistically to get Aboriginal students through their degrees (1990, p. 91; 1992, p. 163). Garbutcheon Singh takes the position that success and failure cannot be measured in terms of numbers: 'it is clearly more important to evaluate the results of education in terms of increased civility and empowerment than in terms of price and product' (1990, p. 106). These studies constitute position papers rather than being based on any extensive ethnographic fieldwork.

Gale points out that while the figures may have improved over the years, indigenous students are still required to learn within a western framework, and through non-indigenous teachers (1996, p. 117). Abdullah and Stringer (1997) have found through personal experience that universities continue to accommodate Aboriginal knowledge and Aboriginal ways of knowing in the only way they know how - their own! Universities must change their perceptions of knowledge, learning and teaching if they are to avoid the 'culturally-corrosive effects' of teaching and research on indigenous students in higher education (Kemmis 1997b, p. 4; Abdullah and Stringer 1997). This raised an ongoing philosophical and practical problem for my research:

How can students and I, as an ethnographer, learn outside our own ways of knowing?

2.7. Summary of Chapter Two

This chapter has introduced the historical and geographical setting and raised some of the initial theoretical concerns for my thesis. It introduces my original concepts
of knowledge, learning and teaching. It shows how I was already reading Aboriginal
culture before I arrived in Numbulwar, in accordance with a structure of knowledge
which I had brought with me and applied to the scene. My initial understanding of
Aborigines at Numbulwar was displaced by my subsequent discovery of Harris. His
work provided me with another map with which to read Aboriginal student
behaviour in the classroom. I then described the difficulties I encountered through
my teaching at the Northern Territory University. Although the problem for this
thesis developed out of my early experiences at the university it had its origins in
Victoria. I wanted to find out about Aborigines so that I could change things. The
chapter also introduced some of the previous studies by educational anthropologists
and ethnographers of indigenous education in the Northern Territory. I have
provided a brief introduction to some of the literature associated with indigenous
tertiary education. The literature will be reviewed as an ongoing task throughout the
thesis. Once I had established the historical and geographical setting for the thesis, I
then turned to the methodology:

*How can I find out about indigenous students at the Northern Territory University?*

This question will be addressed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3

1993

THE METHODOLOGY
CHAPTER 3: 1993 - THE METHODOLOGY

How can I find out about indigenous students at the Northern Territory University?

3.1. Introduction

When I started my research as a Masters student, I had some practical experience as an amateur ethnographer at Numbulwar and Galwin'ku. Harris' thesis (1977) had taught me what to look for and how to read it. I was also to receive some formal training in ethnographic methodology from Harris, and from Malin, through the Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics at the Northern Territory University. As lecturers they gave me more ideas about how to proceed with my research. They introduced me to ethnographers like Dobbert (1982), Van Maanen (1988), Fetterman (1989), and Wolcott (1988, 1990, 1994). These ethnographers showed me how to define the problem and what questions to ask. Fetterman (1989) says ethnographers often adopt the model of a researcher they admire.

As a phenomenologist, I wanted to find out what the experiences of indigenous students at the Northern Territory University actually mean to them. I wanted to understand what a situation is like from the informant's point of view. Using the informant's own constructs to frame a study is a phenomenological approach (LeCompte and Preissle 1993, p. 45). I assumed the informants were rational, self-motivated individuals who were capable of making choices in their lives. They were free to say what they think in the context of their experiences. As a researcher and phenomenologist, I assumed that knowledge originates in the informant, and so I thought there was nothing improbable about trying to discover what the informant thinks and knows.

Malin (1989, p. 131) proposes that this kind of knowledge is usually hidden from the untrained eye. She (1989, p. 131) states:

because much of what we perceive, believe, evaluate and act out is in our unconscious awareness, much of our daily life is invisible to us. We cannot perceive the patterns in our daily actions, or in the actions of those within our cultural network...it is very easy to overlook the obvious, so cross-cultural comparison is employed to contribute breadth and depth of interpretation to the investigation by exposing what is otherwise take for granted.
The informant is motivated by unconscious knowledge or a set of underlying intentions. It is an invisible knowledge which is outside the individual’s control and governs what is said and done (Malin 1989, p. 123). I was searching for knowledge which already existed prior to my entry into the field, but a knowledge which was invisible or unknown to the informants themselves. How could I make the invisible visible?

Like others ethnographers, I thought that I could discover this invisible knowledge by listening very carefully and methodically to what the informants say, and observing what they do (Fetterman 1989, p.16). Knowledge was produced through speaking and listening. The more the informant talked, the more I could know about what the informant thinks and knows (and the more the reader can know about the culture under study). Speech was the revelation of knowledge hidden in the mind of the informant. The words of the informant reveal what he or she has in mind. I assumed that what informants say and do act as a conduit to the mind: ‘not an unreasonable assumption’, according to Fetterman (1989, p. 16). As a phenomenologist, I also considered that speech functions as a natural link between informant and ethnographer (Fetterman 1989, p. 16). The correspondences between thought and speech made it possible not only to discover the knowledge that the informant had ‘in mind’ but also to interpret and explain in a scientific way how it is organised. The scientific method will be discussed in section 3.4 below. My reading of other ethnographers and my training in scientific methods promised me access to the informant’s hidden knowledge. I hoped to produce a picture of someone else’s way of life that was not biased by my own values and judgments.

While I wanted to occupy an insider’s position, I also tried to remain outside the informant’s sphere of influence. However, this is always very hard to achieve and even more difficult to assess. I rarely got an opportunity to stand back and reflect on my own subjective involvement since I was always standing directly in front of the informant during interviews. In Malin’s video study of a classroom in Adelaide she also suggests that it is impossible to determine the true extent to which her presence as an ethnographer in the classroom affected the participants but she adds that ‘any impact that I had would probably be in a positive way, them wanting to show their best side to the researcher’ (1989, p. 157). The incidence of conflict between teacher
and student in the classroom subsided when she was present but increased in her absence (Malin 1989, p. 157). According to Dobbert, the ethnographer’s ‘judgment (choice)’ about the meaning of the data should be suspended until after the data have been collected (1982, p. 26). She claims that ‘if choice is not suspended, the research is a waste of time and money’ and that it would be far less expensive to write a ‘position paper’ (1982, p. 26-27).

LeCompte and Preissle suggest that ‘suspension of preconceptions’ allows the ethnographer to focus on the informant’s own categories and constructs (1993, p. 44). For Fetterman, this is like ‘suspending disbelief’ - the ethnographer accepts what is said in order to allow the informant to tell the whole story (1989, p. 33). Fetterman claims that while the ethnographer must attempt to look at others without making value judgments about strange and unfamiliar practices, he or she ‘cannot be completely neutral’ (1989, p. 33). He says we are all products of our culture with personal beliefs and values, biases, and individual perspectives (Fetterman 1989, p. 33). I will later question this statement in the context of my attempts to find out what indigenous students at the Northern Territory University think and know. How could I possibly understand indigenous knowledge (if I was a product of my culture)? As an ethnographer, could I maintain the position of an outsider?

While I felt encouraged by some crosscultural ethnographers to search for and implement reliable methods, it was feminist researchers like Harding (1991, 1993), Moore (1988), and hooks* (1990, 1991) who enabled me to reflect on how my own underlying knowledge might affect how I look at the informants, and what I could find. I recognised how the methods of educational anthropology often structure social relations of gender and race in terms of western cultural conceptions. The researcher’s own society is used as a benchmark against which to measure and know other cultures. For example, Stephen Harris observes that Aboriginal informal learning styles 'often do not involve a highly conscious process of learning' like white learning strategies nor are they programmed like they are in western society (1977, p. 247). In addition, Yolngu lack the 'felt pressure' of white people 'to get a good education' (1977, p. 139). Harris makes it possible to know what Yolngu

* Original typeset lowercase 'h' for 'hooks'.
learning is by measuring it against a white standard. Christie (1984) and Malin (1989) employ a similar technique whereby we can know about Aboriginal ways of learning by knowing what they are not in western society.

The comparison of Aborigines against a non-indigenous standard is often deployed in terms of 'behind' and 'ahead'. In 1993, the then leader of the National Party, Tim Fischer, stated that prior to 1788, the 'Aborigines had not even managed to develop the wheeled cart' (The Age 1993, p. 3). In the same year, the then Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Marshall Perron said in a speech to foreign journalists that Aboriginal people 'really are centuries behind us in their culture' (The Australian 1993, p. 2). These comparisons provide a standard against which the progress of white society in Australia can be determined. It allows white Australian society to know itself. Similarly, Edward Said's Orient (1978) is constituted as a benchmark against which to measure European society (see Chapter Five).

hooks' critique of the white male bias predominant in educational anthropology was of particular relevance to my research since seven of the nine indigenous informants interviewed were women. hooks (1990, p. 130-131) suggests that:

If white male scholars support, encourage, and even initiate theoretical interventions without opening the space of interrogation so that it is inclusive, their gestures of change appear to be ways of holding onto positions of power and authority in a manner that maintains structures of domination based on race, gender, and class.

Chapters One and Two presented my assumptions and background biases for the scrutiny of the reader. I tried to show the reader where I have come from in terms of my theoretical perspective and practical experience, and how these have influenced my methods and my findings in this study. As the thesis progresses, I become more concerned about the impact of my writing on the reader, and ultimately on the informants who provide the data for this thesis. Harding, hooks and Moore (see above) prompted me to think carefully about the nature of the relation between myself and the informants in the field.

I wanted to do more than observe others. As the researcher, I wanted to be a talker as well as a listener. I wanted to actively participate in the field rather than maintain
a comfortable distance from the informants. I felt that I could develop a professional
relationship with them which had the potential to endure after the research was
completed. I wanted to be accepted and trusted on a long term basis by the
informant. As an ethnographer, I tried to present myself to the informant as fair and
reasonable, and willing to listen. This made me very conscious of my other role as
lecturer and authority at the university, and how this might restrict the informant's
responses.

I was also conscious of how my own personality and ways of communicating would
mediate what was said and done by the informant (Van Maanen 1988, p. 4). The
informant responds to the way he or she perceives the fieldworker, according to
Dobbert (1982, p. 263). In order to control the informant's response to my own
personality, I planned to maintain a constant level in the tone of my voice, and avoid
the perception that I was more interested in some issues rather than others. I wanted
to avoid the situation discussed by some theorists where the informant tries to give
the ethnographer what he or she wants (Dobbert 1982). I also decided to avoid
giving personal judgments on matters that arose in the interviews. I was seeking
their views on teaching and learning at the Northern Territory University, and did
not want to influence these as a lecturer, myself.

I hoped an interview setting could be developed where informants felt comfortable
enough to say what they wanted about the university without feeling that would
offend me. I decided to maintain my position as a university lecturer in the
interviews with informants. I knew that I would be positioned as a lecturer, and so I
adopted a friendly manner in an attempt to offset the informant's preconceptions. I
also wanted to be perceived as naive of the informant’s particular experiences both
at home and at university so that they would feel encouraged to talk freely about
themselves and others without feeling intimidated by someone who was ‘supposed
know everything’. I thought the informant would be more confident about what he
or she knew, if I adopted a position of naïveté (Dobbert 1982, p. 121).

While I could not construct a research relation in which both the informant and
myself were equal participants, I wanted a situation in which there could be
something in it for both of us. I thought that engaging informants in a process where
they were talking about themselves and examining their own lives and actions at
university and at home would help them to learn more about themselves. I not only assumed that self consciousness would lead them on the path to liberation, but also that I could show them the way. I thought that I could help them to know themselves. I saw myself in the role of a counsellor in the interviews.

I wanted to avoid a methodology which would exploit the informant in my search for a doctorate. I had often heard and read about those ambitious researchers who had exploited informants to further their own academic ambitions (see Van Maanen 1988, Brettell 1996). I was also conscious of the criticisms levelled at non-indigenous researchers who conduct research with indigenous informants and walk away with the knowledge, while the informants themselves benefit little from their own participation and even less from the outcomes of the study. Abdullah (1997) writes in *Indigenous Knowledge, Indigenous Learning, Indigenous Research* that although there has been extensive research carried out in the past, it has not made a great deal of difference to the lives of indigenous people. I mentioned in the previous chapter that despite the enormous amount of research into indigenous education over the last thirty years, nothing much has changed. And although the participation rates have increased, indigenous students are still having to learn from a non-Aboriginal teacher.

Abdullah (1997) observes that the knowledge obtained during the research is often not made available once the researcher leaves the field. Knowledge can be collected through inappropriate and unethical research practices, and once the researchers leave the field, they become the ‘experts’ in what they were told by others. Some of the research ends up on the shelf collecting dust or is used to develop policies that do not meet the needs of indigenous people. She concludes that ‘it is no wonder that most Aboriginal people are now very wary of the way research is conducted in their communities’ (Abdullah 1997, Foreword). They have become more aware of the potential damage that can be caused through their own participation in research projects. For example, Australian Government policies of welfare and assimilation, along with the practice of taking children from their parents, developed out of anthropological research programs (Harker and McConnochie 1985; Austin 1993; Nakata 1997, 1998). The research of Elkin helped to pave the way for the government policy of assimilation (Austin 1993).
How can I avoid making the subjects of my research into objects of knowledge? How can I write about the informants and others?

While I had not yet come across the work of critical anthropologists like Clifford (1986a, 1988) and Marcus (1992), I knew something about critical action research through the work of Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). They provided some valuable ideas for working together to collect and analyse the data, and to direct the findings towards getting something done in the community in which the research was conducted. Action research is described as participatory, collaborative research that arises from the clarification of some concerns generally shared by a group. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, p. 9) describe the process: researchers speak about their concerns, they explore what others think, they identify a thematic concern and plan action together, they act and observe individually or collectively, and reflect together.

While I knew that collaborative research could produce rich and informative data, how could I employ such methods? As a PhD student, I was required to produce original research and declare that it was my own individual work. The university rules at the time prevented me from entering into a collaborative approach to data collection and interpretation. The results had to be mine. There was no such thing as equal participation in the context of PhD research at the Northern Territory University, despite the fact that the university was driven by a (funding) policy of access and equity in participation. As a student I did not question the policy at the time, and just accepted it as my lot. I sought to negotiate with the informant: setting and time for the interview, some of the issues to be discussed, and my interpretation of the data.

After I had completed my background reading and established the initial questions for my research, I then began to think about how to collect my data.

3.2. Selecting the informants

I began to look for informants whom I had known for some time in a professional capacity because I suspected that a longer term relation would produce richer data. Informants would be more inclined to talk if they knew who I was, and why I was
interested in them. The informants that I planned to interview already knew about my interest in tertiary indigenous education because I had been working at the university for several years. I thought at the time that my own honesty, sincerity, and ethical involvement had already been clearly demonstrated to those with whom I had been associated in the academic context. I began to reconsider my own implication in what was said by the informants in the field (see Chapters Four and Five). hooks (1990, p. 124) writes:

how often contemporary white scholars writing about black people assume positions of familiarity, as though their work were not coming into being in a cultural context of white supremacy, as though it were in no way shaped and informed by that context. And therefore as though no need exists for them to overtly articulate a response to this political reality as part of their critical enterprise. White scholars can write about black culture or black people without fully interrogating their work to see if it employs white western traditions to re-inscribe white supremacy, to perpetuate racist domination.

To establish which informants I wanted to work with, I issued a questionnaire to nineteen indigenous students with whom I had a previous or current professional relationship. This questionnaire sought personal details such as name and place of birth, schooling and work history. I also asked them to indicate their willingness to participate in a study about indigenous students at the university. I then conducted trial interviews with three of the students who had completed questionnaires. I had known two of the students for a little over four months, and the third student for approximately sixteen months. I interviewed the three informants individually. I wanted to find out how the length of time that we had known each other might affect the kind of data produced. The interview with the student whom I had known for sixteen months was much more comfortable than either of the interviews with the two students I had known for four months. I identified fourteen informants on the basis of five criteria:

a) the informant was indigenous

b) I had known the informant for at least eighteen months at the commencement of the interviews

c) I had worked with the informant either as a lecturer or tutor
d) the informant had degree course experience

e) the informant had agreed orally and in writing to participate in the interviews.

Five of the fourteen students were unable to participate in the interviews. Two of the five students withdrew from their course around the time the interviews commenced, one student was too busy to become involved in the interviews and two indicated that they did not want to participate. The final group of nine informants consisted of seven women and two men, aged between 22 and 47 years. Six of the nine informants selected their own pseudonym, two accepted a name suggested by me, and another decided to keep her own name. All informants volunteered to participate. However, towards the end of my research, I obtained a grant to pay participants for their involvement.

3.3. The interviews

I conducted three rounds of audio-taped interviews with each informant. I considered the repetition of interviews would allow me to investigate a diversity of issues with each informant. Multiple interviews would also allow me to check back with informants about themes which emerged from the previous interview and to revise my analysis and interpretation in the light of what I learned.

The first round of interviews commenced in May 1993. A date was set for the interview and a list of ten questions was given on request to each informant to consider prior to the first interview. These questions were not referred to in the interviews. We negotiated a mutually convenient location for the first interview which was conducted on a 'one-to-one' basis for the purpose of confidentiality. Each interview lasted on average two hours and twenty minutes with the shortest lasting two hours and the longest 2.5 hours.

When I had an opportunity to reflect on the first interview it seemed like I wanted an explanation for everything, and this proved irritating for some informants like Stacey who said in the third interview 'first it was like, this bloke wants to know everything'. I was looking for the reasons behind what the informant was saying. I wanted Stacey to explain and give reasons for her thoughts and actions because I knew I would have to justify my interpretations in the thesis. But as the interviews
progressed I learned to avoid my inclination to control the outcome. Dobbert claims that 'a good way to kill informant pleasure and interest in the interview and willingness to provide depth information is to constantly push the conversation back to a predetermined research path' (1982, p. 120). Even though I was aware of this possibility prior to the first round of interviews, I still fell into the trap of trying to control the conversation. It was the physical reactions from some of the informants that brought me to reflect on and remember what I was doing.

The repetition of interviews allowed me to account for the unpredictability of live interviews and to adjust to a situation which did not always give me what I had wanted and planned for before they commenced. I think both the informants and myself became more comfortable as the interviews proceeded. The first round covered twenty one hours of recordings, the second almost twenty five hours and the third almost twenty nine hours. The audio tapes were transcribed immediately after each interview. I then reviewed the transcript so that I could return to the next interview with some initial impressions of emergent themes. Multiple and extended interviews gave me the opportunity to think about my methods and my act of speaking and listening while the interviews were in progress, and to modify these as the need arose. Woolgar and Ashmore state that researchers should develop a practice in which the interrogation of the methods 'proceeds simultaneously with' the fieldwork (1988, p. 8).

The second round of interviews began in September 1993. They lasted on average two hours and forty-five minutes with the shortest interview lasting 1.5 hours and the longest, 4.5 hours. A time and meeting place for the next interview was arranged over the phone or in the street when we crossed paths. A list of focus questions was formulated from responses in the first interview and distributed to informants prior to the second interview. These questions became more specific as I began to understand how the informants ordered their experiences within and outside the university. However, they didn't bring the questions to the interview and I didn't refer to them.

The third round of interviews were completed in December 1993 and lasted on average three hours and twelve minutes with the shortest lasting 2.5 hours and the longest five hours. One of the major benefits of conducting repetitive and extended interviews is that the informant knows the time commitment involved before he or she agrees to
participate. Therefore, I avoided the potentially embarrassing situation of having to continually return to informants to ask for more time and information.

Towards the end of the third round I asked informants for their reflections on the interviews and these are included in Chapter Four. The interviews totalled more than seventy-four hours of recorded dialogue.

3.4. How did I select my data?

Ethnographic tradition has designed and adopted specific methods for finding out how informants see and interpret the world around them. This was born out of an attempt to go beyond description to produce a science. Singleton, Straits, Straits and McAlister (1988, p. 17) point out that *science* in Latin means *knowledge*. Wiersma (1991, p. 8) defines *science* as 'the search for knowledge through recognised methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation'. Fetterman (1989, p. 11) posits that ethnography is both an art and a science. Science is a process and a product, or a set of methods and a content (LeCompte and Preissle 1993, p. 1; Singleton, Straits, Straits and McAlister 1988, p. 18). In order for ethnographers to produce a scientific product they must adopt a set of scientific methods. Dobbert (1982, p. 129) lists these as *description*, *classification*, *comparison*, and *explanation*. She (1982, p. 276) points out that these four steps are derived from Charles Darwin's view of science 'as an organising scheme based on prior knowledge'.

After the interviews were completed and the data transcribed, I began to read and reread the transcripts to establish the structuring mechanisms used by informants in their everyday lives. Dobbert (1982, p. 130) says that the individual groups his or her experiences into categories in order to understand and use them for some purpose. She explains that the process of searching for categories is:

> based upon the assumption that reality is infinite while the human mind is finite and cannot thus deal with raw reality. A finite mind must group the infinite stimuli of life in order to operate; and this grouping or categorisation is based upon the human's perception of similarity and difference (Dobbert 1982, p. 130-131).

I was looking for interpretive structures that determine what the informant thinks and says. I hoped that I could access this structuring knowledge through my methods.
I selected the data according to my research questions. The questions drew a boundary around what could be included in a category. All the data that were similar were placed into the same category. I was looking for equivalence, and things that did not fit into an interpretive structure were discarded. However, I remained confused by the ethnographer’s claim that categories arise from the data, and the statement that: ‘In anthropological analysis, there are established categories of analysis’ (Dobbert 1982, p. 272). This suggested to me that my job as an ethnographer was to select and group the data according to categories that had already been used by other researchers in the discipline. My doubts were exacerbated by Wolcott (1994, p. 63) who observes that ‘my experience is that categories cannot emerge from the data on their own’. And then I read what appeared to me as an outrageous claim that the ‘data prove nothing, divorced as the quotations are from the context of the interviewee’s personal background, personality, fieldwork project, and published ethnographies or essays on theory and methods’ (Jackson 1990, p. 4). What are categories and where do they come from? What do I do with the data, and how can it be understood? I return to these questions in Chapters Four and Five.

Some of the categories engaged by informants included 'social interaction', 'understanding others', 'diversity of ideas', 'doing it on your own', 'self-esteem', 'pleasing others', 'having control', 'goals', and 'Black sheep'. I selected the data on the basis of categories which were common to the experiences of the nine informants. I was looking for similarities across the data. But what do I do with all the data that do not fit into these categories? How can I understand the differences? These questions will be explored in Chapter Five.

I then compared the categories in order to establish the relations between them. Dobbert (1982, p. 133) points out that at the comparative level, ‘the goal is to understand the principles that create the categories’. Why do informants classify objects in this way? What underlying knowledge determines the informant’s use of a category? This is the knowledge that Malin (1989) notes as being hidden from the untrained eye. I was searching for an underlying structure that governs what is said by the informant, but remains unexpressed to the informant. I began my analysis by attempting to elicit this knowledge from the data. It was during this analysis phase that I became increasingly sceptical of the crosscultural ethnographer’s methodology.
Malin (1989, p. 123) states in her PhD thesis that ethnographic research 'considers it meaningless to look at the Aboriginal child as an individual in terms of intrinsic ability, as did the early research in Aboriginal education'. Earlier studies privileged the individual over the group. Now the ethnographer studies the relations between informants and others. The ethnographer searches the whole corpus for meaning on the assumption that the experience of one informant only makes sense in the context of the whole. The body of data rather than the informant becomes the condition of knowledge. At this stage the ethnographer cannot refer to anything outside the data. Ethnography as hermeneutics analyses the body of data as a hermetic structure (Dobbert 1982, p. 129). The ethnographer presumes a prior knowledge governs what individual informants say and do in all spheres of human life (Dobbert 1982; Malin 1989). I assumed that meaning existed inside the data, and it was my job to articulate and represent this meaning to others. I thought that I could transmit what I was told by the informant to others.

Wolcott reminds us that the 'ethnographer's concern is always for context' (1988 p. 203). What has been said and done doesn't have significance until it is articulated within a structure of meaning. Dobbert (1982 p. 136) says 'the results of research must be placed in the broader cultural context. If this is not done the study will be little more than an interesting curiosity'. I searched for an external correspondence or reference point which would link the data to a world outside. I wanted to give the research some social relevance in terms of what does it all mean?

*How can I link the data and my interpretation?*

I also began to question the possibility of returning to the informants at some later stage to ask them to validate my interpretation. How can they comment on the correspondence between my interpretation, and their thoughts when I had proposed that this structuring knowledge remains unexpressed to them?

3.5. **My first interpretation of the data**

Dobbert (1982 p. 136) says 'the results of ethnoscience research must be placed in the broader cultural context. If this is not done the study will be little more than an interesting curiosity'. What has been said and done doesn't have significance until it is articulated within a structure of meaning. How can I link the data to an
interpretative context? This question proved to be the greatest obstacle to writing my first interpretation of the data (see Preface and Appendix One).

The ethnographer must be able to demonstrate that the data have been interpreted ‘accurately’ or objectively from a scientific perspective or from a position outside the data (Dobbert 1982; Fetterman 1989). Words like ‘objectivity, reliability, validity, or replicability’ can send researchers rushing back to their computers to rewrite proposals that safeguard against any suggestion that their intended studies can be faulted because they are dependent on a human observer (Wolcott 1994, p. 12). While I cannot be completely neutral, I must be able to suspend my own personal judgments. I assumed that the results of the research study would be valid when my ethnographic interpretation conformed to the informant’s perception of his or her situation. In her PhD research (1989), Malin returned to some of her informants so that they could assess the validity or ‘plausibility’ of her interpretations. She aimed to demonstrate to the reader that she established a link with the informant; and that the informant agreed with the meaning of her interpretation. There must be a demonstrable correspondence between the data and the interpretation.

As an ethnographer, I must be able to convince the reader that this is what it is like to be an indigenous student at university. The research results should ‘reflect a clear, representative picture of a given situation’ (Dobbert 1982, p. 259). For verification of scientific knowledge to be possible, explanations and findings must be communicated clearly to others. I came to realise that the success or failure of an ethnography depends on the degree to which it rings true to the reader (Fetterman 1989). Ethnographies are written with particular audiences in mind and reflect the presumptions carried by authors regarding the attitudes, expectations, and backgrounds of their intended readers (Van Maanen 1988). My job was to demonstrate not only to the informant but also to others that the interpretation is a ‘reliable’ representation of what the informant thinks and knows (Malin 1989, p. 158). The ethnographer is searching for external or objective legitimation of experience on the assumption that the same interpretation could be compared and confirmed by anyone with the appropriate training and knowledge. The ethnographer’s task from the beginning is only ever to represent this knowledge to
others.

The reliability of the research can be tested by getting others, including peers, to double check the interpretations (Malin 1989). The reader must be able to measure the link between the informants' representations of the situation (the data) and the ethnographer's interpretation (Malin 1989, p. 160). This is often done through a review of the ethnographer's methods (Dobbert 1982, p. 310). The ethnographer's methods and biases must be made explicit so that others can assess the link between the data and the findings. It is argued that other researchers, irrespective of whether they are indigenous or white, should be able to use the same methods in a similar situation to produce the same or similar results.

But the more I began to think about issues of bias, validity and reliability, the more I came to consider the question: As an ethnographer how can I reveal or even know my own background knowledge and biases? While crosscultural ethnographic and feminist methodologies brought me to recognise that my interpretation of what others say and do is structured by my own underlying knowledge about race, gender and class, they could not tell me what that structuring knowledge was nor how it would affect my relation to the informants in the field, and my interpretation of the data. Nor could I expect it to, as I was soon to discover.

I completed the data collection and proceeded to write an initial interpretation of the data. (see Appendix One) I then distributed the interpretation to informants and friends to read and this was to be the basis of my thesis, but when I received the feedback from readers they were asking the same question: Where does your interpretation come from? They were asking whether my interpretation came from the data or from me. I understood 'me' as a metaphor for the theory. They seemed to be suggesting that my interpretation was grounded in the theory rather than in the data. I received other critical comments from the readers (also see Preface and Chapter 5)

They commented that it was unclear who was responsible for what was said in the interpretation. There was some mixing together of the data and the theory, for example, 'power and knowledge work together as a strategy to fight people on. The words of Foucault and an informant, Karen were combined in the same sentence.
The boundaries of the data and theory, and my interpretation were never really clear. I wrote the interpretation with the aim of combining my own words with those of the informants in an attempt to produce a crosscultural relation. But rather, some readers remarked that the informants' words were subsumed by my interpretation.

The individual was positioned in the interpretation as the one responsible for success and failure inside and outside the university. For example, 'you make your own standards'. Self-esteem and success were equated with the individual. This implied that power is exercised by the individual. Yet much of the data collected from informants, as well as the interpretation itself, suggested that these informants were subject to the expectations and agendas of others. It was pointed out that there is much theory to suggest that indigenous people do not necessarily view the individual as the source of power and responsibility. This again raised the question of where my interpretation came from. Did it come from me or from the data, or from the theory? This in turn raised the question: How is knowledge produced? Is it found in the individual's own mind or is it produced through speech and language?

From the outset of the interpretation the informants were constituted as alienated through the constant use of the pronoun, you. For example, the interpretation began in a dramatic fashion by announcing 'You are born into a family which puts you in an orphanage'; 'You become your own worst enemy' (Jully). The informants were divided between you and I. It was observed that the pronoun you was used as an attempt to generalise from the individual to the group. But this technique was not perceived to work in this fashion for some of the readers of my interpretation.

The problem with the interpretation was not that it was wrong. Rather, it was how the informants were constituted within the discourses of progress and enlightenment. They began in a pathologised position and then they were gradually saved by me in the way I wrote about them. This was to raise a question from Christie (Harris and Christie 1994) of how can I write about the informants outside the discourses of culture, gender, race, progress and enlightenment? How can I talk about the informants without perpetuating unequal power relations in my writing? I began to look for a methodology that neither cast the informants in the negative at the beginning of the thesis nor within a series of binary opposites.
These critical responses from the readers of my first interpretation opened up the possibility of critique and led me to look for another way of organising and presenting the data. Their critiques prompted me to reflect on the methodology I used to produce my first interpretation. Just as Elkin and Harris (see Chapter Two) had shown me what to look for in the Numbulwar community, and in the classroom, ethnographic theory had shown me how to look, what data to include and what to exclude from my first interpretation. I had selected and combined the data on the basis of knowledge which I had learned throughout my training at university and in the field, but of which I was barely cognisant when I wrote my first interpretation. So began the adventures of insight that are documented throughout this thesis.

Questions of objective verification of the ethnographer's findings led me to investigate the production of knowledge through the scientific discourses of ethnography and to ask: *How is scientific knowledge produced in an ethnography?*

The question of the production of knowledge and learning was later raised because the informants made clear that the factor which made or broke their career in tertiary education was something beyond both the credentialising function of the university and its role in the transmission of scientific knowledge. Informants were alerting me to the existence of something other than the search for academic qualifications. What do indigenous students want at the Northern Territory University? Similarly, the ethnographer's way of seeing the world is influenced by something other than the search for qualifications and scientific knowledge.

### 3.6. Conclusion

When I started my thesis I wanted to find out about the experiences of indigenous students at the Northern Territory University (see Chapter Two). I thought that a good methodology would provide me with the knowledge that I wanted but the readers of my initial interpretation questioned my links to the informants and to the reader. The problem became clear. How can I find out what the informants think and know, work out what that knowledge means to them, rather than to myself, and then tell others about what I have found?

My links to others act as the theoretical imperative for my research in Chapters Six
to Eleven, where I examine the relation between the student and the teacher in the production of knowledge in the university classroom. In the next chapter, the data are presented with a brief introduction to explain why they were chosen. My reasons for keeping the data and my interpretation separate are outlined in Chapter One.
CHAPTER 4

1995

INTERVIEW DATA
CHAPTER 4: 1995 - INTERVIEW DATA

The gaze

This chapter consists almost entirely of interview data except for a brief introduction from me to explain why I selected the data. I present the interview data and my interpretation in different chapters so that the words of the indigenous informants are not always read in the context of science (see Chapter Five). The data are used to link the gaps in theory and to solve theoretical contradictions and blockages rather than to confirm my own theoretical position. My first interpretation (see Preface and Appendix One) created the impression that these links were coming from me rather than from the data. I was becoming increasingly aware of why so many indigenous scholars complain about how indigenous knowledge is assimilated by non-indigenous ways of knowing (for example, Abdullah and Stringer 1997; see Chapter Two). There are three more chapters of interview data, including Chapters Six, Eight and Ten. Each precedes a chapter which includes my interpretation of the data.

My return to the interview data in 1995 produced two significant insights for my research. These are presented below.

4.1. The ethnographic gaze

I gained the insight from the following interview data that the informants see themselves subject to an ethnographic gaze.

Willy: For 200 years all the Aboriginal people had was the white culture imposed on them. White people are good manipulators, eh, you know. Always in control of everything. So they've been in control of everything that's come up within that 200 years. The systems like health, education, employment, you name, eh. It's always has been from a white worldview. And from that time on Aboriginal people haven't had the chance to express their own, the chance to use their own knowledge and their own culture. It was always there.

8 The notion of the gaze will be explored more fully in Chapter Five.
Nathan: In the latter part of the fifties and early sixties the Aboriginal voice was still basically unheard. You didn't go around making waves. The Land Rights issue didn't come up in a big way until the next couple of decades. Being a minority, and not long coming off the missions as well, people were quite wary of going into the townships and making waves. What was said and told to you, you basically took it as gospel. Basically, that's how it happened on the missions anyway, I think. So you just believe what people said. If you want to look at the negative aspects of it, they would say you're black and stupid, you know. You could dispute it with your knuckles, if you were of the mind to. The biggest barrier was the way people looked at you in the streets. You could pick up the body language really easily, 'what are you doing in this town'. In those early days because Aboriginal people didn't have a lot of money, they used to book up a lot at the local stores and the storekeeper would rip them off left, right and centre and if you, people would dispute it with the storekeeper, but that was as far as it would go. You certainly wouldn't make waves. You'd never take it to the police. People were brought up with authority nearly all their lives. Even on the missions they had the police there, if they had the mind to use them. You come away with a mentality like that where you just can't get away from it.

Trudy: It doesn't matter how much white you have in you or Chinese or anything else, everyone will look at me as if I'm Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander. Really to say I'm anything else, people would think there's something wrong with me. They give you a choice [on the enrolment form] of being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and I always tick that I'm both and that confuses them.

Nathan: A lot of non-Aboriginal people as well as Aboriginal people have this thing about who is an Aboriginal person. They think it is the person out there with the black skin who are living out there in the remote community. They just can't identify with the Aboriginal person living in town with the yellow or brown skin.

Jonathan: If you've got any Aboriginal in you or if it shows...society puts you there first. It could come from parents as well. You may not see yourself in those categories but you'll always be put in them, you'll always get that.
Kiara: I'm the only coloured one. There's two Indian women there. I'm the only blackfella in there. This doesn't bother me any more. It did at the beginning of the year. I've noticed in mainstream [degree course] that people always stare at you because they think you shouldn't be there because you don't see many coloured people there in mainstream. It's only for themselves; that you're not smart enough because you're Aboriginal.

Jully: I think life experiences just makes you. Its a good thing for uni because it makes you a bit tougher. You can build that wall. You can build a wall around you that you don't worry about. A lot of Aboriginal students say that white people look at you. But they don't. They only want to look at who the new faces are. It's bullshit that white students look at Aboriginal students as if they are dumb. Carmel used to do that. I think it's the way students perceive themselves. They're their own worst enemies.

4.2. The interpretation

The second insight was that the informants are motivated by the ways in which they are seen by others rather than by how they see themselves. The informants’ histories and their experiences at university had already alerted them to the way in which they are constituted in scientific discourses for the gaze of others. I was constituted by the informants with the authority to interpret the data. The ways in which I undertook this responsibility would be crucial to the ways in which they would come to be seen by others. I come to the conclusion in Chapter Five that ethnographic knowledge and our ways of producing it are always linked.

Willy: White people know what to do with it [knowledge] once they got it. They know how to use that information and understanding when they're going for jobs. But for us, we don't know what to do with the knowledge that we've received, really what to do about it once we've got it.

Ellie: When [the lecturer] was painting this wonderful picture about utopia in Aboriginal society about sharing and caring. I don't want to sound cynical, I'm being honest. He was painting this beautiful picture of the Aboriginal race. It was a picture of they've got it so much together that you can't even question any aspect of Aboriginal family life. He told us that they don't fight, they share everything, they help each other.
I said to [two other Aboriginal students in the tutorial] you know any of these blackfellas and we just all laughed. He lives in the dreamtime that mulliga [man].

Kiara: You know Lyn, she's getting prejudice at Uni House [student accommodation at the university]. One of the girls said to her, 'I feel sorry for your people'. That freaked me out, I feel sorry for your people! Things that people say makes you want to do something too, to prove that you can do it, that you're not dumb. [She's saying] we've got no money, got just nothing. Just things like that is why I come here to uni. There's not many Aboriginals in nursing, and people are always saying to me, it's good, it's good. We need more Aborigines in medicine. It just makes you work harder.

Nathan: In Queensland, people make the identification process for you.

Stacey: When I signed up for uni it took me a week or two to tick the Aboriginal and Islander box because I didn't know if I was accepted that way.

Jully: Talking to you, you're really interested in what someone's saying. You can be talking shit, you can be talking about anything but if it's important to them to say it, well you're ready to listen. You're interested in what the other person has to say, doesn't matter what it is...When you meet someone who shows that they're interested in what you're saying it makes a big difference. You'd be surprised the amount of people who appreciate a good listener, eh. They expect you to listen to them but they won't take the time to listen to you.

Trudy: The interviews have made me think a lot about what I'm doing. It's made me review how I'm going the direction my life's taking because I never really think about it. I plan things out but I don't really analyse why I do those things. It's made me think why whereas before I was just doing things without thinking why. I sort of knew but I never really said to anyone in the sense of analysing what I do. I never saw any of my growing up as influencing anything until I did the interview. It made me more aware of what I am whatever that is. It shows me how much my attitudes have changed over the years and why I did things which I probably would never thought of if I hadn't done the interview.
Jonathan: They [interviews] get me thinking. Normally I might just think about it a little bit and oh you know it's bit hard. If you've got no-one to talk to about these [thoughts] you don't get any feedback if there's no interaction you're just left to your own thoughts and you soon get tired of that.

Kiara: I don't really talk about all this how you see yourself.

Ellie: They [interviews] helped me answer a few questions about, myself that I wasn't real sure about. It sort of revealed a few things about me that I hadn't really addressed before. But I sort of find it a bit embarrassing too, I guess. You know, but I don't mind talking. I would have said all the same to you if it wasn't an interview I guess, but it seems sorta funny, it's an interview, but I haven't held back or anything.

Stacey: I got wild with him. I said look, I'll never be your housewife. That was a big shock to him. He must have thought I was gunna sit at home and have kids, just like a proper T. I women, as they say. It's like a category they put them in. T. I. women are supposed to sit at home, have kids, be fat, love their food, love their curries, their chicken. It's all those things. I'm supposed to know how to do weaving and I'm supposed to know how to do dying and all that stuff. I haven't got a clue of it. And because I'm a woman. I'm supposed to sew everything, I'm supposed to make dresses instead of buying them. That shits me, you know!

Jully: I said to Les, on his application for the forces, [for the question] 'Are you Australian?' I said, put in brackets, 'Of Aboriginal decent'. It'll shock 'em when they meet ya, the whitest blackfella they've ever met! They'll be expecting a little blackfella to come down! Black-blackfella! It [application] just says, 'Are you Australian?' It might help his cause in getting in there. A bit of a shock!

4.3. Summary

The gaze and the interpretation are related. The gaze is phenomenological insofar as it relates to what I think the other person is thinking. The informants express a sense of being constrained by what others think. The interpretation relates to hermeneutics insofar as the informants above are talking about the power of the interpretation to train what they think and know. Scientific interpretation also functions as the gaze
to perpetuate an historical relation to authority. The insights gained from these two selections of data brought me to consider the ways in which the data can be interpreted for the informants themselves, my supervisors, examiners, and other readers.
CHAPTER 5

1996

MY INTERPRETATION
CHAPTER 5: 1996 - MY INTERPRETATION

How can the data be interpreted?

5.1. What am I looking for?

Some ethnographers state that there is no need to re-examine our methods because that has already been done before. Qualitative methods 'have come to be widely known and accepted' and there is no longer an obligation for each researcher to describe and defend them over again (Wolcott 1990, p. 26). Wolf claims that the critical ethnographer's concerns about the ways they represent others are just 'postmodernist ruminations' which should be a subsidiary of the more important job of 'getting the news out' in the best interests of anthropology (1992, p. 1). The ethnographer's attention should be focused on the findings of the research. The method is a means to an end. As a phenomenologist and crosscultural ethnographer, I assumed that knowledge already existed prior to my entry into the field, and that I could 'capture' this knowledge in the data. I also believed that I could illuminate the informants' subjective realities for the informants themselves, my supervisors, examiners and other readers. I assumed that a scientific method linked me to the informants and to the reader. But the feedback obtained from my first interpretation produced in 1993 led me to question these links (see Chapter Three and Preface).

1994 was a year of reflection. I was becoming increasingly sceptical of the possibility of being able to pass on the results of my research to others in a scientific way. I devoted myself to thinking about what to do with the data. I began to reflect critically on the ways in which I produced my first interpretation. This took me back to my supervisors who introduced me to critical ethnographers and anthropologists such as Moore (1988), Clifford (1988), Lather (1991), Marcus (1992), Rosaldo

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9 I decided to use the title 'My Interpretation' rather than 'On Interpretation' because I wanted to emphasise the grounded nature of knowledge. This thesis is my interpretation and I am responsible for the ways in which these informants are constituted in my writing. Indeed, I was reminded of this by the informants themselves (see the data of Chapter Four). This is contrary to the position taken by crosscultural ethnographers who ultimately hand over responsibility for their interpretations to the reader (see this chapter).
(1993), Brettell (1996) and also to the critical researchers like Harding (1991, 1993), Cherryholmes (1988), Haraway (1991). For them, knowledge is always situated. It is produced through our own particular ways of knowing and it is impossible to separate the two. Far from being outside the research process, the ethnographer is produced by the practices he or she sets out to implement. Knowledge is always partial and selective (Haraway 1991, p. 190). It is produced through narratives and shared conversations rather than through the position of an adversary or individual (Cherryholmes 1988, p. 66). The problem is not one of needing more and better research to represent more accurately what is going on, nor changing people's ideas, but changing the ways in which knowledge is produced in scientific research (for example, Clifford 1988, Rosaldo 1993). My introduction to critical ethnography brought me to reflect on my own act of looking as a crosscultural ethnographer in the field. It also introduced me to Foucault and his theories of the gaze which will be examined in section 5.2. below.

In this chapter, I will analyse how we come to know and to represent others in ethnographic and anthropological discourses. I take the position that the informant is excluded in the production of scientific knowledge in crosscultural research. He or she is displaced by a series of substitutes, and ultimately by the ethnographer who acts in the position of an authority and spokesperson for the informant. I take the position that the crosscultural ethnographer positions the informants within discourses of progress and enlightenment, and in so doing, positions him or herself as the one with the knowledge and authority to speak for others, including the informants, themselves. The discourses of progress and enlightenment will be defined towards the end of this chapter and again in Chapter Nine.

This chapter is also a self-narration. It narrates my own attempts to know about indigenous students at the Northern Territory University. I describe my relations with the informants of this study, with my supervisors, examiners and other readers, how these links sometimes break down, and how I reposition myself in relation to them. I have attempted to 'make science more artful' by reflecting on the ways in which I write about, and for others, in this thesis (see Bochner and Ellis 1996, p. 22).
5.2. As an ethnographer, how can I understand my act of looking?

Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1991) highlights the ways in which European writers have objectified Arab cultures through an array of stereotypical images of the Middle East. The production of an enduring discourse of Orientalism has acquired a material presence through its own methods of production. The Orient has become an object to be known and compared against European society. Geographic distinctions between East and West have made it possible to compare and make statements about the Oriental mind, Oriental manners and identity. Arabs are represented by European experts, and no longer have the opportunity to speak or act on their own behalf. For Said, ‘Orientalism is a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient’ (Said 1991, p 3). In writing the book, Said was not attempting to correct the distortions and prejudices of western representations of the Orient but to analyse the ways in which western writers and academics establish themselves in the position of an authority to talk about Islam and the Middle East. Said asks:

How does one represent other cultures? What is another culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race or religion, or civilisation) a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self congratulation (when one discusses ones’ own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the other)?...How do ideas acquire authority, ‘normality’, and even the status of ‘natural’ truth? What is the role of the intellectual? Is he or she there to validate the culture and state of which he or she is apart? What importance must he or she give to an independent critical consciousness, an oppositional critical consciousness? (1991, p. 325).

Said endeavours to shift the problem of interpretation from one of prejudices and biases to one of how we can talk about others. In this chapter, I direct my attention to the way in which knowledge is produced in ethnography rather than being preoccupied with the validity or neutrality of the interpretation (compare with Malin 2000, p. 4). I propose in this chapter that the ethnographer’s thoughts and intentions may not be the same as those of his or her informants or other readers. As ethnographers, it is sometimes difficult to predict what we say will do to others. The interpretation can effect others in ways which were never anticipated nor intended by the ethnographer.
Nakata examines the ways in which Torres Strait Islanders have been constructed in anthropological and educational research (1991, 1995, 1998). He observes that not only have Torres Strait Islanders been spoken about ‘as Aborigines’ but always by people other than Torres Strait Islanders (1995, pp. 40-1). He documents the plethora of stereotypes in educational research which constitute Torres Strait Islanders as the Cognitive Islander, the Culturally different Islander, the Culture-sensitive Islander, the Pedagogical Islander, the Colonised Islander, the Linguistic Islander, the Bilingual Islander, the Bicultural Islander, and the Musical Islander (1991, p. 24). The literature on the Islander has been produced primarily by western experts within the discourses of western science, and in doing so, the Islander is constituted as someone to be known by non-Islanders (Nakata 1995, p. 41).

Once the Islander is reconstructed in relation to the gaze of the ethnographer, ‘the natural image of Islander subjects takes on a new culture, a new reality, and a new presence that is void of any previous history’ (Nakata 1995, p. 43). The Islander is constituted within a new discursive reality. He or she is constituted as marginal and in need of help. The western expert is then in a position to offer advice in education, health and so on (Nakata 1995, p. 43-4). Crosscultural ethnographic methodology is able to naturalise the construction of Islanders within a new binary relation so that the culture appears to ‘need progress or moral and economic uplifting’ (Rosaldo 1993, p. 31). Nakata critiques the methodology that categorises and marginalises Torres Strait Islanders within single and unified constructs (Nakata 1995). He analyses the power relation that produces Islanders as an effect of the western expert’s knowledge and authority (Nakata 1998). Nakata’s research raises the question: How does the Islander see him or herself? Can we ever know?

Both Said and Nakata propose that scientific research has historically represented other people as different from the ways in which they see themselves. Oneself is excluded as the cultures are judged and represented in ethnographic and anthropological discourses of the Orient or the Torres Strait Islander. The techniques through which subjects are separated from themselves and positioned in relation to others are uncovered in the work of Michel Foucault (1988). These practices, as constituted through the discourses of ethnography and pedagogy, will be analysed in subsequent chapters.
Foucault is interested in how such discourses have been produced historically, and made to function as true in western society (see 1978, 1979, 1980b, 1989a, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c). He explores the methods which govern the discourses of medicine, the prison, sexuality and anthropology to show that what is said (discourse) about insanity or criminality or sexuality is regulated by what he terms discursive practices. For example, these discursive practices are the methods used by ethnographers to produce discourses about indigenous people. Knowledge about others cannot be separated from the ways in which it is produced. Foucault provides an historical account of how discourses come to be what they are, that is, their ‘conditions of existence’ rather than trying to explain or interpret what they mean. He analyses techniques used for producing knowledge about the prisoner or the madman or the mentally ill. Foucault is interested in deciphering how we come to know in western society as a way of undermining the unequal power relations in western society. He uses history to change the ways in which discourses about others are perceived and regulated. He demonstrates that our methods not only produce knowledge, they also regulate and train our ways of knowing and talking about others to such an extent that it is virtually impossible to think outside these discourses:

We tend to see, in an author’s fertility, in the multiplicity of commentaries and in the development of a discipline as so many infinite resources available for the creation of discourse. Perhaps, so, but they are nonetheless principles of constraint, and it is probably impossible to appreciate their positive, multiplicatory role without first taking into consideration their restrictive, constraining role (Foucault 1971, p. 17).

In Discipline and Punish Foucault investigates the transition in western forms of government from the overt power of the monarch to the ‘invisible’ methods of surveillance and discipline in modern bourgeois society (1979). He proposes that in feudal societies the judiciary only arrested a small proportion of criminals who were punished in spectacular and dramatic ways to frighten others. Reformers of the penal system in the eighteenth century claimed that the dramatic punishments of feudal society were costly and inefficient and failed to either ensure conformity or to reform and correct. In contrast to monarchical power, it was suggested that it would be less costly to place people under a pervasive, impersonal system of surveillance
which would be interiorised to the point that each person begins to constantly observe, examine and control what he or she says and does (Foucault 1979a, p. 202-3). The retribution for crime was no longer enacted on the criminal’s body, rather, training the individual’s mind became the focus of modern disciplinary society. One of the ways Foucault attempts to define the development of disciplinary society is through the visual paradigm of the Panopticon.

Jeremy Bentham’s invention of the Panopticon had a central watch tower for surveillance surrounded by a ring of cells in which each prisoner was individually visible to the tower. The surveillance tower does its work whether or not there is actually anyone in it watching because the prisoner in the cell cannot see who is watching or whether there is anyone watching at all. The gaze is always present but its power and effectiveness lies in the fact that it may be absent. One can never be certain that someone is not looking. The prisoner ‘is seen but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication’ (Foucault 1979a, p. 200). On the other hand, the warden in the watchtower can see the prisoner without ever being seen. The prisoner becomes the object of an asymmetrical gaze. The invisibility and anonymity of a generalised gaze induces in the inmate ‘a state of conscious and permanent visibility’ so that it is no longer necessary to use force to constrain the prisoner (Foucault 1979a, p. 201). Constant visibility is the key to disciplinary technology.

The ethnographer’s will to understand the behaviour of others has led to the invention of increasingly sophisticated micro technologies for probing the secrets of the informant’s mind. These technologies are an effect of historical developments in a discipline which has called for greater visibility of the observed, more thick descriptions, and more and better training directed at the recording, documentation and production of scientific knowledge about the informants under study (Clifford 1986a, 1986b, 1988). The inclusion of videotaping as a method of data collection has placed the informant under the most intense scrutiny. When the ethnographer leaves the field, he or she studies the video frame by frame in an attempt to produce microscopic detail about the informant (see Hudspith 1996; Malin 1989). Nothing goes unnoticed by the ethnographer. Each informant becomes a case to be known. He or she is positioned in ethnographic discourses to be constantly seen and
monitored by others without themselves being able to see. This chapter analyses the ways in which I came to know about the informants in the interviews and through my interpretation of the data.

Foucault is emphasising the change from a system of government based on the overt force of the monarch to a disciplinary society based on the invisible and unverifiable presence of the gaze of authority. The overpowering visibility of the monarch is now replaced by the permanent visibility of the individual in society:

Traditionally, power was what was seen, what was shown and what was manifested and, paradoxically, found the principle of its force in the movement by which it deployed that force...Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom its subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection (Foucault 1979a, p. 187)

Prisons are only one example among many others of the technology of discipline, surveillance and punishment. Schools, hospitals and workplaces all became arenas for scientific observation of the individual where the examination of students by teachers, of patients by doctors and psychiatrists, of workers by managers produce endless files of information about each individual and turns him or her into a case to be known. The constant surveillance of the individual makes possible the acquisition of detailed knowledge. A vast array of documentary evidence becomes an essential part of normalising technologies. More precise and more statistically accurate knowledge of individuals leads to finer and more encompassing criteria for normalisation. The individual is observed, described, classified, analysed and judged within the discourses of medicine, or psychiatry or education to form a stable body of knowledge about the student, or the criminal or the sick or the insane (Foucault 1979a, p. 220).

The production of scientific knowledge in modern society is linked to the establishment of new techniques of population management. The organisation of schools, medicine, and the law are based on the concept of a ‘normal’ individual. The student, the prisoner, the sick and insane are regulated into normality. The
power of institutions and the state to produce an increasingly totalising web of control is dependent on its ability to specify and define the individual through normalising technologies (Foucault 1979a). There is a simultaneous individualisation and totalisation of the population brought about through the normalising practices of the gaze. For example, in my initial interpretation I constituted the informants as individuals who were responsible for what they said in the interviews. But having attributed a degree of autonomy to each informant, I then grouped the data from individual informants into the same category in order to prepare the way for a generalisation. The informant is named, described and analysed in relation to others. He or she is made to conform to an ahistorical norm. Some of the earlier research conducted in indigenous education has been criticised for producing historical and geographical conformity in indigenous cultures (see Nicholls, Crowley and Watt 1996). This will be examined in more detail later in the chapter.

The methods of surveillance and discipline employed by the police and missionaries in the past continue to be used in contemporary society by ethnographers, teachers, doctors and employers. The informants' historical experiences of the gaze, and their experiences at the Northern Territory University had alerted them to my own act of looking as an ethnographer (see Chapter Four). Just as government policies on indigenous people have been designed to alter behaviour and to train and correct individuals, the ethnographic gaze is directed at producing the informant within a familiar discourse which can be read and understood by others. The production of scientific knowledge about indigenous people has been governed by a set of 'hidden' discursive practices, and, for Foucault, it is these methods that act as the 'foundation' of modern democratic society. He asks: 'Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons' (Foucault 1979a, p. 228).

5.3. How can I know what the informant thinks and knows?

As a phenomenologist and crosscultural ethnographer, I was searching for the informants' underlying knowledge. I took the position that while the informant is always caught up in the thick of things, the trained ethnographer is able to see and understand more clearly from the outside. Malin (1989, p. 8) makes the point that 'it is extremely difficult for members of any cultural group to objectively elucidate
culturally patterned, and often unconscious, rules and assumptions which govern their behaviour. I was searching for knowledge that was already there, but remained unexpressed to the informant. My scientific method promised me access to the informant’s hidden knowledge. The informant’s mind is constituted with a depth to be known.

In Chapter Two I outlined my own experiences in Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory. I described the problems associated with a study of Aboriginal tertiary education, and pointed out that very few people had researched the area I was about to investigate. I was preparing the reader for a study which was to be conducted by someone with fifteen or so years of experience in the field. I wanted to substantiate this experience with hard data which would allow me to talk about and interpret indigenous education at the Northern Territory University for others. The production of scientific knowledge would rely on the implicit claim to a unique personal experience with the informant. My task was to cultivate an ‘empathy’ for the informant’s position in order to claim that ‘I was there’ (Kellehear 1993, p. 23). I had to demonstrate to the reader that I had occupied the informant’s perspective. My authority as an ethnographer and research student depended on being able to demonstrate to my examiners and other readers that I had been able to bridge the gap between myself as a (non-indigenous) ethnographer, and my indigenous informants. Harris and Elkin had gone off into relatively unknown territory and forged a link with people who were presented as mysterious (see Chapter Two). Like explorers, they had gone into an area where other non-indigenous people had not gone before them. They had the unique experience to speak about the situation. Like Harris and Elkin, I could now speak with the authority of an insider because I had the knowledge that others lacked. I could interpret strange situations for others.

In order to build on my insider’s knowledge, I inserted normal, everyday details about the informants’ lives into my interpretation to certify my claim to ‘having been there’. I tried to show the reader that I had achieved an insider’s perspective by suggesting that I was privy, as the ethnographer, to at least some of the informant’s closest secrets. My use of a first name as pseudonym for the informant was designed to develop the impression of a reliable and enduring relation between the informant and myself before, during and after the interviews (McConaghy 1997). The pseudonyms for informants and places helped to put me in the position of an
investigative journalist who works behind the scenes with trusted informants to secure valued secrets. I had been given privileged information just as the anthropologists in the old days were bestowed with special rights to know. I was developing my right to know about indigenous higher education. I hoped that I would be able to talk about my special area of expertise with authority.

I took the position in the field (see Chapter Three) that speech acts as a natural link between the informants and ethnographer (Fetterman 1989, p. 16). I could find out what the informant had ‘in mind’ by getting him or her to tell me everything about him or herself and what he or she thought about teaching and learning at university. As a crosscultural ethnographer, I considered that speech functioned as a conduit to the informant’s mind. The more the informant talks, the more I could know about what the informant thinks and knows, and the more the reader could know about indigenous students at university. I adopted a method in order to get the informant to do just that. Van Maanen (1988) calls them ‘tricks of the trade’. I described this method in Chapter Three.

To summarise, I presented myself as naive of the informants’ knowledge so that they would not assume that I knew things that, in fact, I did not know. When talking to people we know very well, a great deal remains unsaid as it is assumed to be shared knowledge (Dobbert 1982). I hoped that the informants would not preempt my position. I wanted the informants to feel confident about saying whatever they liked. I attempted to avoid giving personal judgments on matters that arose in the interviews. I tried to achieve this by controlling what I said, and the ways in which I talked in the interviews. I presented myself as a good listener so that informants would feel like I was interested in what they had to say. I knew that I could use my position as the listener to advantage because people will usually want to talk when they think that they will be heard (see Dobbert 1982, p. 121). As an ethnographer I was searching for knowledge that was unknown to both the informants and myself.

Even though I had attempted to control what was said in the field through a set of techniques which had been tried, tested and perfected in the field for a century or more, I came to realise through the data of Chapter Four that the informants were giving me what I wanted. They were constituting themselves for my interpretation. This problem was also drawn to my attention by the theorists in crosscultural
ethnography before I went into the field (Dobbert 1982). However, I thought I could control the situation through the method recommended by these same theorists.

Informant interviews play an important role in the implementation of disciplinary power in ethnographic discourses. According to Foucault (1990a, p. 59) we have become a 'confessing society'. We confess our sins, our crimes, our guilt, our thoughts, our dreams, our desires, our childhood, our past, our illnesses, our unhappiness, we go about telling, 'with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell' (1990a, p. 59). We confess in public and in private, to our parents, our teachers, our doctors, to those we love and to ourselves (Foucault 1990a, p. 59). Individualisation in modern society has become inseparable from the confession of our deepest truth. The confessional in the form of interviews with the informant has become an essential ethnographic technique for getting the informant to tell all about him or herself. The aim of an interpretive ethnography is to find out as much as possible about the insider's position in order to 'describe the culture' (Dobbert 1982, p. 39). It is therefore assumed that what is in the mind of the informant is linked to the informant's culture.

In creating an atmosphere where the informant could talk about everything, I was able to justify my claim that there is an underlying knowledge waiting to be discovered, a knowledge which could only be brought to light through my skills as a trained ethnographer. In doing so, I assumed that it was possible to know about ourselves through others, and that it was possible for me as an ethnographer to decipher an underlying knowledge, and to provide the informant with an interpretation of who he or she is. The methodology provided me with the special skill to interpret underlying knowledge which could not be recognised or understood by the informant. I thought that I was linked to the informant's mind through his or her words.

As the ethnographer, I was not just a listener but the authority who required the confession, prescribed its boundaries, and sat in judgment (Foucault 1990a, p. 61). Even though I had wanted and planned for a sense of equality in the relation between myself and the informant, my methodology was based on an unequal relation. The informants knew enough about the method of knowledge production from their experiences at university to anticipate that they would be described in detail, classified and analysed, and then interpreted in relation to others (see below). Their experiences
at university had alerted them to the possibility of becoming further inscribed in a discourse of which they were no longer the arbiter.

I gained the insight from the data of Chapter Four that the informant and I were both positioned in relation to the ethnographic gaze. I was motivated by the informants' knowledge and intentions; they were motivated by mine. I wanted to know the informants' background knowledge; they wanted to know what I was going to do with it. The informants' histories and their experiences at university had alerted them to the way in which they are constituted in scientific discourses for the gaze of others. They were already conscious of the presence of an invisible power relation in my interpretation. While the informants were constituted through my methodology as responsible for what they said in the field, I was constituted by the informants with the authority to interpret the data. The ways in which I undertook this responsibility would be crucial to the ways in which they would come to be seen by others.

Knowledge comes from others rather than from oneself. While I positioned the informant in relation to his or her ways of thinking, knowing and talking, I was positioned by the informants in relation to the ways in which the interpretation would be read by others. While I positioned the informant in a relation to self, I was, in turn, positioned in relation to others. Although I didn't realise it at the time, I was already implicated in the data before I had left the field. This raised the question for the following section:

5.4. How can the data be interpreted?

When I moved out of the field, I carefully transcribed the informants' words as data so that the meaning of what they had in mind would not be changed. As a crosscultural ethnographer, I assumed that the knowledge locked inside the data would stand-in for and represent the informant's cultural experience. I did not realise that I was already changing the meaning of what was said by adding a comma here and a full stop there. I was changing the meaning of what was said in the field by adding and omitting punctuation, and changing the sentence structure. Should I change words like 'gunna' and 'that'd' into standard English? Should I add an exclamation mark to what the informant is saying? Is the informant upset or excited about what he or she is saying? The body of data becomes increasingly
homogenised as the informant's ways of talking are lost in the transcription of the data. The informant's own particular speaking style and emotions that are unconsciously attached to what is said are omitted.

Once the body of data is transcribed, it operates in the absence of the informant. The informant fades out of the picture as I work with the data. The data become a text without a context. They are separated from the time and place of their production and reorganised around an absent informant. What is said by the informant is frozen in time and space. This gave me a stable body of data to organise and categorise. But 'frozen' data can also create the misunderstanding that what the informants said in 1993 remains true for the informant in 1996 and will still be true when I finish this thesis. Although I did not intend to freeze the position of these informants, my method had the effect of turning 'history into nature' to make the words of the informants appear as if this is the way things are and always have been (Nakata 1995, p. 56). The dehistorisation and dislocation of indigenous voices becomes naturalised through the transcription of the data (Clifford 1986b).

The tradition of reporting one's findings in narratives written in the present tense can create a sense of timelessness for the society under study. The ethnographic 'present' normalises life by describing what people say and do as if they were always repeated in the same manner by everyone in the group (Rosaldo 1993). Aboriginal communities have often been characterised by crosscultural ethnographers (see Chapter Two) as driven by the same underlying structure which has always existed but is now under threat from the outside (Rosaldo 1993 p. 42). I outlined in Chapter One how I have periodised my thesis to reflect the changes in my theoretical positioning over the period of 1978 to 2001 (also see Kelly-GadoI 1987, p. 16).

As a crosscultural ethnographer, I took the position that what is said by the informant doesn't have significance until it is articulated within a structure of meaning (Wolcott 1988; Dobbert 1982). How we come to know is always subject to the context of the history and place of research and to the people involved. While I recognised that knowledge is an effect of time and positioning I was faced with the problem that the data no longer had a context. They no longer had any significance or social utility (see Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982, p. xxv). I began to search for a new context for the data. The informants' words were embedded in my own descriptions
so that the reader could make sense of what was previously incomprehensible data. But in doing so the quotations from informants were consumed by the sheer volume of my own words. My own descriptions became the condition of meaning for the data. The data were constituted as supporting evidence for my own interpretation (Clifford 1988). The informants' words were made familiar through my 'thick' descriptions.

The data were given an interpretive context but one of my own making. In my initial interpretation, I linked the data to the literature review and to the historical and geographical setting presented at the beginning of the research. The informants were linked to a time and place outside their own experience. As an ethnographer, I was not only rewriting indigenous history as my own, I was also positioning myself as the one who could interpret the informants' historical background to and for others (see Rosaldo 1993). I was interpreting the data in relation to a discourse which already had the authority of a scientific method to convince the reader that 'this is the way things are'. The goal of the scientist is to tell it like it is and not as he or she wants it to be (Cherryholmes 1988, p. 22). Following the criticisms of my first interpretation, I have presented the data in separate chapters so that my interpretation does not act as a voice-over for the data.

The informants were rapidly losing control over what they said in the field as the data were progressively inserted into my interpretive structures. This created a feeling when I first worked with the data that I was gradually becoming familiar with the insider's position (see LeCompte and Preissle 1993, p. 45). As a critical ethnographer I realised that it was the method that allowed me to read the data rather than an empathy for the informant's subjective position. There is no insider's position in ethnography. Both the informant and the ethnographer are separated by the ways in which they constitute themselves for each other's gaze. Even though I had constituted the informants as responsible for what they said I was being gradually positioned through the method as spokesman and authority for the research. In the transition from the field to writing the informants had not only lost their history and their place, they were now losing their voice as I began to speak for them. I was being positioned as the link between the data and the reader just as the pedagogue tries to bridge the gap between the student and the knowledge to be
learned. I was being positioned as the one who could interpret baffling situations for others. The more science can know about indigenous people the less indigenous people act as final arbiters of their own discourses.

I was now beginning to realise the potential power that I was exercising through my interpretation. The informants’ lives were in my hands insofar as social relations are constituted through discourses. The ways in which I positioned the informants in my interpretation would constitute the ways in which they would come to be seen by others. My interpretation can either illuminate or constrain the ways in which the informants will be constituted in the eyes of others.

My positioning of the informants began before I went into the field. I selected informants who would fit the aims proposed for my research. The five criteria used to choose the informants were outlined in Chapter Three. I determined the topic: Indigenous tertiary education. I decided who could talk about it, how it would be articulated and recorded, and the timing involved. The informants were selected against a set of pre-established methodological norms which were designed to control any anomalies that might arise in the group of informants selected. These norms were described in Chapter Three. I was looking for an ideal.

Once the data were transcribed, I began the process of categorisation. In Chapter Three I discussed how the ethnographer in indigenous education has traditionally compared Aborigines and non-Aborigines. For example, Malin explains how one category is defined through its opposite (1989, p. 155). In her study of Aboriginal and Anglo children in an Adelaide school Malin (1989, p. 155) states that ‘descriptions of deficit on the parts of either group could be made using categories of the other group’. While Anglo children were dependent and barely nurturant with one another Aboriginal children were independent and nurturant. She (1989, p. 442) takes the position that the ‘full significance’ of what Naomi (Aboriginal student) says and does in the classroom ‘can only be understood relative to the behaviour of non-Aboriginal students in the same situation’. Harris (1977) and Christie (1984) employ the same technique when they make it possible to know what Yolngu learning is by measuring it against a non-indigenous standard (see Chapter Two). White society is used as a benchmark against which to determine the characteristics of Yolngu culture. In an ethnography a particular characteristic about indigenous
people is revealed and produced through what it is not in non-indigenous people. The unknown is constituted through what is already known. Scientific knowledge about indigenous people is constituted through comparisons with non-indigenous people.

Like the panopticon disciplinary society deprives its members of freedom by separating and comparing individuals and defining them against a norm in order to impose conformity. One of the main ways in which conformity is imposed in modern disciplinary society, according to Foucault (1979), is through the systematic creation, classification, and control of ‘anomalies’ in the social body. In the prison or the school or the hospital, anomalies are isolated and normalised through corrective procedures which are constituted as impartial and objective, and designed to eliminate, but never do. In the school unruly students are taken aside, interviewed, compared against a norm, and disciplined in order to impose conformity. The slow learner who is identified as dyslexic or lazy or suffering from some deficit disorder is isolated, compared against others, and remediated with the aim of slotting him or her back into the mainstream school.

Conformity and stability are created in an ethnography when the data are taken out of their historical and geographical setting. The data are never meaningful in themselves (Jackson 1990). The field data as ‘contradictory, subjective, unruly, partial as they invariably are, provide little basis for knowing with certainty’ (Wolcott 1994, p. 26). The data become meaningful when they are organised and inserted into a structure. Foucault (1979) observed in relation to the panopticon that discipline is imposed in part through a structure. Each individual is given a sealed compartment separating him or her from others, but with a peephole so that he or she could be observed. Individualisation and the gaze of science are linked within a structural space to locate the informant within a space of his or her own within an ethnographic text. The informant is separated from others and embedded within a context of meaning created by the ethnographer. From there he or she can be seen.

Through the process of categorisation and comparison with others the informant is constituted as an individual who contains a definable identity. Malin (1989, pp. 419-473) attributes to the informant personal qualities like 'self-regulation', 'self-reliant', 'autonomous', 'assertiveness', 'independent thinking', 'acute observation skills'.
'ingenuity, astuteness and initiative'. The Aboriginal students in Malin's study (1989, p. 439) are said to have these personal qualities 'from a fairly early age'. They possessed these qualities prior to Malin’s entry into the field. ‘Equivalent’ personal qualities in the Aboriginal informant have been identified by other researchers in traditionally oriented communities (Malin 1989, p. 641). Malin establishes these categories as norms for her Aboriginal informants. But they are also constituted in ethnographic and anthropological discourses as norms for other indigenous people.

Dobbert (1982, p. 272) alerts us to the fact that the categories are already established in anthropological discourses. These categories are found in past research, reviewed in the literature, and applied to the data being analysed in the current study. The ‘new’ data are lumped into ‘old’ categories which have been constituted in the literature review as a norm for indigenous people (for example, Malin 1989). The data are categorised according to norms that have been taken from past research. These norms function as an interpretative structure for the data. They allow the ethnographer to read and interpret the meaning of what is said by the informants.

The data are interpreted through the ethnographer’s ways of producing knowledge and meaning about the informants and their culture. They are grounded in theory that has already been established long before either the informant or the ethnographer enter the field. Christie (1984), Malin (1989) and Hudspith (1996) each use the categories from the research that precedes their own study. These categories, along with their questions, determine what they look for, and what they can find. In this way, the ethnographer follows in the footsteps of others. The indigenous informants in the studies of Harris (1977), Christie (1984), Malin (1989) and Hudspith (1996) are all constituted as autonomous and self-motivated.

The informants of my research are already alerted through their studies at university to the ways in which they could be constituted in relation to my scientific interpretation (see the data of Chapter Four). They are well aware of the way in which they are constituted in relation to tribal people. This is represented in crosscultural ethnographies as a symbol of continuity between the past and the present or between urban and traditional life. In her Adelaide study Malin refers to characteristics in the Aboriginal families which are consistent with the findings of
previous research in traditionally oriented communities (Malin 1989, p. 157). The construction of Aboriginality is not without its costs (McConaghy 2000, p. 260). For example, continuity can be also interpreted as a sign of a divided identity. Ethnographic informants are often constituted as individuals in search of a lost identity (see Chapter Four; Clifford 1986b, p. 114).

The informant in a crosscultural ethnography is positioned in relation to a normalised individual. The norm is constituted as self-motivated and others are then compared against it. I repeated this method when I produced my first interpretation. In representing the informants as ‘containing’ personal qualities I constituted each individual with a fixed and unified identity which could be known by others. I was perpetuating the discourses that historically have been used to constrain and govern Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Nakata 1991). The production of a normalised individual has allowed for ways of governing and self-governing (Foucault 1990a). Crosscultural ethnographic interpretations perpetuate the regulative measures of government that have been historically imposed upon indigenous people through social policies like assimilation and integration. I was perpetuating the gaze of history through my own ethnographic interpretation.

The ultimate goal of such a normalising system was ‘individualization’ (Foucault 1979a, p. 99). According to Foucault, the processes of normalisation associated with disciplinary power do not necessarily produce conformity. Rather, one of the key effects of disciplinary power was to pin down each individual in his or her particularity. Foucault observes that for a long time, it was beyond the means of society to observe, describe, judge, measure and compare the individual with others but the documentary techniques of disciplinary society reversed this and made the description of the individual ‘a means of control and a method of domination’ (Foucault 1979a, p. 191). The ‘turning of real lives into writing is no longer a procedure of heroization; it functions as a procedure of objectification and subjection’ (Foucault 1979a, p. 192). The gaze is not only a way of looking at others. It becomes a means of controlling and disciplining the individual.

Power is not wholly in the hands of one person who possesses or exercises it, rather it becomes a machinery that no one owns (Foucault 1980a, p. 156). The ethnographer’s position is constituted through his or her training as a scientist.
although his or her interpretation of the data is authorised by the informant and other readers. The informant and the ethnographer get their respective speaking positions from others. Power is produced through a relation.

Within the disciplinary system 'each individual has a place and each place has its individual' (Foucault 1979a, p. 143). Each person has his or her given position within the panoptic gaze. The gaze gives the individual a position. It 'tells' the observer or reader where and how to look, and the observed what to do and say. The informant is positioned in ethnographic and anthropological discourses so that he or she can be known and understood by the reader. My ways of interpreting the data made the strange familiar. Each informant becomes a case to be known. He or she is constituted by the ethnographer with an identity which can be recognised by others. Multiple selves are reduced to a singular subject bounded and represented by the notion of culture. The multiplicities of self are 'lost' in the writing of, for example, educational policies (Nakata 1991).

In attempting to constitute the informant as self-motivated, I followed in the footsteps of Harris, Christie, Malin and Hudspith in linking my findings to previous research. The informant is taken out of his or her social context and inserted into a research setting of my own making. Each informant is compared with others and normalised against a new setting. The body of data is interpreted outside the time and place of its production and linked to a context set in another time and place. In interpretive ethnographies, the informant is separated from self and linked to others at the end of the thesis. The informant is produced as inherently different from self in interpretive ethnography. I produced the link between the informants of the data and Aborigines from the research of Harris, Christie and Malin. The informants were constituted with a definable identity, an identity which was ultimately tied to traditional culture. They were interpreted by me in relation to a past history over which they have no control. They were repositioned in a history that is discontinuous from their own (Nakata 1998, p. 7). The individual in modern society is inserted into a 'machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it' (Foucault 1979a, p. 138).

There are three methods by which scientific discourses are produced in western society (Foucault 1982, p. 208; 1971, 1979). These are the dividing practices which separate and dominate; secondly, the method by which an informant is categorised,
described and classified, and compared with others; and thirdly, the techniques by which the individual is tied to an identity. These techniques correspond with the scientific method of description, classification, comparison, and explanation outlined by Dobbert (1982, p 129; see Chapter Three).

The crosscultural ethnographer seeks to establish 'the plausibility' of an interpretation (Malin 1989, p. 158). Like the informants, the reader is constrained by the crosscultural ethnographers' method for interpreting the data. The method governs 'what can be said, written, or thought' (McHoul and Grace 1993, p. 33). The ways in which I constituted the informants in my interpretation would govern the ways in which they could be seen and known by others. The data are interpreted in a crosscultural ethnography in relation to a scientific method which makes the interpretation function as true. Truth does not refer to the 'facts' to be discovered and verified by scientific inquiry, but rather the method 'according to which the true and the false are separated' (Foucault 1980b, p. 132). Valid and invalid ideas are separated through a method. The data are interpreted in relation to a 'regime of truth' that had been established long before I began my research. I observed in the opening paragraph of this chapter how crosscultural methodology is defended as reliable. According to Foucault (1980b, p. 131) each society has its regime of truth which includes:

- the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true;
- the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned;
- the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth;
- the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.

The informant is constituted within a scientific interpretation which is made to function as true through the ethnographer's methodology. The very method that is intended to provide scientific knowledge about others is also used to regulate and govern what can be known about these same people. The scientific method of description, classification, comparison, and explanation always constitutes both the informant and the ethnographer as different to oneself.

There are two kinds of knowledge in an ethnography. One is the ethno
graphic interpretation that is constituted through a scientific method. The interpretation is
constituted through knowledge that is assumed to exist prior to the ethnographer's entry into the field. The second is knowledge that is produced. This includes the data. The data are negotiated through a relation between the informant and the ethnographer in the field. As intersubjective knowledge the data are jointly constructed through the discourses of the field. They are produced through the discussions, questions, interactions and expectations of both the informant and ethnographer.

The data as intersubjective knowledge are produced through a pact of recognition. According to Lacan we are motivated to talk through the desire for 'mutual human recognition' (Lee 1990, p. 77). I cannot remain outside the data while I am talking and participating in the interviews. The informants ensure my inclusion by answering my questions and giving me what I want. Each participant negotiates his or her position in relation to what the other wants in the production of the data. The data represent a negotiated third position and are different to what either the informant or the ethnographer think and want. They are produced as intersubjective knowledge through a mutually negotiated relation between the informant and the ethnographer. The concept of intersubjective knowledge will be developed in the context of the student-teacher relation in Chapters Nine, Ten and Eleven.

The crosscultural ethnographer does not recognise that such negotiations take place. For him or her, the data must be produced through a scientific methodology (see Chapter Three). They are constituted from within the individual informant rather than through his or her interactions with the ethnographer. This also helps the crosscultural ethnographer to position the informants as autonomous and self-motivated.

5.5. How are the data and the interpretation linked?

When I started my research I considered university to be an inherently good thing for students. It provided them with the opportunity to manage their own lives and to progress. The informant's life at university was constituted in my first interpretation as a battle between the past and the future. In looking to the past the informant was positioned in relation to failure at school and at university. In looking to the future the student could, with my knowledge and skills, succeed at university. Throughout
my interpretation I positioned myself as an authority who could show the way to these informants and other indigenous students at university. One becomes a researcher only by becoming expert and certified (Cherryholmes 1988, p. 115). The need to create a scientific method to understand others means that only a trained ethnographer as scientist can understand the data. As a trained ethnographer I could demonstrate that I had been ‘there’ and I could understand what others could not. While the informant was separated from his or her underlying knowledge and identity, I was positioned through the methodology as the one who could read into the depths of the informant’s mind.

As a crosscultural ethnographer I positioned informants as authorities in the field. They were selected because they had the knowledge and they were respected by others (see Dobbert 1982, p. 117). But the informant’s authority to know was taken away from him or her when I positioned myself as the one with the skills to decipher his or her underlying knowledge. As a trained ethnographer I was constituted as the one who could know more about the informants’ world than the informants themselves could know. The crosscultural ethnographer is situated through his or her method as the one who knows and is able to tell others who they are (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982). The informants themselves were constituted as the ones who had to come to me if they were to discover themselves. They got their knowledge and identity from me, as the ethnographer, rather than from others or from oneself, or through socialisation. I was positioned through the methodology as the one who could speak on the informant’s behalf (see Malin 2000, p. 5).

My power and authority were derived from the assumption that the truth about ourselves can only be understood by expert interpreters (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982, p. 175). The data are interpreted by an ethnographer who has become an authority in the field. I was constituted through the methodology as someone who has the power to describe, analyse and interpret. The reader looks to the ethnographer for an interpretation of baffling behaviour as I did with Elkin and Harris (see Chapter Two). I was expected to make the strange appear familiar. As a trained interpreter I was constituted as the condition of knowledge and power in my first interpretation. Both the informant and the reader were constituted in relation to my position of knowledge and authority, which according to Fetterman (1989, p. 33-34), is ‘a fatal error in ethnography’.
I not only assumed a natural communicative relation with the informants in the field, I also believed that I could speak for the informants to tell others what I had found. Once I had discovered the answer, I thought that I could take others down the same path of enlightenment. The data were interpreted in relation to discourses of enlightenment and progress. The informants were constituted in relation to the opposing positions of individuality and authority. There was a simultaneous individualisation and domination of the informant through the normalising practices of the gaze (Foucault 1982, p. 212).

Lyotard (1984, p. 51) states that science in the west has legitimated itself by appealing to grand narratives of the enlightenment: the grand narrative of emancipation of humanity from oppression by scientific knowledge, and the narrative of the movement from ignorance to knowledge, from failure to success. My first interpretation was derived from both these narratives of self-emancipation and knowledge. Clifford (1986b, p. 108) observes that:

> Ethnographies often present themselves as fictions of learning, the acquisition of knowledge, and finally of authority to understand and represent another culture. The researcher begins in a child’s relationship to adult culture, and ends by speaking with the wisdom of experience.

The data and the interpretation were linked in my first interpretation through a position of authority. Scientific method positioned me in relation to the informants, supervisors, examiners and other readers as an authority. The methodology constituted me with the knowledge to tell it ‘the way it is’. In Chapter One I introduced the psychoanalytic process known as transference where as soon as one imparts to another human the ability to interpret baffling behaviour he or she has entered a transference relationship. The important relationship in transference is between the individual and his or her fantasy of a subject supposed to know. As an ethnographer I was constituted in the position of a subject supposed to know. I was positioned through the methodology with the authority to interpret the baffling behaviour of informants. In the classroom the student anticipates that the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know will be able to teach him or her the necessary knowledge and skills to get a degree. The pedagogue as a subject supposed to know will be developed further in Chapters Seven and Nine.
As a crosscultural ethnographer I was positioned from the very beginning of the research not just as an authority, but also as a judge of the informants’ knowledge and experience. To understand the informant’s experience ‘always implies, however subtly, to judge’ (Hart 1992, p. 193). To understand means to recognise the informants’ reasons for their opinions, interpretations and actions. And to recognise the informants’ reasons is impossible without reasoning oneself or assuming an evaluative stance insofar as the ethnographer must inevitably agree or disagree with the informant’s reasons, or at least, withhold judgment (Hart 1992, p. 193-4). As soon as I tried to explain and interpret I was making a judgment. I have outlined throughout this chapter how I made judgments before I went into the field about the focus of my research, what methodology to employ, which books to read, which informants to use, how to collect the data, how to select the data and organise them in the writing up of the research (see Clifford 1988). Crosscultural ethnographic methodology preempted my relation to the informants, fellow ethnographers, my supervisors and examiners and other readers.

I turned to action research theory as a method of reflecting on and critiquing the conditions of knowledge and learning in my own classroom.

5.6. Action Research Theory

The process of action research avoids many of the problems associated with crosscultural methods of ethnographic research. Theories of action research are outlined by Carr and Kemmis (1986), Bullough and Gitlin (1995), Cherry (1999) and Biggs (1999). Action research proposes that the teacher can become a research student of his or her own classroom practice. It reduces the opposition between the researcher and the researched. The action researcher conducts research into his or her own practice based on questions derived from this practice. Such questions arise from the problems encountered through personal experience, and through discussions with colleagues. Examples of action research in the classroom include Bunbury, Hastings, Henry and McTaggart (1991), Trouw (1997, 1998) and Richards (1998). Action research combines practice with theory. The action researcher has the classroom experience as well as a knowledge of the theoretical foundations of that practice and is able to combine theory with what he or she says and does in the classroom (Cranton 1996, p. 190).
The philosophy underlying action research is one of equality and empowerment (Carr and Kemmis 1986). This is in contrast to the crosscultural research model where the expert comes in from outside the classroom, observes and videos the practicing teacher and students, and takes away the data to write up the results of the research to the exclusion of those who were studied. Classroom teachers have little or no say in what is researched or in how the research is conducted (see Malin 2000). They are rarely provided with what they would consider helpful feedback on the results of the research, and they have minimal opportunity to influence policy on teaching and learning in the classroom (Bullough and Gitlin 1995, p. 226). The researched are provided with few opportunities to improve their own practice in the light of the findings.

Educational anthropology and crosscultural ethnography neglect to consider the power relations at work when a researcher sets up his or her video camera at the back of the class. The ethnographer looks without being seen. He or she accumulates a wealth of knowledge about the teacher and his or her class while rarely being seen in teaching action by those teachers. Knowledge is power and authority for the ethnographer who sees, while the teacher under the gaze feels vulnerable because he or she has no similar authority over the one who looks. It is a top-down, authoritarian approach to classroom research. Through action research, the teacher makes the decisions regarding research needs, methodology, participants and the presentation of findings.

There is widespread suspicion on behalf of practicing teachers of the experts who come from outside to observe, analyse and judge. Research for most teachers is something that experts do, and has little relevance to the hurly burly of everyday teaching (Cranton 1996, p. 146). The researcher cannot be trusted to look after the interests of students and teachers since the researcher's interests lie elsewhere (Young 1990, p. 146). This does not mean that research should not take place but it does suggest that when the subjects of research are able to negotiate the research design and process that we can be reasonably sure of an outcome which does not harm their interests (Young 1990, p. 146). Teachers should be given the opportunity and the training to conduct the necessary research themselves into their own classroom practice (Malin 1998, p. 259-60).
In action research theory, the distance between the researcher and the researched is reduced because the teacher conducts research into his or her own practice. This eliminates the outsider-insider dichotomy and with it, the threat of being observed and analysed through the gaze of others. Conducting one's own research closes the gap between theory and practice (Bullough and Gitlin 1995, p. 181). The results of the research relate to one's own practice and these can be implemented in the researcher's own classroom. The crosscultural researcher on the contrary occupies the position of an authority to give advice and to tell the practicing teachers what they should do. And in doing so he or she neglects the power relations involved in acting as an authority to make critical comments about others. Research into one's own teaching practice undermines the role of authority and helps destroy the myth that we need an expert to tell us what to do rather than seeking guidance from ourselves (Kincheloe 1991, p 21). It avoids the enlightenment fantasy that presupposes that the person who knows is able to tell others what he or she has found. Crosscultural ethnographic theory positions the ethnographer in a prior relation to the reader. But the feedback obtained from my first interpretation brought me to doubt the possibility of a direct relation between myself as the ethnographer, and the reader.

The pedagogue who engages in self-directed, reflective, and potentially transformative learning will be likely to promote the same among his or her students (Cranton 1996, p. 142). The students will learn through the teacher's practice (Cranton 1996, p. 142). Both the student and the teacher learn by critiquing their own background knowledge and assumptions. We are able to reflect on what we know by thinking about how we come to know. But if the teacher says one thing and does another in the classroom then it is less likely that students will adopt the teacher's practice.

The action researcher uses different methodologies in order to look at his or her own practice from different positions (Cranton 1996, p. 190). This allows the teacher to reflect on and critique the methods which had been employed in the classroom. Using different methodologies helps the researcher to revise his or her position and to see what he or she could not see before. In 1996 (this chapter) I reflected on the position I first occupied in my thesis in 1993. I could do this because my 'new'
position was based on a different set of assumptions. It is only when a revision of the conditions of knowledge takes place that a transformation has occurred (Cranton 1996, p. 113).

In the second part of this thesis on pedagogy, I reflect on how the action researcher or the student in the classroom is able to question his or her own conditions of knowledge. How does the student or the teacher know how to critique their own methodological position? In 1998 I came to question the position of action research theory and the possibility of teaching others how to critique (see Chapter Nine).

5.7. Conclusion

The data and the interpretation were linked through the theory in my first interpretation. This created the impression that the ethnographic insights were coming from me instead of the data. I have taken the position that I was constituted through crosscultural ethnographic methodology with the knowledge and authority to speak for the informant. My authority was constituted through a method which makes it appear as 'the way things are and always have been' (Nakata 1995, p. 56). The discipline has been dehistoricised insofar as when I started out as an ethnographer in 1993 I assumed that this is what ethnography is, and always has been. I didn't realise that the discipline had undergone many theoretical turns, and that it was possible to see from other positions. Ethnographic methodology has a history.

I had not been introduced to the critical ethnographers when I did my training in ethnographic methodology at university (see Chapter Two). As an ethnographer and scientist I was trained to follow a set of rules or practices (Singleton, Straits, Straits and McAlister 1988, p. 18; LeCompte and Preissle 1993, p. 1; also this chapter). I gained the insight in 1997 that the informants of this research also view learning and teaching as following an already established set of rules (see the data of Chapter Six).

As I reflected on the ways in which I had constituted the informant in my initial interpretation I found that I had been repeating what had been practiced before by other ethnographers. I had followed in the footsteps of others to produce an
interpretation that was strangely familiar. While I thought that I had learned so much through my reflections on the work of Harris, Christie, Malin and Hudspith, I seemed destined to repeat their ways of interpreting the data. While my data are different to theirs they were made into the same through the methodology. Although the informants were all occupying different and contradictory positions they were normalised and homogenised through my way of knowing about them.

I had replicated what had already been found before through my ways of interpreting the data. Like other crosscultural ethnographers my choices and judgments were made in relation to a prior framework or interpretative structure (see Dobbert 1982, p. 27). The facts can only be made to run on the tracks that are already laid down for them (Haraway 1991, p. 248). The interpretive structure consisted of a scientific method which showed me where and how to look, and what to look for, just as Elkin and Harris (see Chapter Two) had shown me what to look for when I arrived at Numbulwar.

I was constituting myself as the source of knowledge rather than the informants. I was caught inside a methodological structure used by previous ethnographers to say what had already been said before. My words seemed to come from others as I summarised and quoted past ethnographies to talk about a new situation. Van Maanen claims that most ethnographies rebottle old wine in new bottles (1988). In Chapter Two I outlined a closely related sequence of research into Aboriginal education. Each new research project extended the work that had preceded it. Each began by investigating the reasons for Aboriginal student failure at school, and each concluded with the hope that things would improve. But things have remained the same. Christie, Malin and Hudspith have relied on a scientific method to produce related interpretations. Each assumed that they could discover what the informant thinks and knows. But their ways of producing knowledge had positioned them, as well as myself, in a prior relation to the informant.

The lack of any direct relation between the informants and myself, as the ethnographer, brought me to consider the parallel relation between the student and the teacher in the classroom. Drawing on the Freudian notion of the impossibility of teaching Ellsworth (1997, p. 55) takes the position that mutual and full understanding between teachers and students is impossible (see Chapter One). There
is no direct line of communication between the two. In the debate between Foucault and Derrida outlined in Chapter One Derrida argues that Foucault makes the double mistake of attempting to produce an objective account of what madness is, and pass this onto readers. Crosscultural ethnography also makes the mistake of assuming that the mind can mirror the world and language reflects reality.

As a crosscultural ethnographer I assumed that I could know what the informants think and know, and that I could also represent their voices for my readers. I was interpreting the data in relation to discourses of emancipation and enlightenment. I thought that I could tell others about what I had found. I was positioning the university and myself as the ones best able to emancipate the informants from a past life of failure. The problem is not one of liberating indigenous students from an oppressive educational system but to liberate ourselves from individualism. The goal ‘is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are...the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries’ (Foucault 1982, p. 216).

While the ethnographer is usually separated from self in a scientific interpretation there is evidence of his or her ‘hidden’ presence (Lather 1991, p. 51). Before I entered the field I chose a methodology. I made choices about who could speak, when, and how. I produced questions to help me collect interview data, to guide my literature search, and to show me what to look for in the interpretation. In the writing up I recognised that I had to make choices in talking about some things rather than others. My interpretation positioned me with the power and authority to interpret and judge others. I was entrusted with this power to interpret by the informants of this study (see the data of Chapter Four). How I have used this power in the eyes of others will be a reflection of me as much as it will be of my methods. The choice of methodology, the questions, the topic, and the ways in which relations with informants, other ethnographers and other readers are constituted and managed in the interpretation all provide evidence of a writer who is telling a story about him or herself as much as it is about others.

As a critical ethnographer I was able to recognise the impossibility of occupying the position of the informant through a set of methods which seemed fated to assimilate his or her knowledge to an ontological position which was adopted prior to my entry
into the field. Rather than providing privileged access to the informant's structuring knowledge a scientific method precluded me from occupying any position other than my own. My claim to be able to tell others about what I had found was legitimised through the way in which the data were interpreted. While I thought that I was discovering the insider's point of view, I was not only presenting difference as accessible for others to understand, but assimilating difference by making those who are different the same. I was, in fact, looking into a mirror while I was interviewing the informants. They were anticipating my need to know and to be able to talk about others. While I undertook research to reflect on my own methods of teaching, and to improve my own classroom practice, I was at the same time accepting the crosscultural ethnographer's methods without critique. I was accepting an epistemology which depended on the separation of knowledge and the ways of producing it. A traditional ethnographic method ensured that I could see only what had already been found before.

Crosscultural ethnography could take into account the position of other ethnographers if 'it is to consider itself as a holistic discipline' (see Dobbert 1982, p. 7). This does not mean incorporating other positions into his or her own nor defending it against the criticism of others. This would perpetuate the power relations that give a voice to some and not to others. The aim of ethnography, and education generally, is to be able to see things from another perspective and to be able to present this perspective for others to read and understand.

A major goal for the second part of this thesis is to decipher how different positions are negotiated into a 'whole' story to ensure the voices of each and all are recognised and represented. As an ethnographer, I am looking for an inclusive interpretation of the data rather than one that is produced through a position of authority and reveals an arrogant style. As a crosscultural ethnographer, I could not see beyond my own ways of knowing. As a critical ethnographer, I thought that I could see things that others could not.

5.8. My turn to pedagogy

In 1997, I turned from a critical study of ethnography to a parallel study of pedagogy. Just as I was repositioned from a crosscultural to a critical ethnographer
in the first part of this thesis, I move from the position of a crosscultural to a critical pedagogue in the following section. I am motivated by the parallel between the informant and the ethnographer, and the student and the teacher in terms of the production of knowledge and learning. My key question for the next two chapters is:

*If the ethnographer is separated from the informants through his or her methodology, how do students learn from the teacher in the crosscultural classroom?*
CHAPTER 6

1997

INTERVIEW DATA
CHAPTER 6: 1997 - INTERVIEW DATA

The discourses of the crosscultural classroom

In this chapter there are two selections of interview data. I provide a brief explanation at the beginning of each section to explain why I selected the data for that section. I will continue to refer to the data throughout the following chapter.

6.1. What are knowledge and learning in the crosscultural classroom?

The following interview data provided me with a definition of knowledge and learning in the classroom. The informant learns how to speak about knowledge as 'right and wrong', as 'out there', as something you 'go and get', as 'objective'. They learn 'how to do it right and to do the work'. The informants learn to 'stick by the rules' (also see Chapter Ten). Knowledge is constituted as prior. As students, these informants are charged with the responsibility of understanding what the teacher understands and returning it to him or her in its original form. The informants are expected to replicate the teacher's knowledge, and in doing so, they assume a prior link to the teacher. They assume before the class begins that knowledge can be transmitted from the teacher to him or herself. The informants assume that the teacher can teach him or her, and that they can learn what the teacher knows. But this link is not guaranteed once the student and the teacher enter the classroom.

Willy: I've always had that thought, well, they've given out the information, now I've got to work on it myself, and I've got to try and understand it myself. I've got to find out what they were talking about: What did they mean by it? What do they expect me to come up with? I thought that I had to do all that by myself. It was very hard for me to go, even into the library, and look for certain things because always in my mind was, look, what do they expect of me, what do they want me to find out about this, what more information can I give, with what you've already given. Maybe I was trying to think what was in your mind. Already, it was my perception that you know about it and I had to come up with the same information or knowledge that would be the same as yours. Otherwise, if I came up with something different, and I believed in it, it wouldn't be the same, and then I'd think, well no, if I give that to
him he's going to say, well, this is what I really wanted. Maybe, I could come up
with twenty different ways of seeing [what the lecturer wanted] but there's only one
particular way that I thought the lecturer wanted. I think, that's what happens to a lot
of us there in AITOP [bridging course]. We can come up with so many different
aspects of the information given to us. But we're all the time we're trying to read
your mind, get your knowledge. We try and get on the same understanding. How
you understand it, is the way we thought we had to understand it as well. All we're
doing is, it seemed to me was, what knowledge you were giving out to us, that to
understand it, we had to gather the same information. Even though we could come
up with say, five or six different versions of what your understanding would be
about it and what we understood about it. I might understand it one way, someone
else might understand it another way. All we were trying to do is get on the same
level of your understanding. That same kinda thing would be different with [the
Aboriginal lecturer] because we're on the same wavelength. She is one of us and we
talk the same sorta...we're on an even keel, you know. She might have more
knowledge about everything but the understanding of that same knowledge will be
the same understanding that we would have with her.

Jonathan: I thought if I work hard and read and learn what people are trying to get
across to you, there's no reason why I can't do it. It's there for me if I want it.
There's no reason I couldn't do it if I worked hard. I realised that the information is
over there and all I had to do was go and get it. I could see it over there and it's just
a matter of working out how to get there but that can take a bit of doing too. You've
got to sit down and work out how to get there.

Kiara: At uni it's a matter of getting the answer. You get this from texts and tutorials
and sometimes from the lecturer if he's good. There not always a right answer to
everything outside [university]. It's so complicated. I thought that everything was
there that you need in one book when I first came here.

Stacey: You've got to train yourself to do it. I'm just learning it now. Working it
out. It's always there and you've got to do it but you don't know how to. You train
yourself to speak and write.
Stacey: Going to uni, you're given that base knowledge so that you can understand everything. Like you can say, I am right, I'm not the only one who thinks this way.

Nathan: People expect you to acquire knowledge in a certain way and if you divert from that, they're almost sceptical of your approach.

Karen: You need academic English for these things. You use it as a tool. You're not going to be accommodated out there otherwise. If I go out there wishing to speak Aboriginal English, they're not going to put up with me. I can go and speak that outside or wherever I want, but if I'm going to go into mainstream [society] and work mainstream, well I have to have those tools and I have to be taught those tools. And it's to use [language] for my benefit.

Karen: It's not just knowledge but how you do something, how you went about it. To evaluate things, and be honest, objective, and know what that word meant, to be objective or to be subjective, to know what you’re actually doing.

Karen: I got my Associate Diploma paternalistically. I do not deserve it. My essays had no title page, no referencing, no spell check and I passed! Tell me how can someone like that pass in mainstream [degree courses]. How can people do that to Aboriginal students?

Kiara: I use Aboriginal English when I'm being stupid, when you're laughing and joking, socially more than seriously. [Aboriginal English] does relax people, you're not so serious, you get along better when you're not like that. [At uni] you've got to act straight.

Jully: We had the two classrooms there [in the children's home]. Grades One to Seven. It [school] was alright. We did the normal things. My memory was really good then. I had the brain. I topped the class in Science, English and History with no textbook. I had a photographic memory then.

Jully: Well, I've never had any trouble with reading or writing or spelling. Once we started writing things it was ok. We were taught parrot fashion. It certainly works.

Jonathan: I find that you just stick by the rules, get your work in on time.
Jonathan: When I first used the library, I'd go into the library and not look up. When you're there, you're working. You just accumulate so much knowledge. It came back to the same thing again. What is required?

Willy: If I have to start compromising on so many things, I'm not going to get anywhere. It's either one way or not at all, in doing my studies. You can't make too many compromises, eh. [It's] straight-out, straight-forward, go straight ahead and do it.

Willy: It's very important that students can do it on their own. They need to start thinking, well, I've gotta start doing things by myself. Like getting around, each of us need to stand on our own two feet, getting around as much as we possibly can and using those resources, using the library, and use people.

Willy: If they want to get on and do a degree, they've got to be really strict with themselves.

Jonathan: A lot of students ask me how do you do it? It's just hard work. Have the attitude that you go into a lecture to find out what that person is trying to get across to you and try to understand it. Other students go in there and try to interact a lot more with other students and boost their confidence that way and they miss a lot of what is being put across to them because they're trying to make friends and boost their confidence that way. You've got to be ready when they're putting it across to them.

6.2. How does the student learn in the crosscultural classroom?

I gained the insight from the following selection of interview data that the informant's mind is not the driving force for learning in the classroom. The informants of this research have learned through their historical experiences to expect, before they enter the classroom, that the lecturer will act in the position of authority. Learning in the classroom is governed by the informants' prior expectations. These expectations are perpetuated through the discourses of the crosscultural classroom. The informants learn by constituting themselves for an authority and keeping him or her happy. They learn through the anticipation of a prior relation to the lecturer. Learning is motivated by an authority rather than by
Willy: From school age, you've got a teacher up there, and you think you better try and do the right thing, otherwise he's come down on you like a ton of bricks. We're always striving to do the best that we can. I think we carried it through with us all the way, trying to please. Although we've never come through assimilation, it was like we had to do it, to make the teacher happy. Don't do anything wrong, try not to do anything wrong. What we kids grow up with, and when we grow up into adults, that same thing is still there, just trying to do the right thing so that we don't bring that wrath down upon us. Like, just some experiences from school age. We just did something wrong in our work and it's been told that many times and it just never sunk in and we ended up getting the cane for it. Just a few times that that sorta happened. That happened with white kids there too. But it instilled in me and a few others that we've got to get it right the first time or expect the cane. It seemed natural to get a flogging at home but when it happens in the school, it put us in the place where we were frightened to do anything wrong. And because they were white teachers too. They had the authority over us.

Nathan: There's a tendency for Aboriginal students to feel embarrassed about not getting stuff in. They've gone over the deadline and they're frightened about approaching the lecturer because of the type of response they get from that lecturer. I think it comes back to this authority thing as well where you're prepared to get a fail grade rather than confront the lecturer. You're [referring to Neil as a past lecturer] still in a position of authority even though you might get on well with the students. When the time comes to hand in assignments they still see you as an authority figure. It is a hangover from colonisation.

Nathan: A lot of lecturers are put on a pedestal by students and we don't want to cross them.

Willy: I thought she's [the non-indigenous lecturer's] brainy and because she's white, so she should know all these things.

Willy: Being educated from school onwards, we've been suppressed with white culture. We've had to learn the white culture even from school onwards. What the
white people did, how do they think, how do they speak, we've had to learn all that, how to read and write their way.

Trudy: I've learnt to go and ask the lecturer for any information they have. Usually they have the best selection and they usually have the things that answer the question because they write it. They know what the answer is. They have the information in their office. It took me about a year and half to realise that the best people to ask and the first person you should ask is your lecturer.

Trudy: I still don't have a point of view when I write an essay but I will take on the strongest point of view and that's usually the lecturer's. You usually find out their point in the lectures. I know this is not really the done thing but if you want a good mark you will take on the lecturer's point of view. That doesn't mean that you accept it. You certainly do get a better mark when you take on their view. It is very hard to argue against a lecturer's point of view because they've had more time and more experience to formulate it. I see university as a time to get the information and by the end of uni I will have that point of view.

Trudy: When I write an essay, I now write an essay for the lecturer. But if I feel strongly enough about certain things sometimes my attitudes do come out but it's very rare. I've gotten into a really bad habit of telling people what they what to hear. If you want to get through you get to understand what people think.

Jonathan: You must realise before you even start the course that if you don't do the required assessment you can't pass. That's the established system and you've just got to accept it.

Karen: If I'm going in to ask a lecturer for an extension or something and I know they're only human beings and I know all these things; they're there to help me. I get into such a panic and I think that's from authority when I'm growing up. I still see them as an authority figure. When I was growing up I saw teachers, police all the basic ones, as authority. I had a wariness of white authority. But I've got family so white or black is not a major issue in my family. It was just the figure, the government, the rule and everything they could have over you. Maybe that's why being afraid of teachers and welfare or whatever. Maybe that's why I'm still afraid of lecturers today. Welfare. I guess homes or something. Scrubbing the floors with
toothbrushes. I had a fight with Rebecca's [daughter's] father out the front of her school and the next day the Welfare Officers were there. That was like wow! Why? Are they still around?

Stacey: It's like a circus act. And you're not supposed to say anything wrong against the uni because this is the lecturer you're talking to.

Karen: It takes a while to know how to write academically and to know what the lecturer wants, to get your credits and distinctions up.

Karen: A lecturer wants you to pass as much as, if not more than you do.

Stacey: You'd end up acting the role. If you're expected to play a role, you play it.
CHAPTER 7

1997

TEACHING AND LEARNING

IN THE CROSSCULTURAL CLASSROOM
Chapter 7: 1997 - TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CROSSCULTURAL CLASSROOM

How is knowledge produced in the crosscultural classroom?

How does the student learn?

7.1. Introduction

This thesis arose from the need to research my own teaching practice at the Northern Territory University. I began by selecting a methodology and interviewing nine indigenous students whom I had taught previously (see Chapter Three). I wrote my first interpretation of the data in 1994 but the feedback obtained from the readers questioned my links to the informants themselves, my supervisors, examiners and other readers (see Preface and Appendix One). This prompted me to reflect on the methodology I had used as a crosscultural ethnographer to collect and interpret the data. I took the position in 1996 (Chapter Five) that there is no natural link between the informant and ethnographer. I could not know what the informant thinks and knows.

I take the position in this chapter that learning is constrained by the focus on methodology in crosscultural theories of education. A scientific methodology constrains what the students can think, know and learn in the classroom. But it is not only the student who is trained in a scientific way of thinking and talking about knowledge. The teacher is also trained in what and how to teach. Both are constrained by the discourses of science. I conclude that in perpetuating a prior relation to the teacher as an authority crosscultural pedagogic theories reproduce an unequal historical relation in the classroom.

7.2. What are knowledge and learning in traditional theories of education?

I gained the insight from the data of Chapter Six that knowledge and learning are constituted in the classroom at university as scientific. The informants learn how to speak about knowledge as ‘right and wrong’, as ‘out there’, as something you ‘go and get’, as ‘objective’. Informants learn ‘how to do it right and to do the work’. They learn to ‘stick by the rules’ (see the data of Chapters Eight and Ten). Knowledge is constituted as prior, and the informants are charged with the
responsibility to understand what the teacher understands and to return it to him or her in its original form. The informants are expected to replicate the teacher's knowledge, and in expecting to be able to accomplish this, they assume a prior link to the teacher. They assume before the class begins that the teacher can teach him or her and that they can learn what the teacher knows. They position the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know.

Education is constituted in traditional theories of education as training members of a society into a form of life that is thought to be worthwhile. The goal of education is to transmit what a community values and this is done through the teacher. The teacher, on behalf of society, is expected to teach a pre-decided curriculum which is perceived to be in the student's best interests (Young 1990, p. 88). The teacher is the vehicle through which knowledge and skills are communicated and rules of conduct enforced (Peters 1970, p. 18). The student is expected to acquire the knowledge and skills which are regarded as socially useful and necessary to the student's full participation in the economic, social and political processes of society. Education fits the student into society so that he or she can get along with others.

Knowledge in traditional pedagogical theories pre-exist both the student and the teacher (Young 1990, p. 90). It is planned and included in the curriculum before either the student or the teacher enter the classroom. The main business of the school is to transmit this prior knowledge to the students (Dewey 1963, p. 13). The teacher transmits the facts which the student comes to possess. This is done through formal instruction supported by disciplinary training (Peters 1970, p. 32). It is curriculum knowledge that is 'finalised' before the lesson begins (see McCormack 1999, p. 308). Students learn to speak about scientific knowledge as 'right and wrong', as 'out there', as something you 'go and get'. Young (1990, p. 89) observes that 'the common ground in all approaches to education, whatever their other emphases, is the assumption that what is to be taught should be true'. Scientific knowledge is constituted prior to the students' entry into the classroom.

The student not only learns prior knowledge, he or she learns how to interpret that knowledge to ensure that it corresponds with what the teacher knows. Both the student and the teacher are expected to interpret it accurately. Hudspith (1996, p. 94) recognises that there is a 'gulf' between setting out to teach a pre-decided
curriculum and succeeding, insofar as the student must not only come to know what
the teacher is trying to teach, he or she must also accept it. The student must accept
that the knowledge to be learned in the classroom is a true and valid representation
of ‘the way things are’ outside the classroom.

What the teacher teaches and what the student understands the teacher to be teaching
must correspond. And what one student understands in the classroom must also
correspond with the interpretation of other students in other classrooms. The student
listens carefully to what the teacher says, and like the ethnographer, notes it down in
its original form so that its meaning ‘remains the same’ (Dobbert 1982). The student
interprets the knowledge to be learned while the teacher assesses and certifies the
student’s understanding of it (Young, 1990, p. 96). The student’s understanding of
the teacher’s knowledge is tested in essays and through examinations to ensure that
the knowledge to be learned remains true and valid as it is handed onto the next
generation.

The need to monitor and control the teaching and learning of classroom knowledge
is demonstrated through Competency-based Training (CBT). What is to be learned
is identified and preempted by the teacher, the competencies are taught, and the
student is then assessed as competent or not competent. Learning is planned,
measured and monitored scientifically against prior standards (also see Christie
1988). What the student is taught in the Northern Territory is expected to
correspond with what the student learns in any state. CBT endeavours to standardise
learning throughout Australia (McConaghy 1997, p. 174). Each student can be
compared against a national standard to determine whether he or she is above or
below the level of other students. But CBT can assess and measure only that
learning which is constituted in relation to prior knowledge. It cannot account for
any learning which takes place outside that which is already planned.

Competency-based Training is never theorised in terms of the production of
knowledge and learning in the classroom (also see McCormack 1999, p. 277ff).
Rather, it relies on transmission-based theories of education. It assumes that the key
competencies can be transmitted in their original form to all students, irrespective of
background, as long as the teacher uses the appropriate methodology. CBT assumes
a conduit between student and teacher, and therefore between cultures (for an
extended critique of Competency-based Training see Chappell, Gonczi and Hager 1995).

I took the position in 1996 that I was already separated from the knowledge of the indigenous informants through my own ways of knowing (see Chapter Five). My first interpretation was produced through a scientific methodology rather than found in the data or in the informant or in the culture. This suggested that my interpretation was subjective. I could only ever talk *about* indigenous informants from my own subjective position as an ethnographer. This then raised a problem for the crosscultural classroom. If the informant and ethnographer are separated by their respective ways of knowing, how does an indigenous student learn from a non-indigenous teacher in the crosscultural classroom?

*How can a crosscultural pedagogy be constituted?*

Knowledge and learning in indigenous classrooms have been explained historically in terms of the cultural differences between the indigenous students and their non-indigenous teacher (see Harris 1977; Christie 1984; Malin 1989; Hudspith 1996; Trouw 1999; for tertiary education see Harris 1988; Bin-Sallik 1990, 1994; Wren 1992; Thibodeaux 1995; Abdullah and Stringer 1997; Kemmis 1997a, 1997b and Walker 1998). Students from different cultural backgrounds have different ways of processing and producing knowledge. They have different worldviews. They are motivated by a different set of rules. Aboriginal and white cultures are ‘largely incompatible’, and are warring against each other at the foundations (Harris, 1990, p. 9). The learning processes at work as children grow are determined by the methods of socialisation their people employ and their view of the world (Christie 1984, p. 35). Malin (1989) compares the home socialisation of Aboriginal and white families to suggest that the Aboriginal children's worldview disadvantages them in the classroom. While there is much continuity between the middle-class Anglo home and the classroom, the ‘incompatibility’ between the culture of the Aboriginal students and the culture of the classroom develops into serious conflict (Malin 1989, p. 404-6). The social and cultural practices which Aboriginal children learn at home do not fit with the assumptions and expectations of the classroom teacher (Hudspith 1996).
There is a cultural and linguistic mismatch between the student's home, and the school. The Aboriginal and Anglo students in Malin's study were shown to react very differently to the techniques of 'social control' imposed by the teacher within the classroom. There is a difference between home and classroom life (Malin 1989, p. 361). This difference is explained as a mismatch between what is in the mind of the Aboriginal student and non-Aboriginal teacher (Harris 1987, 1990). The student learns in relation to his or her own cultural and linguistic background rather than in relation to the knowledge of the non-Aboriginal teacher (Christie 1984; Malin 1989). An Aboriginal student must rely on his or her own cognitive structure or methods for understanding what the non-indigenous teacher says and does in the classroom. Indigenous methods for producing knowledge, and the knowledge to be learned in the western classroom are 'incongruent' and 'incompatible' (Malin 1989, p. 361; Harris 1990, p. 9).

Harris (1977, 1987) compares informal learning behaviours with the major features of western schooling. Formal education is decontextualised with its content having little relevance to everyday life and survival. Students are instructed verbally and through demonstrations. The communication breakdown between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal teachers in western schooling is more than a failure to communicate information. It is a failure of the teacher to communicate intentions and outcomes to the student, and to be explicit about what he or she wants (Harris 1987, p. 44). The failure of communication is not just a function of competing ideological positions and worldviews, but of the incompatibility among the different ways of making meaning. The relation between knowledge and learning became the focus of Christie's doctoral research in 1984.

Christie (1984, p. 329) proposed that if Aboriginal students are to learn western knowledge they must do it through western methods. Knowledge can be understood only in terms of the ways in which it is produced. The focus of educational practice in indigenous education turned from learning western knowledge in and through indigenous ways (see Harris 1977), to learning to read and write through an explicit western pedagogy. Learning in the context of the classroom rather than in relation to prior knowledge and experience was established as a basic learning principle. Knowledge and learning are linked through the classroom methodology.
Crosscultural pedagogic theories then focused on developing explicit methods for producing knowledge in the classroom. The teacher rather than the student was positioned through the theory with the responsibility to create the conditions of knowledge and learning in the classroom. For Christie, these conditions would be constituted through purposeful learning.

Aboriginal students must learn purposefully if they are to learn western knowledge (Christie 1984). Purposeful learning is a self conscious and self regulated approach to learning (Christie 1984, p. 85). It depends on ‘personal effort’ and an ability on behalf of the student ‘to expend that effort purposefully in setting and maintaining specific goals, exercising personal control over goal directed behaviour, and using feedback to monitor progress towards the goal’ (Christie 1984, p. 397). The ability and willingness of an individual to take personal control of academic learning is most basic to his or her success (Christie 1984, p. 328). The students must be willing and consciously able to direct and regulate their own classroom learning behaviour and it is the teacher’s responsibility to create the conditions which enable this. Furthermore, as the learning situation becomes more uncertain and ambiguous, the relative importance of internal control perceptions increases (Christie 1984, p. 89). The more the student is expected to learn on his or her own and to rely on his or her own devices the greater the experience of helplessness and anxiety and the greater the potential for failure. If students are to learn scientific knowledge then teachers need to disabuse their Yolngu pupils of the notion that learning in school is dependent on blindly following the academic routines of the teacher (Christie 1984, p. 397).

Aboriginal students at Milingimbi believed that success would be obtained in the classroom through conformity to the rules of behaviour, passiveness and independence (Christie 1984). Christie (1984, p. 253) interpreted his extensive interview data to suggest that Aboriginal children at Milingimbi view school ‘as a long rite wherein knowledge is somehow sacramentally endowed upon them as they relentlessly go through the motions’. The student believed that he or she will, by mere presence at school, by doing work, and by moving up through the grades on the basis of age rather than mastery of skills, learn all that is needed to be learned (Christie 1984, p. 354). A good student is perceived to ‘remain quiet, behave well,
listen, sit down, and not run away’ (Christie 1984, p. 354). A teacher is expected to be firm, give hard work, and keep good order in the classroom (Christie 1984, p. 354). He (1984, p. 355) concludes that children have their own rules which the teacher should know. There was not just a cultural mismatch in the classroom there was also a mismatch in expectations of the student and teacher.

While success in academic learning is dependent upon purposeful learning behaviour Yolngu children are generally unwilling and unable to behave in this way (Christie 1984, p. 355). Both student and teacher struggle to pursue their preferred mode of classroom learning. The white teacher knows only the performative model of teaching and learning while the Aboriginal students train their teachers to exclude 'purposeful', goal-based activities from the curriculum in preference to classroom rituals like copying, chorus reading and rote mathematics that keeps them busy. Christie (1984, p. 367-8) points to an irony in the Yolngu classroom at Milingimbi where, instead of the teachers training the children to make constructive use of negative feedback, the children had trained the teachers not to give it. Both student and teacher ‘adjust to each other in order to survive long periods together in the classroom’ (Christie 1984, p. 353). Both are being trained by a hidden discourse (the discourse of negotiation will be developed in Chapter Nine).

Christie’s great insight was to link the production of knowledge and learning in the context of the classroom. The students would learn from the knowledge produced inside the classroom and not just in relation to the prior knowledge of the teacher or the situated experience of the student. But learning would depend on being able to negotiate a common set of expectations between the student and teacher in the classroom. This pointed to the theoretical development of a crosscultural pedagogy. To this end, a discourse would need to be created that would allow both the student and the teacher to talk together about what they were doing and learning in the classroom. Christie maintained at the time that Aboriginal students need to be shown how to learn in western ways. They must know what the teacher expects them to do in the classroom. The teacher was positioned as the condition of knowledge and learning in crosscultural theory. The teacher rather than the student was constituted as responsible for what went on in the classroom: ‘teachers must develop the perspective that when their Yolngu pupils are not learning as effectively as hoped, it is their teaching methods which are at fault and require attention, rather
than the children they are teaching' (Christie 1984, p. 393).

Malin (1989, p. 628) maintained that successful school learning in the crosscultural classroom involves a pact between student and teacher, a pact of mutual trust that each will recognise the identity and interests of the other. This involves a concomitant belief in the legitimacy of the other as a student or a teacher (Malin 1989, p. 628). In Malin’s study, the teacher felt that she lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the Aboriginal students, and this led to a breakdown in the relations between them. The teacher often censured the students, and the students responded with anger and defiance. She in turn responded by ignoring the students (Malin 1989, p. 628). If the student is to learn from the teacher then he or she would also want to be recognised in some way (Malin 1989, p. 653). Malin (1989, p. 658) recommended that crosscultural awareness training should be provided to show teachers how to reflect on the ways in which they relate to students in the classroom.

Malin (1989, p. 360) observed that ‘Mrs Eyers commanded enormous teacher-centred control over most aspects of classroom life’. Her authority was exercised through her control of classroom language, supplying examples of good and bad work for the students to follow, warnings and incentives, calming the students when they came in after lunch, ‘intensive monitoring and policing’ of the classroom, body language, and through positive and negative sanctions (Malin 1989). These methods of maintaining classroom control are typical among Australian primary school teachers (Malin 1989, p. 380). Differences among teachers occur ‘in the overall degree of control exerted by the teacher on the students in relation to the amount of autonomy which they are accorded in the classroom’ (1989, p. 381). Students were allowed very little autonomy in Mrs Eyers’ class in terms of their access to and use of classroom resources, choice of activity, and movement around the classroom.

The difficulty that Mrs Eyers had in dealing with Aboriginal student autonomy in her classroom was in direct contrast to the high degree of control that she attempted to exercise and expected students to abide by. The students’ assertiveness and independence of thinking and action was perceived by Mrs Eyers as an affront to her authority and control (Malin 1989, p. 479). She expected ‘students to respond appropriately to her directives with alacrity and to her reprimand with contrition’ but this was an implicit expectation that several of the Aboriginal students in Malin’s
study (1989, p. 479) did not come to understand for some time. She could not tolerate a classroom situation where students were learning outside those parameters set by herself. She required certainty and predictability at all times and this precluded the possibility that students could learn on their own or independently of her planning and control. Student learning had to be teacher-centred. She had to be the ‘boss’; to be in control of what they learned and how they approached that learning in the classroom (Malin 1989, p. 479).

In response to the position adopted by Mrs Eyers in her classroom, Malin (1989, p. 479) states that ‘Aboriginal children should not have to abandon their cultural heritage in order to get an education’. A compromise must be reached between encouraging teachers to allow more student autonomy in the classroom, and consciously teaching the school culture as part of the overt curriculum (Malin 1989, p. 480). Malin (1989, p. 398) observes:

Part of encouraging student autonomy in the classroom, includes the accepting, and the utilizing of ideas offered by the students. Rather than all information and ideas being transmitted from teacher to student, it entails reciprocal exchange in both directions between student and teacher.

By discouraging children from learning or teaching each other Mrs Eyers only encouraged more dependence on herself (Malin 1989, p. 517). The external regulation imposed on students in Mrs Eyes’ classroom was in contrast to the self regulation and ‘considerable autonomy’ experienced by Aboriginal students at home. They were able to orient themselves within their immediate environment without a great deal of external regulation from their parents and this was evident in their early adaptation to classroom life (Malin 1989, p. 408). The Aboriginal students’ self regulation also included doing things in their own time and following their own priorities and preferences (Malin 1989, p. 413).

Malin’s insight produced the recognition that the production of intersubjective knowledge in the classroom involves a pact of mutual recognition. The production of knowledge and learning are constituted through a relation where the student and teacher must recognise each other: ‘If the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the

Hudspith proposed that the success of urban Aboriginal students depends on knowing the teachers’ methods of learning and rules of conduct in the classroom. Learning is produced when the students know how the classroom knowledge is constituted. The student must be able to ‘see’ where the teacher is coming from, and this involves identifying the teachers’ ways of making knowledge and the motivations for what he or she says and does in relation to instruction and discipline in the classroom. She proposed that a ‘mediated, visible pedagogy’ orientates urban Aboriginal students in more compelling ways than do the other types to the instructional and disciplinary demands of the classroom and the school, and it is thus most likely to produce positive outcomes. Through mediated, visible pedagogies, teachers attempt to socialise students in gradual, and highly explicit ways, into the ‘business of the school’ (Hudspith 1996, p. 89). Discipline and instruction are made highly explicit for students. Aboriginal children have a better chance of learning ‘when pedagogic control is explicit, and the criteria for academic and behavioural success are made clear’ (Hudspith 1996, p. 93).

‘Explicit transmission’ occurs when the criteria for appropriate learning and conduct are made clear to students so that there is ‘little misunderstanding of their teacher’s expectations or of the requirements for meeting them’ (Hudspith 1996, p. 226). The goals for learning must be clearly identified for the student, as well as the rules for who speaks and when. Expectations surrounding the academic criteria like ‘presentation’, ‘content’, ‘standard of writing’ are emphasised to students while unacceptable behaviour is defined to students as that which ‘stopped us working’, ‘disturbed the class’, ‘interrupted learning’ (Hudspith 1996, p. 304). Students must be socialised in the classroom into unambiguous roles of teacher and student. In an exemplary pedagogy ‘intentioned knowledge is transmitted to students didactically and students are permitted little choice in matters of learning and conduct’ (Hudspith 1996, p. 227). The teacher’s own intentions and expectations must be made clear to students.
Hudspith (1996) suggests that ‘an exemplary pedagogy is expected to impart clear understandings of the teacher’s methods, of the importance of these to teaching and learning, and of what constitutes academic and behavioural competence’. The links between knowledge and learning must be made clear so that students are in a position to act competently in the world. An explicit visible pedagogy proposes that (indigenous) students have a better chance of success once they know why the teacher wants them to do the things they do. An explicit visible pedagogy provides the student with a way of talking and writing about what they learn. Hudspith is looking for a discourse which will help the student to talk about what they are expected to learn. Once the student knows how to learn, he or she will be able to learn independently of the classroom teacher. Hudspith is not only looking to transmit scientific knowledge to her students, she also wants them to be able to regulate their own learning.

Aboriginal values and interests must be incorporated into the classroom teaching so that the differences in values between the Aboriginal student’s home life and the classroom are ‘mediated’ rather than viewed as irreconcilable (Hudspith 1996, p. 94). Learning is contingent on the mutual understanding of each other’s positioning (Malin 1998). The teacher must ‘get to know’ the students culturally, and to incorporate the students’ home life into the school (Malin 1998). Learning ‘is most likely to emerge when the child is incorporated into the classroom and school’ (Hudspith 1996, p. 96). Hudspith proposes that an exemplary pedagogy is one where the student ‘learns to belong’ in the classroom. The teacher must understand the learners’ understandings if the student is expected to learn the teacher’s knowledge (Cazden 1988, p. 27). There must be crosscultural or ‘common’ knowledge between the student and the teacher for there to be effective learning (Malin 2000 p. 12). Learning takes place in the ‘interaction between learners and teachers’ (Gray 1999, p. 31). Crosscultural pedagogic theories are looking for ways of producing intersubjective knowledge through the relation between the student and the teacher.

Early theories of education expected the student to learn the teacher’s knowledge using his or her own ways of knowing and learning (see Harris 1977). The student was positioned as responsible for his or her own learning. The subsequent theories
of Christie, Malin and Hudspith positioned the teacher as the condition of knowledge and learning in the classroom. The student was positioned in relation to the teacher. He or she was expected to learn through the teacher’s methodology.

This set the scene for an analysis of the teacher’s teaching methods in classrooms containing students from a diversity of backgrounds. Crosscultural pedagogic theories turned their focus towards a method of producing knowledge in the crosscultural classroom which could incorporate the different positions and learning styles in a heterogeneous class. It is argued at various levels of education that while all students need to know the prior knowledge of the teacher, their own situated knowledge and experience should be incorporated into the process of teaching and learning in the crosscultural classroom (see, for example, Malin 1989; Hudspith 1996; Trouw 1999, and for tertiary perspectives, see Bin-Sallik 1990, 1994; McDaniel and Flowers 1995; Thibodeaux 1995; Craven 1996; Lampert and Lilley 1996; Abdullah and Stringer 1997; Kemmis 1997a, 1997b; Walker 1998 and McConaghy 2000). Harris defined the dilemma for Aboriginal schooling in clear, concise terms. Parents want their children to learn the three R’s and to grow up Aboriginal (Harris 1990, p. 137). Education is primarily concerned with introducing students ‘into a pre-existing culture of thought and language’ (Edwards and Mercer 1987, p. 157). It was now proposed that the culture of the classroom should include the culture of the student as well as that of the teacher. Crosscultural pedagogic theories are not only searching for a method of teaching scientific knowledge in the classroom. They are attempting to theorise ways in which intersubjective knowledge can be produced. Edwards and Mercer maintain that:

> classroom discourse functions to establish joint understandings between teacher and pupils, shared frames of reference and conception, in which the basic process (including the problematical features of that process) is one of introducing pupils into the conceptual world of the teacher and, through her, of the educational community (1987, p. 157).

This basic process of education can be observed taking place in the situated discourses of the classroom (Edwards and Mercer 1987, p. 157). Crosscultural pedagogic theories recognise that knowledge is produced in the classroom and not just found.
7.3. How are knowledge and learning produced in crosscultural theories of education?

In a succinct summary of the different models of instruction that are used in indigenous classrooms Malin (1998, p. 265) observes that, as teachers, we often expect students to learn simply by giving them worksheets and assuming that they will learn by reading it or by completing the set activities. Students are often expected to learn through osmosis without the necessary support from the teacher. It is often assumed that knowledge passes along a conduit from teacher to student. The student must be taught how to learn in a school context, and specifically how to use English for further learning (Murray 1995, p. vii-viii). There needs to be more active learning on behalf of the student (Murray 1995, p. vii-viii). Of particular concern is the ‘progressive’ teacher who abdicates a position of authority to take on a facilitating role in the classroom (Green 1998, p. 191). The position of teacher-as-facilitator has led Frances Christie (1993) to advocate an interventionist role on the part of the teacher to help the student to learn. Christie’s position (1993, p. 78) involves ‘overt teaching and guidance of students as they learn language’. Frances Christie is more interested in how the student learns than in any notion of personal growth:

Unlike the romantically conceived individual who is involved in some sort of journey of ‘personal discovery’, the individual is seen much more as an apprentice: one who is initiated into ways of operating and dealing with experience through guidance, advice, and experimentation with the models of others (F. Christie 1993, p. 100).

Malin, Trouw, Hudspith, Murray and Gray draw on the theories of Vygotsky and Piaget to show how the student learns from the teacher in the crosscultural classroom. Vygotsky referred to the space between what the teacher knows and what the student must learn as a ‘zone of proximal development’ (Gray 1999, p. 31). Vygotsky wanted to know how the student and the teacher could be linked in the classroom. Vygotsky proposed that learning is produced through a relation where the teacher provides the student with hints and props which guide the student's learning until it can be applied by the student in his or her own way (Bruner 1986, p. 132). Students can be helped to learn through ‘shared learning activities’ and to produce common knowledge together (Murray 1995, 1996; Malin 1998). Scaffolded learning assumes that language not only transmits, it constitutes and produces
cooperative knowledge (Bruner 1986, p. 132). The teacher helps the student to construct knowledge through his or her ways of talking and writing about knowledge. The student learns through ‘a detailed discussion of the texts’ with the teacher (Gray 1999, p. 31). The rationale for this is outlined in Murray’s *Walking Talking Texts* which is a program for teaching and learning English as a second language. She states:

> For Aboriginal ESL learners in remote communities, there are very few, if any English language contexts outside of school. Children are not able to revisit/reinforce their English language learning by having to interact in English outside of school. As a result, it is more difficult to bring real-life purposes to the learning of English, except to that which occurs in and around school learning. The contexts for the learning of English, for this group of learners, therefore need to be school based. With this in mind, the teaching/learning contexts are derived from written texts and extended to other curriculum areas of school learning...Aboriginal children, in remote communities may not be familiar with many of the cultural expectations of school learning, especially when the medium of instruction is English. Aboriginal children do not necessarily know how-to-learn in a school context because the ways in which English is used in school for learning, are not encountered by the children in their own language outside of school. Walking Talking Texts provides for much repetition of shared learning activities in which the teacher scaffolds the learning for and with the children before they are asked to work independently...the social purposes and use of Aboriginal languages in written forms often differs in purpose and form to those used in English, therefore, children may not necessarily be familiar with the purpose, uses and forms of English language in its written varieties (Murray 1995, p. v-vi).

Murray (1995, p. vi) emphasises the different ways in which Aboriginal languages and English are used to produce different meanings. It is argued that these differences are overcome when the learning context is recreated in the classroom. A common learning activity needs to be negotiated between the student and teacher in the classroom. The student learns by talking together with the teacher. For learning to be meaningful, it must always be context-embedded (Harris 1987; Jarvis 1987; Cranton 2001). Because indigenous students who speak English as a second language get very little English practice in their everyday lives, they are placed in
contexts where there is a school purpose for the use of written and spoken English (Murray 1995, p. vi). Learning-in-context involves 'connecting the new learning to the student's past knowledge as well as explaining its relevance to their future' (Malin 1998, p. 264). These connections are produced through scaffolded learning in the crosscultural classroom.

Scaffolding is erected when the teacher acts out or provides the student with the means for thinking, talking, acting, reading and writing in the classroom. Scaffolding is often erected through the graduated building of questions around a particular theme and through the teacher's structuring of these questions, the student learns how and when to respond to the teacher. The student not only learns to imitate and repeat the structure of a classroom dialogue, but also to anticipate the kind of answers that the teacher might want as the dialogue progresses (Malin 1998, p. 268). The teacher helps the student put into words an explicit description of what they are doing together in the classroom (Cazden 1988, p. 26; Gray 1999). An 'expert' is required to support students until they are competent to perform the learning task on their own (Malin 1998, p. 265). The teacher gives the student a 'helping hand', then only a finger, and then the teacher withdraws that few inches, and so on (Cazden 1988, p. 102). The teacher guides the student into the unknown. Students are provided with assistance until they can walk with their own two feet.

The use of scaffolding as a pedagogical tool has a parallel with my position as a PhD student. Throughout my research, I have found it difficult to talk about what I have in mind. The knowledge is often there but I cannot express it. Others cannot tell me what I am thinking. Through talking and working together on my drafts, my supervisors have helped me to put into words what I could not previously describe. Just as the ethnographer does not know what the informant thinks and knows, my supervisors do not have access to what I think and know. But they can help me to say things in other ways, and to say them better and better so that what I say can be heard by them, and the informants, examiners and other readers. They encourage me to redraft my writing when they are unable to recognise what I am saying. Their lack of recognition encourages me to look for another way of saying what I said previously so that the words can act as a communicative link between us. Working together encourages us to reflect on and critique the ways in which we talk and write.

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and communicate with one another.

The teacher can act as a sounding board for the student so that the student learns through trial and error to say things in ways that will capture the understanding and recognition of the teacher. The student learns what the teacher wants and expects through the communication in the classroom. After I wrote my first interpretation I reflected on what I said and the way in which I expressed it. I have since been trying to rewrite it so that I can communicate with more people, and ensure that more positions are heard. Since each of my supervisors occupy different positions as ethnographers and teachers themselves I have had to constitute my position in relation to both.

According to the theory of scaffolding when the student succeeds in learning new knowledge, he or she not only internalises the content, but also the ways in which the knowledge is produced. The student is then able to apply the teachers' cognitive structures or methods to read, analyse and interpret new texts or to solve problems in new situations. The student learns more than the teacher’s knowledge. He or she learns how to learn. According to the theory, once the methods are constituted in the mind of the student then he or she will be able to learn independently of the teacher.

7.4. How is the teacher positioned in crosscultural theories of education?

The teacher in the Aboriginal classroom should take an authoritative and deliberate approach to teaching and learning, and in core academic areas the students should be given little autonomy or choice (Hudspith 1996, p. 317). Hudspith suggests that the teacher and student must respect one another. The ‘teachers’ authoritativeness derives essentially from two aspects of pedagogy - how they discipline and how they teach’ (Hudspith 1996, p. 317-318). She observes that ‘in matters of discipline it is important to make a few clear and reasonable rules for conduct in the classroom and to ensure that Aboriginal children know how their obedience to the rules will help them to learn' (Hudspith 1996, p. 317). In regard to instruction Hudspith recommends ‘deliberate and incremental teaching’ supported by regular evaluation for Aboriginal students. She emphasises that Aboriginal students need to see that what they are about to learn fits with what they have already learnt, and with what they will learn in the future. In summary, Aboriginal students need to be ‘trained’ in the academic and moral expectations of the classroom teacher (Hudspith 1996, p. 317).
Malin provides a powerful portrayal of how the students are positioned in relation to an authority in the classroom of Mrs Eyers:

Mrs Eyers consistently spoke with a very soft voice which probably, in turn, encouraged the students to be quiet in the movements and speech; otherwise they could miss out on any important information she was imparting. In addition to this low volume, Mrs Eyers’ voice was fairly monotone communicating emphasis through word stress, and occasionally through sudden increase in volume. Her facial expressions were also extremely subtle; her smiles being imperceptible. Both the students and I seemed to know when she was smiling, but it was difficult to determine objectively how we knew. Such subtle facial expressions, and monotone, quiet speech provided limited feedback as to what Mrs Eyers was thinking or how she was reacting to a student...It created ambiguity about how precisely she was feeling, although the specificity and clarity of her instructions made what she wanted totally clear (Malin 1989, p. 372).

Mrs Eyers spoke and expressed herself in such a way that the students could not determine what she was thinking. Mrs Eyers maintains discipline and control not through yelling or speaking loudly nor through overt orders but through maintaining an ambiguous style. It appears that students attempt to predict the teacher’s intentions by reading the ways in which she communicates in the classroom. They are then in a position to constitute themselves accordingly. But in Mrs Eyers’ classroom, the students are not in a position to pin down the teacher’s judgment of the classroom situation. They cannot determine or predict her reactions. They do not know what she is thinking about them in this particular situation, while at other times the Aboriginal students know just where they stand in relation to Mrs Eyers. She maintains an ambiguous position in the classroom, and in so doing the students find it difficult, according to Malin, to occupy any position of power.

Mrs Eyers has got them exactly where she wants, and she has achieved this by controlling her own ways of communicating in the classroom. And in controlling what she says and does in front of the students, Mrs Eyers is withholding a judgment. The students are looking for an interpretation so that they can determine where they stand in relation to their teacher, and how they should react. But the absence of any clear judgment in Mrs Eyers own speech helps to constitute her as an
authority in the classroom. Mrs Eyers' ambiguous style regulates and governs what the students say and do in her classroom. Mrs Eyers teaches by covering over her own intentions.

In Hudspith's research, the teacher's authority is constituted through her ways of talking in the classroom:

Sometimes I pop into the classroom and I see her with each child and she's always talking to them and there's a difference because not many teachers talk in that way. She'll only talk with a child nice and kindly and real calmly and that makes the child feel really relaxing and the child will do as they're told... You look at her and her class and they respect her because she's their teacher, but they respect her because she's like their mother or someone older than them that they respect. You don't hear her screaming out. Like when she talks to Duffy [my son] she says 'Duffy' [very gently], you know, not really loud and the children listen and they've got respect. In other classes the kids might answer a teacher 'Yeah?' but in Mrs Banks' class she calls out their names and they always say 'Yes, Miss?'. They've always got that respect for her. (Hudspith 1997, p. 99).

Mrs Banks is successful because she is seen as an authority, and the students are eager to please her:

[My son] talked a lot about school then, and he never wanted to come shopping with me because he was doing something at school and he was really excited about it. It was the same when I asked him to stay at home and look after the baby. He did it but he never wanted to. But now [he's not in Mrs Banks' class] he wants to stay home and look after the baby and he's glad to do it because he'd rather do that than go to school (Hudspith 1996, p. 184).

For Young, the teacher provides the student with 'cognitive security' and 'freedom from the fear of the unknown' (Young 1979, p. 69). The 'authority of others can be a crucial source of reassurance if it operates within a symbolic milieu which offers promise of making sense of the unknown' (Young p. 1979, p. 70). In these theories, the student is motivated to learn by an authority.

Bryk, Lee and Holland's ethnography (1993) of a Catholic girls' high school in Los Angeles observes Mrs Cramer's English class at the school. She taught a highly
structured program and rarely deviated from her daily pattern of teaching. She was always explicit in what she expected from students. Bryk, Lee and Holland say the students sensed her commitment to teaching. One senior student said in regard to Mrs Cramer: 'She knows what she’s talking about. She knows her students. She demands a lot from you and gives you hard assignments' (Bryk, Lee and Holland 1993, p. 86). Other students say 'they had been Cramerized' (Bryk, Lee and Holland 1993, p. 86).

Such a transmission is possible only if authorities, that is, those with the appropriate knowledge and training, are put in positions of authority (Peters, 1970, p. 251). Authority is used here in reference to individuals who show by their ability to do or say what is appropriate that they have a right to be regarded as sources of wisdom or social control (Peters 1970, p. 246). Peters (1970, p. 244) refers to it as a 'charismatic authority'. The teacher who is genuinely an authority about something 'invests it with an aura' (Peters 1970, p. 259). The teacher’s enthusiasm for a particular field of knowledge and a mastery of its intricacies ‘lures others to be initiated into its mysteries’ (Peters 1970, p. 259). The student must identify with the teacher in order to take on his or her knowledge and values (Peters 1970, p. 260). Learning and teaching are dependent on a process of identification of student with the teacher. A transmission depends on the student’s identification with the ‘teacher as an authority (Peters 1970, p. 309). The student learns through a teacher who acts in the position of an authority.

Lecturers at university are subject experts in their field. In business and industry, trainers have particular skills or expertise to impart to others. Both have knowledge and skills which are passed onto others through lectures and tutorials. Cranton (1992, p. 70) says that students want an expert when they are new to a subject or when they have not had the experience in taking responsibility for their learning. The student looks for a lecturer or supervisor who is positioned as an authority in his or her area of expertise. Students follow in the footsteps of someone they recognise and admire. In Chapter Two I referred to how Harris' study of Yolngu learning styles at Milingimbi has served as a model for other researchers in the field of educational anthropology. Malin reflects on the theory of Aboriginal education to say: Stephen Harris 'still currently dominates the discourse about Aboriginal
Many other researchers have also detailed the methods or techniques through which the student is positioned in relation to the teachers' authority in the classroom (Gore 1998, 1993; Morgan 1997; Luke 1991). The methods include the ways in which the teacher seeks information through questions and answers. The students learn that when they are asked a question, they must be ready with the right answer. They know that the teacher already knows the answer to the questions he or she asks. The students learn that the teacher is looking for the right answer, and the student must show the teacher that he or she knows what the teacher has in mind (Christie 1980). The student becomes familiar with this style of learning through scaffolding (see Trouw 1997, p. 116). The teacher can then feel satisfied that there has been a transmission of knowledge. The student learns a method from the teacher (Shor and Freire 1987). The student looks for feedback from the teacher. He or she listens to how the teacher speaks (Shor and Freire 1987, p. 117). The student learns how to speak about others with a distance and authority. He or she models a way of talking on the teacher. The student learns to speak like the teacher and to repeat the same words and phrases. These repetitions provide the teacher with confirmation that there has been a transmission of knowledge to the student.

The teacher is positioned as an authority in the theories of crosscultural education. This position of authority is constituted through his or her ways of thinking, talking and writing in the classroom. I took the position in 1996 that the crosscultural ethnographer's relation to authority is preempted by the methodology. He or she is constituted as the one best able to speak for and about the informants. Knowledge in an ethnography and in the classroom is transmitted through the position of an authority.

I represented this authority as a subject supposed to know in Chapters One and Five. The informants of this research enter the classroom expecting a teacher who knows and is able to impart his or her knowledge to the student (see the data of Chapter Six). The student presumes that he or she will be able to learn from the teacher. The informants tell how they understand the learning process as one where they must attend lectures and tutorials and take in all the information given out to them. This is how a student gets a qualification at a university (see the data of Chapters Six and
Eight). The student presumes that certain imaginary powers reside in the teacher. The imaginary is dominated by the student’s self-image and the image he or she forms of the teacher. Knowledge is transmitted from the pedagogue to the student through the students’ presumption of a prior link to the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know.

In crosscultural pedagogic theories the teacher is constituted as the condition of knowledge and learning. The students learn prior knowledge from the teacher. They are also expected to know what they are learning in the classroom. They must be able to talk about what they are learning in the classroom, and scaffolding is presented in crosscultural theories as an effective method of doing this. These theories are directed at getting the student to learn a metalanguage in the classroom. The pedagogue wants the student to learn how to learn by asking and answering questions and being critical of what he or she reads and writes. Theories of crosscultural education and critical pedagogy are linked insofar as they both want the student to self reflect (see Chapter Nine). They both want the student to learn a metalanguage; a way of talking about what they are doing and learning in the classroom.

I took the position in 1996 that, as an ethnographer, I did not have access to what the informant thinks and knows (Chapter Five). There is no direct relation between either the informant and ethnographer nor between informant and oneself. My insight from the data of 1995 was that what the informant says and does is constituted in relation to others including the ethnographer rather than in relation to the informant’s own mind (Chapter Four). This raised the following question for the learning relation in the crosscultural classroom:

7.5. How does the student learn in the crosscultural classroom?

In crosscultural theories of education, the student is positioned in relation to the teacher’s knowledge and authority. The students are not just expected to learn scientific knowledge by rote. They are expected to know what they are learning in the classroom. But the informants of the data of Chapter Six position themselves in relation to the teacher as an authority. The informants go through the motions of learning without thinking about what they are learning. These informants are motivated to learn through an authority rather than by oneself.
I gained the insight from the second selection of data in Chapter Six that these informants learn by assuming a prior relation to the teacher. Learning is governed by the student’s assumption of an imaginary link to the teacher as someone who knows and has the knowledge and skills to teach him or her. These informants recognise the teacher’s knowledge and authority. In constituting themselves for the teacher as an authority and trying to keep him or her happy these informants anticipate the teacher’s mutual recognition. They anticipate that they will get what they want in coming to university. They want university qualifications and a teacher who knows how to teach.

The informants learn to monitor what the teacher thinks and says in order to learn what he or she wants and expects. The informants learn by imitating and repeating what the teacher says. They try to please the teacher by giving him or her what he or she wants. The informant is trained in the position of the teacher. The informant is trained to recognise what the teacher wants and expects, and to please him or her accordingly. This process of negotiation is constituted through a hidden discourse in the classroom where the student is unconsciously trained to meet the expectations of the teacher as a subject supposed to know (see Chapter Nine).

The informants try to interpret the lecturer’s knowledge as he or she would interpret it. They decipher the lecturer’s opinion and give this back to him or her in tutorial discussions and essays. The informants are motivated by what the lecturer thinks and knows rather than by oneself. The learning relation in the crosscultural classroom is a mirror relation where the lecturer’s own judgments and interpretations are returned to him or her in something like their original form. This represents a transmission of the lecturer’s knowledge and beliefs. The students are learning how to learn. They are also learning what the teacher thinks and knows and believes by listening to what he or she says in the classroom. In learning how to learn, they are learning how to think like the teacher.

Just as the ethnographer tries to interpret the informant’s knowledge as he or she would interpret it, the student interprets the lecturer’s knowledge. Both the ethnographer and the student are attempting to achieve an insider’s position. The ethnographer tries to read the informant’s intentions. The student tries to do the same with the teacher. I took the position in 1996 that crosscultural ethnographic
methodology preempted my relation to the informants and others (Chapter Five). This raised the possibility that the informants were also constituting themselves for me as the ethnographer. As a subject supposed to know they were giving me what I wanted.

In Chapter One I outlined a crucial stage in the child's psychological development where he or she is forever divided between the desires of others and what he or she wants. Lacan refers to this as the mirror stage where the child's own mirror image first presents it with an image of its own unity and coherence. This mirror image is internalised and invested with libido because of an approving gesture made by the parent who is holding the child before the mirror. The mirror image takes on importance as a result of the parent's recognition, acknowledgement or approval, expressed in nodding gestures and smiles from the parent. The child internalises its parents' ideals and judges itself according to these ideals. The child comes to see itself as its parents do, and comes to call on his or her parents and significant others to ratify this image. The child is inserted into a game of recognition dynamics where it will forever desire the recognition of a subject supposed to know (Fink 1997, p. 87-88). And similarly, the student functions within a partially unconscious discourse of desire as he or she seeks the stamp of approval from the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know. The student is trained through a partially unconscious discourse in the classroom (see Chapter Nine).

Christie claimed that Aboriginal children who were unable to exert the internal control demanded of purposeful classroom learning might orient themselves more towards keeping the teacher happy than towards fulfilling the demands of the learning task (Christie 1984, p. 89). They give up on what they want in order to satisfy the expectations of the teacher. Yolngu children spend much of their time in the classroom guessing at what the teacher wants (Christie 1984, p. 336). Min-Zhan Lu and Horner ask: How might teachers and students understand what students want without the teacher prescribing what students really want or should want? (1998, p. 266). How can the teacher know what the students want when the students tailor their remarks to mirror the teacher's position (Smith 1997, p. 305). The teacher must also be aware of those learning situations when students attempt to please the teacher 'to get what they want' (Shor 1992, p. 217). Malin (1989, p. 372) states:
Humans need communicative feedback in order to know how others are responding to them, so they can adjust their behaviour accordingly. If such feedback is not forthcoming from someone they obviously want very much to please, as the students obviously did with Mrs Eyers, they must be extra careful, attentive and compliant so as not to make a faux pas and hence lose face with her.

Just as the data and the interpretation are linked through the reader’s presumption of the ethnographer’s authority, knowledge and learning are produced in the classroom through the informant’s expectation that the teacher knows what he or she is talking about and is able to transmit this knowledge to students. All knowledge transmitted from the teacher to the student is governed by the student’s assumption of a prior relation to the teacher as an authority. But the perpetuation of this prior relation is governed by the student being able to negotiate a crosscultural relation to the pedagogue inside the classroom.

Learning depends on the student’s expectations that the teacher’s authoritative methods will provide him or her with what he or she needs to succeed at school and at university. The PhD student chooses a supervisor on the basis that the supervisor has the knowledge to get him or her through to the end. The student expects that the supervisor can get him or her through the rough spots and can provide the right answers when required. For the student, the teacher is supposed to remain the rock of Gibraltar when everything is falling down around the student’s ears. When the student-supervisor relation breaks down, as it often does, the supervisor slips from the position of an authority in the mind of the student. When the teacher or supervisor falls from the position of authority in the mind of the student, there can be no transmission of knowledge and no learning. Such a transmission depends on the existence of an imaginary and prior relation between student and teacher.

The ways in which students constitute themselves for an authority in the classroom perpetuates the unequal power relations where indigenous people have been historically confined, observed, monitored and regulated through the Government acts and policies of Welfare and Assimilation. The measures of assimilation have become far more widespread through the ways in which regulation and discipline are practised at the micro level of society, that is, in the classroom, in the prison, in the
workplace, and in the street.

The insight gained from the data of Chapter Six also brought me to reflect on my relation to the informant in the field. They were constituting themselves for me as an authority insofar as they were giving me what I wanted in accordance with the questions I asked, and the way I responded to what they said. They positioned themselves in relation to what I had in mind.

I became increasingly apprehensive regarding the theory of an explicit visible pedagogy. There is a critical difference between helping a student to answer a particular question, and helping a student to apply his or her knowledge and understanding to answer questions from other texts (Cazden 1988, p. 108). The heart of human cognition is the ability to discover new ideas and to go beyond the knowledge provided (Cazden 1988, p. 108). Scaffolding 'as an instructional model cannot account for the mental leap to a new idea' (Cazden 1988, p. 108). Scaffolded learning is restricted to the acquisition of the given knowledge and language (Engestrom 1986, p. 32). As the teacher helps the student to talk about an experience, what the student says and does is moulded according to the teacher’s view of what is relevant to the intended learning outcome (Searle 1984). The student is expected to learn according to the goals of a preplanned curriculum and the teacher helps the student to achieve these outcomes. Through a sequence of questions and evaluations, the teacher directs the students towards a predetermined, fixed cognitive destination (Morgan 1997, p. 125). The student is constituted as responsible for working out the teacher’s plans and intentions (Searle 1984, p. 482). The student structures his or her own way of thinking and knowing within the framework of the teachers’ methodology. The student learns how to talk and write about western institutional knowledge. This raises the question of ‘Who’s building whose building?’ (Searle 1984).

While Gee (1995, p. 24) proposes that scaffolding should teach the student to learn independently of the teacher, he concludes: ‘I can offer no definitive answers’ as to how the student learns other to the teacher’s ways of knowing. I took the position in 1996 that the crosscultural ethnographer is trapped by and within his or her own methods. There is no position from which we can stand outside the text and critique (Carr and Kemmis 1986, p. 72-73). Scaffolding trains the student in the teacher’s
ways of thinking, talking and writing where the 'teacher as expert' acts as the motivating force for student learning (Malin 1998). The teacher is constituted as the condition of knowledge and learning.

The discourses of the crosscultural classroom are constituted as a value-free, scientific tool which the student can use to learn independently of the (white) teacher. The student is trained in scientific knowledge with little regard for what the student wants and expects. Rather, the student learns what the teacher thinks the student should learn (Young 1990, p. 89). Each student goes down the same pathway as others have gone before. The student is trained to think that the answer is more important than the question. The teacher asks the questions and the student is expected to answer them. The student learns through the teaching at university that there is a 'right' answer to the teacher's question and it's a matter of discovering what that is (see the data of section 6.1). The informants of the data of Chapter Six believe that knowledge is right and wrong at university. They learn this from their lecturers and from their experiences. The problem for the teacher in giving the student a question is that the teacher gets back what he or she wants and expects. The student already knows/anticipates how the teacher would answer the question because of the way he or she talks in the classroom. The informants of the data of Chapter Six talk about how they seek the lecturer's opinion in order to write an essay that will satisfy the lecturer.

The student learns to establish clear boundaries in his or her academic work and research, and he or she expects this from the lecturer as well. The student expects the lecturer to be able to give him or her the answers to questions, and to tell him or her what to do and why he or she is doing it (Cook 1992, p. 17). The student responds to external motivation (Cook 1992, p. 17). The student wants certainty and this is usually provided in an education system which gives the student explicit instructions in what to learn, how to scaffold the learning, when to begin learning, and when to stop. The student learns through the teacher how to talk and what to say and write. An explicit pedagogy tells the student what the teacher wants and expects.

Crosscultural theories of education have brought us to a point where learning can be produced as other to what either the teacher or the student want before they enter the
classroom. While learning is constituted in the theory through the production of intersubjective knowledge, I recognised from the data that the informants want to learn in the context of cognitive certainty and predictability. They are motivated by a teacher who can provide them with authoritative responses rather than by what is constituted in the theory as 'mutual learning' (Young 1990, p. 87). The student and the teacher are trained to expect answers rather than questions and ambiguity. There is a significant difference between what crosscultural pedagogic theories assume is going on in the classroom and what actually happens. Both have different expectations about what constitutes teaching and learning in the classroom.

There are two kinds of knowledge in the crosscultural classroom. One is the prior knowledge that has been constituted before the class begins. The informants learn this prior knowledge through a prior relation to the teacher. They have learned from their historical experiences (see the data of Chapter Four) to expect that the teacher will talk about knowledge from a position of authority. Scientific knowledge is constituted in relation to a position of truth. This position of truth is occupied by the teacher who acts in the position of an authority. The teacher is positioned by the student as speaking the truth. The student assumes that what the teacher says is true, and this is constituted through the teacher's way of talking. What is said by the teacher as an authority becomes the standard against which knowledge is constituted as true and false in the classroom (see the data of Chapters Four and Six).

Scientific knowledge and the ways of producing it are still considered to be separate. Scientific knowledge cannot be handed on without learning the teachers' methods for producing it. The student cannot learn mathematics and to read and write without adopting the teachers' methods. The two are inseparable. The student is trained through both conscious and partially unconscious discourses of the classroom to repeat the teacher's ways of talking and writing about knowledge. As the student is inserted into these discourses, he or she is trained to read, write and to speak like the teacher.

The other knowledge is negotiated and intersubjective and is produced through a relation between the student and the teacher in the classroom. Crosscultural theories of education represent this as 'shared knowledge' (Malin 1989, p. 628; Young 1990, p. 87; Hudspith 1996). But it is knowledge of a relation. It is produced as the
student and teacher talk and write about what they are doing. Knowledge is produced through the discussions, questions, interactions and expectations of both the student and the teacher. Felman (1987, p. 81) notes that this knowledge, ‘unlike any commodity, is subsumed by its use value, having no exchange value whatsoever’. According to Felman (1987, p. 167) as soon as ‘knowledge is exchanged, it ceases to be knowledge and becomes opinion’. The production of intersubjective knowledge in the classroom will be developed in Chapter Nine.

7.6. What are the discourses of the crosscultural classroom?

The way in which knowledge and learning are constituted in the interview data of Chapter Six are similar to the way in which knowledge and learning are constituted in crosscultural theories of education and ethnography (see above). The informants have learned through their experiences of the classroom to talk about knowledge in a scientific way, as ‘right and wrong’, as ‘out there’, as something you ‘go and get’. What they learn must correspond to what the teacher teaches. Scientific knowledge as prior knowledge is passed from the lecturer to student through the lecturer’s method. The informants assume a prior link between themselves and the teacher who acts in the position of an authority.

I gained the insight from the data of Chapter Six that there is a voice of authority contained in what the teacher says in the classroom. This voice functions not as a statement of content but as a performative speech act. It functions in terms of its impact on the student. The discourses of the classroom function as an illocutionary force. It is not only what the teacher says that positions him or her as an authority in the classroom. It is how the teacher talks about knowledge in the classroom that perpetuates an historical relation to authority. It is how the teacher is positioned within these discourses that governs how he or she will come to be seen by the students in his or her classroom. The discourses of the classroom perpetuate an historical relation to authority (also see the interview data from Chapter Four). Edwards and Mercer conclude that ‘if the educational process is not to be completely compromised by the asymmetry of teacher and learner, then we need to develop an understanding of the process which recognises and encourages that asymmetry in a manner that fosters rather than hinders learning’ (1987, p. 158). I began to look for other ways of theorising the learning relation in the crosscultural classroom.
raised a focus question for Chapter Nine:

*How can the student learn other to the teacher's position of authority in the crosscultural classroom?*

I came to the conclusion in 1996 (see Chapter Five) that disciplinary power is exercised through its invisibility. The aim of disciplinary power is not directed towards making the population into a single, uniform mass, but rather at training individuals (Foucault 1979a, p. 170). The student is disciplined through and by the teacher's scientific methodology. He or she is trained to think, talk and write like the teacher. Disciplinary power is exercised through the discourses of the classroom. These discourses govern what can be learned, how the knowledge is constituted and represented in the classroom, and the way in which learning is assessed. It is this historical relation to authority that remains invisible in crosscultural pedagogic theories although it is obvious to the informants of this research (see the data of Chapter Six).

The student is not only learning the teachers' ways of talking and making knowledge, he or she is also being trained in and subjected to a regime of power and authority where white people are perceived to be 'always in control of everything' (Willy, see Chapter Four). For the informants there is a strong parallel between the historical and social practices outside the classroom and the practices of teaching and learning in the classroom. One reminds them of the other insofar as the voice of scientific authority in the crosscultural classroom repeats the historical gaze of scientific authority in a crosscultural ethnography (see Chapter Five). The practices of teaching and learning in the crosscultural classroom repeat the social and historical relations in Australia where the white people have always 'had the authority over us' (Willy, Chapter Six).

Students are constrained through a scientific way of talking *about* knowledge as detached and objective. Their learning is governed by the discourses of science. These discourses establish the *rules* or discursive techniques for what and how the students can talk and write *about* knowledge in the classroom (see the data of Chapters Six and Ten). The discourses of science reproduce prior knowledge. They also constitute its method of production, which is, itself also accepted as prior and
true.

Power and authority in the school are no longer exercised by an overt and omnipotent authority but through ‘a whole ensemble of regulated communications’ and ‘by the means of a whole series of power processes’ (Foucault 1982, p. 218-219). Power in this sense is less a confrontation between the cultures of the student and teacher (see this chapter) than a question of government. For Foucault, governmentality refers to the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed. To govern in this sense is to structure the possible field of action of others (Foucault 1982, p. 221). What the students can say and learn is governed through the discourses of science, and specifically through the voice of scientific authority in the classroom. This voice of authority does not belong to the teacher but is constituted through his or her scientific method of teaching. The teacher is trained in a methodology before he or she begins to teach.

Both the student and the teacher are trained through the discourses of science. These discourses govern the knowledge to be taught, and what can be learned in the classroom. Only that knowledge which can be possessed and assessed can be taught through a scientific method (see my discussion of Competency-based Training above). As the teacher, the discourses of the classroom tell me what questions to ask and therefore what answers to expect from the students. Through the discourses, I know what behaviour to expect in the classroom and how to regulate it (see Hudspith 1996 above). My training shows me how to structure the lesson, and how to organise the students in the classroom, for example, as individuals in rows or in groups (Foucault 1982, p. 218-19). Just as the student is trained in the teacher’s ways of knowing, the teacher him or herself is trained by the student as well as by the institution in what and how to teach. Neither the teacher or the student are free of the disciplinary power of scientific authority.

While the teacher is trained in how to teach through the institution, his or her position of knowledge and authority as a teacher is authorised by the student. The teacher gets his or her voice of authority from the student. Likewise, the ethnographer’s authority is constituted through his or her training as a scientist although his or her interpretation of the data is authorised by the informant and other readers. Both the informant and the ethnographer and the student and teacher get
their respective speaking positions from others (see the data of Chapters Six and Eight). Each is an effect of power rather than one who exercises it.

As the final step in architectural and technological perfection, the panopticon includes a system for observing and controlling the controllers. Those who occupy the central watch tower in the panopticon are themselves thoroughly enmeshed in the ordering and control of their own behaviour. It is a model that no one, either the watched or the watcher, can escape. Both the student and the teacher are found to talk about knowledge with the voice of scientific authority in the classroom. Foucault (1980a, p. 156) observes:

This indeed is the diabolical aspect of the idea and all the applications of it. One doesn’t have here a power which is wholly in the hands of one person who can exercise it alone and totally over the others. It’s a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised. This seems to me to be the characteristic of the societies installed in the nineteenth century. Power is no longer substantially identified with an individual who possesses or exercises it by right of birth; it becomes a machinery that no one owns.

Both the student and the teacher are constituted through the discourses of science. Both are positioned in relation to the voice of scientific authority. Both are trained in how to talk and write about knowledge with the authority of a scientist. Both the student and the teacher are separated from their own situated knowledge, and from themselves, through the scientific ways in which they are trained to talk about knowledge in the classroom. Both go through the motions of learning and teaching without having to reflect on and critique why they do the things they do. This is done only in the context of their particular position. Just as the crosscultural ethnographer works within the framework of ethnographic methodology and educational anthropology the crosscultural teacher is positioned through his or her theory.

Crosscultural pedagogic theories are preoccupied by their own search for a scientific methodology. They are constrained by their own positionality, that is, their own ways of looking, thinking and talking. They are limited through and by the discourses of science. They do not look outside the discourses of science in an
attempt to produce a crosscultural pedagogy where the position of all students is validated and legitimised through the process of learning and teaching. Hudspith proposes that ‘if our training often fails to teach us how to teach, it also, perhaps more importantly, fails to instil in us an interest in, and a knowledge of, how the social world ‘works’ (or least of the variety of theories which are purported to explain how it ‘works’)’ (1996, p. 322). That is, as teachers, we need to think about what we are doing.

However, despite the emphasis on an explicit, visible pedagogy in crosscultural theories of education, the way in which the indigenous informants’s historical relation to authority is perpetuated in the classroom remains invisible in these same theories, although not to the informants of this research (see the data of Chapter Six). Pedagogic theories could make explicit the ways in which social and historical relations are reproduced and perpetuated through the discourses of the crosscultural classroom. I called on the theories of Foucault in Chapter Five to emphasise the change from a system of government based on the overt force of the monarch to a disciplinary society based on the invisible and unverifiable presence of authority. The power of the panopticon was in its invisibility. The prisoner could never know whether he or she was being watched.

The unequal relation between the student and teacher prompted me to look for other ways of theorising the learning relation in the crosscultural classroom. In 1998 I turned to critical pedagogy for some help. This will be examined in Chapter Nine.

The question limits what the student can know. He or she cannot stray too far from the topic. The PhD student is positioned within the boundaries of his or her methodology. This methodology regulates what he or she will find. It monitors and regulates what he or she can say and do. Boundaries are produced through mapping practices (Haraway 1991, p. 201). Arguments over what we know are struggles over ‘how to see’ (Haraway 1991, p. 194). The research student knows that his or her supervisors and the reader will monitor his or her interpretation in the context of the chosen methodology. This choice is a forced choice insofar as the student follows in the footsteps of his or her supervisors.
The PhD student is channelled into a particular specialisation which differentiates him or her from others. The student is inserted into a network of relations which positions him or her in relation to others. But in so doing it also separates and divides him or her from others within this network of relations. The student is trained in biology or business or history or education. The student is positioned as a biologist or business graduate or historian or teacher. In studying crosscultural ethnographic methodology I became a crosscultural ethnographer. In studying critical ethnography I became a critical ethnographer. In studying crosscultural pedagogic theories I began to adopt the position of a crosscultural teacher. Students 'become the subjects they study' (Sosnoski 1991, p. 202). They are disciplined through the methodology they adopt. The methodology as a disciplinary mechanism functions as an instrument of social control (Sosnoski 1991, p. 202). The student is positioned and constrained through the discourses of the classroom. His or her position tells him or her how he or she should relate to others within that context. Foucault argues that discipline works as a ranking system where the individual is ranked within a network of relations (1979a, p. 146). Through this positioning one knows one's place in the general economy of disciplinary power (Foucault 1979a).

Traditional disciplines like history or sociology or politics are becoming increasingly inadequate in providing solutions to the complex problems faced by practitioners in the classroom, and by researchers in the field (Crebin 1994, p. 27). These problems require more than a single disciplinary approach to research. For example, research into indigenous education has usually been conducted through the eyes of the sociologist, or psychologist or anthropologist, or philosopher who in turn determined the findings and recommendations of the research. The data were distilled into manageable compartments which could be controlled by the researcher, and presented to the reader in ways which would encase the problem with an air of certainty and finality.

The student learns at school and at university to limit knowledge so that it can be organised, manipulated and controlled. The student learns to talk about knowledge from the position of the discipline. Research into indigenous education has often been presented in terms of 'this is the problem and here is the answer'. The research works from the negative towards the positive. It creates a lack in the lives of
indigenous students and redeems them as the thesis progresses towards the end. I opted to write this thesis in terms of positions rather than produce a narrative that unfolds from beginning to end. I wanted to write about the informants and others without positioning them in an unequal relation of power to myself, and others. Nor did I consider any one theory to be better than another. I thought they all had something useful to say and that by looking for the links between them, I might be able to see something that I could not see before.

In 1998 I began to look for ways in which knowledge is produced outside the discourses of science. This raised a question for Chapter Nine:

How is intersubjective knowledge produced in the classroom?

7.7. Conclusion

Scientific knowledge is transmitted to the student through the teachers' ways of speaking and writing in the classroom. The student repeats the teacher's words, phrases, expressions. He or she begins to think and speak like the teacher, and looks from where the teacher looks. Knowledge cannot be handed on without learning the teacher's methods. The student is trained in scientific knowledge through the teacher's ways of producing that knowledge. The two are inseparable. The student must accept the authority of the teacher for there to be any learning. The student is motivated by what he or she expects the teacher to be, rather than by what he or she says and does.

There is a strong parallel between the ethnographer's gaze of scientific authority in the field, and the teachers' voice of authority in the crosscultural classroom. The teachers' voice of authority functions as a repetition of the scientific gaze. The data brought me to realise that the teacher's position is constituted historically through the scientific gaze and repeated in the classroom. Both the crosscultural ethnographers' look and the teachers' ways of thinking, talking and writing are linked through the informants' expectations of authority in the field and in the classroom.

The informants learn to keep the teacher happy. They do this by attempting to read the teacher's intentions just as the ethnographer tries to read the informant's mind.
Each wants to know what the other wants. Each assumes a relation to the other before they speak. Both the student and ethnographer think that they can find out what the teacher and the informant respectively thinks and knows. They constitute themselves accordingly to give the other what, they think, he or she wants and expects. They reflect on and adjust what they themselves think in the context of the teacher’s thoughts and beliefs. Each is motivated by a prior relation to the other. The student assumes that he or she can learn from the teacher before he or she walks into the classroom.

I did the same as an ethnographer. I thought that I could find out what the informant thinks and knows. I assumed a relation to the informant before I entered the field. The student does the same with the teacher. He or she assumes the possibility of a transmission between the teacher and him or herself. The transmission of knowledge in the classroom is governed by the student’s presumption of an imaginary link to the teacher. The student must assume that he or she has access to the teacher’s mind, and therefore to his or her knowledge and beliefs. Without this assumption on behalf of the student, there can be no transmission of knowledge and no learning. *There must be an assimilation to the position of the teacher as an authority in order for there to be a transmission of scientific knowledge and learning in the classroom.* But in perpetuating a prior relation to the teacher as an authority, crosscultural pedagogic theories reproduce an unequal historical relation in the classroom.

As I worked my way through crosscultural pedagogic theories, I became increasingly sceptical of claims which purported to recognise the background knowledge and culture of indigenous students while simultaneously positioning them in relation to a non-indigenous teacher as an authority. This raised a key question for Chapters Eight and Nine:

*How does the student learn outside the position of the pedagogue as an authority in critical pedagogic theories of education?*

With this question in mind I turned to the theories of critical pedagogy for some insight.
CHAPTER 8

1998

INTERVIEW DATA
CHAPTER 8: 1998 - INTERVIEW DATA

The discourses of emancipation and enlightenment

To recap on the interview group, in 1993, I interviewed nine indigenous students who were studying in Higher Education at the Northern Territory University. The data selected for each of the data chapters were obtained from these interviews. In this chapter, I provide two selections of interview data. I include a brief explanation at the beginning of each selection to explain why I chose the data.

8.1. The discourses of emancipation and enlightenment

I gained the insight from the following selection of data that the informants actively constitute themselves as agents of their own knowledge and learning. They constitute themselves as critical, emancipated students who are independent, ask questions, explain why, use their mind and 'stand on their own two feet' (also see Chapter Six). The informants position themselves in a prior relation to the critical pedagogue, and in relation to them selves, in an attempt to get the recognition of authority in the classroom. They are divided between the opposing positions of authority and agency through the discourses of emancipation and enlightenment. The discourses of emancipation and enlightenment offer the informants an escape from the 'vicious circle'.

Stacey: With uni, they gave you knowledge on things, why you do that, why people think that way. It makes you question things.

Karen: The university teaches you to think. Sometimes people get lost. To think: Why? A lot of Aborigines question things anyway. Why are they giving you this? It's wrong not to teach students not to explain why. It's setting them up for failure.

Karen: Education helps you to know what you're actually doing.

Jonathan: I was quite happy just cruising along, being a mechanic, below average wage. I enjoyed the life. I didn't enjoy the work a lot but I got by. But later I got sick of the work and I could see better things. What I thought was I could see other people doing just so much better than me. I just discovered a whole lot of different things to do. I never really considered [reflected] very much.
Jonathan: They [lecturers] like you to talk. They like you to speak up, not to be too quiet.

Karen: The greatest joy I got was getting a credit off [the lecturer]. Because I know he's such a hard marker. I thought wow! And you're recognised. I've got recognition in an academic world.

Karen: Education gave me the time out, of that vicious circle, a self-destructive cycle, and with the time out I was able to start reassessing myself. And then again, it's like another circle, but a good circle, cycle or whatever. Education gave me the tool to be able to decipher it all, work it out, like concentration, discipline. It's not just knowledge but how you do something, how you went about it. To evaluate things, and be honest, objective, and know what that word meant, to be objective or to be subjective, to know what you're actually doing. University gives you the power to break out of the system that has enveloped you so long.

Stacey: Doing it for yourself, learning to do it your way, standing alone, being able to achieve what you want to achieve, not what someone else wants you to achieve for you.

Jonathan: I couldn't have done it by myself before, but I could now. I don't need that much help now.

Trudy: Everything that happens and everything you do [at uni] is your own responsibility and if you're having problems, [lecturers] are there to help. At uni, it's my responsibility. It's up to me. At school, I had no choice. I had to be there. It wasn't a choice. You just went and did what they told you to do. [At uni] it's a choice of I can stay or I can leave. I can pick and choose which courses I want to do.

Karen: I became more self-centred. [At uni] you're allowed to be different, you're allowed to have different views. In my experience you're allowed to be an individual. There are people there that will just follow the flow, who just regurgitate. If you don't want to you don't have to.

Willy: It's very important that students can do it on their own. I've still got my goals set about what I need to do. Even while the support is there in AITOP [bridging program], they need to start thinking, well, I've gotta start doing things by myself. I may have had a wrong thought about once information is given out that I had to
know about it. If I wanted more information about it to go and find it myself. I've always had that thought, well, they've given out the information, now I've got to work on it myself, and I've got to try and understand it myself. I've got to find out what they were talking about, what did they mean by it, what do they expect me to come up with. I thought that I had to do all that by myself. It was very hard for me to go, even into the library, and look for certain things because always in my mind was, look, what do they expect of me, what do they want me to find out about this, what more information can I give, with what you've already given.

Nathan: People such as you and I, even before we come to uni, some people may get sick and tired of the position they're in, exposed to unemployment and all the other problems that go with it. We say, look, I'm sick and tired of continuously getting this amount of money. I'm going do something about it. And so I'm going to come to a place like this to try and get out of it.

Nathan: I think a lot of people, their parents or whoever, are too paternalistic towards them where they are not able to think for themselves. They're not able to do anything for themselves and so they haven't got the strength to break free of the chains that bond them and so they're stuck in that environment. Whereas somebody like myself, or you maybe, would say, I've had enough of this, I'm taking off. I'm going to make my own way in life.

Karen: I wanted to change and education gave me the tool, [to change] everything. It gives me a tool to do things I enjoy, when I get a job maybe I'll be able to afford more things that I didn't have previously.

Karen: I don't think I'm so lost, like I've found myself [since coming to university]. I know my limits, what you can and what you can't do and what you can do, and get away with it. Time has given me these things. And knowledge and education has helped me to understand. You need deeper understanding, I think, and to be able to sort them out. From being so reckless and self-indulgent, like accident prone. Emotionally grow up. I think now, what I am is me, you know. And mentally more mature.

Trudy: The most important thing is education. I really feel that I need the education. I'm aiming for a higher job, better pay, some enlightenment. I really love learning.
Because I didn't finish Grade 11 or 12, I always felt that need to learn more.

Ellie: [University] gives you the opportunity to have doors open. It's all been a gradual climbing up those stairs. I feel so confident now. I find now I can talk whereas before I was afraid.

Nathan: Educationally, academically, I think I've changed dramatically because of the knowledge I've acquired. I don't think I've changed personally, especially my outlook on life, from childhood to what I am now. Academically, I think it [university] has broadened my outlook on life and to recognise that there are cultural differences. It probably has taught me to see that I was very limited in some of my outlooks on life, on other people. Not only with other people from a different race and cultural background, but people within my own group as well, Aboriginal groups.

Kiara: A lot of people don't be themselves [at university].

Willy: I never used that word so much as I did in the last two years, Aborigine. I'm just wondering now, by using it like that, in such a way that, maybe I'm putting ourself in a little box. Like saying, us Aboriginal people or that Aboriginal tradition. Maybe we're doing it ourselves and not really aware of what we were doing. We didn't see the need to [use the word, Aboriginal]. It's only when we started going to uni that this was coming up in Australian History, in all the studies, that this word kept popping up all the time. All we use in Queensland is Murries.

Jully: Trouble with me is I try to please people. I've just gotta be me. I'm still learning that, to be myself. I can't change. Heaps of times I tried to change for the kids, tried not to smoke dope, not to drink but you just can't.

8.2. The practice of critique

I gained the insight from the following selection of data that a practice of critique is always already at work in the discourses of the classroom.

Karen: In a history tute, two of us had to give a tute on the same day. I thought how can I compete with this guy from third year? After, I sat there and thought I had done it wrong. After the tute everyone come up and said how well mine was and I
got a higher mark than he got and here I was undermining myself because you put your own values and judgments on people who you think are better than you. I think you are your own worst enemy.

Ellie: I can't get over the amount of bigoted, racists bastards. It freaks me out that I'm sitting there with my so-called fellow Australians. I think, fuck you. My father is a white man too. Yours isn't the only white man. I feel like saying it to them. They're talking about bludging blacks, you sit there biting your tongue.

Ellie: I'm in a tute where a student rubbishes Aborigines from Redfern, 'whiteskinned so-called blacks'. You can't take someone's identity away like that!

Karen: Always give them what they want but always asking and questioning, and that's what they like. It gets you good marks. And throw in an argument here or there about it. You've got to show them that you know what the perceived answer is. You can always give them something to think about like I did in my tute the other day. I told you when I brought the 'Freedom Rides' up and she nearly fell off the chair.

Karen: There's paternalistic lecturers there who have said to me - right to my face, "we know there's some good students out there who need just a little bit of nurturing". They want you to pass, they don't want you to fail their courses. You can use that too. And you've gotta learn how to do it right and to do the work.

Ellie: It's like that time I broke down in that anthropology tute. To this day it amazes me that I let that happen to myself because I like to consider myself pretty tough. I just got to the stage where I just didn't want to hear it any more! And the way that woman was relating it, it was so clinical that I couldn't handle it. When she first started, it was alright. She just kept talking about massacres and fucking atrocities and, about children getting bloody heads smashed off. It was the way she was talking about it! It was like, 'oh, we went and bought a six-pack of green cans and got on the piss'. That was about it! I just thought shit, fuck you, you know, that could have been my relations. That's how I was thinking. She probably wasn't even conscious that she was being so blase. When she got to the real bad bit about this guy that had been shot, when he fell, they just dragged him along, and he's in a neck
chain. And then she talked about, actually at one stage I was waiting for her to laugh, it sounded like she was going to laugh. It was awful. All of a sudden I got this enormous lump in my throat and I never heard another word that she said. I just switched off. Next thing I was conscious of was, I was sobbing. I just sorta put my head down and I thought, take a deep breath and compose yourself but I could not compose myself. I didn't feel silly. I wasn't even angry with her. I just thought, god, I thought I got over this sorta stuff. And I was still not angry. Whereas [the lecturer] apologised to me after. He said, I'm really sorry that you have to listen to this offensive stuff.

Jully: I didn't think I would be able to do [the course at university]. I'd always been told as a kid that I was stupid and dumb. I was told that I would never be any good and if you are told something for long enough you believe it. When you grow up being told you're dumb it takes a long time to realise that you're a person.

Jonathan: It's changing right now but I think in the past white people were seen as smart people, and we believed that we weren't. They made us believe that but it's a different world and that's the difference. When the white people came here they plonked their system in place and expected us to know it. It's so complicated the whole mess and that's what I'm trying to learn now. That's what makes people feel inadequate or whatever you want to call it. They don't have the knowledge to learn about that world and be able to communicate. To be able to communicate, you need to understand their world. Their world is mysterious to you. It's very hard. When you are very young you just believe what people say and they say: 'we only blacks but what else, we don't understand', like that, you know.

Stacey: I thought, it's a joke me applying for uni. When I applied for it, I forgot all about it and I thought, there's no way I'm going do that. They're just going laugh at it and pass it off. And then, [the liaison officer] rang up and said that I'd passed, and I was sitting there and I said, what, I passed the application? And she said no, you're in the course, you start in February. I was thinking, there's got to be another step to it. Still not sure of it, that I could do it. You get rejection all the way. You get to that stage where they can only say no. You get used to that, and you never expect anything else but the word, no.
Kiara: If a blackfella, if an Aboriginal talks real posh and that, they'll be freaking out, you know. How you dress. If you came here dolled up like when you was going out, I think they wouldn't like it. [They would think] you're trying to be better than them, I reckon. Or they think that you think that you're better than them.

Kiara: With them mob, you talk stupid. Half English or whatever you call it. Because I know I'm being interviewed and that I won't talk like that. Because it's not...but if I'm with my family I'll talk like that. If you didn't talk like that they would think you're trying to act white or something. I talk like this in a tutorial and I talk like this to other people too. It depends on who it is.

Kiara: I'm the only coloured one. There's two Indian women there. I'm the only blackfella in there. This doesn't bother me any more. It did at the beginning of the year. I've noticed in mainstream [degree course] that people always stare at you because they think you shouldn't be there because you don't see many coloured people there in mainstream. It's only for themselves; that you're not smart enough because your Aboriginal [repeated in Chapter Four].
CHAPTER 9

1998

EMANCIPATORY EDUCATION
AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY
CHAPTER 9: 1998 - EMANCIPATORY EDUCATION AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

How does the student learn outside the position of the pedagogue as an authority?

9.1. Introduction

The informants of the data from Chapter Six assume before the class begins that they can learn from the teacher. They assume the possibility of a transmission between the teacher and themselves. The transmission of knowledge and learning in the crosscultural classroom is governed by the informants' presumption of a prior relation to the teacher as an authority. The informants anticipate a link or conduit between themselves and the pedagogue as an authority. I took the position in Chapter Seven that without this assumption on behalf of students in the crosscultural classroom, there can be no transmission of knowledge and no learning.

I took the position in 1997 that while learning is motivated by the informants' presumption of a link to the pedagogue as an authority it is also constrained by the focus in crosscultural theories of education on methodology. The teachers' crosscultural method governs what the students look for, where and how they look, and how they talk and write about it. Both the students and the teacher are constrained by a classroom methodology. The informants spend a considerable amount of learning time trying to predict what the lecturer has already planned for the lecture, tutorial or essay so that they can give him or her in return what he or she wants and expects. They learn to monitor what the pedagogue wants in order to keep him or her happy. The student is trained through the discourses of science to speak and write about knowledge as the teacher would. But through the process of learning the teachers' scientific knowledge, other knowledge is produced in the classroom. This produced knowledge does not come from the culture or the mind of either the student or the teacher. This chapter is about how knowledge and learning are produced through a negotiated relation in the classroom.

I maintained in Chapter Seven that crosscultural pedagogic theories perpetuate and reproduces the indigenous students' historical relations to authority by positioning the teacher as an authority in the classroom. Giroux (1992, pp. 181-182) emphasises the danger in neglecting the ways in which the students' historical expectations are
reproduced inside the classroom:

Educators run the risk of complicity in silencing and negating their students. This is unwittingly accomplished by educators refusing to recognise the importance of those sites and social practices outside of schools that actively shape student experiences and through which students often define and construct their sense of identity, politics, and culture. The issue at stake is not one of relevance but of empowerment. We are not concerned with simply motivating students to learn, but rather with establishing the conditions of learning that enable students to locate themselves in history and to interrogate the adequacy of that location as both a pedagogical and political question.


Difference in crosscultural theories of education is constituted as cultural or ontological. This is exemplified in cultural mismatch theories (see Chapter Seven). Difference in critical pedagogical theories is constituted through an unequal power relation between the student and the pedagogue in the classroom. Critical pedagogic theories attempt to negotiate the difference between the positions of the students and the pedagogue in the crosscultural classroom. How this is achieved in theory and practice is the subject of this chapter. I take the position that as long as the students are talking and writing for someone, they are already negotiating and critiquing their own position in the classroom. The production of knowledge and learning are
governed by a pact of mutual recognition (see Chapter Eleven).

9.2. Critical Theory

My reading of critical pedagogic theories in turn introduced me to critical theory. Critical theory has its origins in the research of the Frankfurt School and more recently in the writings of Habermas (Gibson 1986, p. 20; Luke 1992, p. 27). I was looking for a theory that would help me to understand the relations between the student and the pedagogue in the classroom. Gibson (1986, p. vii) says:

Critical theory offers a wide range of concepts and methods which can help teachers establish rational justifications for their practice and also improve that practice. Because it insists on the indivisibility of theory and practice, critical theory enables teachers to place their own practice and experience at the centre of their studies.

Habermas proposes that the spread of scientific rationality now operates in an uncritically accepted way of thinking in the university disciplines as well as in most aspects of everyday life (Habermas 1987, p. 4). Rather than accepting that science has to justify its knowledge claims against epistemological standards derived from philosophy, it is now assumed that epistemology has to be judged against standards laid down by science (Habermas 1987, p. 4). Science has come to believe in itself. Science is no longer understood as one form of possible knowledge, but rather, the standard against which all knowledges are compared and judged (Habermas 1987, p. 4). Ethnographers and educational anthropologists constitute their findings as scientific on the basis that they, themselves, have acted as scientists throughout their research (see Dobbert 1982, p. 309-10). I maintained in Chapters Five and Seven that a scientific methodology is accepted without critique in crosscultural ethnography and in crosscultural theories of education.

I took the position in 1996 that the knowledge of informants in a crosscultural ethnography is described, compared and interpreted in the context of science (see Chapter Five). Indigenous knowledge is judged against the standard of western science. In 1993, I noted from crosscultural ethnographic theory that the informant's knowledge is not considered scientific until it has been placed within an interpretive structure (see Chapter Three). I came to recognise in 1996 that this structuring
device comes from the ethnographer's methodology rather than from the informant or the informant's culture. What the informants said in the field could no longer be classified as indigenous knowledge. Rather, it was now western scientific knowledge which I was trying to control through my own way of knowing as an ethnographer and scientist. This recognition has since motivated me to look for a method whereby indigenous students learn other than scientific knowledge in the crosscultural classroom.

Habermas reminds us that the natural sciences offer just one kind of knowledge among others. He refutes the claim that science can define the epistemological standards by which all knowledge is assessed. There are different ways of knowing, each with its own internal epistemological standards and truths and each oriented towards the satisfaction of different human interests and needs (Habermas 1987, p. 308). There are different knowledges each shaped by the particular human interest they serve. What we think, know and say are motivated by a particular interest. Like Foucault’s conditions of knowledge (see Chapter Five), for Habermas, knowledge is always linked to the constitutive interests that lead to its production. For example, the production of knowledge is motivated by one's own situated interests. As a crosscultural ethnographer, I attempted to position myself through a scientific methodology as the one with the knowledge to interpret the research problem at hand (see Chapter Five). I was motivated by a position of authority. In 1997, I maintained that the teacher in crosscultural educational theories is motivated by a position of knowledge and authority. What does the critical pedagogue want?

For critical theorists, the chief threat to humanity lies in taking away the individual’s capacity to reflect rationally upon their own action and to use these reflections as a basis for practical change (Carr 1995, p. 113). Through self-reflection, individuals can free themselves from the constraints of society and so become rationally autonomous agents. Through the power of self reflection, knowledge and interest are one (Habermas 1987, 314). The goal for a critical pedagogy is to articulate a theory of knowledge and learning in which critical self-reflection and conscious human agency can be acknowledged. Individuals should be provided with the opportunity to understand their own situation, and their real needs and wants. Crosscultural theories of education position the student in relation to the pedagogue’s authority. The student is expected to learn through the position of
authority. Crosscultural theories of education cannot explain how the student learns as an agent of his or her own knowledge and learning in the crosscultural classroom.

Critical theory provides educational theorists with 'a mode of critique and a language' for talking about the social and historical relations of domination that are perpetuated in the classroom (Giroux 1983, p. 5). The social privilege and inequalities reproduced in the classroom can be overcome through social emancipation and self-emancipation. Giroux (1983, p. 4) refers to the work of the Frankfurt School to summarise the goal of critical theory:

Within the theoretical legacy of critical theorists such as Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse there is a sustained attempt to develop a theory and a mode of critique that aims at both revealing and breaking with the existing structures of domination. Crucial to this perspective are an analysis and a call for the integration of the processes of emancipation and the struggle for self-emancipation.

Giroux calls for an integration of the theory and practice of pedagogy. A critical pedagogy should be seen to be practicing the principles of democracy and freedom in the classroom and not just talking about them. The critical pedagogue should be seen to be critiquing his or her own position of authority. For Giroux what we think and say must be linked.

Habermas recognised that emancipation is anticipated in every act of communication (McCarthy 1976, p. xviii). The very act of participating in discourse presupposes that a genuine agreement or consensus is possible (McCarthy 1976, p. xvii). Both speaker and listener must assume before they begin to talk that they will be able to understand one another and agree on what has been said. McCarthy, a translator of Habermas’ work, summarises Habermas’s theory of communication: ‘all participants must have the same chance to initiate and perpetuate discourse, to put forward, call into question, and give reasons for and against statements, explanations, interpretations, and justifications’ (McCarthy 1976, p. xvii). Communication ‘is free from constraint only when for all participants there is a symmetrical distribution of chances to select and employ speech acts, when there is effective equality of chances to assume dialogue roles’ (McCarthy 1976, p. xvii). All participants ‘must have the same chance to express attitudes, feelings, intentions, and the like’ (McCarthy 1976,
All interests and agendas should be represented, any question may be asked and communication between participants is symmetrical. Democratic discussion must be ‘free from all constraints of domination’ (McCarthy 1976, p. xvii). The conditions of discourse are connected to traditional ideas of freedom and justice which in turn is linked to the conditions of truth (McCarthy 1976, p. xvii). The goal of critical theory is self-emancipation from the constraints of unnecessary domination. In Foucauldian terms, theorists are looking for a student who is constituting as well as one who is constituted through the pedagogue’s way of knowing and learning.

Like the critical theorists, critical pedagogic theories are motivated by human agency and freedom. Students will feel free to learn in the classroom when they have equal opportunities to do so (Carr and Kemmis 1986; Simon 1992; Giroux 1992; Carr 1995). Students learn through democratic relations in the classroom rather than through an authority (Simon 1992, p. 116). What is said in the classroom is judged in the context of democratic principles of freedom and equality (Giroux 1992, p. 156). A critical pedagogy is directed towards evening-up the inequities in education. The differences in educational outcomes for students can be overcome through equal access and equity to resources and programs (see Luke 1992, p. 27; Gale 1996, p. 5).

Crosscultural pedagogic theories position the teacher as the condition of knowledge and learning in the classroom. The students and the teacher are linked through an exemplary methodology. Critical pedagogic theories claim that the ‘traditionalists have failed because they have refused to make problematic the relations among schools, the larger society, and issues of power domination, and liberation’ (Giroux 1983, p. 4). Critical pedagogic theories propose that the conditions of knowledge and learning are produced through a democratic relation between the student and pedagogue in the classroom.

9.3. How is the pedagogue positioned in critical pedagogic theories?

When I started teaching, I resented authority and its methods of control and I worked hard to avoid acting in that position. But students seemed to expect an authority. They demanded that I tell them what to do, when and how. Most of the classes I observed as a student-teacher were ruled by discipline and authority. The teachers
had the students ‘eating out of their hand’. I considered that they were caught up in a system of authority. But while they were being trained at home to accept authority, I was being trained by them to meet their expectations. I started to impose more rules and more discipline upon the students. I was rewarded for it by colleagues and by the students themselves. I also wanted to be fair and democratic. In retrospect, I was involved in a constant battle between acting in the position of an authority, and maintaining the principles of democracy in the classroom. I was faced by a similar dilemma to other teachers who are required to maintain order in the classroom while ensuring that the curriculum is taught.

McMurray reflects on her experience of teaching English to university classes of 60-90 students in Japan:

During the first class, I stood on the podium behind the lectern. Seventy students sat in rows in front of me - a typical Japanese setting, in which the teacher is the supreme authority. The students expect an all-knowing authority. For my part, I needed to stay true to my beliefs about authority in the classroom. I was not going to be put in the role of a lecturer. I wanted learning to happen in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere, but on the other hand, I did not want my English class to become a joke. I decided to meet the students half way (McMurray 1998, p. 214-215).

McMurray was divided between her own expectations and those of the students. She wanted to remain faithful to her own notions of teaching and learning while the students expected a ‘supreme authority’.

The students know that the pedagogue is the one who does the assessment (see the data of Chapter Six). Pedagogues are employed by the university or the school to teach, to assess students and to grade. Pedagogues are also authorities because of their knowledge, training and experience. The student is observed, assessed and measured against others. Gore (1993, p. 142) recognises that, she herself, is positioned as an authority by and through her own methods of teaching:

The teacher is an authority, and, by mode of moral supervision, is central to this machinery. Pedagogy deploys a limited set of techniques through which to distribute and observe individuals in order to make them responsible for their own conduct.
Since recognising that she is already situated as an authority by the student Gore concludes: ‘I have ceased trying to relinquish my authority’ (1993, p. 142). As a feminist pedagogue Gore (1993, p. 68) attempts to exercise ‘authority-with’ rather than ‘authority-over’ her students in order to democratise the power relations in the classroom. She uses her authority as a pedagogue to engage her students in explorations of pedagogy. She suggests making her own regime of institutionalised authority explicit to the students instead of imposing this regime on them (Gore 1993, p. 143). The assumptions and values that underlie the position of the pedagogue in the classroom must be made explicit to the student. The student should learn that ‘facts’ are laden with value judgments, that textbooks have been chosen for particular reasons, and that learning is based on unequal power relations that have developed historically over the last 200 years in Australia and are perpetuated in the classroom through the student-teacher relation.

Gore reveals to the students how her pedagogy is situated by the institution, and through critical and feminist discourses, in an attempt to disrupt the discursive practices that empower some students while disempowering others (1993, p. 143). She proposes that if pedagogy is not just received by students, but the pedagogue and student work together to unpack the discursive power relations of the classroom, then the work of unpacking will occur partly outside the regime (1993, p. 143). The student is situated in relation to an authority to speak, to critique, and to judge what is worthwhile knowledge in the classroom (Luke 1992, p. 39). Gore emphasises a pedagogy which is collaborative, cooperative and interactive rather than one which is competitive and individualistic (1993, p. 79). She emphasises a non-didactic approach with lots of discussion, role play, journal writing and storytelling (Gore 1993, p. 79). These methods are aimed at forming links with students rather than constituting them as independent learners.

Gore recalls a story of how she had asked her students to keep a reflective journal of their learning (1993). She thought that journal writing would help her students to reflect on their own positioning. She assumed that she could bring about institutional and social change through her pedagogical methods, and that this would be good for students even though they might not recognise this at the time (Gore 1993). One of her students, Scott, refused to participate in the journal writing exercise and was initially labelled by Gore as recalcitrant (1993, p. 1). Scott was not
interested in becoming self-conscious (1993, p. 1). While he was prepared to learn what Gore wanted him to learn, he resisted the pressure to think and write about himself. He resisted having to place himself at the centre of his learning. By the end of her book, Gore concludes that Scott was resisting the self-disciplining technologies imposed by her style of teaching (1993, p. 148).

The pedagogue is positioned by the institution as an authority in the classroom. As long as Scott refuses to recognise the pedagogue's authority to set and assess the work, then he will not learn. If he does not recognise the pedagogue's position as a subject supposed to know then he can't expect to be recognised himself. Scott wants to learn on his own terms and is not prepared to interact with the pedagogue.

Gore addresses the unequal power relation between the student and the pedagogue by proposing an 'emancipatory authority' which empowers rather than dominates the student (1992, p. 99). Cherryholmes (1988, p. 165) explains the apparent oxymoron in the following terms:

'Coercion appears to be necessary for emancipation while simultaneously subverting emancipation. The emancipation/oppression distinction thereby deconstructs, and its deconstruction highlights an issue that critical educators tend to keep at the margins of their discourse: which forms of domination (coercion, constraint) are justified in furthering which forms of emancipation?

A critical pedagogy must begin by reconciling the student-teacher contradiction so that 'both are simultaneously teachers and students' (Freire 1972, p. 46). Freire is not suggesting that the positions of the student and the pedagogue be made equivalent:

For me the question is not for the teacher to have less and less authority. The issue is that the democratic teacher never, never transforms authority into authoritarianism. He or she can never stop being an authority or having authority. Without authority it is very difficult for the liberties of the students to be shaped. Freedom needs authority to become free. It is a paradox but it is true. The question nevertheless is for authority to know that it has its foundation in the freedom of others, and if the authority denies this freedom and cuts off this relationship, this founding relationship, with freedom, I think that it is no longer authority but has become authoritarianism (Shor and Freire 1987, p. 91).
Trend proposes in an interview with Giroux that ‘you can’t avoid authority, because it’s a psychological condition’ (Giroux 1992, p. 158). An authority must be used to provide the pedagogical conditions that empower students not only to speak but also to develop the critical capacities to change the conditions that oppress them and others in the first place (Giroux 1992, p. 158). Learning through the pedagogue as an authority is in fact good and valuable and necessary if the student is to learn something of his or her own. The student must accept the authority of the pedagogue for there to be any learning.

Critical pedagogic theories are torn between the opposing positions of emancipation and coercion. It creates democratic conditions of learning in the classroom but it recognises that the student enters the classroom already expecting the pedagogue to occupy a position of authority. Critical pedagogic theories want to position the student as an agent of his or her own knowledge and learning. The informants of Chapter Six expect a teacher who knows how to teach them. They constitute themselves for an authority and they hope for structure and certainty in return. McMurray attempted to account for her students’ expectations by meeting them ‘half way’ (see above). Gore explains Scott’s refusal to do as he was told in the classroom as resistance to the methods of coercion and authority. Cherryholmes and Freire (see above) view freedom and authority as linked rather than as opposites.

9.4. How is the student positioned in critical pedagogic theories?

Critical pedagogic theories have as their goal the critical consciousness of the student (Shor 1993, p. 32). The student ‘becomes a critical thinker in the act of practising critical thought; in the act of being conscious in relation to the world’ (Lankshear 1993, p. 90). The critical pedagogue in the university classroom talks about how his or her methods were chosen, where the theory comes from and how it affects what he or she says and does, and its consequences for others. According to critical pedagogic theories the pedagogue talks about the conditions of knowledge. He or she also encourages students to analyse and critique how they ‘actively construct the categories of meaning that prefigure how they produce and respond to classroom knowledge’ (Giroux 1992, p. 181).

In 1996 I reflected on how I constructed the interpretive categories in my first
ethnographic interpretation of the data. I took the position that these categories of meaning came from the methodology. They governed what I could think, know and say as an ethnographer.

Students in critical pedagogic theories are expected to make decisions for themselves rather than having a teacher who decides what is to be done, when and how (Cook 1992, p. 16). While the pedagogue can instruct the student on reading and writing skills and how to add up and take away, he or she cannot tell the student the meaning of the knowledge produced in the classroom. Students are expected to learn independently of the pedagogue and they are best positioned to do this when they have control over their own learning. Students learn best when they want to, that is, when they are self-motivated (Cook 1992, p. 16). What students learn will mean more to them when they are able to ask their own questions and pursue the answer in their own way and in their own time rather than working to a set script.

While ‘students need the comfort and security of a routine’ they also need to be encouraged to learn on their own (Douglas Brown 1998, p. 159). The student gains control of the task as the adult gradually withdraws support until the student can perform the task on his or her own (Trouw 1997, p. 110). Children progressively internalise self-regulatory activities until they become an automatic part of their own reading and writing (Wood 1988, p. 178). The student begins to monitor his or her own progress, and to become more conscious of what he or she says and does. The ability and willingness of each student to take personal control of academic learning is most basic to his or her success (Christie 1984, p. 328).

By this time, I was becoming increasingly conscious of the division in what the pedagogue wants. On the one hand, the pedagogue expects students to learn through others (see Chapter Seven). But he or she also expects the students to be self motivated. This may not be a contradiction for the teacher but it is one for the informants of this research. How the informants resolve this split in what the pedagogue wants is the subject of this chapter.

Huggins (1999) relies on an interventionist and explicit approach to teaching and learning where modelling and joint negotiation and construction of texts precedes independent production of knowledge and learning. This is opposed to process
writing which relies on implicit learning of literacy through immersion and exposure to different texts. As a practising pedagogue, Huggins tries to devise strategies that encourage her students to become active learners. She combines an explicit approach with a student centred approach (Huggins 1999, p. 35). She adds that the most successful and enjoyable learning occurs when the students make discoveries about how language works in different social contexts.

The Northern Territory University has introduced Common Units for first year students who must take two of the units as part of their degree. The rationale for the introduction of compulsory common units is that ‘employers want more than people crammed full of knowledge. They want people who can think on their feet, make connections, get on with others and a whole range of other interpersonal skills’ (Northern Territory University 2000, p. 1). The Northern Territory University is producing a normative identification of what the student is supposed to be through how it talks about students. The university wants students who are self motivated.

Students are positioned as responsible for their own learning in critical pedagogic theories. They are expected to move towards setting their own goals rather than continuing to rely on the goals set by the pedagogue or the curriculum. To enable university students to establish their own questions, solve their own problems and talk about what they are learning, the teacher should be prepared to relinquish some control of the learning (Crebin 1994, p. 5). This requires some academics at university to acknowledge that while they are teaching a subject or a discipline, the students are learning through a relation to the pedagogue. The students bring their own expectations into the classroom and these should be recognised by the teacher.

The pedagogue is expected ‘to foster leadership and effective participation in others’ to the extent that he or she becomes less necessary to the ‘self-directed learning process’ (Mezirow 1990, p. 363). The students are encouraged to organise and set the goals for their own learning (Shor and Freire 1987, p. 90). The pedagogue ‘gently creates dilemmas’ by encouraging learners to face up to contradictions between what they believe and what they do, the differences between one position and another (Mezirow 1990, p. 366). The control of the learning process should reside in the student. A successful pedagogy is measured in terms of the student’s increasing independence and self-motivation. The aim is to get the student to
become more ‘self-directed’ while the pedagogue’s role is to act as a ‘sounding board’ for the student (Mezirow 1990, p. 365). The critical pedagogue is also positioned as a ‘facilitator’ or ‘cultural worker’ (Giroux 1992; Simon 1992) or helper (Gore 1992, p. 68). The critical pedagogue helps the student to ‘understand himself’, and to reflect on his or her own assumptions and beliefs.

Critical pedagogic theories position the pedagogue as the one to provide students with the knowledge and skills to critique what and how they know. The pedagogue is expected to teach the student how to critique. And the students are expected to learn to critique their historical and social relations to authority inside and outside the classroom (Giroux 1983, 1992; Simon 1992). In 1996 I critiqued the ethnographic methods that positioned me as an authority in my interpretation (see Chapter Five). Students learn to reflect on their own assumptions and expectations and to challenge the methods that position them in an unequal relation to others (Simon 1992, p. 59). Critical pedagogic theories endeavour to make the student responsible for what he or she says and does (Simon 1992, p. 64). Following my insights gained from the data in 1995 I took the position in 1996 that ethnographers should take responsibility for their interpretations rather than hand this responsibility to others (see Chapters Four and Five).

Gale takes the position in his doctoral research that representations of indigenous people in discourse are not just reflections of what already exists (1996). Rather, what is said about indigenous people in the discourses of education and the media actually produces the relations between indigenous and non-indigenous people (Gale 1996, p. 339). The relation is not prior to these discourses. It is produced through how we talk about each other. I gained the insight from the data of Chapter Four that the informants’ histories and their experiences at university had alerted them to the way in which they are constituted in scientific discourses for the gaze of others. They were drawing my attention to the importance of my own ethnographic method insofar as the way in which I interpreted the data would govern the ways in which the informants would come to be seen and interpreted by others. The relation between the indigenous informants of this research and the readers is constituted through the ways in which I talk and write about the informants. The relation is produced through and by the interpretation.
The informants, along with critical pedagogic theories were emphasising over and over again, that the way in which I interpreted the data would govern the way in which the informants would come to be seen. I began to avoid the discourses that pathologise and romanticise indigenous people. I did not want to position the informants within the tired out discourses of culture. I had already gone down that road with my first interpretation. I also reflected on how the informant and ethnographer, student and the teacher, and myself and my supervisors are linked rather than opposed. I began to look for commonalities in the different experiences. How is the position of each constituted through and by the other?

In critical pedagogic theories, students are expected to chose how they learn as well as what they want to learn. These choices should extend beyond the selection of materials that has already been chosen for the student by the pedagogue (Berlin 1993, p 263). Students are positioned so that they can work freely in groups, or as individuals, and to produce and present this work as either shared or individual texts. They should be able to present their findings orally, as well as in writing. While these options are possible at the undergraduate level, it is rare that postgraduates can work as a group and present their findings as a group.

A powerful norm of individualism and competitiveness exists in universities where research academics are constituted as self-directed agents of intellectual entrepreneurship (Schon 1987, p. 310). Collaboration is rare. Two students collaborated on the research and writing of a Masters degree at the Northern Territory University to present their work in 2000 (Watts and Fisher 2000). Their historical research was presented as the first known example of collaborative work conducted at the postgraduate level at an Australian university. Schooling is weighted against group work while it privileges the individual, self-regulated worker. Pedagogues in higher education appear more suspicious of collaborative work and emphasise even more the individual as the source of motivation and learning. I gained the insight from the data of Chapters Six and Eight that the informants of this research are motivated by others rather than by oneself.

There is a hierarchy of learning and authority at work in the crosscultural classroom in both schools and at university. It privileges the individual over the group and writing over oral work (Christie and Rothery 1990, p. 187), and the teacher over the student. Most learning is pedagogue-centred. Like an ethnography the hierarchy in
education grades work in stages from description and classification as lower order skills, through to analysis and conclusions. Description and narrative are considered lower order skills while independent analysis and judgments are considered 'higher-order thinking' in the discourses of the classroom (Michaels 1995, p. 22). Just as the ethnographer progresses through the lower to higher order skills, the student is expected to progress from narrativisations to analysis and conclusions. Texts are presented and discussed in terms of ‘simple’ and ‘complex’ texts (Gray 1999).

Critical pedagogic theories account for the students’ expectations of an authority by positioning the student in relation to discourse rather than in relation to the pedagogue as an authority. The student is expected to monitor and control his or her own learning (Gibson 1986, p. viii). The student makes decisions from him or her self rather than relying on an authority to tell him or her what to do and how. The student is expected to critique the ways in which he or she is positioned historically in relation to an authority through the discourses that circulate inside and outside the classroom:

Students need more than information about what it means to get a job or pass standardised tests that purport to measure cultural literacy. They need to be able to critically assess dominant and subordinate traditions so as to engage their strengths and weaknesses. What they don’t need is to treat history as a closed, singular narrative that simply has to be revered and memorised (Giroux 1993, p. 374).

I proposed in 1996 that the position of informants in a crosscultural ethnography is fixed through the interpretation (see Chapter Five). Crosscultural ethnographic interpretations suggest that this is the way things were and this is how they are now. The informants are fixed in relation to an historical and geographical setting constituted by the ethnographer. The history comes from the ethnographer, not the informant. As an ethnographer, I linked the informants to a context of my own making because I wanted to show cultural continuity. Both the student and the pedagogue could be analysing how they come to know, what they want, and why.

The recognition that our histories are constituted through discourses allows both student and teacher to challenge the inherited views of themselves and others as the product of a historically determined past. It helps the pedagogue to avoid
pathologising indigenous students as victims of a past history which is constituted as progressively unrolling in a chronological manner over the last two hundred years. Student come to understand how particular historical and educational discourses govern what they think, know and say. The critical pedagogue is expected to teach the students how to critique the way in which they are positioned within these discourses (Simon 1992, p. 112).

Central to critical pedagogic theories 'is the need to explore how pedagogy functions as a cultural practice to produce rather than merely transmit knowledge within the asymmetrical relations of power that structure teacher-student relations' (Giroux 1992, p. 98; italics added). There have been few attempts to analyse how the relations between the pedagogue and student are tied not only to what they know but also to how they come to know. What we teach and how we do it are closely related to forms of domination, and to the ways in which these practices can be critiqued and resisted (Giroux 1992). According to the theories, the indigenous students should be trained in scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge is defined in the data of Chapter Six, and in Chapter Seven as prior knowledge. In addition, students should be able to critique the ways in which they are constituted within unequal power relations in the classroom. Critical pedagogic theories expect students to understand how they are positioned within and against the discourses of the classroom. This is based on the proposition from critical theory that the student should be able to self-reflect in order to change his or her own situation. The opportunity to critically self-reflect is constituted as a condition of knowledge and learning in the critical pedagogic classroom. This raised the following question:

9.5. How do students learn to critique in critical pedagogic theories?

The most significant adult learning experiences involve critical reflection: 'reassessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling, and acting' (Mezirow 1990, p. 13). Critical reflection is 'a critique of the presuppositions on which our beliefs have been built' (Mezirow 1990, p. 1). Through critical questioning, the student looks for anomalies and contradictions in the old ways of knowing, and it is the gap in knowledge that 'triggers' critical reflection and transformation (Mezirow 1990, p. 14). Through critical reflection and transformation, the student learns how and why our
presuppositions and expectations have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand and feel about the world, and to be more open to other experiences and perspectives (Mezirow 1990, p. 14). Emancipatory education helps the learner challenge presuppositions and ‘habits of expectation’, explore alternative positions, transform old ways of understanding, and act on new positions (Mezirow 1990, p. 18). Reflecting on ‘the content, process, and especially the premises of one’s prior learning is central to cognition ... It is the way we control our experiences rather than be controlled by them’ (Mezirow 1990, p. 375).

In critical pedagogic theories, students talk about the ways in which they come to know and to learn, rather than what they know (Simon 1992, p.115-6). Rather than arguing over what a text means, the student and pedagogue analyse the ways in which meaning is produced (Simon 1992). Through a study of one's own responses to text, the student can be helped to locate his or her perceptions, beliefs and values within the discourses that position him or her. The pedagogue’s role is to provoke and challenge the student’s existing views by ‘offering questions, analyses, visions and practical options’ that student can pursue in their own lives (Simon 1992, p. 47). The aim is to help the students come to a better understanding of who they are, how their history has been constituted, how this knowledge can open up possibilities for change and enhancement (Simon 1992, p. 115). But a critical pedagogy should ensure that the methodology is not aimed at getting the students to think and act as the pedagogue does (Simon 1992, p. 47).

Nakata (1997, p. 70) critiques the emphasis on teaching functional literacy to Islander students as if ‘that is all we are seen to need it for’. He takes the position that Torres Strait Islanders should be learning English primarily so that it can be used as a ‘political tool’ in their lives. They should be learning more than to state their name, address, and age, and to fill out withdrawal and deposit forms at the bank. A student friend of Nakata’s remarked: ‘If I can’t fill out my bank forms, I can ask at enquiries’ (Nakata 1997, p. 71). He proposes that Islander students should be able to look over the counter and seek information that the people behind it have rather than learn about what they already know or could easily find out from someone else. If students were learning about the political knowledge of western institutions and how they work, then they would know what questions to ask and what they want to find out (Nakata 1997, p. 71). Nakata is proposing that students
should be learning the conditions of scientific knowledge. Students should learn the
skills to analyse, deconstruct and critique the ways in which he or she is constituted
and represented in discourse.

Within every textbook there are multiple readings and contradictions. The meaning
of a text is governed by many conditions and we cannot simply reduce learning and
teaching to discussions over the proper meaning of a text. Rather, the pedagogue
should emphasise how the meanings are produced in the classroom (Simon 1992, p.
115). Texts that are used in the classroom are not simply full of facts. They are the
results of political, economic and cultural activities, battles and compromises. They
are produced and written by authors with particular agendas in mind (Apple 1993, p.
195).

As I write each chapter, I discover that it can be structured in many different ways
and a lot of my time is devoted to choosing the best way of ordering and structuring
my ideas and the ways they develop. I chose one which I think is the most
convincing for the reader. While the meaning in each chapter comes from the
structure, the number of structures or contexts which can be employed to produce
multiple meanings are limitless. The text gets its meaning from the context but the
contexts are limitless. The problem is not one of how to make true meaning.
Rather, it is about the kinds of limits that we place on all the possible meanings that
can be produced from a text. Chapter Five analysed the categories and structures
that constrain and limit the ethnographic interpretation.

The use of scaffolding as a methodological technique for producing knowledge in
the classroom is based on the recognition that students should be able to actually
observe how the knowledge is constructed in the classroom. The conditions of
knowledge should be explicit to students. They should be able to see where the
ideas and positions in a classroom text come from and how they are linked together
through particular techniques. When knowledge is actually produced by the student
and the pedagogue together in the classroom, they are able to observe how their
judgments and interpretations are produced. Students will then spend less time
trying to work out what the teacher has in mind and more time on analysing what
they think and want. I have taken a similar approach in this thesis. I have tried to
outline how I have arrived at a particular position by discussing how I have moved
from one position to the next, and from one chapter to the next. I have tried to be
explicit about the conditions of my knowledge as an ethnographer, and as a pedagogue.

In 1994 ten educators, Courtney Cazden, Bill Cope, Norman Fairclough, James Gee, Mary Kalantzis, Gunther Kress, Carmen Luke, Alan Luke, Sarah Michaels and Martin Nakata met in New London, USA, to look for ways of producing knowledge in the classroom which would allow each student to learn the basics without having to lose his or her identity and culture (The New London Group 1996, p. 72; also see Cope and Kalantzis 2000). They ‘were able to agree on the fundamental problem, that the disparities in educational outcomes did not seem to be improving’ (The New London Group 1996, p. 2-3). They proposed that students should benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community and economic life (1996, p. 60). The challenge is to encourage the different languages and the multiplicity of meanings to flourish rather than erase differences through the imposition of a standard. The group was looking for ways in which students could learn from their own situated knowledge. While the student is positioned in relation to his or her experience in the classroom of the critical pedagogue, that experience should never be celebrated uncritically (Simon 1992, p. 124). The students should be able to critique what they think, know and say. But how do they learn to critique without it being an assimilation to the position of the pedagogue?

The New London Group defines pedagogy as the integration of four factors: ‘situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice’ (1996, p. 83). Situated practice focuses on the cultural and linguistic experiences that the student brings to the class (1996, p. 88). Overt instruction includes the active interventions on behalf of the pedagogue to build on and develop the knowledge and experience of the student (1996, p. 86). It is not enough just to give students books to read, questions to answer, topics to talk about and assignments to complete, or maths problems to solve. The pedagogue guides, models, and scaffolds students in the particular ways of thinking, giving explanations, constructing arguments, and asking questions relevant to the context of learning (Michaels 1995, p. 22).

For the New London Group, the pedagogue guides students in the practices of a discourse, and the students learn how to talk and write about what they are learning.
The goal of overt instruction is conscious awareness and control over what is being learned (The New London Group 1996, p. 86). Transformed practice allows the student to compare his or her experiences in relation to different contexts and discourses and to realise that these experiences can have multiple meanings in a multiplicity of contexts (The New London Group 1996, p. 88). Critical literacy helps the learner to understand how his or her position is constituted through an unequal relation to the pedagogue. Critique provides the student with a ‘means of reflection as well as a means of action’ (Halliday 1985). The pedagogue’s job is to devise ways that can ‘direct and develop complex reasoning in the learner’ to solve his or her own problems (Michaels 1995, p. 22).

The student is positioned by the New London Group in relation to a metalanguage. A metalanguage would provide the student with a position of critique. A place outside the discourses of the classroom would provide students with a distance from what they already know (Simon 1992, p. 112). I came to the conclusion in 1996 and again in 1997 that neither the informant nor the ethnographer can stand outside what he or she thinks and knows. And likewise, the student and the pedagogue are always positioned in relation to their own knowledge and experience. So how can the student occupy a position outside the scientific discourses of the classroom?

In her reflections on the proposals of the New London Group, Hansen (1995, p. 75), a practising high school teacher, doubts that either teachers or students in the Northern Territory are critically examining the discourses they bring with them into the classroom. Her solution is to develop specific learning outcomes which test students’ abilities to critique the interpretive basis of what they already know and say and do. Hansen tries to plan for and program a learning which is specific to the student’s own experiences, but it is one that cannot be evaluated in terms of a system wide curriculum. What the student learns and how the student learns in relation to his or her own situated knowledge, cannot be predicted, nor known by the pedagogue. Once the learning is planned and controlled, knowledge ceases to be produced through critique, and becomes a transmission of what the pedagogue knows, wants and expects.

In bell hooks’ university classroom, the student is positioned in a space of uncertainty and risk rather than in an atmosphere of safety:
The revolutionary hope that I bring to the classroom is that it will become a space where they can come to voice. Unlike the stereotypical feminist model that suggests women best come to voice in an atmosphere of safety (one in which we are all going to be kind and nurturing), I encourage students to work at coming to voice in an atmosphere where they may be afraid or see themselves at risk. The goal is to enable all students, not just an assertive few, to feel empowered in a rigorous, critical discussion. Many students find this pedagogy difficult, frightening, and very demanding. They do not usually come away from my class talking about how much they enjoyed the experience (hooks, 1989, p. 53).

Students are expected to learn through the dialogue of the classroom. They are expected to ‘assert themselves’ and to be ‘critical thinkers’ (hooks 1989, p. 53). A critical pedagogy starts with the teacher, and then the student examining the self from a new, critical perspective. Rethinking and remembering ways to constructively narrativise the self makes the students more conscious of who they are, and how they can relate to others (hooks 1989). Story-telling enables the students to see themselves as part of history (hooks 1989, p. 110). Freire (1972, p. 53) proposed that the positions of the pedagogue and the student become interchangeable through dialogue. They teach each other through negotiation and dialogue to produce a ‘deepened consciousness of their situation’ (Freire 1972, p. 53). Dialogue is constituted as the condition of knowledge and learning (see Chapter Eleven).

In critical pedagogic theories, the students and the pedagogue are both expected to express their own views while simultaneously analysing and critiquing how these views are constituted through the discourses of race, gender, class and age (Simon 1992, p. 64). This requires a collective process that will most likely produce conflict and difference. Students and the pedagogue should be ready to accept difference and disagreement as resources for learning (Simon 1992, p. 64). These differences encourage the students to reflect on how their own knowledge claims contribute to, and perpetuate relations of power and authority (Simon 1992, p. 64). Critique allows the students to understand how they participate in their own domination, and that of others. In 1996 I analysed the ways in which my own ethnographic interpretation reproduced relations of power and domination. My interpretation perpetuated a relation where the informants were positioned in relation to the interpretation of
others but never in relation to self. They were constituted as objects of other peoples’ knowledge, not as agents of their own knowledge and experience. I took responsibility for what they said, and spoke on their behalf. The informants lost control over what they said in the field as the data were progressively inserted into my interpretive structures (see Appendix One).

I was introduced to the position, through critical ethnographic theory, that analytical knowledge is *produced* not found. I have proposed that much of the learning that goes on in the classroom is preempted by the pedagogue. This is scientific knowledge and learning. It already exists before the class begins. But learning is also *produced* through the discourses of the classroom. The student uses the pedagogue as a sounding board to express his or her knowledge and beliefs, and to identify and name the ways in which he or she is positioned within discourses inside and outside the classroom (Luke 1992). It is proposed that if students are given equal opportunities to talk about their cultural experiences, and if pedagogues help students to analyse the ways in which their knowledge and identity are constituted within and against ideological frameworks and discourses, then ‘students will have the critical tools with which to act in morally responsible, socially just and politically conscientious ways’ (Luke 1992, p. 27).

Critical pedagogic theories are based on the position taken in critical theory that people are motivated to reflect critically on their own social situation (Crebin 1994, p. 23). The student is expected to become an active learner rather than one who accepts and reproduces the unequal power relations of the classroom, and of the wider society. Students pose problems and solve them using a range of skills and techniques (Freire 1972, 1985). Students should be able to identify their own biases in order to distance themselves from subjective knowledge and experience (Harding 1991; Haraway 1991). Critical pedagogic theories expect ‘that students will question and probe information and not take knowledge as given’ (Crebin 1994, p. 66).

As the student moves into tertiary education, he or she is expected to become self-motivated (Crebin 1994, p. 84). From a survey of seven hundred first year students at the University of Ballarat, seventy percent ‘considered self-motivation and individual responsibility were the features which distinguished tertiary study from
secondary schooling (Crebin 1994, p. 84). Self-motivation and responsibility were also demanded by academics at the same institution (Crebin 1994, p. 84). The student should ensure that he or she meets the commitments and expectations of the university and its lecturers. The student in tertiary education is expected to monitor his or her own performance, and to become self-monitoring. Students know that there are rules to follow, and these should be adhered to. Study becomes increasingly individualised as the student progresses through the educational system. The student is treated as an individual at university (see Chapter Eight). In schools, the student is subject to the constant and ongoing discipline and authority of the pedagogue but this external surveillance and regulation decreases as the student continues through the education system. The student becomes increasingly self-governing as he or she is positioned as self-motivated and autonomous.

While higher education encourages critical thinking in theory, the practice is often quite different. The authoritarian model of assessment in higher education means that ‘all too often, a belief that “playing safe” and “pleasing the teacher” is the key to success within education’ (McMahon 1999, p. 550). Where assessment is organised in an authoritarian manner, students will give the teacher what he or she wants and expects (McMahon 1999, p. 551). It is proposed that power sharing between students and teachers over assessment decisions is necessary to overcome the situation where an authoritarian relation militates against learning in the classroom. McMahon (1999, p. 551) holds that ‘if learners have some say over what is assessed and how it is assessed then, by negotiation, they can take greater responsibility for what is learned and how it is learned’. By this time, I was becoming increasingly suspicious of a theory which made claims to power sharing and democracy in the classroom while leaving the credentialising process in the hands of the pedagogue.

When I returned to the data to find out how students actually learn to critique in the classrooms of the Northern Territory University, I found a significant difference between the expectations of critical pedagogic theory and what was happening in classroom practice.

9.6. How do students learn to critique in classroom practice?

I gained the insight from the interview data of Chapter Eight that the informants
actively constitute themselves for the critical pedagogue as agents of their own knowledge and learning. They constitute themselves through the discourses of emancipation as critical students who are independent, ask questions, explain why, use their mind and speak up in tutorials, stand on their own two feet and do it on their own (also see the data of Chapter Six). The informants talk about how they are better off now that they have come to university. They constitute themselves in accordance with what they think the critical pedagogue wants and expects.

Through talking and writing for the pedagogue, the informants learn what the pedagogue wants. They learn to constitute themselves as critical students to keep the pedagogue happy. To the critical pedagogue, the students sound like they are taking control of their own learning while the students are being rewarded for being critical, independent learners.

In the classroom at Milingimbi, both the student and the teacher each develop coping strategies to deal with the expectations of the other (also see Chapters One and Seven). As the teacher demands academic, purposeful learning, the student retreats from the teacher’s demands. The teacher then responds to the student’s retreat by reducing his or her demands for academic knowledge. Both student and teacher ‘adjust to each other in order to survive long periods together in the classroom’ (Christie 1984, p. 353). Each is trained through a hidden discourse in the classroom to negotiate a place in relation to the other.

The informants of this research are already anticipating that they will be analysed and judged by others (see Chapters Four and Five). As they constitute themselves in relation to others, their own expectations govern what they, themselves, say and do in the classroom. The informants’ interpretation of what others are thinking limits and constrains their own participation. They limit what they say as they second guess how others will interpret and judge them. The gaze of others is internalised to the point where the informants turn the interpretation upon themselves. Like the invisibility and anonymity of the panoptic gaze described in Chapter Five, the interpretation produces in these informants ‘a state of conscious and permanent visibility’ (Foucault 1979a, p. 201). The interpretation of others induces in the informants a state of permanent self awareness which acts to limit and constrain what they say and do in the classroom. Constant visibility is the key to disciplinary technology (Foucault 1979a, p. 201):
He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (Foucault 1979a, p. 202-03).

The informants and the pedagogue become both the subject and the object of each other's expectations. They become the object of other peoples' expectations, and the subject of their own self-consciousness. The pedagogue is positioned as an authority by the informant before the class begins. The informant is positioned as an agent by the pedagogue. Each is constituted as an object of the other's prior expectations. Each feels self-conscious in relation to the other. The informant is concerned with what the pedagogue will think and constrains him or herself accordingly. The critical pedagogue is concerned about perpetuating a historical power relation through his or her method of teaching. The informant is divided between the opposing positions of agency and authority while the critical pedagogue is divided between the positions of authority and democracy. Both are positioned as divided within a discourse of desire which is instigated through the mirror phase (see Chapter One).

Briefly, the mirror stage involves the child's insertion into a discourse which governs how he or she communicates with others for the remainder of his or her life. The mirror image takes on importance as a result of the parent's recognition and approval. The child comes to see itself as its parents do, and calls on his or her parents and significant others to ratify this image. It is driven by its anticipation of recognition from a subject supposed to know like a parent or teacher or some significant person in its life. The child is inserted into a discourse of desire where it is forever divided between the desires of others and what he or she wants. The informants of this research are divided between the opposing positions of agency and authority (see this chapter). Desire is born out of the mirror phase, and henceforth, our desire is always for the desire of a subject supposed to know (Lacan 1977, p. 264).

Chapter One examines the analytic case where a woman goes into psychoanalysis. As she becomes more and more demanding in pursuing the analyst's personal recognition she discovers herself repeating all the things she had learned from her
father as a child to gain his attention. She recognises an unconscious relation to the ways in which she attempts to get the recognition of a subject supposed to know. She repeats a historical and paternal relation to a subject supposed to know. The woman not only recognises that she is repeating a long forgotten historical relation to her father, she also recognises that she is already positioned within a partially unconscious discourse of negotiation which governs the ways in which she can talk and communicate with others. Through analysis the patient recognised that she was repeating a particular way of talking for getting the recognition of others. She was using these ways of talking to negotiate a place in relation to a subject supposed to know. She becomes aware of something she is already doing in speech. This is learning as recognition (see Chapter Eleven).

In a discussion of the production of intersubjectivity, Langton (1993) takes the position that 'Aboriginality' arises from the experience of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who engage in any intercultural dialogue. For Langton, (1993, p. 81) 'Aboriginality' is not a fixed thing but 'is remade over and over again in a process of dialogue, imagination, representation and interpretation'. One of the ways in which this occurs is when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people test and adapt imagined models of each other through dialogue to find satisfactory forms of mutual recognition (Langton 1993, p. 81). Through these crosscultural and reciprocal exchanges, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals 'test their own imagined models of the other, repeatedly adjusting the models as responses are processed to find some satisfactory way of comprehending the other' (Langton 1993, p. 83). Aboriginality is produced through a discourse of negotiation where both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people negotiate a place in relation to each other. This place is produced as outside what both want and intend. It is a negotiated third position (relation) between them and it is produced through the discourse of negotiation. This is illustrated in the following.

The informants of this research analyse and reflect on what they say and do as they try to decipher what the pedagogue thinks and wants. Without some judgment or guidance from the pedagogue about what he or she might be thinking, the students keep talking and writing in anticipation of the pedagogue’s recognition. They ask questions and critique what they think and say, and how they say these things, in order to give the pedagogue what they think he or she expects. Once they find out what the pedagogue wants, they position themselves in order to keep him or her happy. I gained the insight from the data of Chapter Eight that a practice of critique
is always already at work as the informants negotiate a position in relation to the pedagogue as an authority. In Langton's model (see above), intersubjective knowledge is produced through the speaking practices of critique and negotiation as each tries to understand and account for the position of the other. Speech constitutes the condition of intersubjective knowledge and learning in the classroom:

knowledge is not contained by any individual but comes about out of the mutual apprenticeship between two partially unconscious speeches that both say more than they know. Dialogue is the radical condition of learning and of knowledge, the analytically constitutive condition through which ignorance becomes structurally informative; knowledge is essentially, irreducibly dialogic (Felman 1987, p. 83).

Speech is the radical condition of intersubjective knowledge and learning insofar as the students and the pedagogue are already involved in negotiating a position which is beyond what either of them know and intend. The negotiation of this position constitutes a mutual relation between them (see Chapter Seven). In this way intersubjective knowledge is 'irreducibly dialogic' insofar as it is produced through the relation between two partially unconscious speeches in the classroom. It is produced outside the knowledge and power of the pedagogue and outside the control of the student. Through speech, the student is able to recognise what he or she is doing in what he or she is saying in the classroom. The students are not only repeating a set of techniques for getting the recognition of others they are also producing themselves as they negotiate a place in relation to the pedagogue as an authority. They are producing themselves as subjects through how they talk in the classroom (see below in the context of the writing classroom). As subjects they are produced rather than found as a prior identity. This subjectivity is performed through the discourse of negotiation (also see Chapter Eleven).

In the context of the writing classroom, Bracher (1999, p. 90) proposes that if a piece of writing is perceived as elegant, the writer too partakes of that quality. Each style (austere, formal, professional, authoritative and so on) creates a particular type of persona for the writer, allowing him or her to be perceived as a particular sort of person, and thus according him or her a particular identity. Our ways of writing and talking are in themselves 'performative speech acts' which act out our desires, expectations and unconscious knowledge (Felman 1987). They are discursive strategies aimed at getting the recognition of the teacher as a subject supposed to
know. Such strategies are often very competitive at university. For example, research often attempts to exclude competing voices when it fails to take into account the position of those who are considered to be competitors. It often attempts to ‘stand-on’ or take the place of other writers who are perceived to be opponents or to colonise other discourses by assimilating their categories (Bracher 1999, p. 64). The researcher displaces one voice of authority with the voice of a more powerful one in the literature review (also see Chapter Five).

Attempts to exclude or take the place of someone else allow the writer to perceive him or herself as unified and coherent (Bracher 1999, p. 44). They allow writers to resist feelings of disunity and uncertainty and fragmentation in their own work, and to reinforce and defend their own sense of identity. Critiquing other writers allows the writer to maintain but misrecognise his or her own unified sense of writing (Bracher 1999, p. 44). Writing shores up the insecurity of the self (Bracher 1999, p. 71).

The persuasive strategy adopted by the writer, the syntactic complexity, diction, and tone all indicate the style of the writer, that is, the person whom we read. These discursive strategies give the reader an idea of who the writer is trying to be, or be seen to be, and who for (Bracher 1999, p. 73-74). A writer’s style embodies the writer’s fundamental way of defending against the conflict between one’s own desires and the expectations of others (Bracher 1999, p. 92). Britzman (1998, p. 4) observes that ‘some studies refuse to distinguish the arbitrary violence of the street from the defensive and aggressive dynamics of the classroom’. I take the position throughout this thesis that the ways in which we, as pedagogues and students talk about others, and themselves govern the ways in which they conduct their relationships inside and outside the classroom. There is little difference between what we do in language and what we do in our human relationships. Our human relationships are constituted through our ways of talking and writing (see Chapter Eleven).

In 1998 I came to the point where I understood as crucial my own relation to what I write. I recognised that my ways of writing and talking are expressions of myself. I understood that through my writing, I was producing my relations to the informants, supervisors, examiners and other readers, as well as the relations between the
informants themselves, and the readers. I also began to realise that my own relation to self was being produced through my writing.

9.7. My relation to writing

When I started to critique the research of Harris, Christie and Malin, I thought that I could avoid constituting myself within the same theories of emancipation and enlightenment as them. But I found it difficult not to follow in their footsteps. I thought that I could discover new knowledge that hadn’t been seen before by those who had conducted research before me. I thought that I could avoid their mistakes. I was becoming increasingly suspicious of educational theories which purported to improve the lives of students through knowledge and education.

As a critical ethnographer, I thought that I knew more than the crosscultural ethnographer (see Chapter Five). I thought that I could see things that they could not see. My sense of enlightenment was creating an arrogance that was beginning to show through in my writing in 1996. I began to recognise that the ways in which I was constituting myself as an authority in my writing would govern the ways in which readers would relate to me in future. I was beginning to understand the significance of my supervisor’s insistence that human relations are made and produced through our ways of talking and writing. Discourse is not just something to be talked about in an academic way. It governs how we get on together. My relations to others and to my self are produced through, and limited by, discourse. Knowledge of these relations is produced through the talking and writing that goes on in the classroom. In critical pedagogic theories, this knowledge is produced through the work of critique.

As a PhD student I spend most of the day focused on my own thoughts as I try to make ideas explicit to myself and to others through my writing. I become self-conscious of what I say and do. A PhD candidature constitutes the passage from an undergraduate community to postgraduate loneliness where the student is assigned a place of insecurity and self-doubt (Frow 1988, p. 319). Uncertainty creates anxiety. It challenges the student’s sense of worth, ‘provoking a trauma of loss as one of its central knowledge-producing mechanisms, one which is often cruelly prolonged or repeated’ (Frow 1988, p. 319). Most importantly the student is individualised
throughout his or her candidature. He or she is expected to establish the direction for his or her own research. The student disappears into the quiet of night, to sit night after night, on his or her own, to write up the results of the research. This sedentary life is not just a peculiarly private one, it is a life lived away, and secluded from others (Green and Lee 1995). The student is constituted as an individual through a discourse of the classroom that emphasises self-motivation and self-discipline. The student learns to govern him or herself. I must internalise the norms which characterise a doctoral student in order to make a name for myself (Yeatman 1995). I must learn to speak and write like a doctor of philosophy. I gradually take control of what I say and write as I separate from my supervisors (Bartlett and Mercer 2000).

I must keep my mind on task and not let it wander. I must exclude the drive to be somewhere else. I must manage my anxieties and my joy. I try to control what I write but distractions creep in through the cracks and contradictions of science to undermine my self-discipline. I am distracted by other thoughts. My mind is not my own. I separate from myself as I am reminded by an anxiety that I must finish the thesis. I must remain focused on my-self. The gaze turns inward. Separation and anxiety move me from one place to another. I need to approach my writing with a strong mind. I must internalise what others are already doing. I must be disciplined. As a PhD student I am increasingly left to my own devices as the thesis progresses. I must do things on my own and be responsible for what I say and do. I must be single minded. I must stop relying on others for help and become self-motivated, self-regulated and self-sufficient.

I am writing this chapter in conjunction with Chapters Five, Seven, and Eight. I move between one chapter and the next and back again. The position of a critical pedagogue helps me to understand the position of the crosscultural pedagogue. A comparison of the two positions establishes their differences. The two positions can be evaluated relative to each other rather than in relation to a scientific truth or norm. As I look back at the discourse of the crosscultural classroom, the position of the critical pedagogue tells me what questions to ask and what to say. I am driven by a methodology which shows me how to interpret what is said by the crosscultural pedagogue. It gives me the tools for critiquing methods like scaffolding. Any position constitutes a way of thinking, knowing, talking, reading and writing.
As I write this chapter, I lose my way. I stop to think about what I am looking for. What am I trying to say? I try to link what I am saying with what comes before and what comes after. I look for a link and yet I am always divided between one position and another. I think about what I am saying within the context of the section or of the chapter as a whole. This then gives me direction. The link gives me some satisfaction. I can write only within a context. The idea gets its meaning from the context. It is the context that gives me direction. I insert subheadings and sections in an attempt to impose a structure of meaning. These techniques create a feeling of certainty. They eliminate the doubt. But how can I limit the contexts? What do I include and what do I exclude? I try to monitor and control what I write to create some certainty where there was previously none. I impose a limit on the text in order to understand and comprehend it, and to control it. I am looking for ways of talking and writing about others.

What I say and do are governed by what is said by others. How can I transgress the boundaries of writing? Am I allowed to transgress them in producing a thesis? How can I say something that hasn’t already been said before in my literature reviews or by my supervisors, peers and friends? I seem to be an effect of discourse rather than a manipulator of it. The words of other writers and supervisors become my words as I attempt to understand and comprehend what they say and write. My words are inserted into the structure of others. They scaffold what I think and know but don’t have the words to say. I learn through others. My knowledge comes from others. My experiences are ordered through the language of others. Their words give meaning and structure to my thoughts and experience. I become conscious of what I think and know through the language of others. Their thoughts become mine. I am dominated by discourse. Discourse operates on the subject (Foucault 1977, p. 148). I want something of my own creativity or imagination to show through in the thesis, but my writing is continually subverted by what others think, say and do. I attempt to reflect on and critique the ways in which I am positioned as a PhD student through the discourses of the classroom.

As I write I assume there is a correspondence between what I think and what I write. This assumption gives me a sense of unity and progress as I move toward the end of the thesis. But when I reread the chapter some of the links have disappeared. I feel separated from my writing. I lose my way as I read through the chapter. The link
between what I think and what I say in writing often fails. This is represented in the Freudian notion of the impossibility of education (see Chapter One). I am positioned in relation to my own thoughts as well as in relation to what I think others expect. There is a double impossibility. As an ethnographer I am separated from my own thoughts and from others.

What I say and do are monitored by my own thoughts of what my supervisors, examiners and other readers want and expect. Like the student in the classroom who worries about what the teacher thinks and wants I limit what I write. Even though I am told by the critical theory that truths are always partial (Haraway 1991) I know that there is a right and wrong at university. I know that students fail and pass. I monitor my thoughts for fear that I might be contradicting myself. I continually cross-reference the various positions throughout the thesis to avoid the contradictions. I must be conscious of what I say and how it relates to what I have said so far, and in relation to what I intend to say. I change, delete and add in anticipation of the readers' expectations. I self-reflect in anticipation of what my supervisors, examiners and other readers will say about what I write. I change what I write in anticipation of being recognised by them. As a PhD candidate I am expected to show evidence of original investigation and to be able to understand the methods of the academy. I write in relation to what I am expected to be as a PhD graduate.

For Foucault, the 'psyche' is the contemporary target of discipline (Smart 1988: 74). Throughout the writing of this thesis, I have become an object of my 'own' scientific scrutiny. Like the prison officers in the central watch tower who are themselves watched, I have become thoroughly enmeshed in the disciplinary techniques that I employed at the beginning of my thesis to use on others (see Chapter Three). I have become an effect of my own position as an ethnographer. I am constantly watching what I say and how I say it because I know that every word can be examined and scrutinised. I know that people will be able to make judgments about what I say, how I say it, and who I am. Rosaldo (1993, p. 7) observes that if crosscultural ethnography's vice was the slippage from the ideal of detachment to actual indifference that of present-day reflexivity is the tendency for the self-absorbed researcher to lose sight of the context he or she studies. There are times when I become so concerned about the politics of writing about the informants and myself
that nothing is written. The gaze for indigenous and non-indigenous subjects may be linked.

The indigenous informants of this research, and myself as an ethnographer, are subject to the gaze of self-consciousness as we try to predict what others are thinking about what we are saying. Even though we are both positioned differently in relation to the gaze, the gaze of interpretation links our different positions. We are caught in a phenomenology of thought and consciousness as we try to occupy an insider's point of view. We both attempt to decipher what we think and want. I have suggested that both the informants and myself are already reflecting on how we position ourselves in relation to others through our talking and writing. There is an attempt here to forge some common ground without saying our experiences are the same (see McCormack 1999, p. 331).

The invisible gaze of the informants, my supervisors, examiners and other readers generates self-surveillance to the point where I internalise the judgments of others. I become self-conscious in what and how I write. 'Know yourself' becomes a preoccupation (Foucault 1988, p. 19). Modernity is preoccupied with the self as knowing subject and as object of knowledge: 'Man appears in his ambiguous position as an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows' (Foucault 1973, p. 312). Modern reflection has become self-reflection. And self-reflection has become a technology of the self.

For Foucault, writing and death are linked. The writer becomes a victim of his or her own writing to be revealed only through absence:

Writing is now linked to a sacrifice and to the sacrifice of life itself; it is a voluntary obliteration of the self that does not require representation in books because it takes place in the everyday existence of the writer. Where a work had the duty of creating immortality, it now attains the right to kill, to become the murderer of its author (Foucault 1977, p. 117).

But as a writer and ethnographer, I am revealed in my writing. The ways in which I position myself in relation to the informants of this research, and in relation to other ethnographers and other teachers in the literature, is revealed in how I write. The writer shows through in the ways in which he or she positions him or herself in relation to others through his or her talking and writing. I have also tried to maintain
a presence in the thesis through my own self narrativisations.

There are two discourses at work in an ethnography and in the classroom. One is scientific discourse that transmits scientific knowledge and content from the teacher to the student, and from the ethnographer to the reader. All these participants are trained in a prior relation to an authority through scientific discourse. The other is a discourse of negotiation. This discourse is already at work in the scientific discourses of ethnography and pedagogy but it is one that is often obscured in the effort to articulate valid, quantifiable outcomes. It is a discourse which neither the student and teacher, nor the informant and ethnographer can control. It is a partially unconscious discourse that trains both the student and the pedagogue in the desire of the other. The discourse of negotiation motivates the student to talk, write and learn in the crosscultural classroom. And through the talking and writing a crosscultural relation is unconsciously produced.

9.8. What are the discourses of emancipation and enlightenment?

When I began this thesis, I assumed that knowledge sets us free. I assumed that education empowers, and that was good for the student. I didn’t question the assumption that education is an inherently good thing until I returned to the data in 1995 (see Chapter Four). The indigenous informants are inserted into a ‘cycle’ or structure of learning where they begin as a pathology but are redeemed by the institution as they progress through the hierarchy of learning and education. They gradually become an agent of knowledge as they are positioned in relation to a self-motivated individual. The students are positioned within the discourses of emancipation and enlightenment where education is constituted as an antidote to failure.

Kant believed that once the actions of individuals and societies were based on the power of reason and rational autonomy, then the inequalities of the old social order would be displaced. The development of human reason through education would enable people ‘to see the light’ and ‘to escape their self-incurred tutelage’ (Carr 1995, pp. 121-22):

The basic metaphor of the enlightenment - that of ‘light’ - was intended to convey the message that the progressive development of human reason will
When I began my research, I believed that if I could communicate my findings clearly to others, then they could also know what I know. But I have learned since writing this thesis that communication depends on more than being clear and explicit about what one knows. There is no clear line of communication between the writer and the reader, nor between the student and the pedagogue. I have maintained that the informants of this research deal with this problem by giving the pedagogue what he or she wants and expects. They constitute themselves for the critical pedagogue by talking and acting like an emancipated student. The student thinks that the pedagogue will then be impressed by his or her displays of critical analysis (see the data of Chapter Six).

Ellsworth (1992) writes of her experiences in teaching a course called ‘Media and Anti-Racist Pedagogies’ at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The course was aimed at getting students to critique campus racism and crosscultural education at the university, but it also turned into an analysis of the current discourses on critical pedagogy. Ellsworth (1992, p. 91) claims on the basis of her teaching the course ‘that key assumptions, goals, and pedagogical practices fundamental to the literature on critical pedagogy - namely, ‘empowerment’, ‘student voice’, ‘dialogue’ and even the term ‘critical’ - are repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination’. When Ellsworth (1992, p. 91) attempted to apply the language of critical pedagogy to her classroom practice, she found that her approach actually exacerbated the problems of racism, sexism and ‘banking education’ that she was attempting to undermine. Critical pedagogues fail to provide a clear statement of their political agendas which they believe ‘to be for the public good’ (Ellsworth 1992, p. 93).

The teaching of analytic and critical skills for judging the truth and merit of propositions actually serves to guarantee that the foundation for learning in the classroom is reason itself. The critical pedagogue is in the impossible position of having to use a scientific method to critique the absence of reason, and irrational
To attempt to use the language of reason to study irrational discourses such as racism and sexism is to use the very methods that have previously oppressed and excluded many of the students in the crosscultural classroom in the first instance (Ellsworth 1992). The critical pedagogue is always implicated in the very structures he or she is trying to change (see the debate between Foucault and Derrida in Chapter One). Knowledge and the methods of producing it are inextricably bound. When I began my research in 1993 I assumed that the two could be kept separate.

While critical pedagogic theories have been dedicated to ending oppression through methods of student empowerment and dialogue, they haven’t offered any practical solutions to deal with the paternalistic project of education (Ellsworth 1992, p. 99). Their efforts at critical analysis are limited to changing an unequal relation of power in the classroom into an equal one. The informants of this research are learning to critique the ways in which they are positioned in relation to others by constituting themselves within the discourse of emancipation and enlightenment. They are learning to speak like an emancipated student by using the words of the critical pedagogue. The critical pedagogue is positioned in the classroom as transmitting a method of critique as well as a content. The critical pedagogue is positioned as the one who can teach the student how to critique. And the student is expected to learn this. In assuming a direct link or conduit between the pedagogue and the student, critical pedagogic theories rely on a transmission-based theory of education. They assume that a method of critique can be transmitted from pedagogue to student.

As the informants constitute themselves within the discourses of emancipation and enlightenment, they mirror the critical pedagogue’s values and beliefs. They replicate an ontology. The pedagogue is seen to be passing on his or her own personal values to the student, and in doing so he or she could be seen to be intervening in the student's own ontology.

Emancipatory authority implies an emancipated pedagogue who can liberate a dominated student (Ellsworth 1992). The emancipated pedagogue ‘helps’ or ‘fosters’ the student to express his or her subjugated histories and knowledges. The students are expected to take responsibility for their own voice (Tobin 1991, p. 336). I observed in 1996 that crosscultural ethnographic theory positions the ethnographer as the one to speak for informants because the informants are often unable to speak
for themselves (Malin 2000, p. 5). But in speaking for the informants, only the single, unified voice of the ethnographer is heard. The ethnographer who speaks for the informants perpetuates the status quo where indigenous students say nothing because they anticipate that they will be judged against others. Ellsworth (1992, p. 101) raises the question of how could she, as a white, middle class professor, 'help' students in the cross-cultural classroom to find a voice?

Inquiry based courses of the ideal, emancipatory kind, free of coercion, with participants holding symmetrical relationships, one with the other, are not possible within the confines of award-bearing courses (Groundwater-Smith 1988, p. 261). Critical pedagogic theories actually insert students into, rather than free them from the asymmetrical power relations of the university. Groundwater-Smith cites the example of the 'Action Research Planner' offered to off-campus students through Deakin University. She (1988, p. 261) says it was intended as a means of facilitating critical action research, but instead, it became a set of rules which the action researcher followed in order to be granted a credential. The students were more interested in receiving a qualification than they were in 'becoming critical'; or at least they followed in the footsteps of the pedagogue in an effort to satisfy course requirements.

I took the position in 1996 that action research offered a good alternative to crosscultural methods of research (see Chapter Five). I no longer agree with this earlier position. The action research proposed by Carr and Kemmis (1986) assumes that students can be taught to critique. Following my insights from the data, I have maintained in this chapter that students at university learn to critique by negotiating their own position in relation to what the pedagogue wants. I also recognised from the data that there is already a practice of critique built into the dialogue between the informants and the pedagogue in the classroom. This practice cannot be organised and planned for in advance, and transmitted to the student. Critique cannot be learned scientifically. As a pedagogue, I cannot teach a student to critique. Students critique and self-reflect unconsciously when they position themselves in relation to the pedagogue as authority through the discourse of negotiation.

The informants of this research enrol at university because they believe that something is missing from their lives and that a diploma or degree will give them
what they want (see the data of Chapter Eight). The informants talk about their lives as being in chaos before they came to university. They could not stand on their own two feet and were dependent on others. They did not know what they wanted before they came to university, although they knew they wanted something different from what they already had. The university presents itself as the equivalent of what the student lacks. Education is constituted as an antidote for failure (see the data of Chapter Eight).

In expecting the student to be critical of his or her own knowledge and experience, the pedagogue of critical pedagogic theories can easily be interpreted by the student to be making personal and ideological judgments about what the student thinks and believes, as if, his or her knowledge is 'not good enough' (see the data from Chapter Seven). The pedagogue may be seen to be imposing his or her own expectations on the students to emancipate them from their own attitudes and beliefs. The informants of this research have dealt with this possibility by constituting themselves for the pedagogue in and through the discourses of emancipation and enlightenment. In positioning themselves as independent agents of knowledge and learning, these informants are able to keep the pedagogue happy while also getting their degrees.

9.9. Conclusion

I have taken the position in this chapter that crosscultural and critical theories of pedagogy and ethnography are linked insofar as they both maintain that knowledge and learning are constituted through a relation. In crosscultural theories of ethnography and pedagogy, knowledge and learning are constituted as prior. In critical theories, knowledge and learning are produced through a relation between the participants. There are two kinds of knowledge and two kinds of learning in any classroom. The first is where students are expected to learn scientific knowledge which is constituted before either they, or the pedagogue enter the classroom (see above). The second is intersubjective knowledge which is produced as the informants negotiate their respective positions in relation to what the pedagogue wants (see the data of Chapter Eight). Intersubjective knowledge is produced through a speaking practice. I gain the insight from the data of Chapter Ten that the informants learn through a practice.

This thesis is a critique of transmission based theories of education. These theories
assume that a methodology can be transmitted from the pedagogue to the student. Crosscultural theories maintain that knowledge can be passed onto others when the ethnographer or pedagogue is explicit about what he or she wants and says. Critical theories of pedagogy assume from the outset that the student can be taught to critique. The student has direct access to the pedagogue's knowledge and skills. It is assumed in critical theories that the student and the pedagogue are linked. The responsibility for understanding and learning are ultimately placed upon the individual student or the reader. Teaching and learning continue to be constituted as an individual pursuit in both crosscultural and critical theories of ethnography and education.

The pedagogue can do more than talk about what is good for the student. I have maintained throughout this chapter that the pedagogue can reflect on how he or she positions him or herself in and through what he or she says in the classroom, and on how he or she is positioned by the students. To adopt a position is to make a judgment. The pedagogue is already making judgments about the students through the ways in which he or she talks and teaches in the classroom. He or she is talking about the way he or she sees things. I concluded from the data that the informants of this research constitute themselves in relation to the judgments of an authority.

The students of critical pedagogic theories are given a forced choice between being subject to the authority of others or being emancipated agents of their own knowledge and learning. It is a forced choice between oneself and the pedagogue. The positions of the student and the pedagogue are constituted as opposites in the two theories just as the positions of supervisor and candidate, and ethnographer and informants are situated in a binary relation. I took the position in 1998 that these positions are linked. Each relies on the other. They mutually define and govern each other. The production of knowledge and learning in the classroom is motivated by the production of a crosscultural relation between the student and the pedagogue. While the students get their qualifications from the pedagogue, the pedagogue gets his or her position of authority from the students. The position of each depends on the recognition of the other. I quoted Malin (1989, p. 628) in Chapter Seven as maintaining that successful learning in the crosscultural classroom involves a pact between student and teacher, a pact of mutual trust that each will recognise the identity and interests of the other. Learning is governed by the mutual recognition of
each other's prior positioning. That is, the student and the pedagogue must recognise what each other wants in order to negotiate a mutual position (and a learning) which will be inevitably beyond what both want and intend at the outset.

But there is a significant difference between what critical pedagogic theories want and what is actually happening in classroom practice. Critical pedagogic theories position the students as independent agents of their own knowledge and learning but the informants of this research position themselves in relation to the pedagogue as an authority. While the informants position themselves in relation to the pedagogue, the theories position the student in relation to what the pedagogue wants. This raises the following question:

*What does the student want?* This will be addressed in the final chapter.
CHAPTER 10

1999

INTERVIEW DATA
CHAPTER 10: 1999 - INTERVIEW DATA

10.1. A speaking practice

I gained the insight from the following data that the informants are motivated by the pedagogue's ways of talking that are not so straight and express humour, that recognise differences, and attempt to compromise and negotiate, to interact and listen. The ways in which the pedagogue talks and writes in the classroom have the potential to both link and separate him or herself from the students. The informants are motivated by how the pedagogue speaks just as much as by what he or she says. They learn through a speaking practice.

Kiara: [At uni] you've got to act straight. I don't see that mob [students] mucking around and that, especially if they're with a really straight lecturer. I find with the real serious ones, I won't learn anything. They'll just go through it. If you did jokes, stupid examples, people would remember it. In our anatomy class, we had laughs about some of the things eh, because there's a lot to laugh about, and you just remember them. If you just go on in that same level tone, all the way through it's just really boring, you lose concentration and you don't learn anything. Tutorials are more relaxed. You can discuss things.

Kiara: I think it [formality] will grow on you. More straighter. Sometimes, now with my friends, I won't muck around. It won't come naturally. I have to get with it. I think, shit, I'm just sitting here. Everyone else is enjoying themselves.

Nathan: He doesn't sus me out because, you're an Aboriginal person, you're the only person who can answer the question. I don't think that's the motive for asking the question. Mind you, that could vary from lecturer to lecturer. Because this lecturer is aware of Aboriginality, he can frame his question without putting me on the spot. But I wouldn't say that for all lecturers. They might choose me because you're the Aboriginal person, you're the expert in the area, what do you think?

Trudy: A lot of the people that came in [to tutorials] had set views and they would argue it. I remember in one tutorial three students in a class of about fifteen and they would always argue between themselves. It was terrible. It almost went to punches
at one stage because they held their views so strongly and they never gave anyone else a chance to say anything. Now I could argue a view but not a heated debate, not as heated as they got. That was terrible, I thought. I've never had to sit in that situation where I had to defend what I thought. I never really had to argue that strongly in something that I believed in to change someone's mind.

Karen: Isn't education supposed to give you enough confidence to disagree. Once I say something, it's out there, it's not personal any more. Then we can talk about disagreeing and agreeing. The confidence comes from being able to put it out there.

Trudy: At uni, I can write and say things that don't really hurt anybody.

Jonathan: The biggest change for me was at uni where you're exposed to different views. At high school you're taught one thing whereas at uni you're presented with different ideas and you choose. In that way you develop your ideas and you learn to argue against other ideas. You do create your own perspective to a certain degree.

Jonathan: [Essays] are where you learn most, when you've got to get into arguments, pull them apart, get right into them.

Nathan: I use the lecturers a lot. You can sus out these lecturers for what they've got, for their information. He's the one you've got to write the essays for; gives you guidance.

Trudy: I speak differently [at home to the way I speak at university]. I'm more relaxed. I crack more jokes. I'm not very serious when I speak to my family.

Kiara: I use Aboriginal English when I'm being stupid, laughing and joking; socially more than seriously.

Willy: The only time I break loose is when there's a bit of humour going on and I let rip a bit.

Stacey: Before there was no way I was going to assimilate into their ideas, just refused to conform. Whereas now, you got to take half at least, take half of each, combine them, find out the medium and go from there. If you take one or the other you'll feel guilty from the other whereas if you take both and keep check, you're
laughing. You’ve got to conform a little bit their way.

Willy: It would be good if we could meet on neutral ground somewhere, or that middle ground bringing the two cultures together. It's hard for one lot to loose that control. It will always be a power struggle.

Stacey: I reckon we should learn from everything, put it all together like ingredients of a cake, mix it altogether. If we drop all this putting us into categories we can mix it all together.

Willy: Since I've been there [university] I've been able to talk to him [husband] a lot about a lot of things. And he'd sit down and have a good old yarn with me, and he'd never do that [before I went to university]. He's a very quiet person. And while I talk, he's learning too. He's picked up a lot of things. When I come home, I tell him a lot of things. So it's helped him as well and we're able to communicate better. It has helped him in family life as well. And he can talk to [his son] too [who is at university].

Ellie: How come I've got so comfortable with you that I can swear, talk about bloody private parts. That's really good. I'm not talking to you as a woman and you're not talking to me as a man. We're just two human beings. That's what I like and we can recognise both sides of what is happening.

Stacey: If he [father] says something that I don't like, I try to remember or I try to give him a different perspective about it. He still shrugs it off but I think at least it was a nice input, not yelling at each other.

Jonathan: My aim is to learn about society and people. The more I learn, the more successful I will be because that will be my job. I can go out to dinner with white people now and feel comfortable. I understand a lot more about life now.

Trudy: Once I started to look and learn, the more information I got out of books, the more I saw of other people's point of views, the more I saw the reasons why they looked at things that way, the more I came to accept that there's so many different points of view that none are really the same. I just accept them as that without imposing my own point of view onto it.
Jonathan: What I try and do is understand the differences without saying that's them and this is us.

Willy: You know with us Murries, it's not so much a mental thing. Being in the company of that special group. It's always with a lot of us. Always big groups.
CHAPTER 11

INSIGHTS FROM THE THESIS
What insights have I gained into my own teaching practice from writing this thesis?

11.1. Introduction

In this final chapter, I summarise the journey I have taken throughout this thesis as an ethnographer and pedagogue. I outline the insights gained as I move from the position of a crosscultural ethnographer to a critical ethnographer, and from a teacher in the crosscultural classroom to the position of a critical pedagogue. Throughout the chapter, I continue to address the key questions of this thesis:

*How does an indigenous student learn outside the non-indigenous pedagogue's knowledge and power in the crosscultural classroom?*

*What does the student want?*

As I return to these questions I outline the insights gained into my own teaching practice through writing this thesis. I begin to think beyond my means when I discover a discourse of negotiation at work in the classroom, and in ethnography. The discourse of negotiation is motivated by the student’s desire for the recognition of the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know (see Chapters Seven and Nine). In Chapter One I introduced the Lacanian concept of the mirror stage where the subject forms an image of itself by identifying with the parents' perceptions of it. In the classroom the student wants to recognise him or herself in how the pedagogue speaks. In this ethnography, the informants and other readers want to recognise themselves in the way I look and the stories I tell. This chapter highlights the importance of speaking and dialogue to the production of intersubjective knowledge and learning in the classroom.

11.2. Starting off as a crosscultural ethnographer

When I started my research in 1993, I wanted to find out how indigenous students learn at the Northern Territory University. I was motivated by my own teaching experience in indigenous classrooms at Numbulwar, Galiwin’ku, and at the Northern Territory University (see Chapter Two). The students were not succeeding, and nor was I so I wanted to do something about it. I assumed that there was an answer to
what I was looking for.

In conducting my research I wanted to learn from my own teaching practice in the university classroom. I did not want to observe and analyse other teachers because that seemed to be an overly intrusive thing to do, although I did not come across Foucault's theory of the gaze until 1994 (see Chapter Five). In the field, I talked about learning, teaching and knowledge production with the indigenous students I had been working with in the bridging program at the Northern Territory University (see Chapter Three). I interviewed students who were already enrolled in degree programs.

After I collected the data I wrote my first interpretation in 1993 (see Preface and Appendix One). When I asked my informants and friends to read it, they expressed their concerns over how the indigenous students at the Northern Territory University were positioned within the discourses of progress and enlightenment through my writing. This prompted me to reflect on the methodology I used to collect the data and to produce my initial interpretation (see Chapter Five). Twelve months passed before I was able to select the data for Chapter Four, and then another twelve months before I could write Chapter Five in 1996. During this time, I began to consider how I could talk and write about others without positioning them in an unequal relation of power to myself, and others.

My return to the data in 1995 produced two significant findings for my research (see Chapter Four). The first was that the informants saw themselves subject historically to the gaze of authority, and it was against this historical background of constant surveillance that they anticipated that they would be compared and judged against the scientific norms of my ethnographic methodology. The second finding was that the informants learned from their historical experiences and from their studies at university what to expect from me as an ethnographer and pedagogue. In the interviews, they gave me what they thought I wanted. They constituted themselves for me as an authority in my field of work. And I constituted them for myself as informants who had the knowledge I was seeking.

In 1996 I began to search for other ways of talking about the data (see Chapter Five). My thesis supervisors introduced me to the critical ethnographers. Critical
ethnographic theory brought me to consider my own act of looking as an ethnographer in the context of what I had just learned from the data. How do I perpetuate the unequal power relations through the way I look at the informants? The insights gained from the data of Chapter Four about the ways in which the informants are subject historically to the surveillance of a scientific authority helped me to understand and interpret the relevance of Foucault’s theory of the gaze to my own research and teaching practice. I began to think about the link between the data and the theory. Like the crosscultural ethnographers who have come before me I was perpetuating the informants’ historical relations to authority through my own ethnographic interpretation (see Chapter Five). Yet in the classroom I was looking for a learning which was produced outside the knowledge and power of the pedagogue.

When I first studied the data as a crosscultural ethnographer in 1993, I used them as a tool for my research. They were presented to support my initial interpretation, and to answer my research questions. The data were presented to support my own position as an ethnographer. I positioned myself as a gatekeeper of indigenous knowledge and in so doing I repeated what many other researchers and academics have done before (see Abdullah and Stringer 1997). I read the body of data only in terms of the methods I used to help me interpret it. The position of the informants was preempted by my ethnographic methodology before I entered the field. In the crosscultural classroom learning is governed by the teacher’s methodology (see Chapter Seven).

As a crosscultural ethnographer I refused to see myself in the data. I put a methodological barrier between myself and the informants to show that I did not influence what they said in the field. For example, I indented and italicised the quotations from informants in my initial interpretation to differentiate the informants from myself (see Clifford 1986a, p. 15). I did the same with the theorists. Was this necessary? I refused to look for the links or common ground between us. I refused to negotiate a position which was mutual to us both. I assumed that we were separated by our respective cultures and positions in the research scene. They were indigenous and I was white. There was little attempt on my behalf to interact with the informants outside what was permitted by the methodology.
The links were already there but I was unaware of them. I was blinded by my own gaze. My methodology imposed a predetermined position on me as an ethnographer insofar as it determined what I could see and find (see Chapter Five). The gaze structures the look of others (Bannet 1989, p. 38). It imposes a predetermined role on the participants of the situation. As an ethnographer, I could see only from one point but I was looked at from all sides by the informants themselves, my supervisors, examiners and other readers of this thesis. Their gaze was invisible to me although I was always conscious of its existence (see Lee 1990, p. 156). For Lacan it is the gaze of another person which determines subjectivity and causes desire. A gaze is imagined by me in the field of the Other even if and when it is not there (Lee 1990, p. 157). As an ethnographer, it drives me to work harder to cover over the gaps and discontinuities in my writing.

Once I began to reflect on the learning relation in the classroom I recognised the links between the informants and myself as an ethnographer (see Chapter Five). We both undertook the interviews assuming, before we started, that we could communicate. We were linked through a prior relation. As an ethnographer I selected informants who had the knowledge I was looking for. And the informants granted me the interviews. They got their authority to know and to speak from me as the ethnographer while I got my authority to interpret the data from them (see Chapter Four). We each got our respective positions from the other before the interviews began.

The data are produced as intersubjective knowledge. I cannot remain outside the data while I am talking and participating in the interviews. The informants ensure my inclusion by answering my questions and giving me what I want (see Chapter Five). Although the informants and I are linked through the fantasy of a prior relation at the beginning of the research the data are produced in the field through a discourse of negotiation where the informants position themselves for me as the ethnographer. The data represent a negotiated third position and are different to what either the informant or the ethnographer think and intend. They are constituted through the difference between the informant and ethnographer so they always have a double meaning (see Chapter Five). To provide just one meaning, even if it is the most plausible one in the eye of the ethnographer, is to exclude the other voices
inevitability woven into the data. The first part of this thesis is critical of a methodology which covers over the multiple voices in the unified story of a crosscultural ethnographer. But through the discourse of negotiation different positions are already being negotiated into a 'whole' story to ensure a range of voices are recognised and represented.

When I undertook my training in ethnographic methodology at university I thought there was only one position for the ethnographer (see Chapters Two and Three). It was only when I started my research that I was introduced to the critical ethnographers. I recognised then that ethnographic methodology has a history. It consists of multiple positions that have been constituted through the historical and political twists and turns of the discipline. But while ethnographic theories are motivated by differences, the ethnographers themselves are positioned through the theory to look and write from a single, fixed position. The multiplicities and differences are covered over or excluded as the ethnographer is expected to produce a coherent and unified interpretation (see Chapter Five). The ethnographer along with each informant in the research is positioned with just one way of looking and knowing through the scientific methods employed to do the research. As readers we can see the ethnographer from all angles, but he or she can see only from one.

11.3. My turn to pedagogy

In 1997 I turned my focus to the crosscultural classroom (see Chapters Six and Seven). The informants learn how to speak about knowledge as right and wrong, as out there, as something they go and get, as objective. They learn how to do it right and to stick by the rules (see the interview data of Chapter Six). The informants recognise the position of the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know before they enter the classroom. Knowledge is transmitted from the pedagogue to the student through the students' presumption of a prior link to the pedagogue as an authority. I conclude in Chapter Seven that there must be an assimilation to the position of the pedagogue as an authority in order for there to be a transmission of scientific knowledge and learning in the classroom.

The informants of this research are motivated by a relation, albeit an unequal one, rather than by the teachers' methodology (see Chapter Seven). I took the position in
1997 that crosscultural theories of education perpetuate a historical relation to authority in the classroom by continuing to position indigenous students in an unequal relation to the teacher. The theories overlook the unequal power relations at work in the classroom (see Chapter Seven). In 1998 I began to look for a crosscultural relation between the student and teacher. I turned my attention to critical pedagogy for some insight.

Critical pedagogic theory takes the position that students learn best through an equal relation in the classroom, rather than through the position of an authority (see Chapter Nine). What is said in the classroom is judged in the context of democratic principles of freedom and equality. A critical pedagogy is directed at evening-up the inequities in education by constituting the student and the pedagogue in an equal relation (see Chapter Nine). This is achieved in the theory by providing all students with equal opportunities to speak and write themselves within and against the discourses of the classroom. The students in critical pedagogic theory are initially expected to learn in relation to the pedagogue. They are subsequently expected to critique this relation and to become agents of their own knowledge and learning.

The informants constitute themselves for the critical pedagogue as emancipated students who are able to think, critique, and learn independently of others (see the data of Chapter Eight). They decipher what the pedagogue wants and values, and they constitute themselves accordingly. They do the same for me as an ethnographer. But in constituting themselves in relation to the pedagogue as an authority the informants are simultaneously limited and constrained in how they can talk and write in the classroom. They are unconsciously inserted into discourses of progress and enlightenment.

When I turned to pedagogy in 1997 I was interested in its parallel with ethnography in terms of the production of knowledge. Both use the same scientific method to talk and write about knowledge. The ethnographer and the lecturer at university are already positioned through the way they look at and talk about others. They are trained in a scientific method of talking and writing that allows them to speak only from a single position. The informant and the ethnographer, and the student and the pedagogue, are already positioned as opposites through their methodologies and theories. But one of the insights gained through writing this thesis is that each
depends on the other for his or her power and authority.

Power is not wholly in the hands of one person who possesses or exercises it. It becomes a machinery that no one owns (Foucault 1980a, p. 156). In the classroom, the teacher is trained in how to teach through the institution, but his or her position of knowledge and authority as a teacher is actually authorised by the student (see Chapter Eight). The teacher gets his or her voice of authority from the student. Likewise, the ethnographer's position is constituted through his or her training as a scientist although his or her interpretation of the data is authorised by the informants and other readers (see Chapter Six). Both the informant and the ethnographer, and the student and teacher get their respective speaking positions from the other (see Chapters Five and Seven). Power is produced through a reciprocal relation of recognition. This thesis has been directed towards examining the nature of this relation and how it is produced in the crosscultural classroom.

Critical pedagogic theories account for the different expectations in the classroom by making the relation between the student and the teacher equal. The student and the teacher are positioned in the theory as wanting and valuing the same thing, that is, autonomy and agency (see Chapters Seven and Nine). However, in learning through an equal relation in the classroom of the critical pedagogue, the student is positioned to adopt the values and beliefs of the pedagogue (see Chapter Nine).

I recognised from my interpretation of the data of Chapters Six and Eight that there is a significant difference between what the theories want and what is actually happening in classroom practice. Both pedagogic theories and the informants of this research have different expectations of learning, teaching and knowledge production in the classroom (see Chapters Seven and Nine). But while the informants position themselves in relation to the pedagogue, the theories position the student in relation to what the pedagogue wants. This raised the question in Chapter Nine:

*What does the student want?*

Knowledge and learning in crosscultural theories of education are monitored through their methodologies (see Hudspith 1996, Chapter Seven). Critical pedagogic theories propose that knowledge and learning are produced through the relation between the student and pedagogue. These theories brought me to the point of
understanding that knowledge and learning are produced through a crosscultural relation. But they do not explain how this relation is actually produced in the classroom. The crucial insight gained through writing this thesis is that such a relation is produced through speech.

11.4. Intersubjectivity and the talking cure

The informants of this research are motivated by a speaking practice that is not so straight and expresses humour, one that recognises differences and attempts to compromise and negotiate, to interact and listen (see the data of Chapter Ten). These partially unconscious speaking practices govern the relations between the student and the pedagogue in the crosscultural classroom. The way in which the pedagogue talks and writes in the classroom has the potential to both link and separate him or herself from the students. Students learn through a speaking practice and not just through a methodology or a content that has been planned before either the student or the pedagogue enter the classroom. The data of Chapter Ten suggest that the informants want to recognise themselves as subjects rather than as objects in the speaking practices of the classroom.

Lacan refers to a speaking practice as a style. Style is the one to whom we speak (Miller 1991, p. 147). The teacher's style triggers a relation to the student. Success is not a consequence of a good theory but the product of an unconscious influence of the teacher's speaking style upon the pupil (Salecl 1994, p. 172). While the student is expected to learn from the teacher and from oneself in both crosscultural and critical theories of education, the crucial factor that brings the two together in the classroom is how the pedagogue speaks. It is what the pedagogue does in what he or she says that produces a crosscultural relation and a learning for the student.

Lacan equates the ego with conscious thought and being with the unconscious (see Chapter One). But the Lacanian subject is not the subject of the statement. It is not the ‘I’ in ‘I think therefore I am’. That is merely the subject of the statement. It is the ego talking but not the Lacanian subject. The subject appears in the enunciation

10 Felman (1993) provides a comparable discussion of how a woman can speak as a woman rather than being spoken for.
rather than in what is said (Fink 1995, p. 39). It appears in the very act of enunciating (Fink 1995, p. 39). The subject is created through speech and dialogue. Language is not added to the person as in socialisation theories (Mitchell and Rose 1982, p. 2). It is produced through the relation between the speaker and listener, but it exists only as long as they are talking (see Chapter One for a discussion of the elusive Lacanian subject). The subject is constituted through the very act of enunciation itself as the student talks about his or her opinions and beliefs.

A speaking practice in the classroom produces the subject. Intersubjectivity is produced as the student and the pedagogue negotiate a relation between them in the classroom. The subject does not exist outside or before the discourses are constituted in the classroom. It exists only while the student and the pedagogue are talking and writing. Speech gives the subject a place while it is talking (Ragland-Sullivan 1986, p. 101). This implies something about the importance of speech and dialogue in the production of knowledge and learning outside the position of the pedagogue as an authority in the classroom. Dialogue produces a relation between and among the students. Insofar as students want to achieve something beyond the simple transmission of facts and skills speech produces intersubjective knowledge between and among them. Through speech students recognise something about themselves and who they are as subjects.

What correspondence theory 'fails to grasp is simply the performative dimension of language, the fact that language changes us' (Lee 1990, p. 76). My ways of talking about the informants and others govern who I am and how I relate to others. The performative aspect of language serves to define subjectivity itself (Lee 1990, p. 76). The ways in which I negotiate the links between the different positions throughout the thesis produce me as the writer. They create the kind of person I am in the eyes of the reader. And my relations to the informants and other readers are produced through my writing. The ways in which I talk and write about others perform me as a subject. How I use these methods to talk about others and myself define who I am.

Speech is the radical condition of intersubjective knowledge and learning insofar as the students and the pedagogue are already involved in negotiating a position which is beyond what either of them know and intend. The negotiation of this position constitutes a mutual relation between them (see Chapter Nine). In this way
intersubjective knowledge is 'irreducibly dialogic' insofar as it is produced through the relation between two partially unconscious speeches in the classroom. It is produced outside the knowledge and power of the pedagogue and outside the control of the student. What the student wants is revealed in what he or she is doing in what he or she is saying in the classroom. As the students talk and write in the classroom they are already producing a narrative of themselves as I have done in the self narrativisations of this thesis although this narrative is usually hidden in the discourses of science. They are producing themselves as they negotiate a place in relation to the pedagogue as an authority. They are producing themselves as subjects through how they talk in the classroom, that is, as they enunciate themselves. As subjects they are produced rather than found as a prior identity.

Nevertheless, the existence of a subject supposed to know governs what and how the student learns. The student must assume the pedagogue to be an authority in order for there to be any transmission of knowledge and skills. For the student to learn outside the knowledge and power of the pedagogue there must first be an assimilation to the position of the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know. The pedagogue as a subject supposed to know motivates the student to talk and write, and only through speech and the production of a negotiated relation (and subjectivity) will the student be able to learn outside the knowledge and power of the pedagogue. The most important insight for this thesis is that speech does not just function as a conduit of information and skills it also helps the student to recognise him or herself outside the all-consuming discourses of science in the classroom.

Language permits choice (Bannet 1989, p. 162-3). This represents for the speaker or writer a choice to combine and invert relations and this is exactly what Foucault tries to do in his *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1989a). Through his archaeological method he tries to discover the underlying discursive practices that govern particular discourses in western society (see Chapter Five). He says that rupture of the episteme is possible only on the basis of the rules already in operation (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982). Through a thorough knowledge of how language works in everyday human relationships we can negotiate other relations in the classroom and in our own lives. In saying and writing things differently we can produce new relations. This thesis is an attempt to recognise how these partially unconscious practices are already at work in the classroom to produce a relation in the crosscultural classroom.
Speech helps us to gloss over the divisions that we experience when we are not talking. Speaking practices like those of critique and negotiation not only link us to others they also help us to transcend the destructive divisions that plague us in our everyday lives. The subject appears in this division to make us whole again but only while we are talking. This chapter attempts to highlight the importance of speaking and dialogue to the production of intersubjective knowledge and learning in the classroom. I referred to speech in Chapter One as the *talking cure*.

We are faced with the choice of linking ourselves to or trading places with others through the ways in which we position ourselves in language. Behind all quests and meaningful choices and behind the motivation to speak and relate to others are the questions of who am I? And how do others see me (Ragland-Sullivan 1986, p. 40)? In the classroom the student wants to recognise him or herself as a subject not in all the mirror images and ideals of others, and not as an ego, but through the negotiation and dialogue (the relation) that is constituted between oneself and the pedagogue.

In the negotiated transition from one position to another something is learned. In this thesis, I attempt to negotiate the links between the various positions posited throughout the thesis. These links move me onto another position and allow me to see what I could not see before. The links produce my insights for this thesis (also see Foucault 1979b). As I move from the position of a crosscultural to a critical ethnographer, I inevitably compare the two. I compare what is said and I compare how they are said. I compare the language and style of the different positions. These comparisons allow me to recognise the links and the differences between them. As I move from one position to another, I engage other discourses and it is in the transition from one discourse to another that I am able to recognise a difference:

> The sequence of connections I draw as I explore an idea ... is a sequence which 'changes' me. The connections I draw make me aware of things I wasn't aware of before, they modify me, move me forward, allow me to see, believe and act as I wasn't able to before. Spelling out the links in the chain of signifiers I write leads me to modify myself in various ways, depending on the extent of the connections and the implications I draw from them (Brooke 1987, p. 686).
My own attempts to work outside the discourses of race, culture, progress and enlightenment and to think differently (see Chapter One) have prompted me to take on responsibility for what I say and do and how I talk about others, including indigenous people in this research. This thesis is my interpretation and I am responsible for the ways in which these informants are constituted in my writing. Indeed, I was reminded of this by the informants themselves (see the data of Chapter Four). One is always responsible for one’s position as subject (Fink 1995, p. 47). In a discussion of ‘what does a woman want’ Felman (1993, p. 40) summaries the challenge facing the woman today as ‘nothing less than to “reinvent” language, to re-learn how to speak; to speak not only against, but outside of the specular phallocentric structure’. The self-narrativisation that runs through this thesis outlines my attempts to relearn how to speak and think about indigenous people. With respect to reinventing language this research attempts to redefine the practices of negotiation and critique (see Chapter Nine).

Traditionally negotiation and critique have been conceived as practices which the students consciously learn. It is assumed that students can be taught to negotiate and critique and they are given exercises to improve these skills. But one of the major insights gained through writing this thesis is that students are always already negotiating and critiquing, without thinking, as they talk and learn in relation to the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know. They are already critiquing what they say and do in the classroom as they negotiate a position in relation to the pedagogue as an authority. These practices are constituted through the partially unconscious discourse of the negotiation. This thesis has been an attempt to recognise and theorise some of the partially unconscious work that is always occurring, albeit in hidden ways in the classroom. Until now this unconscious work has remained under-theorised.

Foucault (1979a, 1989b) provided me with the insight that in introducing more and more laws and regulations to produce equality and outlaw discrimination against race and gender in society and in the classroom, we will ourselves become increasingly regulated through our attempts to regulate and manage a scientific and rational system. In looking at others, we will in turn become subject to their gaze. Rather, we need to be conscious of what our speech and writing does to others.
Foucault phrases this as: ‘People know what they do; they frequently know why they
do what they do; but what they don’t know is what what they do does’ (Dreyfus and
Rabinow 1982, p. 187). Change can be achieved through more attention to the ways
in which we talk and write about others and the ways in which we constitute others
in discourse. As a pedagogue, how I go about this governs how relations are
produced in a crosscultural pedagogy.

11.5. Conclusion

There are two types of knowledge in the classroom and in an ethnography. The first
is scientific knowledge which preexists both the student and the teacher (see Chapters
Six and Seven). This knowledge is curriculum knowledge. It is planned before the
students enter the classroom and is transmitted from teacher to student through a
dual structure of address. This dual structure is an imaginary relation where the
student anticipates that the teacher as a subject supposed to know will be able to
teach him or her the necessary knowledge and skills to get a degree.

The second is intersubjective knowledge. Intersubjective knowledge is produced
through the negotiations between the student and the teacher and cannot be acquired,
evaluated or measured (see Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine). Intersubjective
knowledge is not just knowledge of what the student is saying and doing in his or her
negotiations with the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know. It is knowledge of
how they are already producing themselves as subjects through speaking practices
like critique, negotiation, humour, compromise and not acting ‘so straight’. This
subject is one that is covered over by the discourses of science, that is, in training the
ego. Through speech and dialogue the students are negotiating a position (relation)
and the subject appears through this relation. But this subject is always already
outside what either the students or the pedagogue know and plan for. In this way
intersubjective knowledge is produced in a homogenous classroom as well as in a
crosscultural one. It is not bound by the discourses of race, culture and gender. The
subject constitutes the sublime object of pedagogy.

There are two types of learning in any classroom. The informants of this research
learn scientific knowledge through transmission-based education. This is education
as training (see Chapters Six, Seven, Eight and Nine). Most education is devoted to
training the student in the teacher's knowledge and skills. This education is directed at training the student's ego. For example, the informants in this study are trained to argue and to defend their beliefs and opinions and those of their lecturer at university (see the data of Chapters Six and Eight). In crosscultural and critical theories of education the student's own self image is strengthened. In teaching students 'to stand on their own two feet' and to be 'critical' and 'independent', current pedagogic practice not only functions to instill a cult of individualism in schools and universities, it perpetuates the dominance of a patriarchal authority in the classroom. This authority has historically disempowered indigenous people in the classroom.

The second is learning as recognition. Learning in the crosscultural classroom involves a pact of mutual trust that each will recognise the identity and interests of the other (see Chapter Seven). The student and the pedagogue must each recognise what the other wants in order to negotiate a mutual position (and a learning) which will be inevitably beyond what both want and intend at the outset. Learning is governed by the mutual recognition of each other's prior positioning, that is, by the recognition of who they are and what they want and expect. While students position the pedagogue as a subject supposed to know, the pedagogue must recognise that students want something beyond what he or she wants for them. Beyond the transmission of knowledge and skills and the search for qualifications, students want to be recognised as subjects in what they say and do in the classroom. Each gets his or her speaking position from the other. Learning is governed by a pact of recognition.

Rather than viewing different ideas and beliefs at university in terms of competing arguments, students could be talking about different positions and looking for the links between them. Knowledge and understanding are produced when we negotiate a relation between the various positions and not just through substituting one idea for another. Each student should know that his or her position will be heard, but at the Northern Territory University the informants of this research understand that the best argument prevails, and this usually belongs to the lecturer (see the data of Chapter Five and Seven). Their voices are isolated in the voice of the lecturer and other students (see the data of Chapter Five) just as the voices of informants often become isolated in the stories of the crosscultural ethnographer.
When the pedagogue talks *about* knowledge in fixed, competitive and individualist ways then learning will be constituted as fixed, certain and scientific, and as an effect of the individual mind. But when some attempt is made to recognise the ways in which knowledge and learning are already produced through a set of practices, then we may be able to re-cognise how our everyday relationships are always already constituted through a speaking practice. These practices at university govern our human relationships. They govern how we interact with others both inside and outside the university. And they determine whether we view our relations as always already linked to others through our ways of talking or as competitive and oppositional.
APPENDIX ONE

1994: A Preliminary Glance at the Data

MY FIRST INTERPRETATION

The following represents my first preliminary interpretation of the data collected for this thesis. It was written in 1994.

1.1. Measuring-up to representations: becoming other

You are born into a family which puts you in an orphanage (Jully) or adopts you out (Kiara). You are told that you are dumb (Jully), a bit slow (Jonathan), you're white (Karen, Trudy, Stacey), you're sex-crazed (Ellie) or you just get flogged and punched (Nathan). As you become an 'outcast' in your family, people tell you, 'we're only blackfellas, we don't know' (Jonathan). You believe that whites are smarter (Jonathan, Karen, Willy). And 'if you're told something long enough you believe it, eh. It's true, it works that way' (Jully). Your disempowerment is exercised 'through the manufacture of consent to or at least acquiescence toward it' (Fairclough 1989, p. 4).

You become alienated from both your own family and from society and more particularly from yourself. Social discourses emerge to represent your social location 'as sets of negative qualities' (Hartsock 1990, p. 161) which come to be understood as 'true', as 'natural', as essential to Aboriginal cultural representations.

You become the actor (Stacey) who is staged in different roles. One moment you are a 'black bitch' and the next 'a white bitch' (Ellie). According to Foucault 'otherness is both a force and a feeling in itself which involves 'seemingly endless metamorphoses' (Arac 1988, p. 5). Your actions become 'linguistically transformed representations' (Lather 1991, p. 21).

You grow up trying to please others; authorities, white people, black people, mothers, fathers, relations (Jully, Ellie, Stacey, Willy, Nathan). You are continuously 'responding to agendas determined by others' (Johnston 1991, vol. 4, p. 24). You measure-up to your own 'essential nature' at school by saying: 'come on
you kids, you should do better than us; you're white' (Willy). You are told that you
can better yourself if you marry white and have white kids (Stacey, Ellie). You grow
to live in your own disunities. You begin to believe you're the strange one, the odd-
one out, the black-sheep, the one who really doesn't know and who is always wrong
(Stacey). Your differences are internalised negatively because differences are
presented in Western discourse as dichotomous and contradictory. You are
confronted by a divided self. Your task is to fit-in with the normalised representation
of self and to discard the negative qualities of self (as defined by others).

You believe that power is the preserve of the dominant, of the state which has 'in
general enshrined the notion of an Aboriginal people as the white man's burden and
worst enemy. You isolate yourself (Jully). You set yourself up to fail, 'it becomes
inbred' (Jully, Nathan). Willy argues: 'If you don't come up to what they expect you
to be you just throw the towel in. Because straight away you think, well, I'm not
good enough to get there. I'm just an Aborigine'.

You often get good marks at primary school (Nathan). Willy loved primary school
'because I was always somewhere near the top'. But high school's often a 'wipe-out'
because the representations overwhelm you, 'white kids would expect you to be
dumb' (Stacey), they make fun of you so you grow to hate school (Jully) or 'you just
get slack' (Kiara). You usually learn here at high school that your place is allocated
according to colour (Willy, Trudy). You start to see things in Black and White
(Nathan).

1.2. Dealing with representations: rearticulating identity

But you begin to ask, is this all? Jully reflects: 'Maybe I was one of the lucky ones
who realised there was another side to the world. I got to the stage where there was
nothing left for me'. You begin to:

see better things. What I thought was I could see other people doing just so
much better than me. Then later I thought, well fuck 'em, they're wrong to
think this fella is not too smart. I started to see them as not understanding
(Jonathan).
You start to break down the rules, the ideological biases of what had hitherto been 'epistemological enforcers of what (as well as how) people thought, lived and spoke' (Arac 1988, p. 10). You begin to see the clearing in the forest, 'to think the unthought' (see Arac 1988, p. 19). You gain new uses for gathering knowledge, that is, to legitimate your own different identity and 'block out the negative thinking [which] has been embedded in your whole mind and environment from the day you have been born that you can't do that [succeed]' (Karen).

As you begin to think that you might be able to succeed at university, you still get called white or some of your relations think 'it's a big joke' (Karen) or your boyfriend tells you that 'you must be rootin' the teacher' (Stacey). But you have gained some self-esteem and confidence from your success and you are able to stand your ground (Stacey). The rationalising discourses which once suppressed you now become your sites of resistance (Diamond & Quinby 1988, p. xvi):

> Having university knowledge is great when you run into the bastards that said you can't do that, you can't go to university, how can you go. I think when I get my degree my mother will have my picture in all the local papers: See! She done it! (Karen).

For these nine students, university 'clarifies your understanding of both worlds' (Kiara) and reinforces a belief in yourself. It facilitates a realisation that social location does not have to be an institutionalised given. You don't always have to measure-up to a given set of coordinates from race (or gender or class): 'It makes you aware that you are not as dumb as you thought you were' (Jully). You can 'take charge' of yourself to deconstruct the 'given world'. You begin to unlearn, to stop being the actor to please others. You begin to realise that self-esteem is not everything but without it 'you won't get anywhere' because you stay in your own 'little corner' (Stacey). This little corner or nurturing space allows you to 'sift out what people are saying about you and decide who you really are' (Hartsock 1990, p. 163). And with the 'will to knowledge', power relations can be altered through this process of self-formation and understanding the motivation of others and 'what they want from you' (Kiara). Through this process and with success at university your self-esteem builds.
These students begin to relearn at university through individual struggles to 'rearticulate locale at different levels and in different ways' (Nicholson 1990, p. 10). This relearning does not seek to understand the totalities of reality but rather self. Perceived access to empowering knowledge 'that makes you comfortable' (Jonathan), 'meeting all sorts of different people' (Jonathan) who offer you diversity of ideas and opinion, that is, difference, and choice and control facilitate the process whereby students learn that they can set their own social location; that it doesn't have to be the dominant that determines your identity. It is OK to be yourself at university: 'I think once people just think of themselves as Jully or Neil or whatever that they'll be right. It's hard because that's what they're conditioned to just think of themselves as black (Jully). Lather (1991, p. xvii) argues that 'we need to turn away from a focus on dominant power to focus on oppositional discourses of criticism and resistance'.

1.3. Dealing with difference

The fight against domination is no longer a question of 'us and them' because 'if you keep thinking like that it's tunnel vision' (Ellie). You won't get anywhere. To think in the binary of 'us and them' would be 'insulting one part of the family' (Trudy). For seven of these students, you grow up with both black and white perspectives. You have parents from 'both sides' so you 'can't really pick between Aboriginal and White' (Kiara). Social location becomes a dialectical resolution of selfs more so than one of resolving different worlds or different cultures or one of struggling against the all powerful 'master control room' (Collins 1989, p. 11). Hence the apparent contradiction in students saying: 'I don't see things in terms of black and white but there are differences' (Trudy, Ellie). In other words they are able to articulate their own identities across the worlds of black and white without recourse to race boundaries and yet they recognise that they are different to other people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. There is an 'imposed' balance between reifying and ignoring differences.

While individual identities are formed, there is an affinity to group (Jonathan). There is a balance of independence and interdependence. But this affinity or interdependence is not what propels you: 'What I think is really important is that you don't just think as an Aboriginal' (Ellie). You've got to do it on your own to understand both yourself and others because it's the understanding that brings the
strength (Jonathan). You define the terms of interaction (see Hartsock 1990, p. 158). You 'make your own standards' (Stacey).

Your understanding of your own concrete experiences of exclusion and representation are clarified and reinforced through your studies at university (Nathan). It is understanding that the oppressive and dominant forces which once overwhelmed you are not a fait accompli. Power is not god-given or institutionalised from the top down. With this in mind, the world no longer remains 'natural' or predetermined. It is learning that power and knowledge work together as a strategy 'to fight people on' (Karen), 'to let people know that you are successful' (Kiara and Jonathan). Knowledge and a degree can give you 'recognition in an academic world' (Karen) so that you are treated with respect and credibility in mainstream society, so that 'you can then have your say' and people will have to listen (Stacey and Jonathan). University experiences give 'you the power to break out of the system that has enveloped you so long' (Karen). It's a realisation that you have the power to hold your own with all those who have stolen and withheld your self-esteem. 'No-one can pull you down' (Jonathan) if you have that academic knowledge, and control those texts which 'are fundamentally facts of power' (Collins 1989, p. 6). 'It's all a gradual climbing up those stairs' (Ellie); a clearing of 'a semiotic space by challenging disciplines at the level of the basic categories and methods involved in the possibilities for knowledge' (Lather 1991, p. 34).

It becomes clear that, just as at home, getting along at university doesn't simply mean trying to keep the teachers happy because you understand where they are coming from and what motivates them (Jonathan). You analyse the dominant discourse at its own site. You no longer have to get angry with their attempts to dominate and objectify you. Lack of understanding becomes their problem instead of yours. You become less occupied with the oppressor's concerns:

I'm the only blackfella there [in the tutorial]. This doesn't bother me anymore. It did at the beginning of the year. I've noticed in mainstream that people always stare at you because they think you shouldn't be there because you don't see many coloured people there in mainstream. It's only for themselves; that you're not smart enough because you're Aboriginal. I still feel a bit uncomfortable when I'm on my own. I'm probably a bit paranoid. It's just what
other people tell me. They [whites] sorta just get a shock because you're Aboriginal, because you're there. I'll grow out of it. I don't think it will bother me next year. You know that you're there to do it for yourself (Kiara).

You focus on your own expectations rather than having to measure-up black or white, woman or man, smart or dumb. You produce rather than reflect meanings and negotiate other outcomes for yourself. The discursive practices which once constrained you now generate localised and strategic social action.

Marginalisation is dismantled and the binaries of 'us and them' no longer remain meaningful and intelligible when you have established your own reference points in life. You no longer use the other to articulate your own identity. You construct your own subjectivities. For Sawicki (1988, p. 187) difference is a resource:

insofar as it enables us to multiply the sources of resistance to the myriad of relations of domination that circulate through the social field... Moreover, if we redefine our differences, discover new ways of understanding ourselves and each other, then our differences are less likely to be used against us.

1.4. Thesis

This study reveals that for these nine students domination and discrimination are felt at both macro (societal) and micro (family) levels. It explains how 'technologies of communication profoundly shape [their] human experience'; their experiences of 'the real' (Lather 1991, p. 21). It argues that these experiences are internalised at the local sites by each individual in their own way. Nine of these students have always felt different from others and so if you feel different, you perceive your experiences to be different, they are local, they are yours to deal with: 'after you get kicked in the guts you either lay down or else you get up and do something' with your life (Ellie). You 'either accept it or do it differently' (Stacey). The power to take action in your own life, to do something, is perceived by these students to lie with the individual rather than with institutions, or the 'master control room'. In their self narrativisations success at university is 'being aware of yourself and going through self-examination and having control [of how you want to go]' (Willy).

However, power and domination have often been viewed as coming from the top down, that disempowerment is a product of the 'natural world'. These students are
learning to deconstruct authority, 'to trace its effects, to see how authority is constituted and constituting' (Lather 1991, p. 144). They are gaining control of the new technologies of self at university through a critical awareness of how regimes of truth have constructed their otherness in white Australian history. They are undermining the very foundations of the monolithic category of 'the dominant' 'as they enter a world of oppositional knowledges and negotiate definitions and ways of perceiving' (Lather 1991, p. 145). Jonathan observes:

Understanding the world and what's required of us [at university] is important. If you are confident of yourself and you understand that nothing is really right or wrong; that your thoughts might not be wrong. I used to think there is a right and wrong way of thinking [at school] and I didn't have the confidence in myself to think broadly and open my mind and consider all these different things. I used to think that there might be a book that's got all the right and wrong answers. Now I think that your opinion is valuable, as valuable as anyone else's.

Because inequality is lived out at the local level by each of these students who are different and often experience inequality differently, it needs to be dealt with at the local level by each individual. Adrienne Rich points out that we need to 'construct a feminist theory that starts from the fragments of one's own body'. She emphasises that 'it is my body and not the body which becomes the site and the grounds from which to speak as women' (Probyn 1990, p. 177). Indeed these students reject the assumption of a universal Aboriginal body when they say: 'I am me, I'm my own person' and 'Aboriginality is not what propels me' (Ellie). Their social location and their theoretical grounding start from the fragments of their own body. These position were realised outside the university. Like gender identity, notions of Aboriginal or group identity are not the point of liberation but rather the grounding of continuing oppression and alienation from self (Nicholson 1990, p. 16). Jully notes 'the trouble with a lot of Aboriginal people is that they don't see themselves as people, they just think of themselves as black. They're isolating themselves'.

1.5. Theoretical grounding and discussion

To try to create the vision of a future just society requires a concept of human essence, of sameness, a hope for some of us which hasn't been achieved in over 2000
years of western philosophy. Concepts such as justice and equality at the structural level are inimical to difference because they require sameness, a human essence, a homogenous culture if they are to be achieved. A vision of a just human society based on the primacy of reason is antithetical to attempts to create equality (see Rabinow 1984, p. 5). There can be no single claims to truth because we experience in dialogical and disunified ways at myriad sites of social location.

These differences need to be seen as 'good', as valuable resources. As such we need to strive to understand differences rather than transforming them into dichotomous opposites. We need to avoid metanarratives which elide differences so that we can understand them from the point of the lowest common denominator. We need to view complexities as opportunity rather than crisis (Lather 1991, p. xvii). Lyotard (Fraser and Nicholson 1990, p. 23) claims that 'we cannot have and do not need a single overarching theory of justice. What is required, rather, is a justice of multiplicities' based on the revolution from within one’s own body; localised, 'ex-centric' uprisings to deepen 'the crisis of confidence in western conceptual systems' (Lather 1991, p. 159).
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