

A PHENOMENOLOGY OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF FEMINIST ISSUES: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE 105 JOURNALS

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ABSTRACT

In teaching Social Science 105, Gender Issues in Philippine Society, this professor asked his students to write regularly in journals their own ideas on certain topics that he assigned.

The following study is based on his analysis of the entries on these journals. What he did is to provide an analysis of these discourses.

His approach is anecdotal, but it shows how students feel or think about issues on violence, sexuality, and gender relations.

Methodological Assumptions

The following analyses of texts are taken from the journals that my students submitted in my Social Science 105 class. There are thirty-seven journals I collected after the end of the semester. These journals were requirements in my class. I asked my students to write on assigned topics related to our discussion every week. So I collected the journals every end of the week. Towards the beginning and end of the class, I asked permission from my students to use their materials for my future research. I also promised them that I would not disclose their names. Insofar as my

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sample is limited to only 37 students, I do not claim that the findings of my study will be applicable to all female students of the University of the Philippines who had taken Social Science 105. This study is just a way of giving opportunities for the voice of my students of Social Science 105 on specific topics relating to gender.

I followed the thematic format of the journals. Because there are several themes in the journals, I decided to limit the themes. The materials included are not exhaustive. But I deem that they are representative of the class. My purpose is to produce a coherent body of analysis linking these themes together.

The Problem of Interpretation

There is no single meaning for a given text (Denzin, 1989). That is why, I cannot claim that my analysis of the texts I included in this study is either definitive or final. As much as possible, I avoided altering and editing the journal entries cited in the study. (Ed. I edited the entries sparingly.) I keep my intervention to the minimum. My intervention in the text occurs in three ways: editing some portion, deciding what to cite and what part, and what to exclude. The ellipses and the underscoring bear the mark of my intervention as an editor and co-author. This study therefore is joint authorship and product of me, as an editor and sociologist, and my students, whose voices are disseminated all throughout the paper. I deliberately put my commentary in brackets to highlight my voice. This strategy however is not meant to reinstall "objectivity" into my interpretation. That is, the attempt to capture and represent the pre-given meaning in the text. It is only to alert the readers of the polyphonic character of this study. The voices of my students are indented.

However, I do not claim that the texts are the pure voices of my students. Neither do I claim they are transparent representation of the thoughts of my students. For I am actually deliberately framing their voices in a style that I want. Moreover these voices, on their own, are meaningless collage. It is my reading that it gains coherence as a whole. In the final analysis I am still the one who manages these voices. Nonetheless, this control is not total. For readers can notice that in some instances, I am also being controlled by these voices I am trying to represent and analyze. By positioning my voice side-by-side with the voices of my students, I have actually textualized my own voice. I have taken the risk of objectifying my own position. In effect, this study is a pastiche between my textualized voice and the texts of my students. I am supposed to be the brakeman in this grafting. As I have reiterated earlier, the final product of this study is a text. And now it is open for another rendition as a piece of music. This inter-textuality is beyond my control now. While writing this text, I may be in control, but once this study is fixed as a written document, it is now beyond my control. My interpretation is subject to other similar and contradictory reinterpretations.

A. Some Random Thoughts on Feminine Mystique

At the beginning of the course I asked my students to write every week an entry in their individual journal. Then I collected the journals every end of the week. For the first entry, I asked them to write something on their experience of gender oppression and inequality. I asked them to recount their personal experiences when they felt the burden of patriarchy. Surprisingly enough, my students wrote passionately on the subject. Below are some of these encounters with the patriarchy or gender inequality.

1. *The Classic Offering-a-Seat Chivalry Mystique*

There are three versions in the journals about this situation. One comes from a male student. After describing his physical discomfort in riding a hot air-conditioned bus, he describes the entry of a “voluptuous chick” and his predicament.

I really need a divine intervention to counter the influx of rage within me. Then it came! A voluptuous chick suddenly hopped in as if she was sent by Heaven to appease my anger. My angsty feeling was then replaced with a Freudian instinct. But I have to guard myself with contempt. Besides, I'm studying Soc. Sci. 105 to at least limit my emotional sexual image for women.

Anyway, this chick with swelling mammary glands incidentally stopped beside me. Because there was no seat available, she was forced to stand. I was thinking twice, if I would offer my seat and chat with her and get to know her name, and her contact number and. . . and make love with her. (No! No! It's not right).

I had not made up my mind yet when suddenly she started to talk to no one in particular. But you can figure out that it's for males who are comfortable sitting inside or in the lighter side of hell. 'Wala na ba talagang boy scout ngayon?' 'Wala bang gentleman? Mga bakla yata yong mga nandito,' she said.

The narrowness of her argument suddenly made me speak up this time with a stranger. 'Hey Miss! Ba't di mo tanungin yong driver. I think he's gentleman and enough para paupuin ka. Yun nga lang! Ikaw ang magdrive.'

Whether it's because of shame or to avoid further argument, she signaled 'para' and left.

I felt guilt for what I've done. Well! *Angst, my Id, and Soc. Sci. 105 theories are* not good recipe for that moment.

Notice in this account that the student was struggling with his id and the reality principle imposed by Social Science 105. In the end, his Id took control. What is visible here is the

entanglement between gender oppression and other forms of micro-fascisms of everyday life. The students described the bus as “hell” and the “voluptuous chick” as an angel sent to rescue him. But it appears that the angel challenged his privilege. As a result, he became the devil and felt guilty in the end. It is really difficult for men to get rid completely of their misogynist baggage. And as the student confessed, he had to do battle with his angst, his Id, and the teachings of Social Science 105. Sometimes, or most of the time, men tend to confront their sexist attitude through intellectual or rational approach. However, it takes more than rational approach to come to terms with this misogyny. Because it is already ingrained within their system becomes a second nature to them. Consequently, most men no longer realize these oppressive attitudes. And even if we become aware of it the impetus to overcome it is not strong enough because we are in the privileged position. It is very difficult to give up our comfort. We could even ask, what’s the point? There is no physical harm? It is very easy for men to call themselves feminist. It is much easier for them to empathize with the struggles of women. But David J. Kahane (1998:220) argues that “it’s not clear that emphatic listening can give men an adequate grasp of some of the experiences most central to feminist analyses.” And usually men have to surmount the problem of “not getting it.” Overcoming this obstacle means that “he would learn that he has internalized patriarchal affects, habits, and desires, in more ways than can be traced or changed; that he has benefited and continues to benefit from male privilege. . . that he has oppressed and continues to be complicit in the oppression of women in general and particular women in his own life, and that his every gaze and sentence and interaction is inflected, in large and small ways, by sexism and patriarchal privilege.”

Here's another version, this time, by of one of my female students.

Our class ended very early so, I tried to get to CSWCD [College of Social Work and Community Development] and to meet my friends. I was about to leave when their teacher announced that they'll have film showing so, I tended to stay and somehow learn about community development, but I was totally wrong. When we gathered at the classroom most of the boys seated *in front* and girls were standing at the back. I was lucky enough 'coz I sat with my friends in the middle not far from the small television and from the mere fact that I'm just with my friends. I'm somewhat confused and asked myself 'Wala na bang gentleman ngayon?' When I questioned my friend, a guy sitting besides me, he smiled sarcastically and said 'Akala ko ba'y gusto nyo ng equality, so ayan na!' I was astounded with his answer. I was expecting no nonsense answer. . . I asked him very softly and tried not to let others hear us but he insisted on sharing it with his friends. I was annoyed and reacted on their observations about the said equality, that's not what I want. I need explanations but they're teasing me about what happened. And besides the situation is different from other big issues.

In the foregoing account, the female is the one who articulates the micro-oppression. In this situation the male student ridiculed the question of the female writer by distorting the arguments of feminism. The point here is men are so incredulous to feminism because it threatens their macho image and other privileges. It also irritates men because it questions what they think is natural and common sense. That is why, men and women are repulsed by the very label "feminism." Moreover, what is shown in this instance is how men can ignore women's issue by distorting feminist views.

In the following journal entry, a gay student writes his own version.

I was going home last Friday. It was rush hour and all the buses were packed liked corned beef. Everybody couldn't avoid

brushing against each other. As I passed through the aisle, an old lady instinctively covered her breast with her handbag and loudly told her younger companion, a teenager girl to turn around as I passed. And all the while I was facing the other way. As if all men for them were either maniacs or rapists, always taking advantage of women. And to boot, I was wearing a Roman clerical collar and my crucifix at that time!

I couldn't blame them anyway. It could have risen from a bad experience.

But later on, when the bus wasn't like a corned beef anymore, just sardines, a man got off. An older man and I competed for it. Seeing my attire (probably mistaken me for a Catholic priest) he hesitated and offered me the seat. I declined saying I could still stand. He insisted. As a compromise, we both gave the seat to a lady who just got on the bus.

In this version there is a reversal and a double bind. The gay student felt awkward because of the reaction of the female passenger. Yet he could not react to the passenger, for men who are sincere in their efforts to respect women are willing to give up their privileges. It is also disheartening to know and experience women still show suspicion and uneasiness towards their gestures. This suspicion of women will always be there for as long as there are men who define their gestures in the traditional masculine way. Hence, the way to eliminate this mutual antagonism and misunderstanding between sexes is to involve both sexes. Women cannot win the struggle for equality if we, as men ourselves, would not begin to change our attitudes and definitions of women.

Another point worth stressing in this situation is the hierarchy of power. In this situation the older man preferred to offer the seat to my student because of the latter's appearance. It reflects the fact that religious status is esteemed more highly than gender or age status.

Yet what is very interesting in this situation, the classic offering-a-seat chivalry mystique, is it brings to relief in a very simple manner the dialectic between difference and equality. Men in this situation tend to argue on the side of equality, while women take the position of difference. Of course this can be reversed. But as Joan Scott (1987) has shown, women need not reduce their position to one side by holding on to one of the horns of the dilemma. What is needed is a strategic use of each horn to advance their rights.

2. Feminist Consciousness

I think there already exists feminist consciousness, no matter how embryonic, among my female students, or among women, and some men for that matter. Some find their biological structure, like menstrual period, oppressive. Following Marx's analysis of class-consciousness, it may be argued that women already have that incipient consciousness of their oppression. This consciousness is heightened more when they encounter different forms of sexual discrimination. They might feel what Betty Friedan (1968) calls as the "problem without a name." She terms this as the "feminine mystique." What is needed is to elaborate and articulate this "problem without a name." And gender courses provide opportunities for these women to confront these unnamed problems. In the following account, the feeling of psychological uneasiness is very evident. For instance, one of the authors writes the following entry in her journal.

I don't know if I'm cursed or not of being a female. I hate it every time my period is coming. I'm turning into someone like the wicked witch of the East in the Wizard of Oz. And furthermore my sneezing can be heard throughout the corridor in my dormitory. Aside from being grouchy bear during this dark time of the month, I also feel like a pig because being so messy and clumsy in everything I do.

At this moment, I can hardly come up with a single advantage of being a female.

Then after discussing her hysteria about the roaming rapist in the campus and the presence of kleptomaniac in the dormitory where she stays, she complained.

First, there was fraternity violence. Then, a kleptomaniac. And now, a rapist? Tsk. . .tsk. . .tsk. . . . A sorry life indeed of being a student and a female.

After reading this entry, I asked myself. "What if men could menstruate?" Gloria Steinem (1978) gives the answer. "The answer is clear—menstruation would become an enviable boast-worthy, masculine: Men would brag about how long and how much. Boys would mark the onset of menses, that longed-for proof of manhood, with religious ritual and stag parties." Steinem's answer deconstructs the patriarchal definition of menstruation. Reading this deconstructive interpretation might bring men closer to the reality of women. Yet, men may still take this merely as propositional knowledge, and refuse to employ its rhetorical power on their privileges. This is another example of bad faith, of not getting it right.

The most common source of oppression of women, especially female students, is sexual harassment. In their daily activities, of going to school and back to their homes, sexual harassment is very omnipresent especially in spaces where it is least expected. The best example is when they ride public utility vehicles. Under these circumstances, women tend to feel violated, yet they fear their enemy. This is very surprising given the fact that sexual harassment is very private, and is done in a public place. While men may tend not to see their actions in these spaces as violative of women's personal space, nevertheless women interpret these gestures differently. It is undeniably true that men also exploit this space because it provides ample opportunities

to perform improper gestures and body language whose interpretations are contingent on the definition of the situation. The definition of the situation in public places such as a crowded bus provides convenient excuse for some men to justify and rationalize their several aggression. Unfortunately, for men who do not share the same attitude, a crowded bus makes them conscious and wary of women's aversive response. This knowledge brings men to confront unhappy or agonistic consciousness about their position in patriarchal society. As Kahane (1998:222) beautifully puts it, "The shock awaiting a man with thorough knowledge of feminism would be acute: he'd lose his sense of secure grounding in the world—faith in his own judgments, emotions, and desires. Every aspect of his self would become suspect, and also potentially impositional or harmful. Did he just make a sexist comment? Should he hold his door? Was that a pornographic gaze? There is further sense in which men are unable to purge themselves of their roles in patriarchal harms. It is only socialization that is relatively immovable in any man's case, but also the structures of power that endow him with privilege."

My experience isn't exactly new. It's just that it happens to me almost every time I ride buses on my way home to Paranaque. I'm talking about sexual harassment, and I admit that there are a lot of male maniacs roaming around and they just happen to be on the busses I'm riding in.

In a way, I'm quite lucky because I haven't been raped and touched in my private parts—it's just merely brushing his hands on my arm, thigh, and hands. But it's still the same—it is still a violation for women. My only mistake is that I don't know how to fight— maybe I'm just afraid that he would do a lot of worse.

Others question even the way they dress. They felt that dressing is not a function of gender but of comfort. Yet in our society dressing is predominantly tied to gender (Rothblath, 1987).

Why do I try my best to move like a masculine woman? The question just popped out of my mind. I try to move about like a male, walk like males do, stiffen my facial expressions just the way my father and brothers do etc. Why do I try to be so? Why don't I just try to mimic the way my mother and female siblings dress? Why do I find men's—like clothing better than feminine clothing? Skirts and tight blouses make me feel restricted — they do not look good on me either. I have also wanted to wear clothing of this type but actually wearing it is suffocating for me. Maybe I am just putting too much value on comfort. I want to be free to move just the way I do now.

The way I dress, the way I move and try to look is my style of survival.

Another journal entry criticizes the Spice Girls as a false representation of true feminism:

I hate Spice Girls. I don't like the way they interpret 'Girl Power.' They are stereotypical bimbos who couldn't care less about feminism. All they care about is the money that they are served on silver platters when all they have to do is show some skin, wear high heels, make 'pa-cute', sing stupid songs and dance crazily. They don't even have good voices! Only Sporty Spice, with her loud voice, could claim that she has an attention to tune.

What is the world coming to if the teens look up to these people as their role models who portray feminists and claim that they serve as spokeswomen for GIRL POWER? Even a grade-schooler can write lyrics such as 'if you wanna be my lover, you gotta get with on my friends, making love's forever, friendship never ends!' Now, does that suck or what? All they ever paid real attention to is the rhyming.

If this is how the media portrays role models for women, how will young girls who idolize them see themselves? Realize what they are capable of? Know what the real essence of being a woman is?

Another source of oppression is in the family. A father usually prefers a first-born son to a daughter primarily to perpetuate his family name. Here are two examples:

It was the ninth month of pregnancy of my sister and the baby was expected to come out soon. When the moment came that my sister would give birth, everyone in the family was excited. We waited for the announcement of the 'physician' (I'm confused whether I'd use the word doctor, it's unfair there's Dra., until physician popped into my mind.) So when she announced it was a baby boy, my father was really happy. He exclaimed, 'Finally, I have a baby boy.' I understand because God blessed him with five girls, including me. So at least, even the baby boy would no longer 'carry' our family name, my father is still extremely happy, because at long last, he got a boy in the family, his grandson.

I found out from my mother that my father branded me as a 'disapproved child' because he always wanted to have a baby boy. When my sister was born, he decided that he would have a baby boy for his next child.

When my Mom became pregnant, the ultrasound revealed that it was a baby boy. My father was quite pleased with himself. Unfortunately the baby was me—a bouncing little baby girl. The ultrasound provided false result, and worse, my dad couldn't accept it. All my life, we never got close. When my little brother was born, somehow it made him accept me. Even so, I feel very oppressed just thinking about this experience.

Others locate oppression in the portrayal of women in romantic novels.

In the romantic books I'd read, women are the 'damsels in distress' captured by the antagonist men waiting to be saved by their 'knights' in shining-armor only to find out in the end they'd engage in sexual acts as the heroes tease and lead them to 'open up' to their demands.

I think that these examples are utterly oppressing on the part of the women in the sense that the persons alone signify the chauvinistic attitude of men thinking that they should be initiations and that women who take up that kind of action are considered aggressive and improper. Women are concerned about the opinion of men because they want to please them sexually by submitting to their will leaving them [men] exploring their [women] bodies.

One of my students notes how oppressive it is to be a typical wife via anticipatory socialization.

Now I know what a housewife feels! *Noong na-suspend ang classes ng Friday (July 23) wala akong ginawa kundi maglinis ng bahay.* Take note: *Ako ang naglinis.*

My dad was upstairs, watching TV. My two brothers were at school. *Nang tapos ko nang lahat ng dapat linisin, wala na rin sila. Umalis ang dad ko, ako na lang ang natira. Ganon pala yon! Kapag wala nang gagawin, manuod na lang ng TV mula 12 hanggang hapon. . .Ay. . .*

Hindi nawawala ang pagkain! Aside from cleaning the house I was also the one who cooked, So *talagang housewife na housewife ang dating ko! Tapos, siyempre, kapag nanunuod ng TV, may kasamang nguya at pagkain. Kaya pala tumataba ang mga housewife!* After the day, I felt so unproductive! Feeling *ko tuloy wala akong nagawang significant kundi ang magpataba!* I feel useless, depressed *at kung anu-ano pa. Kaya* I begun to realize the great opportunity that I have in my hands, 'DON'T TAKE EDUCATION FOR GRANTED.' It is your ticket out of domestication and your jumpstart to improvement.

Another student recounted this story and how she thinks that women are oppressed in the workplace.

My friend works in one of the prestigious banks in Metro Manila. She told me just the other night about one particular incident in the office last week.

One sub-unit manager of this girl, a marketing associate, told her to prepare herself because she will have to meet with one of the bank's biggest clients. The girl who was excited at the same time, nervous. However when the first VP (Vice-President) learned about this, he said that a guy should be tasked to meet the client. The sub-unit manager, also a woman, argued that the girl has the capabilities of meeting with the client. She wasn't listened to and the guy associate was given the task.

This incident is a very obvious example of oppression in the workplace. What does the guy have that the girl doesn't have? NOTHING!

Oppression also happens in intimate relationship, as in the case of the following journal entry.

One outrageous thing I did was to invite a man; actually he offered me his company, in my apartment while I was all alone in the night. I was in my second year in college and I thought that it would be fun or an adventure for me. But when he got there I felt uneasy towards him because he wanted to get personal and intimate, which I politely refused. Thankfully he was gentleman enough or should I say he was strong enough to repress his lust towards me. Well, he was a good sport—when he left in the morning he shook hands with me. But maybe if ever this incident would happen again I will certainly do it differently to be more unforgettable and outrageous.

How about my male students? Here is an account of one of my male students' dilemma whether to pursue his talent in guitar or develop his physical talent in basketball. Notice in this account how the pressure of the male peer group forced the writer to abandon guitar for basketball. Now in the end, the writer compares his guitar to his mother. The writer here equates music and poetry with feminine qualities and basketball with male qualities.

During my high school days, I was exposed to a lot of great music specifically during the rise of the alternative bands. It turned out that I found myself buying those great records and not just products of commercialized 'art' . . .

My passion for music grew even stronger that I even don't have time for other social activities. For, instance, it was only during my third year high school when I learn to play basketball. My male classmates even said that I have to use my gift of a towering height and not just be into music. Their argument is that music is just for those soft-hearted, weak individuals and basically identified with feminine preferences. They even told me that to be a machoman, you have to play physical games. Much more, they insisted that girls in our campus go ga-ga over varsity basketball players.

I argued that what really satisfies my poetic hunger is just playing my beloved guitar and writing songs. That I don't give a damn about that kind of physical game, and much more their concept of machoman. But the principle of *pakikisama* handed me the basketball and later I realized 'masarap palang magbasketball.'

That realization was recently challenged when I nearly broke my right elbow last week. It really made me afraid to grab the ball again. During these odd moments, I see my guitar just waiting beside my bed. Just like a mother waiting for her son who abandoned her. As if it's telling me 'forget basketball!' 'Just pluck! Pluck me!'

As my guitar gently weeps, it comes into my mind that basketball is somehow associated with the capitalist notion of beating your enemies and it won't suck all the morrow of life.

Even my gay student experienced gender oppression. This is what he wrote in one of his journal entries.

Last Wednesday, I and a couple of gay friends went out for some drinks in a bar that has a reputation for being a pick-up place. We were all straight looking and nobody took notice of us at first. But when everybody got a little tipsy, we couldn't help but become a little bit more feminine. And the guys (I am not really sure if they are really straight) seated next to our table began to take note of us. They started to catch our attention, making glances (or stares), 'pa-cute' actions, and making sexual conversations making sure we hear it.

I and some of my friends were a bit offended! We are all good Christian gays and very much committed already. All of us have always hated guys who make themselves 'cute' when there are guys around. They weren't like that when were still sober, only when they were sure we were really gay.

They could really be that way. But the thing is, it seems to say that, for them, all gays are promiscuous. That gays are always after men. That we would want to have sex with the guy nearest to us.

Well, sorry. Our boyfriends are even more handsome than them. We don't want them.

One of the themes of patriarchal values is the affirmation of male virility. There is therefore the notion that men are by nature sexually promiscuous and polygamous. This value is often couched in sophisticated biological theories. This is even applied to gay and lesbian sexuality. Such taken-for-granted cliché puts pressure on men to show their sexual aggressiveness. I think that females are also capable of showing their sexual aggression. It is only society and culture that inhibit women from doing so (see Eviota, 1994).

B. Sexually Aggressive Women

Women today are becoming more and more open to the idea that women can be aggressive, too, in sexual act. Gone are the days when women were treated as sexually passive and inert. Traditionally, sexual innocence is associated with femininity. Women who display explicit sexual gestures are often treated as whores. With the advance in the study of women's sexual and reproductive biology, and women's sexual experiences (Hite, 1976), we now know that women are also capable of sexual aggression (Steedman, 1994:312). For some, sexual aggressiveness of women is rooted in the nature of female species:

I used to despise sexually aggressive women. I thought they were flirts and had nothing else on their minds but lustful thoughts.

That was before. Now I realized that sometimes, you can't help yourself but just succumb to bodily urges. That's human nature, and there's nothing wrong with that.

Others think that women, too, have the right to express their sexual aggression:

I think it's okay for women to be aggressive. I believe that if you want something, you should go for it and you shouldn't let anyone or anything keep you from getting it.

I can picture myself being aggressive. If the guy's too chicken and I know we both want it, what the heck? Girls should also get to make the first move!

Most of my female students consider sexual aggressiveness in the act of copulation as natural and expression of woman's power, personality, and freedom.

. . . And for those women who are sexually aggressive, well, I don't have anything against them. Maybe, they're just too comfortable with their sexuality, that they want to explore it more. Almost always! It's just one way of showing and expressing their personality and individuality. They enjoy being like that, then let it be.

Sexually aggressive women, in my opinion, are confident and secure about themselves. They are not afraid to take control. I don't see them as cheap and without morals.

What do I think of women who are aggressive in sexual act? Delightful. . . explosive. . . spectacular. . . insatiable. . . really great and I'm envious of them.

Women who are aggressive in bed seem to emanate power, who can transcend the norms and boundaries of culture and if given the chance I'd like to be one.

I think there's no other thing that makes mating very good but being free of doing what you want without being anxious of what your partner will think of you.

Such tolerant attitude does not only apply to their observation of other women but also to themselves. Some women would consider being on top during copulation as the expression of freedom and strength. It is still a battle for sexual freedom. As one writer puts it bluntly:

Me, on top of a guy during intercourse? What a question! Of course, I do want also to be on top during sex. What's wrong with it??? It's natural. You know, when it's there, the guy wouldn't mind if you're/I'm on top. For sure, he would like it.

Why not? I wouldn't exactly call it aggressive though. More like taking control. Men just have been taking control of women

always in *every aspect*. It's frustrating. May be that is why, I think maybe when it comes to sex, I could see myself as more aggressive. It's an expression of strength. That you can't always be on top. That this time, I'm taking the shots. It's an expression of freedom.

Of course. I don't believe that sex should have rules as to what position should you do when having sex. . . I could be on top, in control, in the bottom, anywhere during the sexual act as long as my partner and I want to do and enjoy it.

Others would even go all the way with premarital sex. Interestingly enough, in my research on youth culture of the students of the University of the Philippines, eighteen percent of the respondents had experienced premarital sex. But the majority of my respondents are against premarital sex. It is therefore interesting to know that most of my female students were quite liberal in this issue.

Would I consider having sex outside marriage? Absolutely! My virginity is mine. My body is for me to control. Both of them are no precious gems to give to one special man—if it means just solely one man who will marry me. I would exercise control of my body to a special one—yes but it is not to give up something. If it will have sex, it would be to have sex, to fulfill me—my desire, my needs, my soul (if there's such). For this, I'll do it outside marriage because I'm definitely sure that to attain that fulfillment I would need, at least not necessarily a man to promise me a wedding ring.

Yet the same writer admits that she is still conservative when it comes to sex. But this conservatism is not the conventional conservatism. It should be taken to mean that women could be sexually responsive if they feel for the person whom they want to have sex with. The writer continues below her journal entry.

Even at this age and at this time, I would say that my attitude towards sex is a on the little conservative side. I still do not approve of casual sex. Sex with a person one loves I would approve of, but sex with just anyone else, I really can't see myself in that situation.

Virginity for me is not important anymore. After all, its really just a piece of meat (the hymen). But I just can't see myself doing it with someone I have no feelings for.

There are still some who have conservative attitude to sex, especially those with strong religious conviction. Christian heritage is very strong among Christian women. It is responsible for the domestication of women. It also led to the repression of the sexual capacities of women. By making sex sacred and restricting it inside marriage, popular Christianity has produced, wittingly or unwittingly, a double standard of morality. Women are expected to surrender their virginity only when they are married. And the image of Virgin Mary has become the symbol of this ritual. This is shown in the following journal entry.

Sex for me is sacred. It is for me an act being done by two consenting parties who are in love. Honestly, I don't oppose pre-marital sex. It depends on the lovers. It is a manifestation of love of two persons of the opposite sex for each other. On the other hand, I still believe that virginity is the best gift a girl can give to her husband. Again, I also believe that sexual compatibility is one of the factors to keep the marriage alive. I believe that there's nothing wrong with having sex before marriage only if you do it with one you love and you don't just sleep around with anyone.

My attitude towards sex is one of total abstinence until I am married. Period. . .

It depends [sexual aggression of women]. If the sexual act is done inside marriage and the woman is aggressive. It's OK. It merely shows that she has no inhibitions, and she is intent on giving and receiving pleasure.

However, if the sexual act is done outside marriage, I believe it is wrong, regardless of the woman's aggressiveness or passivity.

C. The Violence of Real and Imagined Rape

According to Susan Brownmiller (1975:209), rape serves as the main agent of patriarchy in perpetuating the domination of

women by force. It is the most dreadful part of the women's experience of violent relationship. When we discussed rape in the class, I addressed my male students in the following manner: "The issue of rape for men is not, why men rape, but the big question is: why most men don't rape women?" Diana Scully and Joseph Moralla (1995:402) contend that "rape is not a behavior confined to a few "sick" men but many men have the attitudes and beliefs necessary to commit a sexually aggressive act." This means that one can talk about "the pervasive male ideology of rape" (Brownmiller, 1975:324). That is, rape is seen as normal and inevitable part of human civilization. Hence, even some of my female students think that eradicating rape completely is pure utopia.

1. *A Rape-Free World, or What if Rape Is Stopped Forever?*

Here, one of my students expressed her exhilarating feeling when rape stops once and for all, at the same time, thinks that it is pure utopia. Notice that the author suggests that all men are potential rapists. Further, she equates penis with rationality. She is arguing that for as long as men let their libido rule their mind, rape will not stop. Nevertheless some ethnographic studies of pre-industrial societies confirm the existence of some rape-free cultures (cited in Scully and Moralla, 1995:403).

No rape?

Wow!!! Are we in utopia? It's impossible. Rape will never leave the face of the earth, for as long as men live. For as long as men have their penis to think for them, rape is here to stay.

This remark suggests a deep-seated suspicion of women regarding male's proneness to sexual violence. And this imagery, I think, is a great obstacle to personal intimacy between sexes. It is destructive to both parties. For men, it stigmatizes them even before they could establish their identity. For women it breeds

concealed antagonism towards the male species. But what if rape stops?

For my female students, I asked them to write their opinions on: Will their lives change once rape is eradicated? And what aspects of their lives will change? Most of my female students think that they will be more comfortable when it comes to sporting daring dressing styles. The thought of rape prevents women from expressing freely their own preferred dressing style. A rape-free world offers security to women.

Then. . . particularly women will be secured. There's nothing to worry about anymore. For us, that [rape] is the no. 1 situation that triggers our fears and worries.

I'll definitely feel free. I can roam around, everywhere at any time. My concerned relatives would stop their interrogations like 'Where are you going? What time are you coming home?' Or, 'Who is with you?' I understand it's for my own good, but you see, almost every member of the family will be relaxed because I'm safe from harm.

But if, and only if, I can be assured that I will not get raped, I'll probably be more expressive in my way of dressing. I can now wear micro-mini skirt with matching tube top without the fear of crazed maniacs grabbing my legs.

I could probably save so much money and comfort by not wearing bras.

I could probably go jogging at night, when I can't sleep and have no better things to do.

I could probably wear whatever I want, like micro-minis and spaghetti straps especially on hot days.

I could probably go out and stay all night without my parents getting worried about what could happen to me.

I could probably not worry about forgetting to lock my doors at night.

I could probably stay out and watch out for a falling star all night if I want to. There would be so much more freedom and so much less worrying.

When rape is gone forever (sexual harassment goes with all) all things being equal, it's like waking up in a world where human rights would be universal, inalienable and indivisible. Why? Because with this could come sexual liberation which could lead to sexual freedom. That is, women are free to discover and feel, design new types of female sexuality. It's like women's capacity (to decide, to express themselves) is reinforced. We would no longer be intimidated by our male counterpart.

If I bring this to (the) some trivial happenings of day to day living it would be something like this:

I've always loved to jog early in the morning or (5-7 A.M.) or early in the evening (6-7 P.M.). I've been harassed a couple of times, so with this [rape] gone I could continue with my activity being worry-free. (But I think I'm really stubborn because given the fact I still do what I chose to do.)

Another benefit of having no rape is the development of freer and more intimate interactions with friends of the opposite sex.

With rape gone, I can have more male friends. I can be open with them and they won't think of me maliciously.

A world without rape is freedom. Total freedom for women. We can express ourselves more, without thinking that 'I might call too much attention of the guys,' or 'They'd probably think I want sex!' We'll be comfortable. No more pretensions.

Others of course would still remain as they are now, but the fear of rape will be gone.

If ever rape stops or would be abolished, I guess one of the thorns that oppress women would be taken away. I could express myself more freely and behave without fear.

However, I would not be up to the extent that I would be behaving like a prostitute—displaying myself wearing skimpy clothes, or the like. I would just be like myself right now, wearing *COMPLETE* clothes and just doing ordinary things like a normal teenager would do in her everyday routine. The only difference is

that fear is taken away, and that I am respected by what I am and who I am.

I could touch a guy, hug him and kiss him if I want to and not worry that he would view it as an invitation [for sexual intimacy] and rape me if I refuse to have sex with him.

I could go out with a guy I have just met if I feel like it and never fear that he is a rapist and that he will rape me.

The threat of rape is very costly for women, both physically and psychologically. Until I taught Social Science 105 I never fully realized how even the possibility of rape is so constraining and damaging to the quotidian life of women. Before, I thought that rape is just a problem when it actually occurs. It never occurred to my mind that even before the crime is committed it is already wrecking havoc on women's lives and consciousness. It changes and limits the physical spaces of women, it distorts their perception of men especially strangers, it makes them paranoid, it makes their lives economically unsustainable (they have to take a cab when going home very late at night), transforms even the way they appreciate nature (e.g., while jogging in a secluded part of the park), and limits their control of their time (e.g., going home late at night and working at a night shift).

A gay student experiences different forms of constraints when it comes to rape and his relationship with female friends. Even gays are suspected by women and could not be trusted. Some women might think that being gay is a just a pretension to take advantage of women's trust and company. Here is the agony of my gay student.

Had the concept of rape been erased from the memory of people, I would not have difficulty in closely communicating with females. . .

With rape in our minds I can't just push and shove around in a compressed bus. . .can't talk to female strangers I happen to see especially if we are alone and it is dark and people cannot see or

hear us, can't give compliments to them. Once, some of my female friends and I were so overcome with emotion, and I just wanted to embrace one of them, but she made a scene as if I were taking advantage of her. It cost me a lot of apologies and explanations. At another time, me and another female friend were all alone in a waiting shed at midnight, waiting for different rides to our respective homes. She said she felt afraid. So I put an arm across her shoulder to give her an assurance that I, although gay, can adequately defend us from anything. As soon as she felt my arms, she screamed out loud. As in loud. (I was a bit glad no one was around to hear and see us.) Then she went a few paces back and forth and told me not to go anywhere near her. She rode the next jeep that came by, although I knew it went out of her route.

All this would go away if rape was eliminated. I don't have to assure females that, despite my masculine appearance, I am very gay and pose no danger to them (except in the competition for men, perhaps.) I do not have to ensure that a friend understands me well before I can really be close to her. And there would be no more limitations in my desire to comfortably communicate with anyone, even strangers. My sex would not hinder me anymore (my gender and sexuality long ceased to be.)

And females would not see me as a dangerous male anymore and accept me into their circle (how flattering), as I have seen them do to my homosexual friends. Some think I even just pretend to be gay and still stay aloof! Well, sorry. I am just not comfortable with being effeminate all the time.

The existence of rape is also damaging to men. But rape is more costly for women. The entries I cited above are very similar to the observations of Tim Beneke (1995:130-131). Beneke, after talking to women, learned that "The threat of rape alters the meaning and feel of the night. Observe how your body feels, how the night feels, when you're in fear. The constriction in your chest, the vigilance in your eyes, the rubber in your legs. What do the stars look like? How does the moon present itself? What is the difference between walking late at night in the dangerous part of the city and walking late at night in the country,

or safe suburbs?” One of his male informants has this very interesting thing to say, which I think parallels my experience, “Lately, I’m realizing that when I stare at women lustfully, they often feel more threatened than flattered” (p. 135).

2. *What if Rape Happens to You?*

The following account summarizes the attitudes of my female students on the question how they would react if they were raped. Here we can see the dialectic of victim versus rapist, consent versus force, privacy versus invasion, compassion versus domination, pity versus self-esteem. Towards the end of the account, the author wishes to end her life rather than live through the post-rape ordeal. This should prompt families to be more supportive of rape victims (Sleeth and Barnsley, 1989:248). With the community and the significant others of the victim showing indifference and apathy, the victim might commit suicide as a form of survival strategy (see Sleeth and Barnsley, 1989:153ff.)

I was raped by a stranger. If it was my crush, I wouldn't call it rape since rape means forcing a person to submit to sexual intercourse and for me, there's this probability that I would submit to him [crush] because I'm physically attracted to him and I think I like him very much. But I felt I was raped by someone I don't know, hurts me so, not only physically, but psychologically and emotionally as well. I felt very weak after the incident. It changed how I look at men in general. I feel totally dehumanized—as if I was just a thing whom the rapist can easily climb upon. He didn't care about my cries of fear and pain. He didn't hear any voice. All he was concerned about was how to appease his pleasure. I'm angry at the world on why of all the people, it happened to me! What's worse, people or the society pity me and think I'm wasted instead of building my self-esteem. I already feel numbed because of what happened and I can't even think straight—I value not only my virginity because I can give it freely to someone I really love but also my dignity which I feel invaded and shattered by a

stranger. He invaded my private space and used my body not for love but simply for his sexual desires like a dog in heat. What I want right now is to end my life so that I could vanish in this cruel world.

[Even the thought of being raped for my female students is very disgusting.]

I can't imagine myself being raped. I don't want to imagine my self getting in that situation—ever!

The thought of rape itself and its omnipresence prevents women from fully enjoying their daily routines. Notice that in the following journal entry, the writer juxtaposes her interaction with Mother Nature with imagined rape.

I missed the morning session of jogging so I decided to do it later in the afternoon. It's a really a humid day. You can do it ____ [her nickname]. Just a few more blocks and you'll complete five-round run of the academic oval.

Whew! I was through so I decided to go to the lagoon and rest for a while. Gulping lots of oxygen and enjoying the cool breeze of the approaching night. It's already dark. I could hear the sound of crickets or insects (whatever) in the distance. It's a wonderful night. Anyway, I was all sweaty, so I sat down on a large trunk of tree beside the bank to relax and well fantasize about my crush. Suddenly, out of the bushes, (I'm not thinking or imagining that such a hideous creep is lurking behind those bushes, his eyes on me, waiting for that perfect timing. . .). Somebody or was it something knocked me out of my consciousness. So I was raped.

What should I do now? 'Shut up all of you!' I can't think. . . the damage has been done.

Women tend to interpret rape as a defilement of their body. As such, it is connected with dirtiness and pollution. In the following journal entry, after the author describes the imagined rape scene this is how she describes her feeling afterwards:

. . . There I was lying on the grassy area, with the rains falling all over me. I looked at the sky. . . and close my eyes. Then together

with the rain. . .a tear trickled down my face and fallen into the ground.

That is how I surely would feel. . .like an angel that has fallen into the ground. If I would be raped, everything on me would surely crumble. First, I lost my virginity which I've been keeping and has given value for so many years, that not even my boyfriend's seduction has lured me into giving it up; second I lost it in a very violent, disgusting situation. I would be coming to terms with two different blows: I lost my virginity and that I lost it harshly with no tenderness to a man I don't love and don't even know. I would really feel like I am soiled and that I'm not clean anymore. No amount of bathing could erase the rapist's prints on my body, and that even if I will be cleaned physically, I'll always feel like I'm dirty.

However I can only imagine what and how I'd feel and can imagine that I would go straight to the bathroom and wash up all night, scrub myself until I would be able to convince myself that no DNA of his remained in or on any part of my body.

3. *An Eye-for-an-Eye, a Penis-for-a-Penis*

In general my students would like to exact equal punishment for their rapist. They want their rapists to suffer the same agony as they do.

i

Try as I might to be creative, the only person I see harassing me is a lustful crazed maniac. And even if this is only a faint vision, I already want to kill him, castrate him and chop his penis in front of his eyes.

I would then look for a gun, or anything that could kill and look for that person and shoot him in the head, or better off, cut off his penis.

I don't know how I'd feel after that. I'd probably get some satisfaction out of torturing him, or at least, seeing him behind bars, but I would forever know that he abused me and hurt me and I would forever see that time that he did.

There will only be two things on my mind, that is, self pity and revenge. I will fight for the thing done to me. I won't stop until he/they are convicted and punished to die. It will be hard for me to forgive, harder to forget

As for the rapist, he should pay. My first thought is to hire someone who would beat and rape him, too. I'm not really sure about it now but I think given the chance, I will do it.

ii

I feel so ashamed of myself. It's funny how I protected my chastity for many years—not even a kiss. And yet. . .all my efforts are wasted. I am shattered. It happened for less than an hour—that's it. . .just like that. Shit.

I know I'm the victim yet I'm too ashamed to blurt it out. What? I'll go out and expose myself on national TV and tell the whole world that hey! I was raped. Look at me! This is the face of the girl who was abused! And then what? They'll pity me? They'll ridicule me?

And on the trial, the defense will ask me to retell the whole story. . .every single detail? But I want to fight back. I want to hurt him, pluck his eyes out, cut his thing into tiny little pieces, pull his hair off and enjoy the moment of seeing his bleeding scalp. I want to kick him, slap him, tear his face into pieces with my bare hands. But I can't. I'm too disgusted at him to even touch him.

He must die slowly and painfully. Bullshit. He must be inserted in a grinder from his feet up.

Meanwhile, I know I can't be forever bitter and live in the past. I want to rule. I will run for presidency and change this country into dictatorship. Once in power, I'll make sure every rapist will suffer like hell. I won't allow them to die though, they will live and forever be ostracized in the society doing endless cleaning, planting trees, while receiving 100 lashes everyday. It could get worse. Meanwhile, I will concentrate on making sure I won't get pregnant. I would abort it, if necessary.

iii

. . .I won't tell my parents or my close friends that I'm raped. It is not that I'm ashamed, I just want to do it as my own way of

exacting revenge. I won't hire a killer to kill him 'coz death would be easy for him and of course, it will cost me some money. I want him to suffer and die slowly for what he has done, and make sure also that he will never get another victim. I want to watch him die a very painful and humiliating death known to man. Since I know some people in my province who practice witchcraft, I will ask them to teach me some of these things. I know some viewed it as a sin. To hell with them. It is my own life and I will do exactly what I want to do in my own terms. It will be a sort of affair between the two of us.

iv

I was raped. If only I could wake up from this horrible nightmare, I wouldn't have suffered this way. If only shouting and crying in anguish would lessen the pain I'm feeling, I would have cried 'till there were no more tears left. I want to kill the person who did this to me. He stole not only my virginity but my future as well. He shall pay for this. He must not die without suffering first. I will not give him satisfaction by shooting him in the head. It's not enough. It will never be enough.

I will start by cutting his most prized possession. I want to see the look in his eyes begging for mercy the way I did when he raped me. Then, I would let him eat 'it.' I can imagine him now on bended knees begging for my forgiveness. I wouldn't care less even if *he cries* 'till he ran out of breath. I know what I'm planning to do is gross and brutal but that serves him well for being sex-starved idiot and maniac.

v

I was raped yesterday! How I hate that man! Shit! I want to die right now! I wish he had killed me after all that. I feel like I'm different person now.

I have a wish for that rapist. I wish 500 red ants would eat up his organ until he loses his last breath. People like him do not deserve to live, but *he deserves* to suffer 500 times before he dies.

If by chance, I'll die before him because I can't go on living like this, I swear that I would visit him every night to give him the fright of his life until he gradually dies. I'll be more than happy to see him suffer a lot and slip away little by little.

I will not leave everything to those in power because I think what will take place is not enough suffering due to a man of such nature. I want everything to happen in my own way! He has done this, now I will let him taste my wrath!

In these entries, the authors show their reluctance in letting the system take care of their problems. They are especially repugnant of the idea of making it public through mass media sensationalism. They are also repelled by the horror of being interrogated in the courtroom. Hence, they want to make it private, but at the same time they want to take the retaliation in their own hands. I think this reluctance of women to go by the rules of the system prevents most rape victims from disclosing their ordeals. And this is a very significant problem that feminists have to confront and change. The system itself has to be changed so that this fear will no longer prevent women from speaking of violence perpetuated against them.

4. *The Violence of Rape*

For women, rape is a violation of their personality. It is a violence of their freedom to control their consent and will.

i

I would want to kill the savage not because he had taken my virginity, but because he violated my freedom. I could engage in early sex activities, and love it, as long as I consented.

ii

If I'm raped by a close friend, the first thing I would feel is being betrayed. I gave him my trust as a friend. And I know that trust is earned hard. How could he do it to me?

The very first thing I would do is to confront him and ask him the *million-dollar* question, why? Is it lust? Or is it just a way of showing me his male pig power over me? And if *he starts* blaming

me for what happened, the only thing I could advise him is to hide from me.

Some students are very rational and prepared on any eventuality of rape occurring in their lives. They know what to do. This may be contrary to the belief that women are passive and helpless victims of rape. Even after rape, women are prepared to take responsibility for their actions.

i

I would like to think that if I were raped (heaven forbid), I'd do what is supposed to be done by rape victims. I'll run immediately to the hospital to get a check up and get a medical report, then go straight to the police.

ii

My first impulse is to hunt the man and to kill him on sight but since that would be impossible without careful planning then I'll go to the alternative of going public for then, there's a chance that the man would be captured and he then could suffer death through lethal injection—if that will happen, then I can build my life back and start over again, knowing that the man who had wronged me is already dead.

But if he will not be captured and would still be lurking around, I'll hunt him and kill him. Only his death could bring justice to what he had done. Only his death could make me forget and transcend over my hatred and trauma. Only his death could help me build my life again because his continued physical existence would only remind me of his evil deed.

iii

So what would I do afterwards? I would probably go to a clinic, to my doctor. Telling her what happened to me would be my first action and it might be best so I can have proof and so I could have an abortion if ever I was penetrated without contraceptive. I would never want a baby with someone I feel hatred for, so I'll definitely have whatever's inside me taken out.

5. *Rape as Virtual Death*

There are also students who would kill themselves because they cannot take the consequences. Suicide is a form of survival strategy and may also provide ultimate escape from the violence and trauma of rape.

i

If I were raped, I think the first thing that would come to my mind is to kill myself. I don't think I'll be able to take it since I'm a very emotional person. I guess for the first few weeks, I'll cry myself to sleep and wish that I were dead. But then again, I don't think I'll be able to kill myself because of my fear of God.

ii

If ever I get raped, it's either I'll kill myself right after or get revenge first by killing my rapist then kill myself afterwards. I can't imagine myself approaching the cops or running to the court or judge, even if it gives the penalty of death to my rapist. It can never erase the fact that I got raped. No amount of comforting words or assurance that everything's gonna be fine will ever take away my hatred. The only form of justice would be if I'm able to torture my rapist—and I mean really fuckin' torture him and then take him with me to HELL! And even in hell, I'll ask Satan to give me that man's soul and further torture him. . . *Basta!* The point is, when a woman gets raped, I don't believe any kind of media hype would help. Just give her .45 and let her shoot the guy for 1,000 times or 'till she can't pull the trigger anymore 'coz of exhaustion.

A student of mine confessed of having been raped by a relative. Unfortunately, her mother did not believe her story.

I never had to do anything. As the rapist lay dying there I said to him, "I forgive you." He paid with his life. For me, it took years of therapy to conquer clinical depression—heck no; I haven't conquered it. I lost 3.75 liters of blood. I have three deep scars; the hardest part of the whole thing was the fact that my parents

never believed me. They sent me to therapy and believed that people or person from a nearby slum raped me. In the end, I never knew what happened to his [rapist] two boys who survived him and his little wife. They moved to another neighborhood.

Another student disclosed that one of her friends was raped by a seminarian in her hometown. Here is how the conversation went along.

Friend 2: One day, I'll have to talk to the two of you, heart-to-heart, and tell you something that you might not be able to take easily.

Me: Oh, my. . . *Kumakabog na ang dibdib ko, sabihin mo na sa akin ngayon.*

Friend 1: *Oo, nga*, Do you think *makakatulog pa kami*, c'mon.

Friend 2: *Hindi, e*. This isn't the proper place. *Sobrang public 'to, e*. (Jollibee Philcoa)

Me and Friend 1: *Hindi, okey lang, sige na.*

F2: *Okey*, I'm going to show you something to give you an idea. —F2 puts on the table a Christian booklet entitled "When trust is Lost: Healing for Victims of Sexual Abuse."

—Me and F1 fell open-mouthed, and became totally silent for a few minutes until F2 took the booklet away.

F2: It happened when I was 13 years old. I thought *na-forgive ko na sya, pero* last Saturday, when I went home *sa old home town namin, nakita ko siya*. And something snapped inside me.

—Silence

F2: You don't have to say anything. . .

F1: *Anong* kind of help *ang gusto mo?*

F2: Just pray for me. Especially at night, before you sleep, because the real battle begins at night. . .

—Silence

Me: *Pwedeng magtanong? Kumusta ka na ngayon?*

F2: I'm past the blame-God stage. I'm also past the damn-him stage. I'm in the blame-myself stage right now.

F1: *Ako din, patanong*, why do you blame yourself?

F2: *Ayokong sabihin na* you can't understand. *Pero* somehow, I can't explain it. *Pero*, most victims do. *Kapag hindi ko na maiisip kung bakit nangyayari 'yon*, I just turn on myself.

6. Rape and the Morality of Abortion

Abortion is an open option for most of my respondents if ever they were raped.

i

“Maybe I would have an abortion if I were raped, especially if the rapist is a relative. This is the only case I would have an abortion. I hope I wouldn't have to have one.”

ii

I'm fully in favor of what was concluded in our sharing [class discussion on abortion], I guess if I were raped or impregnated by my own kin then there's no stopping abortion. I will not feel guilty about it because in the first place, I didn't want it to happen.

iii

First, I would definitely abort a child whose father I did not freely engaged in sex with. It is legal in the Philippines to have abortion after certain number of hours after the rape. It's my responsibility then to go to a hospital. If I exceed the hours, say after two days for certain reasons like inability to move after being battered or shocked, I would still do it. But if I wait after two months, that would be another story and I think I would not proceed to the said plan.

My students have mixed opinions on the issue of abortion. There are few of them who would not abort their baby even if it were a result of rape. The main factor here is religion. The religious orientation of these students is very strong. For those who are in favor of abortion, the argument rests on women's reproductive right and the right to control their own bodies.

7. Life after Rape

For some of my female students, rape is very damaging to their personhood that rape makes life meaningless. They consider

rape as a violation of their right of control of their private self. It is also related to their notion that they have the right to dispose of their virginity in the manner they want.

i

I still believe that virginity is the most precious thing in a woman's life. If ever I would get raped, I'd feel that someone had forcefully encompassed my being. It's like someone has taken your right to live, and it is a very serious offense on my part.

I also believe that we own ourselves, and nobody has the right to take care of them. Through this view, I would really feel that I'm useless if ever I get raped because you wouldn't be your normal self again. Even if they say that you'll get over the pain and the trauma of having experienced one, I still know that it invaded your private life and it would never be the same again.

ii

After I get my revenge, life continues. Even if I don't, I think I still can get on. Sure, virginity is important to me. But I won't let my hymen rule my life.

iii

Well, if that happens, I'll fight back! No matter how hard it will be for me to reveal the 'rape scene.' I won't mind. Nothing will happen to me if I'll get stuck in a cocoon I build for myself. I should not be afraid. I'll put the 'criminals' in messy situations.

I'll do anything just to put them where they belong. I'll never get stuck. I'll continue my life, as if nothing happened.

I'm the victim, I must initiate the move: How to win revenge over the rapist(s).

That was all there was to it. I was raped! But, I'll still survive.

D. Styles of Fathering

It not uncommon among my students to write that their father is sexist. Here is a typical example.

My father is sexist. He never wants my mom to help in earning for the family. He ought to stay at home and hold responsibility for all. My Mom must stay at home and there's no need to do but to fix everything we need physically/emotionally. The common thing is that: *'Ang ama ang padre de familia. At ang ina naman ay siyang ilaw ng tahanan.* Decisions must also come from him. He only doesn't prove he's being sexist to my Mom but also to us his children. A girl must stay at home and no need [to] risk her strength just to help build up a nation [or] home. But he treats me like a crystal. While my brother must take into consideration and learn things from my dad that boys must take hold of more of the responsibilities, work and must dominate girls, but still with respect of course.

The foregoing journal entry describes the traditional gender-based division of labor found in most Filipino families. Another traditional image of a Filipino father is a conservative, emotionally uninvolved father. Here are typical descriptions.

i

My father is sexist. He thinks that women are weak, stupid and emotionally unstable. That's why he becomes so irritated when I disobey him, bypass his opinions and answer back. He always believed that women should be submissive to men. Fortunately, my dad is also an unconscious feminist. For several years now, my Dad and Mom changed roles in the house. Since my Dad has retired from the employment list a long time ago, he now serves as the cook, laundry man, and gardener and overall boy of the house. He takes down messages for us, thus serving as our secretary. He shops for our needs, prepares food for me 'coz I'm a semi-vegetarian so I usually cannot eat what they serve on the table.

ii

I grew up with a father who's most of the time away from home. I can't totally blame him for that because he's a military man. What I cannot accept is that occupation cannot be the sole basis for a certain relationship. I have a lot of classmates and friends who have fathers working as OFW's and still maintain a close

caring relationship with their family. For me, I feel very unfortunate enough to have a traditional sexist kind of father. . . I can say he's also traditional because of the following circumstances: Before, he didn't want my mother to work. He wanted her to stay at home and take care of us and he'll do the office job. Secondly, he lives up to this fatherly stereotype of being silent at all times, although he talks and gives advice if needed. Thirdly, whenever he comes home, he always sleeps, reads the newspaper and so far, I haven't seen him doing household chores. Fourthly, he always tells us (children) that he gets irritated whenever my mom nags. Fifth, he's presently having an affair, which lives up to the stereotypical image of the male specie as polygamous. And lastly, opposite of my mom, he always wants us to be independent in every step we take. I'm not saying he's totally bad. But certainly, he didn't experience every problem in our family like whenever someone is sick.

Here is a typical description of a father who thinks that his only role for the family is to provide economic support. Notice that the writer equates her dad with a "king." Again, this image of a typical Filipino father is based on the gender-based division of labor found in Filipino families.

My dad is like a king at home. He is somewhat apathetic when it comes to household chores. Everything is done for him. He argues that we should be the one to take care of these things since he provides for us. My Mom prepares his dinner all the time and when she's not around, I am obliged to cook for him. If we both are not around then he won't eat. He's so helpless without my Mom. The only thing he does for himself at home is get his candies or get water, sometimes. He is spoiled.

Another image of a Filipino father is the "ander da saya" (literally: "under the wife's skirt"). Here is a typical description of a daughter of her father who gives in to the whims of her mother. The daughter thinks that her father is an "*ander*" (henpeck), albeit she thinks he's not.

My father is not a feminist nor gender-conscious. Sometimes he's a chauvinist, but most of the time, he's not. In fact, when

you see him you'd say he's 'ander.' But he is not. He just gives way to my mother often.

And one thing more I like about my father is that he's not conservative. He lets me wear clothes I like. I can go out late at night (but he has to know my destination and company). I even talk to him as if he's my age, and he doesn't mind.

Here is typical description of a father who teaches independence to his daughter. Again, the trait of independence is often associated with the father.

My father is a typical man. *Kung tutuusin ay may pagka-patriarchal sya. Mahigpit siya pagdating sa curfew at mga lakwatsa. Ayaw nya ng mga magugulo at maiingay. Pasensyoso sya kapag babae at matigas naman kung magdisiplina ng lalaki.*

Makwento si Papa at mahilig makiride sa usapang pang-tinedyer. Sa katunayan ay siya ang nagturo sa aking uminom. Hilig ni Papa na makisali sa buhay ng kanyang mga anak na sa hindi niya namamalayan ay nakakasakal na.

Hindi ako aburido sa paraan ng pagpapalaki ng aking ama. Sa katunayan ay siya ang nagtulak sa akin na maging agresibo. Hangad kong mamuhay nang nag-iisa at ang pasasalamat ko ay inihanda ako ni ama sa ganoong kalagayan.

However, there are also fathers who are described as gender-sensitive, but who may not necessarily be knowledgeable about feminism. Being gender-sensitive here means going against the traditional gender roles in the family.

My father is an unaware or unacknowledged feminist. *Tahimik lang ang papa ko. I really don't know kung tama iyong term na ibinigay pero I would rather call my dad GENDER SENSITIVE than a feminist. Minsan kasi may mga comments sya na pambabae. Pero proud ako sa papa ko. When I was still in elementary, dakilang papa's girl ako. . . He was also there when I had my first period. Hindi ko alam kung bakit ngayon medyo distant ako sa papa ko pero given the chance. I'd do all those na ginagawa namin ng papa ko dati!*

My dad is not the 'bossy' type sa bahay. He cooks all the meals sa bahay. Equal ang treatment nila (ni mama) sa bawat isa.

Nakikita ko kung papaano nila tinatrato ang bawat isa. My dad has also moments of insecurity and inferiority but he doesn't show it openly. *Siyempre, sa lipunan natin* men give big value to their ego.

Another writer describes her father as “unconscious feminist.”

My father is an unconscious feminist. *He does* some of the house chores because it is convenient for all of us. He believes that one doesn't need to be told what to do. His only fault is that my and his definition of a task well done is different. I admit that I have a fetish for cleaning the kitchen. And everyday when I'm home, my dad and I argue about it. I want the kitchen clean all the time but he keeps dirtying it in my definition.

Although he does some of the housework like going to the market and grocery, cooking whenever my mom is out or even if my mom is at home, washing dishes (he would take an hour to wash it), etc., he still believes that there is a division of labor according to sex. For example, he doesn't allow me to carry heavy stuff or to scrub the floors. But I admit it makes my life easier. He believes that a husband has to take care and pamper his wife. While the wife *serves and cooks for her husband*. But he said that *there is an exception* to every rule. For example, he said that if the wife is tired from work and the husband is not, the husband will be the one to cook.

When my students talk about their fathers as being gender-sensitive they mean primarily the reversal of gender role expectations. Of course fathers can be forced to reverse their expected roles. They could also happily embrace these new roles. However, this is far from non-patriarchal fathering.

Based from these limited accounts, one could see the predominance and persistence of traditional definition of Filipino father. However, with the advent of modernization and rapid urbanization, it is only to be expected that these traditional definitions will have to undergo rapid transformation. In the preceding accounts, some fathers are already coming to terms with the reality of working wives. Now, to what extent this

modern development will impact on the role of fathers and the practice of child rearing, is yet to be seen.

E. To be or not to be a Feminist

When I ask my students, at the beginning of the semester, about their attitudes towards feminist theory and ideas they were a bit skeptical about feminism. For them feminism means hatred of men. They have a lot of misconceptions about feminism. These misconceptions are fueled by the mass media. The mass media often portrays feminism as “men bashing” (Kimmel, 1998:65). Bearing this in mind these are some of their angst about feminism.

i

I believe that men and women are equal. Given equal opportunity I believe that women can excel as men. Isn't it a biological fact that women can readily be immune to disease organisms while men have a hard time? So that makes me a feminist. But being one doesn't mean that I have to urge other women to be like me. I believe in individual freedom. I believe that women should discover it within themselves that they are oppressed in our patriarchal society.

ii

I don't want to be a feminist in every sense of the word. But I really do want to make a difference not by attacking men but just by merely clearing a point that a woman deserves what a man deserves; and equality is the term for it. I don't have to prove that I can be as tough or as macho as a man would be but I can be a strong and tough woman who can handle any problem that comes my way.

I must admit that I should really be a feminist—a feminist that does not bite men off but a feminist who should learn about her femininity being oppressed or not. I wanted to be aware of the realities of the patriarchal society so that I wouldn't end up being

an open wound in which men sprinkle salt over it. I should be feminist because it is my right as a woman.

Another argued that feminism means more of respect than equality. Here the student would like to base equality on respect. Equality does not precede respect. No, it is respect that is the precondition for equality.

i

Yes, I think I should be a feminist. Why yes? Should I bother myself on elaborating my answer? Anyway, I could consider myself advocating rights for women but not to rise in competition against men. I've been through on that ideology and all that were done were useless. I am not asking for equality but rather for respect. It is hard to voice out oppression if there is no one who would care to stop and listen.

Feminism for me is not fashion or just a mere distinction of being involved. I am affected by oppression of others for I am also a being capable of sensing inequality.

I am a feminist but not a considerate one. If I would have a chance, I might consider introducing a new thought about feminism. However, it's too early to assume my own stand. As they usually say, only time can tell.

ii

I would really miss this class. It's one of my few classes that actually makes sense and stimulates and pushes me to think deep and argue with my own opinions and beliefs. I've been a feminist even before I took this course and now I've become a confused lesbian-feminist-atheist. After all the issues we've discussed in this class I pledge to continue to be a feminist (although I am not sure yet what kind of a feminist) for the simple reason that I believe that I am a person within myself. I believe in my rights and no one can put me down just because of my sex. I'll continue to be a feminist because it's the only way I know that I could help myself and others to be aware of their oppression and they to do something about it.

My personal definition of feminism is uplifting the status of women in society. Specifically, it means recognizing that the present condition and treatment of women was brought about by specific social events like the industrial revolution, French revolution, emergence of middle class and division of labor, so they are not intrinsically permanent. It means being aware of the gestures and actions that promote the dominance of men over women, and avoiding them. It entails looking at oneself, and women in general, with dignity and respect, and acknowledging one's strengths. It means not measuring things according to male or female standards alone but incorporating both standards. Finally, it entails acting upon my beliefs to help improve women's status in society. This is what feminism is for me. . . .

A journal entry connects feminism with other forms of oppression. The author asserts that her feminism is not rooted in her oppression but on her sympathy with women who suffer. The author is a member of radical student organization. This is how she looks at feminism.

I want to be a feminist. . .not because I feel oppressed but because I don't want to see oppressed women. Actually, I don't like to see any form of oppression and I believe feminism goes along with other movements advocating the abolition of inequalities.

I used to feel negative about feminists, not anyone in particular, just the thought it used to bring. I thought feminists were men haters. They can be and some feminists I now know can be much more open minded than that.

Other students remain on the level of theory. For them feminism as a theory is sound. But when it is applied to daily practice, it becomes impractical. Here the student admits candidly that she cannot go all the way with feminism. She chose to remain on the theoretical or consciousness level.

i

I may be a feminist in my own way. I am now aware of some of the political and sociological implications that I attached with gender. But I could never claim I'm a real, genuine, true, authentic feminist.

After five months of studying the course [Social Science 105], one might say that I'm a failure if I wasn't able to imbibe the teachings. I did. But only theoretically.

I realized that it's really difficult to apply your classroom lessons in real life. And for that, I'll remain a feminist in theory—making me not a feminist at all.

ii

I will always be a feminist. Why? First of all I am a woman and I don't want my gender to be always the second best next to man. I believe in equality. Women's voices should also be heard because sometimes their views and opinions are better and helpful in the development of society.

iii

Despite the entire-ism of Nancy Chodorow, Adrian Rich, etc. I still can not consider myself as a feminist. . . .

I don't want to be labeled as a feminist because I don't want to box myself into a single category, that is an advocate of feminine rights. I don't want to go into gender specific struggle and separate myself from the deeper cries of the world. People are starving. People are dying. I believe that it calls for more attention. I believe that we should take into consideration gender/sexuality after all. What is important is the humanity of an individual.

If there is one thing I learned in Soc Sci 105, that is to respect the rights of other people despite and in spite of their sexuality.

Others would impart feminism to their children.

I also believe that not only should I be the feminist in the family but also my children (in the future). For the future will all depend on them. If they know how to respect women, if they know the value of equality among men and women, the world will be a better place to live in.

ii

I certainly won't raise them [my children] as chauvinist. The world has to learn to be feminist in ways, that we have to change a lot of our customs and attitudes to realize the logic of viewing all sexes as equal. The way to start doing this is with your children. Since they have the most innocent mind untainted with prejudices and biases, it would be easier for them to comprehend feminism.

iii

I would definitely raise my children to be 'egalitarian' feminists—ones who don't step on any people's lives. I would share to them the importance of capabilities of each gender being unique in its own ways. I wanted them to know everything that comprises one's social being so that they would know they are being strangled by society.

iv

Yes, I would teach my children to be feminist and I would encourage them to be feminists. Because to be feminist is to be liberal and compassionate not only for women but for men as well.

Here is the lesbian's journal entry.

. . . And if ever I will have a daughter or even a son, I'll give them the option of wanting to be a feminist or not. I mean *ayoko namang diktahan sila basta ang akin*, I'll give them more options, a larger perspective of life, *ayoko silang i-kahon. Kung ano ang gusto nila sige* as long as *hindi sila makakaperwisyo ng ibang tao at magiging masaya talaga sila*. I want to see myself as a parent of a very happy, fulfilled and well-loved child *maging ano man ang preference nila*.

One writer even demands that not only her children be raised as feminist, but also her future husband or live-in partner.

I would also like to add that if I were a feminist and if my child were to be raised to be feminists. I'd also want a partner (husband or live-in partner) to have the consciousness of feminists. That or nothing else.

Another student of mine came to terms with her lesbian identity with the encounter with Social Science 105.

Patapos na tayo sa SocSci 105, patapos na rin yung isang gender class ko na major. Imagine I have two gender classes this sems, di ko alam kung coincidence ba sya o destined dahil dapat before akong grumaduate alam ko na or secure na ako sa gender ko. Ang tagal tagal ko na ring may identity crisis. And I can say now na okey na ako. I must admit may 'ka-on' na ako ngayon or in other words girlfriend! Dati ayoko talaga ipaalam kaso napag-isip ko ano bang dapat ikahiya, eh she's a nice person naman and I think our relationship is healthy naman, the thing lang is that we're both from the same sex. E ano ngayon sa kanila? Masaya ako, masaya sya and I guess that's all that matters. So, what am I trying to say here? Simply, that my perspective as a person, as a woman changed! And I thank the feminist ideas for helping me find the real me and somehow come out of my shell. So if you will ask me if I want to become a feminist my answer would be straight YES! I like the idea of becoming a feminist kaso parang ang hirap gawin kasi buong family ko or buong angkan ng — [family name] magwawala at itatakwil ako dahil napaka-conservative nila major proponents of patriarchy. Siguro the farthest I can go in becoming a feminist is to become gender sensitive. At least by that mali-liberate ko ang sarili ko, my friends and my family from 'sex oppression' caused by patriarchy.

Here is author story of changed perspective:

Taking up Soc Sci 105 made me realize that I was once deaf and blind. I never gave much importance to the things around me. I used to ignore a lot of things thinking that I've got nothing to do with other people's miseries. This subject motivated me to think about my life—my being a woman and my being a part of patriarchal society.

I became a feminist simply because I cared about women. Being a woman is also one of the reasons why I became a feminist. Now I know how women stand in our society. It's hard to be a woman but I know it's not easy to be a man too. I became a feminist for I want to fight for equal opportunities and equal

treatment for women, homosexuals, bisexuals, and lesbians alike. Being a feminist is a mind-boggling lifestyle for you've got to question everything and solve all those *complicated problems that have no* definite answers and solutions in the first place. It's hard but I still want to try. I'm proud to be one of the feminists and I just hope that I would live long enough to witness women's victory over oppression.

There are still students who would consider feminism as a threat to family values and traditional gender roles prescribed by the Catholic Church. Again, feminism is often associated with hostility to the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church. What should be pointed out here is that the Catholic feminist theologians are grappling with these issues for the moment. Unfortunately, their views are often not expressed side by side with the official teachings and doctrines of the Catholic Church.

I don't believe that women should support feminism. I still do believe in sacred marriage and Catholic teachings. What I think should be given more importance is peace and order and equality of men and women. Feminism for me just puts more pressure on relationships that have to be strengthened.

The most extreme position among my students is this journal entry in which the author argues that feminism and patriarchy are all in the mind. In this account the author argues that feminism is just a fiction or imagined cure for an imagined problem or symptom of patriarchy.

From the very start of the semester, I held that FEMINISM is in the mind.

As for me, I have always believed that I was born female for a purpose, and I might as well enjoy the benefits and pleasures of the sex I was born into. When guys think that I am weak and that they should help me at all times. I'd say 'Go ahead. Suit yourselves.' As long as I know, deep inside me, that I am strong the way I am, and that I don't have to depend on guys for constant support, I wouldn't really care about what they think. Besides, they are the

ones who are being misled and fooled not me, so it's ok. They can suffer and get tired of their chauvinistic helpfulness, for all I care. As for me, I'll sit back, relax and enjoy the pleasure of seeing them do the nitty-gritty work for me. And again I would think (probably aloud). The battle is in the mind.

I'm not a feminist. And this class didn't really encouraged me into it either.

I don't really believe in this 'girl power' thing. I don't think woman is superior to man. Neither do I think *woman is inferior*. I just believe that men and women are different. They have their own roles and responsibilities. You can't put one over the other or pitch them against each other.

I think man and woman are two different species of a puzzle. Put them together and the puzzle becomes whole. But they're of different shapes. You can't say one is better than the other or make the puzzle more complete compared to the other pieces. Both of them, together make the puzzle complete.

Women's exposure to feminist ideas does not necessarily guarantee conversion to feminist values and perspective. It takes more than intellectual elaboration, no matter how elegant, and classroom discussion to conscientize women on the reality of gender inequalities. The inadequacy of Social Science 105 is its inability to bring feminism closer to real life. I in fact tried to connect the theory with practice through sharing and personal disclosure on my part. However, those techniques are not that effective in making patriarchy more visible. Or, it may be because I am a man, teaching feminism, that I lack a strong conviction during my lectures and discussions. Or, maybe I lack the experiences necessary for handling the course. Whatever the inadequacy is, I just have to improve my style of teaching it next time.

The resistance came mostly from my students with strong religious convictions. And most of the time I found myself debating with them. I also find the method of disclosure very

effective. I usually ask my students to discuss very personal issues with the class. It is surprising that they are very enthusiastic about sharing their experiences to the class. Then, I also disclose about my personal views and practices. I find some revelations very depressing sometimes that I am at a loss in how to handle the situation. In most occasions, I find the sharing very stimulating. I then used these occasions to discuss feminist theories after the report. Overall however, I find the course very effective for students who took a feminist course for the first time. It served as an eye-opener for them.

Conclusion: The Power and Limits of Feminist Studies Class

Feminism as a Worldview

I began my lecture in Social Science 105 by defining feminism. For me, feminism involves consciousness of gender inequalities and female oppression, the attempt at systematic elaboration of these situation of oppression, in order to change them. Feminism involves four components or stages. First is immersion in and experience of patriarchal violence. The second step is the systematic analysis of these webs of violence. Third, feminism attempts to provide alternative courses of actions. The final step is making the perspective a lifestyle. This final step is the hardest to take. For it involves no less than living up to the ideals of these theories. It means applying the feminist critique to one's total lifestyle: beliefs, attitudes, values, and practice. Feminism connects experience, theory, and practice together.

The trouble with most of my students, including those in my other classes, in appreciating the power of feminism, is they stop on the second level. Sometimes they jump to the fourth stage and short circuit the entire process. It is easy to understand

and employ Adrian Rich's analysis of compulsory heterosexuality to homophobia, Chodorow's analysis of mothering to female psychology, and McKinnon's critique of pornography to sexual exploitation. It is also easy to join signature campaigns to stop child sex-trafficking, and attend symposia on countless women's issues. But it is hard to use these critical analyses to change one's habitual behavior and attitudes to life and gender issues. Here is where feminism is markedly different from other forms of theories and ideologies: it demands total personal commitment.

Perchance it is this commitment that parries off men and women from fully engaging in feminism. It is very demanding. It means questioning one's most cherished values and even going against the system, friends and family. What Social Science 105 can do is merely to provide theoretical tools for students to grasp patriarchal violence. It is very difficult to turn these tools against one's self introspectively. Nevertheless, there is already a quaint presence of feminist consciousness among my students. In the entries cited in this study, this consciousness is rooted in family processes, mass media, experiences in public and private spaces, relationship with significant others, religious doctrines, and educational institutions.

Feminism as a Unifying Narrative of the Self

I always insist that women, no matter how oppressed and immersed in the patriarchal discourse, are, in some ways, questioning and are conscious of these violence. What is needed is to connect this "feminine mystique," this "problem without a name" to feminist theory. It is very clear that my students had already experienced gender inequalities even before they took Social Science 105. Others of course already had exposure to feminist ideas and writings prior to taking Social Science 105.

These experiences that they narrated in the beginning of my study provide very rich materials for elaborating on feminist theory and perspectives. They served for me as springboard from which I illustrated the debates and potency of feminist analysis. The course also enabled my students to redescribe these experiences from a feminist perspective. If the self is defined as center of gravity of different narratives, then, feminism offers a way of weaving and unifying these diverse episodes of one's life. Old vocabularies, habits, and practices are seen from a new light. They are problematized. This problematization leads to self-transformation. I think that this should be the goal of the course. The course should equip students with the vocabulary or world-view by which they can reinvent the narrative of their self.

Epilogue: Reflections of a Man Teaching Gender Study

Teaching Social Science 105 is very challenging for me as male teacher. In the beginning of the class, I asked myself: What right do I have to teach Social Science 105? My answer is that it is my modest contribution to the struggle of women to uplift their condition. It also provided an occasion for me to explore this omnipresent question: Can I, a man, be a feminist by heart, practice, and theory? In this last part of my study, I will deal with the problems I encountered as a male feminist teacher.

The greatest problems I encountered are how to control the limits of my personal disclosure, and how I would encourage my students to share their personal experiences, without the uneasiness caused by my simply being male. I could freely disclose to my students my experiences as a father, as an atheist who appreciates the cult of the goddess and witchcraft. However, when it comes to sensitive matters, I felt constrained most of the time during class discussions. I think it would have been different

if I am teaching an all-male students class; or, inversely, a female teacher will have less difficulty handling an all female-students class. I am not of course suggesting that there should be gender segregation for women studies classes. My problem lies in my approach to the course. I want it to be very personal rather than another ordinary class.

Sensitive matters include sexual experiences, violence in intimate relationships including rape, etc. In these matters I cannot help but reduce the discussion to mere theoretical elaboration and remote examples. It would have been more effective for me if I were able to take off from the personal experiences of my students. As a result, I have to rely on the journals of my students. I even have to be cautious in citing some entries. I have to observe closely the reactions of my students. I think the obstacle to men teaching feminism, is the gender gap between the teacher and the students. This is neither of course epistemic, nor metaphysical issue. It is just a question of strategy. I therefore suggest that team-teaching, involving a male and female teacher, is a very good strategy.

A second realization I learned from teaching this course is that feminist consciousness cannot be instilled via pure theoretical indoctrination. I think that the traditional way of teaching ideological consciousness is basically tailored by men. The alternative is to integrate the emotions, passions with reason. Feminist consciousness involves the use of senses, the body, and it disprivileges the visceral or optic way of knowing. It is very similar to the Biblical notion of religion. Relating to one's God, in Hebraic religion, does not only mean knowing God; in fact, this is not considered very important. The emphasis is on corresponding to God's will. Orthodoxy is subordinated to orthopraxis. The idea of orthopraxis captures the meaning of true feminism. And this makes being full-blooded feminist very

difficult, if not impossible. For it involves constant and zealous attempt to practice feminism.

Finally, the course gave me ample opportunities to expand my feminist consciousness. It actually made me aware of those spots within me that I have not examined yet, and exposed those parts of me that still are resistant to feminist challenge. It also pressured me to live up to my principles and be vigilant of my gestures and language both inside and outside the classroom.

I look forward to teaching Social Science 105 regularly.

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