Ways of Seeing Women's History:
An action research study of student responses to a document-based lesson sequence centring Black women in a historical narrative

"The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe […]
We never look at just one thing;
we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves."
(Berger, 2008, pp. 8–9)

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Abstract

This thesis investigates a document-based enquiry as a way of integrating the teaching of women's history in the classroom. This need arises given women's misrepresentation, marginalisation, and erasure by history teaching practice and curricula in high schools in South Africa and further afield. Existing research shows students resist valuing women's history when presented as token additions to the traditionally male-centred narrative. Gaps identified in the disciplinary and critical approaches to teaching history provide a theoretical framework for foregrounding the necessity of examining the impact of affect in enabling as well as in obstructing student learning. Scholarship on resistance to learning both within and beyond history education further facilitates theorising the importance of affect in impeding learning.

In this action research study conducted in my own Grade 11 history classroom, I curated accessible documents centring Black women in events that secured the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama in the 1940s-1950s. Textbook extracts presented alongside documentary evidence allowed my eight students in their penultimate year at an all-girls school to interrogate the divergent narratives. To elicit students' enthusiastic participation and close reading of the material, I sequenced engaging pedagogical activities across ten lessons. Plenary and group discussions, constructions, and writing, along with individual reflections, were collected as data. My positionality is evident in my choice of Tetreault's feminist framework to analyse how the enquiry informed students' ways of seeing events in Montgomery, and reflexive thematic analysis is used to analyse how the enquiry informed students' ways of seeing the construction of textbook history.

My findings indicate that the extended enquiry enabled all students to critique the textbooks' erasure and misrepresentation of women. Several students' affective engagement enhanced their capacity to enact sophisticated criticality and disciplinary learning that exceeded my expectations. By contrast, affect unconsciously partially impeded the learning of others, as their embedded notions absorbed from the social milieu they inhabit compelled them at times to resist using aspects of the documentary evidence consistently. In response, I contribute three reconceptualised disciplinary, critical, and psychosocial literacy lenses as interlocking pedagogical approaches to capacitate and enhance student learning in the history classroom. They would also assist teachers in noticing and responding constructively to students experiencing knowledge as discomfiting their sense of themselves and how they wish to be seen socially. My study highlights the dearth of research in history education that uses an affective and psychosocial lens to examine student learning in the classroom, and shows that this lens is essential to facilitating and enhancing student progression in this subject.

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List of Initialisms

Action Research	AR
Digital Inquiry Group (Formerly Stanford History Education Group – SHEG)	DIG
Document-Based Enquiry	DBE
Montgomery Bus Boycott	MBB
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People	NAACP
Open up the Textbook	OUT
Reflexive Thematic Analysis	RTA
Thematic Analysis	TA
Women's Political Council	WPC

Student Groups – Pseudonyms

Group 1: Delilah, Freye, Toni, and Yolande

Group 2: Indigo, Jane, Max, and Veronica

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Focus Overview

To explore ways of integrating women's history into my teaching practice, I initiated an action research (AR) study of my Grade 11 history students' responses in and to a document-based enquiry (DBE) centring Black women's role in ending bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama, by December 1956. Researchers who have previously examined responses to teachers' inclusion of women's history in the classroom observed students seeing such material as outside of mainstream history, so that women remained sidelined if not uncredited in students' grasp of events (ten Dam and Rijkschroeff, 1996; Levstik and Groth, 2002; Levstik, 2009; Watson-Canning, 2019, 2020). Crucially informing my AR study of my own practice, Watson-Canning (2019, 2020) emphasises that academic historians and teacher educators cannot speak to what teachers' interventions into the curriculum might secure without doing research in history classrooms themselves.

Accordingly I investigated how initiating an extended DBE might shift my students' perception of women's history given its ongoing marginalisation, misrepresentation, and erasure from the national school curriculum and thus from our teaching practice in democratic South Africa. I did this by curating documents centring Black women in events to enable my students to question the dominant narrative of what the South African Grade 12 national curriculum (*CAPS FET HISTORY GR 10-12*, 2011, p. 28)[1] and prescribed textbooks, as well as the US textbooks, reductively term the "The Montgomery Bus Boycott" (MBB) of 1955-1956. In selecting this aspect of the civil rights movement as a DBE focus for my Grade 11s, I was bound by the demanding Gr 12 curriculum which we had already commenced studying due to time constraints in their final year ahead of the exit examinations. I also understood the need for documents that would be readily accessible to my Grade 11 students, and knew that such material existed on this topic. Already in 1957, the emerging narrative centred Martin Luther King Jr's activism as the single key factor (Hassler, Resnik and Barry, 1957), ignoring the centrality of Black women's activism in the decidedly patriarchal "politics of respectability" (McGuire, 2010, p. 92) dominant at the time, and subsequent textbooks have largely reproduced that erasure[2]. My AR entailed

[1] The South African school system extends from Grades 1 to 12, with the final year culminating in an externally-set exit examination.

[2] For an exposition of key events, please see my brief overview of the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, with a selective timeline of events, included as Appendix A.

examining my students' responses to diverse women-centred counter-narratives selected to "open up" (Wineburg, 2007; Digital Inquiry Group, no date) if not overtly contest the textbooks' androcentric account of how the ending of bus segregation was secured. I selected this focus as not only was the MBB conceived of, organised, and run by Black women with prior organisational experience, and further fund-raised for by working-class Black women themselves, it was indeed they who, having suffered ongoing racialised sexual abuse and assault by white bus drivers for decades, rallied daily for over a year to ensure its success (McGuire, 2010, pp. 117–120). Black women's anti-bus segregation activism arose against the backdrop of the infamous racialised rape by white men of Recy Taylor, Gertrude Perkins, and others in the 1940s. Furthermore, the pivotal role played by four Black women plaintiffs in the 1956 Supreme Court *Browder v Gayle* ruling which ultimately ended bus segregation is excluded from the textbooks' framing altogether, as is key bus protestor Rosa Parks's stature as a seasoned anti-rape activist, rendering her instead as the disembodied symbol of the MBB alone. As part of their enquiry, students were encouraged to infuse their substantive re-examination of previously erased evidence with disciplinary thinking concepts key to the study of history, in order to inform their subsequent writing. In my AR project, my carefully constructed pedagogical activities – which were aimed at securing the integration of women's history in the classroom – intentionally encouraged students to engage in both a critical and a disciplinary approach to the evidence they encountered. Their DBE overtly centred previously marginalised Black women erased from or misrepresented in the textbook narrative – a critical approach – and required them to consider Black women's significant and causal role in events – a disciplinary focus – as they worked in groups to construct various texts indicating their own narrative of events. This is in line with the depiction of a critical historical enquiry by Santiago and Dozono:

> Critical historical inquiry challenges narratives of progress by focusing on inequitable power dynamics and centering the histories of historically marginalized communities. Applying criticality to history, the subject matter, means asking questions about where knowledge comes from and how power and privilege impact the learning of history. Without this criticality, history education leads to exclusions, misrepresentations, and history as a form of control. (Santiago and Dozono, 2022, p.176)

In compiling pedagogical activities to enhance my students' engagement with the selected documents, my intention was overtly to centre Black women previously marginalised by and even erased from the content in the official US and South African textbooks. I was further affording students the opportunity to consider issues regarding the construction of evidence presented in the dominant narrative, as well as with "how power and privilege impact" (Santiago and Dozono, 2022, p.176) their learning, without doing this overtly. To secure students' interest and constructive involvement, several activities intentionally elicited affective engagement with

the diverse role-players and issues evident in the documents. Students' in-depth engagement in plenary, group, and individual activities was evident in the rich data generated by audio recordings of their discussions, and in the texts they generated.

Through analysis of the data generated across a range of pedagogical activities, it became evident that my extended DBE indeed facilitated a way to integrate the teaching of women's history in my classroom. Furthermore, my AR study informed my understanding of teaching and learning in a range of ways, enabling me to contribute to addressing existing gaps in history education theory and practice.

1.2 Research Questions

In line with my intention to explore ways of integrating women's history into my teaching practice in response to the South African curriculum's narrow focus on the MBB, I framed the following research questions:

1. **How does centring Black women in accounts of the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama inform students' way of seeing:**

A events in Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s?
B the construction of history in school textbooks?

2. **How does action research using a document-based enquiry inform our understanding of pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning history?**

As the overview of chapters further below indicates, Question 1A is addressed in Chapter 5, and Question 1B in Chapter 6. Finally, I address Question 2 in order to articulate my contributions to knowledge in history education in Chapter 7.3.

1.3 Background and Rationale

Despite minor token references to women's history in the post-apartheid curriculum, the androcentric nature of that curriculum remains unchallenged, uncontested, and unchanged, with women's token presence further circumscribed by the male-gaze determining whose contributions to tag onto the existing constructions of school history. Having taught history in high schools for twenty-four years, I have developed the professional expertise required to challenge this misrepresentation of the past while still working closely to meet the requirements of the prescribed curriculum.

In my more recent teaching at a well-resourced South African urban all-girls school, I have embraced the opportunity to challenge my students to examine our history of injustice in this country. As at all such single-gender South African schools established for white students' advantage and advancement under colonial rule in the 19th and early 20th century, students currently are privileged by the excellent infrastructure and outstanding facilities. These stand in glaring contrast to the daunting conditions existing at historically disadvantaged – and currently still vastly under-resourced – township and rural schools, which often lack even the most basic amenities (*Amnesty International*, 2020). Such long-established sought-after schools have for three decades – in some cases, longer – been open to all apartheid-designated race groups, but their prohibitive school fees have meant that despite the increased diversity in the student body, these elite schools still do not proportionally represent the demographics of the country (Gruijters, Elbers and Reddy, 2024)[3]. Furthermore, a more diverse student body in and of itself has not transformed these aspirational institutions, which in complex ways remain bastions of largely unexamined traditions which embody coloniality[4], whiteness[5], inequity, sexism, and queerphobia. To fit in, students who under apartheid would have been designated as Black African, Coloured, or Indian have to embody the "dominant discourse of the school and all its attendant complexities with respect to color and class" (Soudien, 2010, p. 360). Critically re-examining and restructuring the very fabric and texture of school life in South

[3] Using apartheid-era terminology, Gruijters et al. quantify the disjuncture between demographics and the reality at historically well-resourced schools: "White students (3.8% of the student population) occupy 62% of the spaces in elite public schools and 55% of the spaces in elite private schools. Indian students (1.5% of the population) are also overrepresented in public schools (6%) and elite private schools (13%). Coloured students (7.5% of the population) are overrepresented in elite public schools (12%) but underrepresented in elite private schools (5%). A potential reason for this is the large Coloured population in the Western Cape, where many elite public schools are located. Finally, Black students (87.2% of the population) are vastly underrepresented in both elite public and private schools (20 and 27%, respectively)." (Gruijters, Elbers and Reddy, 2024, p. 187)

[4] Maldonado-Torres is most prescient here: "Coloniality […] refers to long-standing patterns of power [..] that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production […] Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience." (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243)

[5] Ahmed's framing of whiteness has much resonance here in explicating Soudien's (2010) findings in the South African context: "Spaces acquire the 'skin' of the bodies that inhabit them [...] Becoming a 'part' of an institution […] requires not only that one inhabits its buildings, but also that we follow its line: we might start by saying 'we'; by mourning its failures and rejoicing in its successes […] To be recruited is not only to join, but to sign up to a specific institution […] Rather whiteness is what the institution is orientated 'around', so that even bodies that might not appear white still have to inhabit whiteness, if they are to get 'in'." (Ahmed, 2007, pp. 157–158)

Africa on an ongoing basis remains imperative if schools are to become spaces where all students can freely and equitably express and be themselves. In my own classroom, I have endeavoured to instil in students a critical curiosity about their present and its connection to the past, encouraging them to question everything – not least my own teaching – by voicing what they are feeling and thinking, even while they are still grappling with how to articulate that.

As a white intersectional feminist acutely aware of the androcentric nature of the school curriculum, I have more recently worked to address the erasure of women from our teaching of history. In initiating Grade 10 students into senior history, I created opportunities for them to each conduct individual investigations into aspects of either Black South African or, more broadly, continental African women's history, with students largely choosing their focus within a structured framework. I further introduced Grade 10s to divergent accounts of a young girl who "history has not been kind to" (*Nongqawuse*, no date), blaming her for a catastrophic series of events which led to mass starvation in her Xhosa community. The documents aimed to dispel the colonial and apartheid depiction of both Nongqawuse and the Xhosa people. Students read feminist historian Bradford's gender analysis of what she terms the "1856-7 millenarian movement" (1996) in which women halted their cultivation of fields in response to the abused orphan girl's testimony against "male sexual offences" (Bradford, 1996, pp. 363–367). They learned how Bradford disputes other male-centred versions, such as that by Peires (2003), for not crediting Nongqawuse's agency, and for ignoring the centrality of women's work (Bradford, 1996, pp. 360–367; Kros, 2022) in the events he describes as "the great Xhosa cattle killing of 1856-1857" (Peires, 2003). Students wrestled with these and other divergent accounts in their first encounter with historiography that makes women's actions visible by reinterpreting the little evidence that has been handed down as oral history, or retained in the colonial archives. Despite the students' interest, they battled with the diction and complexity of some of the material, reinforcing the need to choose, for research purposes, a DBE topic for which I could source more cognitively appropriate materials.

This led me to explore how students would respond to a DBE which tasked them with reflecting in structured pedagogical activities on carefully curated material that implicitly "opened up" (Wineburg, 2007; Digital Inquiry Group, no date) and potentially even subverted the dominant textbook narrative that continues to marginalise and render facile if not totally insignificant women's actions in the past. My project further sought to explore students' responses to my challenging them to question what constitutes history as it is presented by textbooks – what is

remembered and what is obscured, trivialised, and erased in textbooks' construction of history. I was interested in exploring the transformative potential that my deliberately curated pedagogic initiatives might have for how students see women's history, and the iterative nature of AR invited me to continually reflect on my own practice in a critical, coherent, and systematic way.

Given their earlier exposure to slices of women's history, all my Grade 11 students were enthusiastic throughout the DBE about participating in my AR, and they engaged at length and in depth with the pedagogical activities. This was evident despite the fact that the intervention took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to unique logistical challenges to interactive activities given the imposition of masking, physical distancing, and enforced absence from school following exposure to the virus, which required several students to participate online rather than in person at times.

1.4 Overview of Chapters

In Chapter 2.1, to contextualise my study within an existing theoretical framework, I examine the literature on the disciplinary approach to teaching history, marking its limitations in responding to what students experience as disruptive knowledge. In doing so, I also note the gaps in research identified by history education researchers within and beyond that approach and consider suggested avenues for research into enhancing teaching and learning in the classroom. Thereafter (2.2), I discuss scholarly work on the teaching of women's history, noting student resistance to the integration of women's history evident in previous research. Following that (2.3), I explore the literature both in history education and more broadly on resistance to learning as a framework for resistance to learning beyond that already noted with regard to teaching women's history.

In Chapter 3, I provide the theoretical underpinning for my methodology, examining the intersections of AR (3.1) and feminist research (3.2), and the validity (3.3) of an AR qualitative study. I motivate a DBE (3.4) as my class project, with disciplinary thinking concepts and intersectionality (3.5) as the guiding approach to the documents. I then explain my data collection process (3.6). My heuristic for analysing the data in light of my first research concern, Question 1A, is Tetreault's feminist framework (3.7), followed by reflexive thematic analysis (RTA, 3.8) to answer Question 1B. Thereafter, I discuss the ethical considerations (3.9) of my project.

In Chapter 4, I explain the design of the diverse pedagogical activities I compiled for the DBE, and my curation of the documents, providing images of some of the students' work to demonstrate what they did. I further provide my coding for each activity which is referenced in the analysis in the next two chapters.

In Chapter 5, I analyse my findings using Tetreault's feminist phase model to consider data that responds to Question 1A. Chapter 6 thereafter analyses my findings using RTA to examine further data in response to Question 1B.

In Chapter 7.1 I draw conclusions based on my discussion of Questions 1A and 1B. As reflection is integral to AR, feminist research, and RTA, in Chapter 7.2 I reflect on the affordances of the DBE, briefly consider what I might do next time, and note the limitations of this study given my particular context. I then address Question 2 (7.3) to articulate my contribution to knowledge in history education, briefly examining the implications for the history curriculum and making recommendations for further research.

As this overview indicates, in the next chapter I first examine the disciplinary approach to teaching history and pertinent gaps identified in that approach before examining the teaching of women's history and the scholarship on resistance to learning.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The traditional approach to history teaching (Jay, 2022, p. 343) focuses on the transmission of substantive knowledge by teachers to students, largely through the use of textbooks. Yet, as Counsell advises, "To teach the substantive alone is to deceive the pupil by suggesting that the knowledge of the past arrives in fixed stories, that it is never possible to reconfigure, rearrange, challenge or defend those stories" (2021, p. 170). My intention was to study how a DBE centring Black women in events in the past potentially enables students to "challenge" the textbooks' "fixed stories" and integrate women's history into my classroom practice. As Counsell suggests, this requires me to examine the literature on the disciplinary approach to teaching history. I therefore begin by noting what is variously understood by that approach as modelled on the work of historians, and also consider gaps that have been identified by scholars working in history education both within and beyond disciplinary history.

I then examine the literature on the teaching of women's history, indicating that the strides made at tertiary level have as yet not resulted in the reconstruction of school history curricula, which remain overwhelmingly male-centred. Furthermore, Crocco (2018, p. 341) indicates that as Black women are generally overlooked in school history textbooks even when token women are presented in side-bars, the value of using an intersectional feminist lens to reimagine classroom practice is instructive. Given school history's narrow focus on political change, it remains of concern that women's history is reduced to social history, instead of crediting women's collaborative and individual activism as political. In the literature, any nominal reference to women's history manifests as an easily removable "add-on", resulting in its being variously resisted by students as not proper history.

Initial engagement with the data generated by this current study led me to explore the literature on resistance to learning beyond the framework of the teaching of women's history in order to understand the unanticipated manifestations of such resistance in my own cohort. My students' overt enthusiasm for women's history, and their sustained participation in the pedagogical activities constructed for them to interact with the carefully curated material in the DBE, gave me no reason to anticipate such resistance in their group work. Some of the students – despite their journalled self-reflections indicating that they prioritised the inclusion of women – appeared not to infuse the particularities of women's experience they had encountered and

appreciated in the evidence presented in the DBE into their group discussions and writing. To grapple with that data theoretically, I present a literature review focused on resistance to learning.

2.1 Disciplinary Approach to Teaching History

Modelling historical thinking on the disciplinary work of historians

In "Looking for History", Seixas explores how "historians can provide our best models for rational understanding and interpretation of the past" (2015, p. 255) in the teaching of school history. This modelling of the teaching of history on what history educators understand as the practised thinking competencies of historians is what has become known as the disciplinary or historical thinking approach. As Levisohn suggests, "Learning to think like an historian is a matter of learning to speak the language of the discipline of history" (Levisohn, 2015, p. 626).

A range of historical thinking concepts have been identified by history education specialists as key to inculcating this "language" into our students' practice (e.g., Counsell, 2004; Lévesque, 2008; Counsell, 2011; Seixas and Morton, 2013; Seixas, 2017; Worth, 2017; Counsell, 2021). Students' historical thinking is demonstrated through their engagement with these "generative" concepts that serve more as "problems, tensions, or difficulties", so that "History takes shape from efforts to work with these problems" (Seixas, 2017, p. 597; quoted by Lévesque and Clark, 2018, p. 128). Seixas and Morton's *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (2013) have gained much traction beyond their Canadian origins, given their clearly-expounded "guideposts" to "historical significance"; "evidence"; "continuity and change"; "cause and consequence"; "historical perspectives"; and the "ethical dimension" (Seixas and Morton, 2013, pp. 10–11). More recently, the UCLA History-Geography Project has suggested adding the "activist dimension", resulting in the reframing of Seixas and Morton's typology as "The Big Six +1" (Integrated Actions Civics Project, 2023). This innovation extends disciplinary thinking in order to examine "How can history help us work toward equity and justice?" (Integrated Actions Civics Project, 2023). For Martell and Stevens, "thinking like an activist" is an approach grounded in critical theory, and they argue its importance in history education along with thinking "like a historian", and like a "democratic citizen" (2021, chap. 2).

In a related approach in England the "second-order" – as opposed to substantive – concepts of "causation and consequence"; "change and continuity"; "similarity and difference" and "historical significance" (Counsell, 2021, p. 157) have come to guide practice both locally and

further afield. Counsell deplores the unfortunate way this has at times resulted in "atomized" skills-centred assessments that purport to measure students' proficiency without providing them with fully contextualised sources and the relevant substantive knowledge (2021, p. 159). This mistaken trend further encourages students to confuse "sources" with "evidence" (2021, p. 159). Instead, Counsell applauds teachers who challenge students to evaluate the evidence in the sources in their historical context by guiding them over a series of lessons to answer a carefully-chosen question (2021, p. 159). This informed my decision to embark on a document-based enquiry, as will be explained in Chapter 3.4.

Interrogating source evidence in its historical context in ways modelled by historians is similarly the focus of the disciplinary approach adopted by the Digital Enquiry Group (DIG) in the USA. Reisman (2012), Wineburg and Reisman (2015), and the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG), now reconstituted as DIG, have advocated for "Reading like a Historian" by requiring students to answer guiding questions on a text's "sourcing", "contextualisation", and "corroboration", as part of "close reading" (*Historical Thinking Chart*, no date). DIG's online site is used widely, not only across the USA, but internationally (Wineburg and Reisman, 2015, p. 637). Reisman and Wineburg insist this approach to disciplinary literacy is a "radical" approach that goes beyond the deployment of "reading strategies" (2015, p. 636). As they write, for example, regarding their requirement that students interrogate a source's origin, this entails "a *weltanschauung*, an entire way of apprehending the world" which "rocks the foundation on which the school textbook rests: that its facts are unassailable and need not be questioned, interrogated, or overturned" (2015, p. 636).

While other proponents of historical thinking may concur with that sentiment, what precisely the disciplinary approach entails has differed across education systems (Levisohn, 2015, p. 618; Seixas, 2017, p. 593) to the point where "There is no single, agreed-upon definition" (Lévesque and Clark, 2018, p. 119). In response to that "difficulty", Lévesque and Clark "bring some conceptual coherence to this field of study" (2018, p. 119) by analysing the research trends in various locations to identify areas of commonality in the face of evident divergence. They conclude by calling for "more empirical work on historical thinking" (Lévesque and Clark, 2018, p. 137). As will be examined in more detail in Chapter 3.5, my methodology includes the opportunity for my students to use a historical thinking approach in interrogating the dominant textbook narrative to generate such empirical data. Furthermore, as will be explained in Chapter 3.4, I draw on a disciplinary approach to implement a document-based

enquiry (DBE) in which students construct a response to a key question by closely engaging with the evidence presented.

Seixas and Morton explain that historians engage "creatively" with evidence to construct their interpretations of past events (2013, p. 2). Underscoring this, the disciplinary approach intends to inculcate the grasp that history is "constructed by historians (who have their own biases) from whatever sources (of varying degrees of credibility and validity) were available, or selected by them" (Mathis and Parkes, 2020, p. 190). Contesting the widely-held contention that historians are "neutral" in their interpretations, Blain (2022) in "Black Historians Know There's No Such Thing as Objective History" asserts that history is instead reinterpreted by historians from within their current contexts, and therefore their "work will always reflect contemporary realities – explicitly or implicitly". This has generated a long-standing debate[6] over the affordances and dangers of what critics have come to label as "presentism", that is, "employing contemporary modes of thought in evaluating the motivations or behaviors of historical actors" (Epstein and Peck, 2018, p. 2). In response to claims that reinterpreting the past using present concepts poses a danger to the field of history, the historian Rubin indicates that colleagues would readily call one another out for producing work based on uncritical and flawed notions (2017, p. 244).

In defending the use of conceptual "ways of seeing" not prevalent during the period in the past she was researching, historian Hall clearly asserts their value when re-examining earlier narratives in the archives:

> The changed world in which we now live, and the new conceptual frameworks we have been able to develop, allow us to critique the writing of previous generations and indeed of our own earlier selves, to see their, and our, 'blind eyes' [...]
>
> An imaginative engagement with the alterity of the past can help us to grasp how the lives they lived and the conceptual frameworks that were open to them produced distinctive ways of seeing. Embracing the possibility of thinking more critically, reflecting dialectically on the relation between past, present and future, probing the silences and absences in the archives, being self-conscious about the limitations imposed on us by the present we inhabit, engaging with a politics of changing the course of history by writing about it – that seems a kind of work worth doing (Hall, 2017, pp. 262–263)

[6] For entry points into the voluminous, ongoing debate on presentism, see Armitage's in-depth overview 'In defense of presentism' (2020); Miles and Gibson's useful depiction of Armitage's typology of presentism (2022, p. 4); Steinmetz-Jenkins's 'Whose present? Which history?' (2022), an introduction to *Modern Intellectual History* forum on History and the present; Walsham's 'Past and … presentism' (2017) introduction to an issue of *Past and Present*; and Hunt's 'Against presentism' (2002), her American Historical Association presidential address which led to much of the subsequent debate.

Hall's articulation is encouraging in respecting the "alterity of the past" while using new conceptual lenses to uncover and examine "the silences and absences in the archives" (2017, p. 262). As part of my intention is to explore the integration of unacknowledged women's history into my classroom practice, Hall's advocacy helps provide a framework for my current study.

Next, I turn to the more recent work of history education scholars on epistemic cognition. This includes reviewing how researchers have differed on whether students' "competence in negotiating productive solutions" to the "problems" generated by disciplinary thinking (Seixas, 2017, p.597; Lévesque and Clark, 2018, p.128) can be plotted as a stage-like linear progression.

Epistemic cognition in history education

The term "epistemic cognition" is usefully defined by Hofer and Bendixen as "what individuals think knowledge is and how they think that they and others know" (2012, p. 227). As Epstein and Peck in referencing Lee and Shemilt explain, tracking the development of students' epistemic cognition is key to the disciplinary approach to history education which is rooted in "psychological theories of cognition" (2018, p. 2). The intention is to change students' "naïve understandings" of historical narratives as the truth of "what happened", so that they come see them instead as "*interpretations* or reconstructions" of past events (Epstein and Peck, 2018, p. 2). This is helpful as a theoretical framework for my AR study as I track whether centring Black women in the documents enables students to reconceive the textbooks' "singular" (Epstein and Peck, 2018, p. 2) version of events considering the more complex counter-evidence they encounter.

In 2016, VanSledright and Maggioni reviewed the literature on epistemic cognition in the domain of history education. Their study reinforced the need for "empirical research" to understand "discipline-specific patterns of epistemic beliefs" in history (2016, p. 128). One of the specific gaps identified in existing research was clarity on the origin of students' "changing ideas or potential underlying epistemic beliefs forged for example by life and schooling experiences" (2016, p. 135). More specifically, VanSledright and Maggioni pointed to various studies uncovering what they term "epistemic inconsistency (wobbling)" (2016, p. 140) in students' development, but without clear explanations for that finding. They framed such "wobbling" as arising when unexplained "impasses" occur, and called for research on what leads to that "inconsistency". Such research should address whether students' beliefs are

"cultivated in sociocultural contexts such as classrooms or at home" and should furthermore suggest "how they might be educated" (VanSledright and Maggioni, 2016, pp. 142–143).

The identification of "epistemic wobbling" posed a challenge to assumptions by Lee and Shemilt (2003, 2004, 2009) that students would progress from "naïve" to "sophisticated" historical thinking, and would not demonstrate a mixture of both at the same time (Epstein and Peck, 2018, p. 2; O'Neill *et al.*, 2022, p. 66). VanSledright and Maggioni's call for further research is part of what is examined in a special issue of *Historical Encounters* showcasing the more recent work on "Epistemic Cognition in History Education" (Nitsche, Mathis and O'Neill, 2022). The editors freely acknowledge after discussing existing gaps in the literature that even this more recent collection "does not resolve all […] research gaps" (2022, p. 4). Interestingly, in the one study featured in that issue that does centre student learning qualitatively, the main researcher was investigating her own classroom practice (Ní Cassaithe, Waldron and Dooley, 2022, p. 86) which may have facilitated the resulting depth of engagement with student responses. Ni Cassaithe, Waldron, and Dooley identify what they term "epistemic bottlenecks" (2022, p. 78), which they suggest teachers should embrace as opportunities to secure self-examination by students of their own embedded epistemic notions (2022, p. 93).

In their study in the same publication, O'Neill et al. similarly question theories projecting a systematic linear advance in students' understanding, underscoring how they concur with researchers who have failed to detect evidence of "stage-like developmental progression" in what students believe about knowledge in history (2022, p. 61;72). Regarding the finding of "epistemic wobbling", O'Neill et al. suggest that this may have arisen as a result of the methodology deployed in tracking student responses (2022, p. 61). After reviewing previously deployed quantitative approaches (2022, pp. 62–63), the authors explain their own novel construct which tested whether students' thinking developed in the "stagelike" manner that Shemilt had envisaged (2022, pp. 63–72). O'Neill et al.'s instrumental tick-box tool with a focused choice of four responses to guided questions was not intended to facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the reasons for students' resulting tallies on a test designed to be completed in 15 minutes. This then leaves open the opportunity for scholars – and action researchers in their own classroom, in the case of this current study – to construct tasks in which students can demonstrate the reasons for their claims (VanSledright and Maggioni, 2016, p. 143). In a related call for detailed empirical studies, Jay (2021, p. 322) argues that detailed

research of everyday teaching practice in the classroom is needed to track any potential shifts in students' "epistemic stances" as a result of their study of history. This current study is indeed based on data generated "at the granular level" (Jay, 2021, p. 322) in my classroom, and the work of history education scholars on epistemic cognition provides a framework for analysing why some students may find recourse to problematic claims despite the disciplinary guidance provided to them. As O'Neill et al. (2022) suggest in ways that will prove illuminating in analysing the data gathered during my DBE, unless students develop a "mature" grasp of the reasons why historical accounts diverge, they may instead cling to a way of seeing the past where "anything goes", believing that "all accounts are equally valid in principle, and everything is a matter of perspective" (2022, p. 59).

Next, I examine the challenges encountered by history education specialists studying the impact of students' epistemic beliefs when engaging with "difficult history" (e.g., Miles, 2019, p. 476) as part of a discussion on the need to focus on the role of students' affective responses to "difficult knowledge" (Pitt and Britzman, 2003).

Engaging with "difficult knowledge" and "difficult history"

History education researchers have built on Britzman's term "difficult knowledge" in various ways. As Garrett explains, this moves beyond disciplinary history as it is underpinned theoretically by "psychoanalytic theory" (2011, p. 325). Levy and Sheppard situate Britzman's initial coining of the term in her exploration of the use of *The Diary of Anne Frank* in studying the Nazi genocide. As they explain, Britzman's expression was intended to focus on "how students' inner conflicts disrupt learning histories of hatred, aggression, and suffering" (Levy and Sheppard, 2018, p. 366).

In his case study intended to examine Canadian students' historical thinking, Miles finds their responses to photographs of indigenous residential schools "difficult to make sense of using a historical thinking framework" (Miles, 2019, p. 474). He later reexamines the data through the theoretical lens of "difficult knowledge, emotion, and affect" (Miles, 2019, p. 474) with close attention to how students related to the images. Based on his in-depth empirical study, Miles finds that this type of knowledge is challenging precisely because of "its power to disrupt, unsettle, and implicate the identities and self-images of learners" (2019, p. 475). As Garrett (2017d) has stated, "the difficulty resides not in the content but rather in the learner's relationship with it" (Garrett, 2017d, p. 110; Miles, 2019, p. 475). This insight – that the challenge is situated in a student's "relationship" with the evidence and not just with the

evidence itself – informs the theoretical framework for my study in analysing some of my students' unexpected responses to my centring Black women in a DBE.

Miles – and Garrett (2017) who he refers to in his analysis – each appear to suggest that the research focus in history education should shift from the substantive evidence presented to students to their interaction with evidence that "implicates" them in some way (2019, p. 475). As Miles explains, he is drawing on Britzman's insights to ensure that "the stuff of such difficult knowledge becomes pedagogical" (Britzman, 1998, p. 117) for the students. To do this, a teacher has "to risk approaching the internal conflicts which the learner brings to the learning" (Britzman, 1998, p. 117; Miles, 2019, p. 475). Similarly drawing on Britzman to focus on the pedagogical value of her theoretical insights, Garrett explains that "difficult knowledge" speaks to what obstructs students' learning. He suggests this invites us to consider "pedagogy from the vantage of the complications it introduces for learners and teachers" (Garrett, 2017b, p. 21). According to Miles, this is at the heart of "difficult knowledge" in Britzman's terms in that it facilitates students "learning from" the process instead of simply "learning about" the substantive content (2019, p. 475). Using Britzman, Miles suggests this assists students to examine their "affected, indifferent, or resistant responses" to the disruptive knowledge (Miles, 2019, p. 491). Miles's study insightfully points out the value of engaging students' reactions directly. However, he does not elaborate on how teachers are to go about assisting students to enquire into their affective responses. It is instructive, therefore, to turn to what has previously been the subject of scholarship in the related field of "difficult history" to note the gaps that still remain in this regard.

The relationship between what a student "brings to the learning" (Britzman, 1998, p. 117) and the disruptive knowledge they encounter in the classroom has been the subject of research into what is termed "difficult history". Despite indicating that there is no single agreed upon definition, Miles suggests that in history education, "difficult histories can be characterized as historical acts, events, or structures of collective violence, injustice, or trauma that implicate the identities of students and teachers today" (Miles, 2019, p. 476). Researchers into such histories have focused on the impact on their learning of epistemic beliefs which they suggest are grounded in students' family, community, and religious backgrounds in countries such as Northern Ireland (e.g. Barton and McCully, 2010, 2012; McCully and Reilly, 2017; McCully, Weiglhofer and Bates, 2021). McCully et al. in researching the consequences of visits to community museums on students' views, note Zembylas's contention that students

demonstrate “a wilful ignorance” or a “deeply seated epistemic resistance to know” (2021, p. 513) when knowledge they encounter challenges their own culture’s sacred beliefs.

The focus here and more broadly within the field of research into “difficult history” is on teachers’ and students’ immersion in their community which given their country’s divided past and present has imbued in them epistemic beliefs that resist being challenged by evidence of contrasting perspectives. In their study of student responses to museums presenting “difficult history” in Northern Ireland, Barton and McCully (2012) point to the problems inherent in a detached approach being adopted by teachers who attempt to avert engaging with students’ resistant epistemic beliefs as generated by their families, communities, or faiths. As the authors assert, teachers may choose to confine themselves to a reserved, disciplinary approach which is not best suited to facilitating students’ engagement with contentious history. Indeed, they argue that “Students who face strong pressures of identification outside the classroom may not be well-served by such a dispassionate approach to history” (Barton and McCully, 2012, p. 397).

This focus on the relationship between the substantive material presented to students, and how they feel about it resonates with the insights provided by both Miles (2019) and Garrett (2017) with regard to students’ interaction with “difficult knowledge” as crucial to their learning. Other education researchers have asserted the importance of moving beyond a narrowly conceived understanding of a disciplinary approach “to highlight how concepts of power, identity and agency shape all historical narratives” (Epstein and Peck, 2018, p. 2). Epstein and Peck build on the diverse work on “difficult history” internationally to suggest teachers engage with students’ emotions directly instead of disregarding and suppressing such affective responses. As they explain in drawing on both critical and sociocultural approaches, “Beginning by asking young people to recognize their emotional responses to difficult histories may be a more productive approach” (Epstein and Peck, 2018, p. 9) to securing student learning in history. Nevertheless, in Epstein and Peck’s review of the work of Zembylas and others, it is clear that such research has largely centred on the responses of teachers rather than that of their students. What this means for students therefore remains undefined.

In further setting a theoretical framework for this current study, Levy and Sheppard also identify “the paucity of research into the role emotions play” in student learning, calling for that gap to be addressed in order to grasp “how emotions come into and move through teaching and learning difficult histories” (2018, p. 383). This call to be attentive to students’ emotional

responses is further clarified by focusing on the difficult dilemma facing a teacher enacting a carefully conceived lesson that ostensibly does not work due to students' "subjective, emotional engagement" (Levy and Sheppard, 2018, p. 382). The call for studies into actual classroom practice is reinforced by Miles (2019). As he claims, history education researchers need to examine students' divergent emotional responses to disruptive content in order to clarify why "some learners are emotionally disturbed or resistant and others demonstrate little or no reaction" (2019, p. 477). Miles identifies the precise gap in the literature to be a focus on what has to date been overlooked – students' "experiences" as opposed to those of their teachers (2019, p. 478). He acknowledges Zembylas's research into how some teachers are resisting teaching material that discomfits them, while other teachers do include it in their practice. In doing so, he draws attention to the need to conduct research into students' responses when such disruptive knowledge is introduced to them. Similarly, McCully et al. indicate that existing scholarship on students' affective responses to museum exhibits has revealed a research gap regarding how "affective learning relates to historical approaches learned in classrooms" (2021, p. 515). Even where researchers have focused on "emotion" or "affect' in the classroom, Sheppard et al. claim they have not done so with the necessary conceptual and theoretical clarity, so that "The overarching place of emotions […] is largely in the conceptual shadows. When the terms *emotion* or *affect* are used, they are un-theorized, and their role in the process of teaching and learning social studies remains primarily hidden" (2015, p. 157). This current empirical study will speak into this gap identified by various researchers in Chapter 7.3.

Instructively as a theoretical basis for this study, Barton and Levstik have long emphasised the centrality of "feeling" in history education without dispensing with the need for cognitive rigour. Instead, they suggest that students establishing an emotional connection with the past has "cognitive payoffs", despite the still limited scholarly work on what they insist is the "inseparable relationship of thought and feeling in cognitive development" (2008, p. 236). In this vein, in calling for "Empathy as caring", Barton and Levstik (2008, chap. 12) take issue with Stuart Foster, who with regard to the nature of enquiry in history avers that it "remains primarily a cognitive, not an affective, act and one that is chiefly dependent upon knowledge, not feeling or imagination" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, p. 207). In the face of such a bounded view of historical enquiry, Barton and Levstik focus on what for them is equally key: that the students establish a "connection" (2008, p. 229) between themselves and what they are studying. The authors assert that in tandem with what resonates with the disciplinary approach

of inculcating "perspective recognition" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, chap. 11) of people in the past, teachers must understand the need for students to build a relationship of "care" with past role-players, and with what mattered to them in their historical contexts. As they explain, "these relationships often include emotional commitments or feelings of personal relevance. We might say that care is a tool people use to establish their connection to the past; they use it in determining how they feel about history rather than what they think about it" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, p. 229). Indeed, Barton and Levstik in insisting that how students "feel" is not independent from what they "think" about the past, also assert that an emotional link to past role-players may further enable students to enact historical thinking by opening them to contrary viewpoints. They assert that "affectively mediated information" is important given "the inseparable relationship of thought and feeling in cognitive development" (2008, p. 236). Developing competence in understanding diverse perspectives is a key requirement in disciplinary thinking, here augmented by engaging students' feelings, making Barton and Levstik's framing regarding the role of affect an invaluable touchstone in considering pedagogical ways to enhance learning in the history classroom.

Furthermore, Reidel and Salinas appear to support the contention made by Barton and Levstik (2008) that examining students' emotions can enable them to grasp different viewpoints in history. As quoted by Sheppard et al., Reidel and Salinas advise a shift in teachers' approach to students' emotions, advocating that teachers "choose to engage in inquiry with their students about the ways in which attending to emotion can deepen our understanding of diverse perspectives. This approach depends upon our ability to view emotion as a resource rather than as a problem" (Sheppard, Katz and Grosland, 2015, p. 165). It is unclear from this what they intend by suggesting that emotions be construed in ways that enhance the possibility of "meaningful learning" (2015, p.164), beyond the advisory that teachers reflect on "how they are or are not supporting learning" (2015, p. 166). In that regard, Garret et al. (2020) reference Pitt to acknowledge that paying attention to the context in which students affectively resist learning may nevertheless lead to further emotional intransigence. Even so, they insist that "by including questions about belief and emotion into discussion and deliberation, teachers […] acknowledge and legitimize those domains as part of our engagement with others on issues that matter, especially when they are shrouded in overt ideology and controversy" (Garrett, Segall and Crocco, 2020, p. 321). It appears, therefore, that there is a need for focused research into the utility of emotion manifesting as a springboard for learning for some while obstructing learning for others.

It is also instructive to consider that while Miles draws attention to the need to research students who are "emotionally disturbed" (2019, p. 477) by learning about and from troubling events in the past, there is also a paucity of research into students whose affective responses are more positive. This resonates with Barton and Levstik's suggestion that students "care about" particular topics, "care that" certain changes were secured, and "care for" particular role-players in the past whose lives inspire them to "care to" take action in the present (2008, pp. 229–240). Students may rejoice, for example, in learning about issues they "care about", such as justice being secured though the activism of those they "care for". They may "care that" people resisted oppression (2008, p. 233) or "care to" shift their "own values, attitudes, beliefs, or behavior" (2008, p. 237) in light of what they have learned. In a related vein, Sheppard et al. also advocate for a focus on how students "celebrate shared experiences, and how they communicate across difference" (2015, p. 167). They therefore call for investigations that not only attend to "the emotions of conflict and difficulty", but pertinently, to "the joys and passions that are also present in the ideas and work of social studies education" (2015, p. 167). Indeed, Barton and Levstik's notions of "care", and Sheppard et al.'s encouragement to consider students' positive affective responses in the classroom provide a theoretical framework for my reflection on some of my students' exuberant engagement with material during the DBE, as will be discussed in Chapter 7.3.

A review of proposed pedagogical approaches to dealing with tension arising during historical enquiry

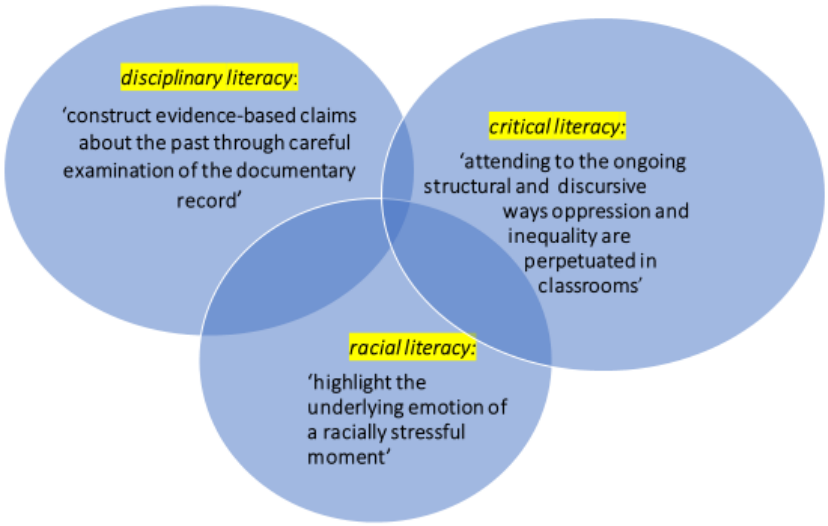
In light of the above review indicating the need for clarity into teaching strategies to facilitate student engagement with "difficult knowledge", it is instructive to examine Reisman et al.'s suggested approaches in the narrower context of racial tension emerging during a historical enquiry. The authors suggest three overlapping "interpretive frames" (2020, p. 321) for enquiries that become fraught with unanticipated racial tensions: "disciplinary literacy", "critical literacy", and "racial literacy", with the first two drawn from what they perceive as the "dominant perspectives" (2020, p. 325-327) in history education:

> We understand interpretive frames to be schematic lenses that guide teacher perception, interpretation, and action in classrooms […] Ultimately, we argue that these interpretive frames represent a suite of mutually reinforcing tools that might be leveraged […] to help teachers anticipate racial stress and turn paralysis to pedagogy. (2020, p. 321)

Below for ease of reference I present my understanding of Reisman et al.'s three intersecting lenses as a Venn diagram to visualise their "conceptual" (2020, p. 325) convergence. This for

me captures their contention that “In fact, each contains important elements of the other two” (2020, p. 327).

Figure 2.1 A schematic visualisation of Reisman et al. (2020)’s overlapping ‘Interpretive frames for responding to racially stressful moments in history discussions’



In the first instance, the authors intend to facilitate a teacher’s “noticing” the nature of the problem that has emerged in the discussion. They explain that

> a reader makes meaning in the act of interpretation, which is informed by prior experiences, beliefs, cultural practices, etc. In short, whether reading a classroom interaction or a text, what we see is not objective but rather a function of the interpretive frame(s) we bring to bear (Reisman, Enumah and Jay, 2020, p. 324).

A teacher using the “disciplinary literacy” lens would pick up on what students are saying and doing in order to shift them towards demonstrating the appropriate disciplinary procedures. In their broad framing, Reisman et al. do not include a detailed exposition of disciplinary concepts central to the Canadian or English approaches discussed above. Furthermore, they presuppose students already have substantive knowledge of the period’s “particularities” by suggesting teachers pose questions like “What do we know about race relations in the 1930s (*disciplinary literacy*)?” (2020, pp. 332; 339). This approach – which subsumes the substantive into the disciplinary – may be problematic when introducing material that is excluded from, marginalised by, or misrepresented in the textbooks, as is the case when teaching women’s history. There appears to be scope for further articulating what is meant by disciplinary literacy,

and how that may facilitate learning new forms of substantive knowledge in the classroom, as will be examined in Chapter 7.3.

Secondly, for Reisman et al., "critical literacy" requires paying attention to the "ongoing structural and discursive ways oppression and inequality are perpetuated in classrooms" (2020, p. 325). While they draw on diverse theories that explain the part history has played in shaping the present, including Black feminist thought (Vickery, 2015), they do not elucidate on how each theory would inform the classroom dynamic. Given their framing, it would appear that there is scope for researchers to further explore the application of relevant critical theories for teachers to access in intervening in a stressful classroom dynamic, and to articulate more clearly what a critical approach might entail. As Martell and Stevens insightfully indicate in advocating a critical approach: "Teachers and students should be continually asking of each event that they study: Did certain groups experience this event differently? Were there different perspectives of this event within groups? How and why?" (2021, chap. 4). Such critically-framed questions may be a way to augment the use of a disciplinary lens in a classroom. For example, engendering an awareness of collective activism in the face of past power structures may enable students to question narratives that focus only on select leaders as agents of change. As Martell and Stevens explain regarding the use of "thinking like an activist" in tandem with a disciplinary approach, this entails enabling students to consider the role of "collective movements of people" in securing change in the past. Such an approach would counteract the dominant textbook narratives that centre "important individuals" as "the main drivers of the past" (2021, chap. 2). Juxtaposing the textbooks' focus on singular male leaders as the motivating force in events with documentary counter-evidence centring Black women indeed forms part of my design in the DBE, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

While presenting disciplinary and critical literacies as two distinct approaches, Reisman et al. do reference their "overlap", insisting that their distinctions are "largely conceptual" (2020, p. 325). Yet in a later review of the literature on teacher education research in social studies, one of the authors, Jay (2022), insists that there remains a clear divide between the disciplinary and the critical approaches. He suggests that "a single researcher can contribute to [the] field's coherence by experimenting with research in multiple strands" (2022, p. 357). Jay is here inviting research that uses both disciplinary and critical approaches. While his review does note (2022, p. 355) Santiago and Dozono's article entitled "History is critical: Addressing the false dichotomy between historical inquiry and criticality", he does not engage with its substance.

Santiago and Dozono suggest that the two approaches share some "common commitments" (2022, p. 173) and both are required when researching the teaching of marginalised or excluded histories (2022, p. 189). Given their understanding that this entails exploring ways to engender an awareness "of how power shapes our study of the past" (2022, p. 174), the authors suggest the congruence with disciplinary requirements. They explain this overlap by asserting that "the critical historical inquiry camp uses historical thinking skills to analyze power dynamics in relation to race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality, and class" (Santiago and Dozono, 2022, p. 174).

Epstein and Peck (2018, p. 3), however, contend that the disciplinary approach does not usually examine the critical "power dynamics" (Santiago and Dozono, 2022, p. 174) that underpin the way the historical account has come to be framed. A critical approach to teaching history entails the creation of a classroom environment in which students are able to expose and challenge disparities in the narrative. As suggested by Martell and Stevens (2021, chap. 3), this necessitates ensuring that the classroom becomes "a contested space to uncover and confront inconsistencies in the historical record", further creating the opportunity "to reveal voices that were often intentionally silenced or erased" (2021, chap. 3). According to Martell and Stevens, teachers should call on students "to be the interpreters of the past" (2021, chap. 3). This provides theoretical scope for a DBE which centres the actions of Black women obscured or effaced by textbook narratives. Martell and Stevens's articulation of what a critical approach to history entails appears to resonate with the framing of a "historical problem space" (Reisman *et al.*, 2017, p. 11) which students are encouraged to identify during an enquiry. This is not easily secured by students, as Jay (2021) indicates. In his study students had difficulty in determining this "paradoxical space", where they "must face apparent contradictions and inconsistencies in the historical record to reckon with the simultaneous distance and familiarity of the past" (2021, p. 310). As will be explained in Chapter 4, I intentionally compiled material for my students to interpret in the DBE during carefully conceived pedagogical activities so that they could problematise the textbooks' account of events.

Turning now to their third approach, "racial literacy", Reisman's et al.'s declared intention is to draw on the "psychosocial literature on emotional and racial literacy to highlight the underlying emotion of a racially stressful moment" (2020, p. 326). This lens is meant to enable a teacher "to see, interpret, and respond to the racialized emotions that rendered the incident stressful" (2020, p. 335). The teacher would then frame questions intended to get students to reflect on why their reactions may have provoked different feelings in their classmates (2020, p. 336). While Reisman et al.'s narrower focus is on facilitating a teacher's response to a racial

incident, my earlier discussion indicates the potential value of asking students to reflect more broadly on their emotions and epistemic beliefs. As Garrett et al. suggest: "we see potential in asking students directly to explain why particular pieces of evidence might cause them alarm, concern, anger, or pleasure" (2020, p. 320). Interestingly, given the framing here – which includes "pleasure" as a possible response by students – this appears to resonate with Sheppard et al.'s call (2015, p. 167) to focus on the need to research the role of positive affect in the history classroom.

Furthermore, in an interview with Zembylas, Boler suggests that a key challenge facing education researchers is "to develop pedagogies that can engage emotions and affect as part of the necessary work of 'critical pedagogies' […] that invite students to reflexively re-evaluate closely-held assumptions, values and beliefs within a socio-historical frame" (2016, p. 27). In light of the gap in research on students' affective responses in the history classroom identified variously by Barton and Levstik (2008), Sheppard, Katz and Grosland (2015), Boler and Zembylas (2016), Levy and Sheppard (2018), Miles (2019), Zinga and Styres (2019), Garrett, Segal and Crocco (2020), and McCully, Weiglhofer and Bates (2021), I will in Chapter 7.3 argue the utility of reconceiving Reisman et al.'s "suite of tools" (2020, p. 339) to craft pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning history more broadly. Next, I examine the literature on teaching and learning women's history in the classroom, identify current findings on resistance to that, as well as the potential theoretical frameworks to deploy in working to integrate women's history into our practice.

2.2 The Teaching of Women's History

Lerner (2009) acknowledges that since the latter part of the 1960s, when she came to be viewed as an advocate for women's history, it has become necessary to foreground women's exclusion from the canon, given that "what we call history had been concerned only with the activities of half the human race. It should properly be called the history of men" (2009, p. 103). To address women's erasure from what is traditionally understood as history, it is necessary to "question the criteria of selection by which historians defined historical significance" (2009, p. 103). By implication, Lerner asserts that the dominant narrative has "reinforced the idea that women have not had a part in the building of societies and the shaping of historically important events" (2009, p. 112). In similar vein, Tetreault explains that it is important "to challenge the way

knowledge is conceptualized and what is considered worth learning" given that what "is researched and taught, the substance of learning, is knowledge articulated by men and about men" (1985, p. 367). The implication is that teaching women's history implies reconfiguring what has long been understood as appropriate knowledge for students to learn.

It is evident that despite the development academically of women's history courses in the latter quarter of the 20th century (Berkin, Crocco and Winslow, 2009, p. 4), coverage of women's history at high school level is still sorely lacking in the 21st century (Bair, 2008). Whereas at tertiary level Wiesner-Hanks and Willoughby produced *A Primer for Teaching Women, Gender, & Sexuality in World History* (2018), this has not translated into a shift in the teaching of school history. Evidently, what is required is not simply to "add women and stir" (Crocco, 1977, p. 32; Sincero and Woyshner, 2003, p. 218) to the high school history curricula. Instead, the call is for women to be centred in the historical account rather than just tacked on as an afterthought or a sidebar to a pre-existing course. Bair acknowledges that it is difficult to determine a way of doing so seamlessly and logically in a way that averts the "pitfalls" identified previously (2008, pp. 80–81).

Constructing innovative classroom practices centring Black women to encourage students to view the study of women's history as integral to their study of history rather than as a dispensable "add on" is part of what informed my lesson sequence, as will be explained in Chapter 4. It is evident that as recently as 2018, the need for empirical work on the teaching of women's history had remained what Crocco terms a "novelty", resulting not only in an injustice to women, but also in concerns with "truth-telling":

> Educational researchers have documented the ways in which attention to women's history has been overlooked, trivialized, "token-ed," and "sidebarred" in textbooks. […] Interest in […] the intersectionality of race, class, and gender remains a novelty in history education research. […] As a matter of social justice, but equally as a matter of truth-telling, history education would be well served by greater attention to gender […] as part of its research agenda. (Crocco, 2018, pp. 341; 344; 351)

Even more recently, Watson-Canning identified that in school history "women are not considered historical and social change agents" (2019, p. 11). Researchers have focused on addressing the exclusion of women's history in several ways. Their lack of inclusion in textbooks has been examined by Tetreault (1986a), Commeyras and Alvermann (1996), and Woyshner and Schocker (2015) in the US context, while Chiponda and Wassermann (2011) question the impact on young people of the stereotypical ways women are presented in textbooks in diverse countries, including South Africa. Schoeman (2009) and Wills (2016)

examine the representation of women in South African textbooks, with the latter deploying Tetreault's feminist framework in her analysis. The resilience of Tetreault's model encouraged me to adapt it for use as a methodological heuristic in examining student responses during the DBE to explore the teaching of women's history that goes beyond merely "adding on" women. I explain Tetreault's feminist framework at length in Chapter 3.7 and use it extensively as a lens in analysing data in light of Question 1A in Chapter 5.

Theoretical attention has also been paid to the nature of what it means to integrate women's history into our exposition of the past, with researchers noting that "Ultimately it changes the story of the […] past, challenging facile conclusions reached by leaving out half the population" (Berkin, Crocco and Winslow, 2009, p. 4). This claim can clearly be examined in other historical contexts too: the focus of the edited collection, *Clio in the Classroom: A guide for teaching U.S. Women's History* (Berkin, Crocco and Winslow, 2009, p. 5) necessarily narrowed their scope to invite a range of authors to share enriching ways to teach U.S. women's history in the classroom. Considering initiatives to make school history more "representative", Counsell (2021) envisages a commitment to avoid the "tokenism" evident in the way some teachers have tried to include narratives centring Black people in their teaching. Counsell cites Boyd's suggestion that the aim would be a focus on women's "agency" in order to secure what would be "the ideal – a relational and integrated history". Boyd asserts that by uncovering women's "lived experience", historical narratives would necessarily shift from their "traditional political shapes" (Counsell, 2021, pp. 168–169)[7].

According to scholars ten Dam and Rijkschroeff (1996), Levstik and Groth (2002), Levstik (2009), and Watson-Canning (2019, 2020), teachers attempting to include women's history in their lessons have encountered pitfalls relating to how students view that history. Levstik and Groth (2002) evaluate Grade 8 social studies students' responses to a stand-alone women's history unit. They identify some concern with students perceiving the introduction of a module centring "women's perspectives" as leading to "silencing men" (2002, p. 244), even though men were clearly evident throughout in the teaching materials. "Real historians", according to one of the students, "would 'have gone from the male perspective'". While the students acknowledged that their lessons had scarcely ever referenced women before, they could not

[7] This appears to echo Tetreault's Phase 5: Holistic History as will be evident in Chapter 3.7, and in the analysis in Chapter 5.4.

recall ever being concerned about that evident omission (Levstik and Groth, 2002, pp. 244–245).

Furthermore, how teachers interact with their students is also key to securing student engagement. In her examination of student responses to two teachers' introducing women's history in the classroom, Watson-Canning (2019, 2020) differentiates between what was successfully achieved by the teacher who embraced relational engagement and dialogic practices with her students, as opposed to the large-scale student resistance to studying women's history that ensued when a less relational approach was taken by a novice teacher unpractised in challenging resistant students' assumptions.

The literature suggests that students' prior socialisation and their existing beliefs also impact on their responses to women's history. Ten Dam and Rijkschroeff (1996) document girls' responses to the enforcement of a mandatory women's history module in the Netherlands, indicating that girls were reluctant to associate themselves with women who they saw as somewhat "deficient" in their roles and access to rights. "Girls are disinclined to identify with 'a group that is lagging behind"', they conclude (1996, p. 86), with girls seeing women's history "as the history of a group in a disadvantaged position" in contrast to themselves, who they see as living at a time when gender equality had been more or less secured (1996, pp. 84–86). Levstik (2009, pp. 284–285) frames ten Dam and Rijkschroeff's findings as students responding to lessons centring women as "victims of history rather than its agents", with the authors claiming that the women's history module was perceived as lower in "status", resulting in "stereotyping" (ten Dam and Rijkschroeff, 1996, p. 86).

Evidently, the students did not see women as integral to all of history. This though does not mean the teachers were at fault; instead, ten Dam and Rijkschroeff assert that "Not everything that teachers intend to teach students is learned by students; not everything that students learn is intended by teachers" (1996, p. 85). I was unaware on first encountering this insight how far this would resonate with what I later identified in some of my students' responses during my enquiry. Watson-Canning defines student responses to the introduction of a "complementary curriculum" (2019, p. 128) that includes women's history as their "diffraction" (2019, p. 130) of that curriculum. She calls for far more rigorous research into how women's history is "enacted" and responded to in the classroom in order to determine whether any attempt at integrating women's history in the curriculum "has an ameliorative effect" (2019, p. 2).

As this literature review indicates, there is value in what can be learned from empirical research in a classroom that allows for a more considered and in-depth exposure to the centrality of women's historical actions in events. Next, I provide a theoretical framework for my use of intersectionality as a lens in curating the documents presented to my students.

Intersectionality in the Teaching of Women's History

In "Conceptualizing the Intersectionality of Race, Class, and Gender in U.S. Women's History", Ball explores how such an approach can problematise enduring preconceptions, making it possible for students to engage with the past in all its complexity (2009, p. 150). Students intuitively grasp the notion of intersectionality by analogy with their having diverse "interests and identities", so they understand that how intersecting "social constructs help define one's sense of self and affect the ways that one is perceived by others" (2009, pp. 150–151). Using the concept of intersectionality is seen as crucial in countering the dominant narrative where "women" tends to mean "white women", with the shift to include Black history more readily leading to the inclusion of Black men only. Ball suggests that through closer examination of "the life cycles, family relationships and responsibilities, labor, and community networks of women in a comparative way", students can develop a deeper grasp of the various stratifications that differentiate women from one another (2009, p. 155).

In their approach, Levstik and Groth use the historical thinking category of "different perspectives" to evaluate students in an eighth grade classroom's capacity to intuit that "women are not a single category" (2002, pp. 240–244). They find that while students created work that distinguished between women, and asked questions indicating they understood the necessity of doing that, students at times "argued that *all* women were 'treated like slaves' or that *all* men treated women as inherently inferior" (2002, pp. 242–243). Regarding differentiation, Woyshner and Schocker focus on the presentation of Black women in history textbooks to determine whether their inclusion subverts the "single-axis emphasis on women's work as the purview of White working-class females and the understanding that White, middle-class women did not work outside the home" (2015, p. 463). Their textbook research uses Crenshaw's intersectional lens to demonstrate that centring "privileged group members – White men, Black men, and White women – distorts students' understanding of racism and sexism by focusing on subsets of the population and 'marginalizes those who are multiply burdened' – Black women" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140; Woyshner and Schocker, 2015, p. 463).

Woyshner and Schocker draw attention to the specific erasure of Black women by examining the nature of images of Black women in the standard U.S. textbooks, as opposed to textbooks focusing on African American history, with the former mostly portraying enslaved women, while the latter showcase a range of roles played by Black women. Even so, they find that women overall are still eclipsed in their coverage by the focus on men.

In response, Woyshner and Schocker advocate for an interpretive "heuristic" informed by prior frameworks (2015, p. 453) which encompasses five phases of women's history: "all-white" history, which barely includes Black women; "famous firsts", which identifies "the accomplishments of great Black women"; "contribution history: what Black women were doing in mainstream historical events"; "oppression narrative", which analyses "how Black women overcame injustices"; and "Afro-centric history", which "reorders history around the experiences of Black women" (2015, p. 457). Furthermore, they problematise themselves as white women analysing the nature of inclusion of Black women's images in curricular material thus making overt their stance as researchers.

Woyshner and Shocker's advisory regarding the need to make overt their privileged positionality is apposite here for my AR investigation as a white intersectional feminist researching my students' responses to the inclusion of women's history by centring Black women in past events. My reflexive awareness is key to acknowledging that as teacher-researcher in my own classroom, I not only curated the documents and the classroom pedagogies for the DBE; I also constructed my understanding of my students' ways of seeing and responding to the evidence in the DBE. The historian Hall explains that acknowledging one's "politics of location" facilitates a consciousness of one's "blind eyes" – of how we may be blinkered from seeing approaches that differ from ours:

> History writing has always been informed by the present, but perhaps there is something more that we have learned, something about the 'politics of location', a term associated with feminist thinking, that allows us to be self-reflexive in our writing, more aware of our 'blind eyes', more alert to disavowal with its patterns of knowing and not-knowing, more open to the need for an awareness of those many 'others' whose ways of thinking are so different from ours. (Hall, 2017, p. 254)

Next, I examine the way women's history, to the extent that it has been included at all in school history, is delineated as social history, and excluded from the curriculum's central focus on political history.

Teaching Women's History as Political History, and not only as Social History

School history – that is, political history – has long been viewed through male eyes as centred around the "public" sphere, with the general exclusion of women who are seen to be largely operating in the "private" sphere. This approach has led feminist academics to call for a focus on "social history", as that would more readily include women's history (Crocco, 1977, p. 32). Levstik and Barton (2015, p. 6) contend that school history need not be so narrowly concerned with the "public political arena" and should instead draw from the academic study of the family and women's work in the home to uncover women's important role there. They assert that women will continue to be omitted from school history unless such arenas – in which women are "significant historical actors" – are included (Levstik and Barton, 2015, p. 6). Similarly, Tudor (2000, pp. 25–35) delineates five key aspects of women's twentieth century experience: "work", "family", "political life", "cultural life", and "war and conflict", as evidenced in her innovative resource targeting European schools. For Tudor, "political life" includes "suffrage/vote, local politics, national politics, representation, rights and responsibilities, activism" (2000, p. 30), where it would appear women's actions within the realm of what is traditionally regarded as political is narrowly foreground. (Tetreault, 1985; Wills, 2016).

In response, Woyshner (2012, p. 364) disputes the "myth" that political history of necessity excludes women, and that women's history typically means only social history. With direct reference to Levstik and Barton (2015), Woyshner asserts that limiting political history to the "formal" participation by men in state structures is problematic (2012, p. 364). Instead, she proclaims the necessity for what she terms is a "reconceptualization" which credits women's own understanding of their work in "social movements and voluntary associations" (2012, p.367). In the USA context, Woyshner examines aspects of women's clubs and organisations, dominant in much of the later 19th and early 20th century, as evidence of women's political actions which laid the groundwork for their 1960s-1970s activism. In my local context, I see Hassim's influential work on women's organisations in South Africa (2006) as examining women's political work in ways analogous to how Woyshner suggests their political history in the USA should be acknowledged and taught. In her work, Hassim "traces the ways in which women articulated their political interests within the broader struggle against apartheid, and, in some instances, against capitalism and in the process sought to articulate a set of interests based on the particular experiences of gender oppression" (2006, p. 3). According to Hassim, women's groupings politically influenced the drafting of an inclusive constitution in democratic South Africa. This broader, more inclusive understanding of the political –

grounded in Hassim's key examination of my South African historical context – is crucial to my interest in examining my students' responses to my centring Black women's actions. Black women's significant activism in Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s has been rendered merely symbolic where not fully erased from the dominant textbook narratives, both in the USA and in South Africa. Following Woyshner and Hassim, I am able to explore whether my students come to see Black women's individual and collaborative initiatives as political, and in that way as integral to their study of school history.

2.3 Resistance to Learning

In the discussion above I presented my initial literature review on the teaching of women's history, noting the challenges scholars have previously identified when observing teachers introduce isolated units focused on women (ten Dam and Rijkschroeff, 1996; Levstik and Groth, 2002; Levstik, 2009; Watson-Canning, 2019, 2020). Later, having immersed myself in the data arising from the DBE with my students, I was challenged when attempting to understand and interpret aspects of that data, and felt compelled to seek out further scholarship within and beyond the confines of history education that might account for some of my students' unexpected responses. As will be evident in Chapters 5 and 6 in examining the findings of my AR project in the classroom, some of my students appeared at times to demonstrate what can be termed resistance to learning from the documents they had studied in their DBE – and this resistance appeared to be in tension with those same students' earlier articulations when engaging with those same documents. This then led me to compile this more in-depth literature review to locate my findings within the existing literature, in order to be able to extend and apply that to my particular classroom context.

In his work, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* (2001), educational and cognitive psychologist Wineburg describes something akin to the tension I identified in analysing the data I collected in my own classroom, as will be discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. Wineburg (2001) finds that clearly competent student Derek failed to learn as expected despite his "exemplary" (2001, p. 23) reading of primary source material. While Wineburg expected Derek's exposure to the documents to challenge his preconceptions, Derek instead disregarded any evidence that was at odds with his "existing beliefs" (2001, pp. 23–24). This propensity identified by Wineburg for students to be "unfazed" (2001, p. 24) by remarkable evidence in the documents they read is similar to what Woodburn found when presenting students with narratives that contained explicit evidence of older women as proactively engaged in

momentous moments in history in his article "Do old ladies make world history? Student perceptions of elder female agency" (2006). His students appeared to be unwilling to notice and acknowledge incontrovertible evidence of older women's activism as that was contrary to their "prior assumptions" that protestors were always young. Woodburn asserts that "The evidence was suppressed, not in the sources, but at the intake because it contradicted the reader's prior assumptions" (2006, p. 526). It would appear that students can *later* discount evidence they have seemed to digest (Wineburg's Derek) or can even disregard its presence altogether (Woodburn's students) when integrating it would require re-examining their assumptions about the world and the nature of forms of knowledge deemed relevant in recounting historical narratives. As Wineburg suggests in analysing Derek's thinking: "What seemed to guide his view of this event is a set of assumptions about how normal people behave. These assumptions, in turn, overshadowed his very own observations, made during the review of the written testimony" (2001, p. 23). By implication, this was how – according to Derek in his own historical context and based on his own preconceptions – he would expect "normal people" to behave.[8] Wineburg suggests that Derek here fails to view events through the historical protagonists' eyes, instead displaying evidence of "presentism"[9] which he defines as "the act of viewing the past through the lens of the present" (2001, p. 37).

Furthermore, Wineburg claims that as students' prior beliefs are unshakeable, the disciplinary requirement of thinking historically is "unnatural" as it requires them to think in ways that are at odds with their "psychological condition at rest" (2001, p. 37)[10]. To think historically they have to set aside their embedded preconceptions: "Trying to shed what we know in order to glimpse the "real" past is like trying to examine microbes with the naked eye: The instruments we abandon are the ones that enable us to see" (2001, p. 25). Setting aside Wineburg's somewhat disconcerting implication that historians are able to determine a singular "real" past, what is also not clear from his analysis is the evident divergence between Derek's impressive reading and his later rationalisations. Wineburg does not help me grapple with why some of

[8] A sentiment echoed by one of my students, Jane, in the phrase "we all do it", as will be seen in Chapter 5.2.

[9] A claim disputed by Levisohn: "This is not 'presentism,' but rather an epistemic predicament to which we should be sympathetic. Should Derek trust his own reading of some documents shown to him, or should he trust his deep-seated intuition about human psychology? In the face of a possible interpretation that seems 'ludicrous,' he chooses the reasonable option." (Levisohn, 2015, p. 621)

[10] Others have critiqued Wineburg's classification of historical thinking as a necessarily "unnatural act". See, e.g., Barton and Levstik's *Teaching History for the Common Good* (2008, p. 215); Levisohn's 'Historical Thinking – and Its Alleged Unnaturalness' (2015); Rubin's 'Presentism's Useful Anachronisms' (2017); Körber's 'Presentism, alterity and historical thinking' (2018); and Gibson and Miles's 'Rethinking Presentism in History Education' (2022)

my students initially appeared capable of setting aside what they thought they knew as they engaged with new forms of knowledge in the enquiry, and then later reverted to type, imposing their own "beliefs" on to that material. This concern suggests that more needs to be explored about the impact of the embedded nature of preconceptions than is evident in Wineburg's deductions – especially about student engagement with evidence that challenges the established textbook presentation of what kinds of knowledge are of value in the writing of historical narratives.

In another seminar, Wineburg (2001) presented participants with history as narrated in *A Midwife's Tale,* based on the life of Martha Ballard, and contrasted that with the way textbooks narrate history. Wineburg instructively focuses on the disjuncture between school head Colleen's enthusiastic engagement with the richly nuanced *Tale,* and her own studiously dispassionate scripting of a narrative later, which appeared to discount everything she had gleaned from the *Tale* (2001, pp. 33–35). Colleen "could not find a way of resolving the belief that history had slighted her [Ballard] as a woman and the belief that when writing history one should be cool, dispassionate, scientific, objective" (2001, p. 35). As a result, she structured her account in textbook fashion without a narrator, ignoring her own visceral response to Ballard's story. Wineburg's detailed examination suggests the immense hold that prior learning and preconceptions of what constitutes an appropriate historical narrative might have even when participants are called on to "rewrite history" (2001, p. 33) after being exposed to rich documentary evidence at odds with the textbook.

While understanding that students are not a "blank sheet" (Pendry *et al.*, 1997, p. 20) or "blank slates" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 73) open to any and all learning experiences and ready to integrate what they are exposed to in the classroom by re-examining their prior conceptions of the world, it remains unclear how their learning is impeded by their preconceptions even when this is understood. Watson-Canning suggests that teachers wanting to address structural inequalities and injustices in the classroom must bear in mind that students "are not passive sieves in which teachers pour content knowledge" (2019, p. 146). She is not surprised that students, when confronted by evidence that is at odds with their "experiences", may actively resist integrating that evidence. It is not apparent though when teaching history that centres women in events which students' "experiences" to take cognisance of in preparing materials, and in deciding on the appropriate pedagogy to best engage with those in ways that will lead to effective understanding. Even in teaching science, teachers encounter resistance based on

preconceptions of the particular "facts", and science teachers are advised to identify those "misconceptions" directly in order to secure more effective learning (Sadler and Sonnert, 2016, p. 26). Sadler and Sonnert deduce that teachers need to ensure that students "unlearn" or "change" their prior ways of understanding the world in order to gain new scientific knowledge (2016, pp. 26; 32). They contend that this is a challenging process.

However, in history teaching it is far less likely that teachers can identify in advance – or even while teaching – which deeply held notions might be impeding their students' learning. Indeed, in "What they think they know: the impact of pupil's preconceptions", Conway suggests that in the history classroom such beliefs "can be all-pervasive and extremely subtle, as well as drawn from areas or ideas which have nothing to do with the topic at hand, or even history as a subject" (2006, p. 15). It is the intrusion of each student's individualised ways of thinking about the world that makes it so much harder to even attempt to ensure that learning is not impeded by their "prior" thinking. Such modes of belief might reasonably be *un*anticipated by the history teacher given they are unrelated to the substantive content being studied. There is no generic remedy for this; neither is there a once-off solution. Instead, Conway claims that students' notions pose an ongoing and time-consuming "challenge" that history teachers need continually "to actively investigate" (2006, p. 15). Like Watson-Canning above (2019, p. 146), Conway suggests the potential for further research into this quandary as "research into and writing about the preconceptions pupils bring to their history lessons is sparse and leaves many questions open" (2006, p. 10).

This sentiment that further research in the classroom is needed is echoed by Pendry et al. in "Pupil preconceptions in history" (1997) which further explores the lack of conceptual clarity on what those "preconceptions" entail, and how they are to be viewed. As they ask given the absence of research into this: "Do we regard such preconceptions as 'wrong', or are those statements best understood as misconceptions?" (1997, p. 18). In light of their study, Pendry et al. deduce that their findings on students' prior beliefs resonate with those in the teaching of science where students "fit new knowledge into existing frameworks" which "may be inconsistent" (1997, p. 20). One of Tetreault's participants in a faculty seminar where she introduced her feminist framework[11] admitted similarly that:

[11] Tetreault's framework is discussed in Chapter 3.7 as the methodological underpinning for the analysis of the data in Chapter 5.

> "It's going to take an awful lot of work and thinking on my part to digest this stuff in a way that fits with what is already in my head". Those just beginning to think about incorporating women would frequently have anomalies embedded in their reasoning as they struggled to reconcile the "contradictions" of feminist scholarship with long-held theories. (Tetreault, 1985, pp. 381–382).

Education researchers have suggested that students may not necessarily incorporate new information into what they already believe and may instead resist accepting the new material where the fit is uncomfortable. For example, Middendorf et al. postulate that rather than integrating "a more historically critical and nuanced account" (2015, p. 171), students may instead revert to their initial beliefs when confronted by dissonant evidence in ways that echo Wineburg's assertions above. Similar to Wineburg's claims that students need to learn how to think historically in order to do so, Middendorf et al. claim that overt engagement with disciplinary ways of thinking is advised to secure the necessary shift in their "epistemological understanding" (2015, p. 169).

Epstein found that Black and white US students, informed by their divergent family and community backgrounds, retained opposing perspectives on the "meaning and significance of the actors or events" (1998, p. 404) in the US history they studied. These differing views informed how they engaged with both primary and secondary source material, and the ways they set about incorporating or resisting information. For Black students this tended to manifest in a distrust and even rejection of the historical narrative propounded in the classroom when this diverged from the beliefs instilled in their homes and communities, whereas white students tended to trust their textbooks. Similarly, in the South African context, Angier demonstrates how students may appear to adopt the required official version in class only to "revert" to their earlier beliefs about the past thereafter (2017, p. 169). Building on this, Colley suggests that in her gender study "students were not only bringing their own cultural tools […] into their historical analysis, but also their own memories, emotions, and feelings about their own gender, the expectations placed upon their gender, and their own experiences with gender oppression" (2019, p. 21). Colley surmises that teachers must therefore teach with the understanding that those factors will affect student learning in the classroom.

Woyshner and Shocker (2015) postulate that students may view the material presented by the teacher as if at an angle affected by what they term a "cultural parallax". For them, this conceit captures the displacement between the observer and what they are viewing (2015, pp. 448–449). What follows is that students' ways of seeing are determined by their individual preconceptions so that they perceive the material presented in the history classroom from their

particular culturally-affected perspective. An awareness of their positioning is therefore key to understanding what they "see". Woyshner and Shocker attribute Nabhan (1998) with defining this heuristic grounded in "a concept from photography and astronomy, in which a 'parallax is the apparent displacement of an observed object due to the difference between two points of view'" (p. 91) (Woyshner and Schocker, 2015, pp. 448–449). In a related vein, Watson-Canning similarly uses a visual metaphor to suggest that students do not passively absorb the taught material, but instead may indeed "diffract" the teacher's "enacted" curriculum (2020, p. 67). Watson-Canning emphasises students' active role in meaning-making while drawing attention to the challenges teachers face in implementing their planned curriculum. Students may displace or deflect what the teacher presents and thus at the very least may complicate the teachers' attempts at finding sound pedagogical ways for them to learn as intended.

I suggest, following Watson-Canning, that by examining students' responses to what teachers "enact", researchers can track the impact of that displacement or deflection on their learning. Berger's 1972 work, *Ways of Seeing,* has resonance here, as Woyshner and Shocker indeed acknowledge in formulating their own understanding of how students see what is presented to them (2015, p. 447). As Berger asserts, "The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe [...] We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves" (2008, pp. 8–9). Woyshner and Shocker interpret this as implying that "meanings come to light in the interplay between the viewer and what or who is viewed" (2015, p. 447). I suggest that Berger's insights may apply not only to students' viewing of visual sources, but also to their engagement with other documentary material presented to them. As will be evident in Chapters 5 and 6, Berger's insightful framing invites me to engage with students' responses to documents as informed by their "looking at the relations between things" and themselves.

Kumashiro (2000, pp. 45–46) draws on Ellsworth (1997, p.31) to point to the displacement between what the teacher presents and how the students view that by analogy with how each individual viewer chooses to view a film – another visual metaphor akin to what Woyshner and Shocker, Watson-Canning, and Berger have suggested above. Following Ellsworth, Kumashiro positions students as viewing their teacher's "performative" implementation of the curriculum from vantage points that diverge from what the teacher intended, to the point where "the teacher cannot control how the student reads what the teacher is trying to en-act" (Ellsworth, 1997; Kumashiro, 2000, pp. 45–46).

What is a common thread in much of the literature is that simply exposing the students to new forms of knowledge – as I did with documents tracing diverse aspects of Black women's lives on the personal-political continuum – is not in itself a pedagogically sufficient way to shift their thinking in all cases. Watson-Canning (2019, p. 130) points to Loutzenheiser's work which directly addresses this erroneous notion by asserting that "teachers mistakenly believe if students simply 'know enough' or 'know right', they will alter their thinking". Indeed, Loutzenheiser claims that it is flawed to suggest that we "can *think* our way out of gender bias, racism, homophobia and heterosexism" (2006, p. 67), which are some of her concerns in "Gendering Social Studies, Queering Social Education". Loutzenheiser suggests that teachers will not succeed when they believe "that students just need to come to understand or to be fully conscious, and then normativity can, with some finality, be changed." (Loutzenheiser, 2006, p. 68). In this article Loutzenheiser presents an in-depth examination of student resistance to learning which is informed in part by queer studies, intersectionality, and feminist psychoanalysis. As Loutzenheiser tackles a related problem to one I am interested in – how to integrate women's history in the classroom, rather than just "trivialising" it through an easily-dismissed "add and stir" approach (2006, p. 66) – and as she raises intriguing questions about the nature of education itself which are pertinent to my research, it is worth considering her analysis at length here.

One of the ways students resist learning despite attempts by teachers to instil a grasp of social justice is by what Loutzenheiser (following Grillo and Wildman, 1995) describes as "over-analogizing" (2006, p. 67). This refers to white people's inclination when confronted by Black people's oppression to ignore the difference in their contexts, instead depicting their very divergent situations as the same. Doing so diverts them from actually facing up to the other person's "reality" (Loutzenheiser, 2006, p. 67). This identification of a propensity to make everything about themselves provides a promising framework for analysing how some students manifest their displacement of their teacher's "enacted" curriculum, as Watson-Canning suggests. By "over-analogizing", students may tend, for example, to portray all Black people as the same, even when exposed to explicit differentiation between them in historical documents. Students may flatten and reduce documentary evidence, producing simpler narratives from complex ones in their reading of the content, thereby implying "that peoples of color are not complicated with differences between and amongst issues of sexuality […] class,

and gender" (2006, p. 68). Furthermore, students may discount their participation in constructing their version of the narrative as based on their own perspective.

Loutzenheiser (2006, pp. 68–69) references Felman and Ellsworth to make quite daunting claims regarding the "impossibility" of teaching. Felman frames this as a pedagogic challenge that paradoxically generates "unprecedented teaching possibilities, renewing both the questions and the practice of education" (Felman, 1987, p. 70; quoted by Ellsworth, 1997, p. 55). What then goes some way to illuminating where some students' learning might have been inadvertently obstructed during the DBE I introduced in my class is when Ellsworth suggests that such obstruction arises when the "unconscious constantly derails the best intentions of pedagogies" (1997, p. 55). While acknowledging that pedagogical approaches have to be scrutinised in each teacher's localised situation, Loutzenheiser points out that this is not a straightforward, predictable process given students' immersion in "popular culture" where they unconsciously receive "daily cultural messages" (2006, p. 68). This insight is insightful when examining some of my students' responses to documentary evidence, as will be evident in Chapters 5 and 6.

Loutzenheiser's exposition is also instructive in suggesting that the challenges teachers face in the classroom may manifest as continually varying opposition which cannot be planned for, even if teachers were to examine their own localised teaching environment. While I had not assumed in embarking on this AR study that my students would be "passive vehicles" (Watson-Canning, 2020, p. 67) for documentary evidence centring Black women that would then in some mechanistic way change their views on integrating women's history, I had also not anticipated some students' inadvertent but overriding resistance to sustaining changed thinking. Loutzenheiser's use of Felman helps me navigate the seemingly incomprehensible resistance to learning evident in some of my students, which resistance I initially thought I ought to have been able to prepare for. She references Felman to assert that "good teaching" is not "plannable", and even when valuable teaching is momentarily secured, it is not "repeatable" (2006, p. 68). Alleging otherwise does not consider "*student* constructions of knowledge, resistance, and the unknowable, (i.e., the unconscious)" (2006, p. 68). Instead, Felman suggests what is needed is ensuring "open spaces" where what the teacher intends "*might* occur, but also *might* not" (Loutzenheiser, 2006, p. 68). It is encouraging to note Felman's suggestion is not for further teacher planning but instead for ongoing open-ended engagement through classroom discussion. Loutzenheiser, via Felman, consistently makes the point that this teaching and

learning process cannot be "scripted" in advance: instead, the teacher is encouraged to take on board student resistance and overtly respond to that as part of their pedagogy. Similarly, Kumashiro contends that teachers must acknowledge the "unknowability" (2000, p. 45) of teaching. He encourages teachers to engage with their students in the "space" (2000, p. 46) that emerges between what they teach and what students learn, although he does not provide clear guidance on how to do so. This points to a gap in our understanding of how best to navigate this "space" that opens up for discursive engagement in the history classroom.

Loutzenheiser further asserts that when students appear to "ignore" or disregard what they are exposed to in the classroom, such "ignorance" is not owing to a "passive lack of knowledge" (2006, p. 69). Instead, what students may inadvertently be manifesting is "nothing other than a desire to ignore" (Felman, 1987, pp. 78–79; quoted by Loutzenheiser, 2006, p. 69) material they find disconcerting. This is pertinent to my grappling with how some of my students appear at one point to grasp the significance of the evidence they encounter, only to later discount that entirely as if they are not remembering what they previously encountered. Framing "ignorance" as a "desire" to not take note of discomfiting information is key to understanding why students might resist learning in a context where they appear keen to learn. Teaching is therefore not just about providing the requisite information to students eager to learn, given their unwitting yet resolute resistance to learning disruptive content as it were in spite of themselves. Indeed, students may unconsciously manifest "'an active refusal of information'" (Felman, 1987, p. 79; quoted by Ellsworth, 1997, p. 57). As Ellsworth insightfully elaborates in ways that inform my understanding of some of my students' determination not to be implicated by discriminatory attitudes they wish to distance themselves from:

> The hatred or fear of one's own implication in what's being taught – about the histories and operations of racism or sexism, for example […] – can make forgetting or ignoring or not hearing an active, yet unconscious refusal. And the "inner resistances" that call an ignore-ance into being are stubbornly capable of maintaining it, even against the conscious intentions or desires of one who otherwise wants to learn. (Ellsworth, 1997, p. 57)

Loutzenheiser indeed draws on this passage from Ellsworth (1997) to suggest that students might feel compelled to resist knowledge that impacts on them in ways they seek to avoid as such content is, for them, too distressing to recall (Loutzenheiser, 2006, pp. 69–70).

Zinga and Styres (2019) also examine how students' preconceived stance impacts on their learning, though they insist that their focus is mostly on resistance to their attempts at decolonising the curriculum. For me their work picks up on Loutzenheiser's suggestion that teachers allow for unscripted engagement with their students' resistance to learning "where

students can question, within the context of their own positionalities, the ways they are implicated in and/or affected by the societal maintenance of assumptions, biases and relations of power" (Zinga and Styres, 2019, p. 34). They further demonstrate the importance of criticality in foregrounding students' "location within shifting and interconnected networks and relations of power and privilege" (2019, p. 31) as impacting on their perceptions of class material. Indeed, one of the most revealing comments in examining resistance to learning comes from the post-course feedback by one of their students: "It is this developing ability to recognize my inherent settler privilege and challenge my unconscious use of it that I am taking away from this course [...] My assumptions have been the biggest hurdle I have tackled in this class" (2019, p. 45). While not contextualising how that student came to make this profound realisation, their insight does support the contention that student resistance to learning stems from such previously-held beliefs. Furthermore, it appears that Zinga and Styres too, like Loutzenheiser, suggest that there is no generic pedagogical approach that can ensure that learning takes place when it provokes resistance. As they assert, "Universal approaches are not effective within decolonizing and anti-oppressive work due to the deeply personal work that must be done on the part of both the educator and the student" (2019, p. 44). Choosing to frame their decolonial approach as their own deliberate, conscious "resistance" to the status quo, Zinga and Styres see student's opposition to that as "counter-resistance". It manifests when students are confronted in class with evidence which they cannot integrate without their entire reality "splitting open" (Zinga and Styres, 2019, p. 46), so instead they resist that evidence. Zinga and Styres suggest that such resistance can appear as "biased statements and taken-for-granted assumptions that are introduced by students" (2019, p. 46) which teachers must take into account. Looking at my findings through this lens will inform my grappling with the displacement of the learning I intended, as some students reverted to the comfort of their unquestioned prior beliefs. In that regard, it is insightful to note that Zinga and Styres do not overtly confront their students' resistance to learning. Instead they encourage their students' "critical reflection" by getting them to consider what affective provocations have led to their discomfort (2019, p. 47), foregrounding for me yet again the importance of examining the impact of affect on learning in the classroom.

By way of contrast, it would appear that Kumashiro (2002) does advocate directly addressing students' resistance to learning, suggesting we "ask students to discuss, reflect on, and write about what they are unlearning" as well as "what they feel resistance to learning" (2002, p. 78). Kumashiro contends that teachers need to acknowledge that teaching entails unknown variables

that they cannot control (2000, p. 46), as does Loutzenheiser (2006, p. 68). Kumashiro insists teachers "cannot presume to know who their students are, what they need, and whether they have changed in desired ways as a result of their lesson" (2002, p.79). He postulates that he might in future plan a lesson which takes this reality into consideration, anticipating that students might "want to learn some things, resist learning other things, and simply miss opportunities to learn yet other things" (2002, p. 78). He emphasises the need for students to work through the resulting "emotional crisis" (2002, p. 74) that encountering disruptive knowledge might lead to. He cites Felman to argue that dealing with a "crisis" that has left students deeply distressed is an inherent part of learning to oppose oppression. Even so, Kumashiro (2002, p. 74) concedes that students might double-down and resist even harder as a result of attempting to do so. Kumashiro's consciously blended suggestion is therefore not guaranteed to secure a definitively changed response to disruptive thinking in students, given that result cannot be scripted by teachers in advance. It would appear that there is scope for researchers to further explicate what both Kumashiro's and Zinga and Styres' approaches might entail for history teachers in the classroom. A gap, therefore, remains in history education in capacitating history teachers to attempt to address such dogged resistance to disruptive knowledge.

Furthermore, Kumashiro references Britzman to suggest that students want to learn whatever strengthens their perception of who they are as "good people" (2002, p. 73), and resist whatever they experience as suggesting they are colluding with oppressive beliefs and behaviours. This is suggestive of students' refusal to see new forms of knowledge as integral to narrating their grasp of past events because they resist what they think using that knowledge might imply about them. Instead, they choose to steer clear of evidence that confronts them with a disturbing reality. For Kumashiro (2000, p. 43, 2002, p. 73) this manifests, for example, in the deliberate "silencing" of language that provocatively exposes past and present queerphobia. Kumashiro's exposition of this is instructive in understanding the verbal policing enacted by some of my students as analysed in Chapter 6. As he asserts:

> Even after learning that many GLBTIs use the term [queer] politically […] some students ask that the silence generally surrounding that term […] be repeated. Instead, they prefer the less confrontational terms gay and lesbian, which, unlike queer, do not invoke a history of bigotry, hatred, and violence […] Learning about the term queer requires confronting their relationship with heterosexism, which is not something many students feel comfortable doing. (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 73)

Kumashiro's analysis is insightful in viewing what he depicts as the "paradoxical" (2000, p. 44) nature of student responses that may initially appear contradictory. Drawing on Felman,

Kumashiro frames this as a situation that teachers should anticipate: that students will get both "unstuck" – or freed from prior ways of thinking – and "stuck" – or cognitively incapacitated – as they encounter disconcerting knowledge that challenges not only the way they perceive the world but also their sense of who they are and how "complicit with oppression" (2000, p. 44) they are.

Students' longing for affirmation rather than the discomfort entailed in confronting disconcerting narratives appears to be echoed by Middendorf et al. when they suggest that students may inadvertently "seek 'comfort history' that is less disturbing emotionally *yet also* less nuanced and intellectually revealing" (2015, p. 172). The authors identify "emotional bottlenecks in the history classroom" which arise when students' ways of making sense of themselves and the world are challenged, generating discomfort and impeding their learning. As they elaborate:

> Students have powerful emotional attachments to their worldviews, as the basis for their beliefs about their self-identity […] When history students feel that they […] are implicated in events of the past, that their beliefs are being impugned, or that their basic assumptions are being challenged, it is often because their preconceptions are causing them to feel uncomfortable with the historical content. (Middendorf *et al.*, 2015, p. 171)

By focusing directly on the impact of history students' "powerful emotional attachments" to their ways of seeing the world, Middendorf et al. provide a useful theoretical framework for this current study. Their exposition appears to resonate with the call by some history education scholars for research that focuses on student emotions at play in the classroom. The authors' framing of the discomfiting impact of traces of the past which students experience as incriminating them or calling into question what they believe will prove key to analysing student resistance to integrating knowledge they feel subverts them.

Building directly on Kumashiro's work, Aronson suggests those teaching for social justice need to be adaptable in their planning, anticipating that each new cohort's ways of seeing the curriculum will be mediated by their own "experiences and positionalities" (Reyes *et al.*, 2021, pp. 7–8). In a review of a collaborative self-study with pre-service teachers, Aronson insists that what we teach needs to be ever-responsive to our particular cohort in our local teaching context, as there is no ideal curriculum with precise material that will necessarily change our students. Aronson points out that each new cohort will present with "different experiences and positionalities" and will also be distinctly situated in their particular social context. She recommends that as teachers we must note that our syllabus must "be living and ebb and flow with the context in which we teach" (Reyes *et al.*, 2021, pp. 7–8). Here again there is scope for

further investigation, as Aronson does not provide clear pedagogical activities to be deployed in ensuring such adaptability on the part of teachers. It is apposite to assert that scope exists for further empirical research into resistance to learning which may throw into relief constructive approaches to be adopted in the history classroom.

Conclusion

In this literature review I engage with research into the disciplinary approach to studying history, indicating the limitations of engaging in bounded ways with "difficult knowledge" and "difficult history". In doing so I consider the gaps in research identified by history education scholars from within and beyond that approach. In that light, I note the potential for reconceiving literacy frames as pedagogical strategies to inform teachers encountering resistance during classroom enquiry. I problematise the integration rather than just the tagging-on of women's history in the classroom. Feminist intersectionality is suggested as a valuable lens through which to present women's history, with the further advisory that political history be reimagined to include women's individual and collaborative actions in the public sphere. Studies document students' resistance to seeing women's history as "real" history, although they do not provide a theoretical basis for me to anticipate the types of resistance to integrating documentary evidence in a consistent way that became evident in my DBE. This led me to examine scholarship on the ways in which students ignore what they learn in class when that subverts their sense of self or their own preconceptions in fundamental ways. This deeper understanding of the study of history as not only cognitive but affective informs my analysis as I discuss the data in Chapters 5 and 6, further enriching my conclusions, reflections, and contribution to knowledge in Chapter 7. Next, I turn in Chapter 3 to my Methodology, grounding my various approaches theoretically and accounting for the diverse but congruent analytical approaches adopted in my project.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

> Your methodology is a proposed set of techniques combined with the underlying assumptions about the world (the ontology) and the assumptions about how to establish true statements about the world (the epistemology). (Olsen, 2007, p. 2)

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approaches adopted in my qualitative action research (AR) study. While rigorously analytical and reflective, my methodology is underpinned by my overt positionality as a white feminist researcher exploring the use of a document-based enquiry (DBE) to integrate the teaching of women's history. This is made explicit by using Tetreault's feminist phase model (1982, 1985, 1986a) as my methodology. As such, I acknowledge that what I constructed based on reasoned analysis of the data produced and collected in my own classroom is not *the Truth* but rather an epistemically relative understanding of the teaching and learning of high school history in my local context. Other researchers may find differently, as they would in turn perceive the data filtered through their own backgrounds, theoretical frameworks, and methodologies (Houston, 2014, p. 220). Given that the knowledge I generate in my AR study is "fallible, incomplete and influenced by historical factors", analytical self-examination is required throughout (Winter and Munn-Giddings, 2001, p. 264), as indeed it is in the Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) I use as an analytical approach as well.

In exploring the underpinnings of feminist research, I find that theorists have encountered difficulties in identifying the theoretical basis of feminist scholarly work (van Ingen, Grohmann and Gunnarsson, 2020, p. 9). In response, Fletcher in *Critical Realism, Gender and Feminism* asserts the value of critical realism in postulating that "social beliefs and values […] can be causal (i.e., they can have an effect in the world)" (Fletcher, 2020, p. 209). In the same volume, Martinez Dy et al. suggest that critical realism allows for an intersectional rather than an "additive approach" (2020, p. 158) to evidence, which is appropriate as I was indeed exploring ways to integrate rather than just "add on" women's history in my teaching practice.

When using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) as my methodology, I further meet Braun and Clarke's requirement that "the different philosophical and theoretical assumptions underpinning your use of TA are harmonious and coherent" (2022, chap. 6). The authors see this theoretical foundation as generating context-bound "truths":

> Critical realism can be understood as combining ontological realism (the truth is out there) with epistemological relativism (it's impossible to access truth directly) to provide a position that […] recognises that human practices always shape how we experience and know this – human practices can be said to give rise to perspectival and contextual truths. (Braun and Clarke, 2022, chap. 6)

The rationalist approach in critical realism with its application of "judgemental rationality" (Go, 2019, pt. 01) in evaluating diverse explanations to determine which is most effective may appear to be in tension with examining the impact of affect in the history classroom as I do in this study. It can though be claimed that for critical realists, "emotions motivate approaching or avoiding behavior" and are "as real as consciousness or as any other social phenomena that is concept-dependent" (Lamb-Books, 2017). Furthermore, this theoretical grounding allows for "methodological plurality" (Tikly, 2015, p. 246) as is evident, for example, in the work of Luongo (2019) which foregrounds the centrality of emotions in human rights research explored from a critical realist perspective.

In what follows, I therefore outline my chosen methodology – AR (3.1) – which is shown to dovetail with feminist research (3.2), both rooted in a critical approach which seeks not only to understand how things are, but to change them so as to enhance "well-being" (Houston, 2014, p. 222). Both approaches require an overt expression of the researcher's positionality, so issues of qualitative validity (3.3) are addressed given that assumption. My methodology secures qualitative validity without any pretentions at generalisability given the analysis is grounded in my way of seeing locally contextualised data constructed as my students responded to documents during the pedagogical activities I curated. To generate that data, I initiated a carefully conceived document-based enquiry (DBE: 3.4) to analyse how intervening in my students' classroom "reality" through an extended DBE might potentially "transform" (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014, p. 62) their grasp of the erasure of women's history and the marginalisation of women in the dominant textbook narrative about the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama. To facilitate this, I integrated the use of disciplinary concepts and an intersectional feminist lens (3.5) into the enquiry. Students' oral responses, constructions, and writing during the enquiry into what secured the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama were recorded and collated as data for analysis.

Following data collection (3.6) and transcription, my AR methodology enabled me to analyse students' responses to my classroom intervention using an adapted feminist phase model (3.7; Tetreault, 1982, 1985, 1986a, 1986b; Wills, 2016) as a heuristic to throw into relief their way of seeing women's history in answer to Question 1A. RTA (3.8; Clarke and Braun, 2013; Braun

and Clarke, 2019, 2022; Lainson, Braun and Clarke, 2019) thereafter enabled me to consider how my students came to view the construction of history in textbooks to answer Question 1B. Finally, I discuss how I secured ethical clearance (3.9) for my project. Each methodological aspect will be examined in turn in what follows.

3.1 Action Research (AR)

As a feminist teacher wanting to address the ongoing erasure of women's history in our teaching practice, AR appealed to me as a "social practice" that "contributes to *history* – to changing for the better, the world we live and practise in" (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014, p. 27). Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon quote Borda as calling on researchers to aim at "studying reality in order to transform it" (Fals Borda, 1979; Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014, p. 62). Furthermore, they add "that is only half the story: we also think that critical […] action researchers "transform reality in order to study it'" (2014, p. 62). When action researchers initiate innovations in their own practice, and then examine the consequences of those initiatives critically and self-reflexively, they are reconfiguring their own context while studying it.

My AR project was based on a considered intervention with my Grade 11 students that centred Black women in events in order to explore that as a way to integrate the teaching of women's history. In embarking on this venture without quite knowing how to do it, or what to expect, I was encouraged by Kemmis et al. quoting Freire, who asserted that with regards to AR "we should be 'learning to do it by doing it'" (2014, p. 2). I was further encouraged by Kemmis (2009, p. 464) succinctly framing AR as "a self-reflective process by which they remake their practice for themselves" (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014, p. 26).

The inherent process by which knowledge is generated in AR is distinguishable from that conventionally expected in academia, as its aim is to explore ways to secure liberatory change. Hence, knowledge is constructed through what practitioners come to understand by reflecting critically on their actions, interactions, and the outcomes of those in an iterative process (Reason and Bradbury, 2008, pp. 5–6). The validation of teachers' tacit knowledge is reinforced by Weiner in quoting Anderson and Herr who speak to knowledge as "produced out of their own lived realities as professionals" (Anderson and Herr, 1999, p. 20; Weiner, 2004, p. 632). Depicting such research as "insider accounts", Herr and Anderson speak to their academic value to "inform the research community about the actions and beliefs of practitioners – a knowledge base that is otherwise unavailable." (2015, p. 50). Furthermore,

they explain that AR is underpinned theoretically by Dewey's focus on "human experience and active learning in the generation of knowledge" (Herr and Anderson, 2015, p. 32). While positivist approaches in education research saw a shift away from this approach, it has since been reasserted, especially following Carr and Kemmis's *Becoming Critical* (1986) was published. Herr and Anderson concede that this has troubled some in academia, given that what AR generates is "knowledge that in many cases is practice driven rather than theory driven" (2015, p.65). The authors do though caution against assuming that practitioners "have privileged access to truth", given that "their accounts of reality are themselves constructions of reality and not reality itself" (Herr and Anderson, 2015, p. 66). Indeed, Kemmis draws on Gadamer (2004) to indicate how a historian requires awareness of "how history is effective in her or his own historicality, actively influencing her or his interpretations (via "prejudices" or taken-for-granted assumptions)" (Kemmis, 2008, p. 125).

For Kemmis et al., in AR, "practices" are described in simple terms as "the way we do things around here" (2014, p. 78) even while those approaches are held in place by institutional determinants beyond our immediate control. For me, those determinants would include the imposed curriculum and approved textbook, and, more broadly, the dominant androcentric way school history has been conceived and taught for generations. Kemmis et al. depict practices as "malleable rather than […] fixed and final" (2014, p. 78) and take a clearly normative stance in calling on practitioners to "see ourselves as the *stewards* of these practices for our time, at our historical moment" and who "share a moral, social, political and professional duty for the conduct of the practice of the profession in our time" (2014, p. 79). I found this apposite given my disquiet with how my profession perpetuates the marginalisation and exclusion of women's history in our classrooms.

I understand AR as providing an approach for teacher-researchers to explore ways of reimagining what they do "in order that their practices and the consequences of their practices will be more rational and reasonable, more productive and sustainable, and more just and inclusive" (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014, p. 66). Considering this, I view the erasure of women from history teaching as *ir*rational and *un*reasonable, and aimed to use AR to explore ways of making my teaching practice more "just and inclusive" by collecting evidence of my students' responses during the DBE for later analysis. I understand these to be normative goals, informed by my feminist perspective that leaves me deeply concerned about the exclusion of women's history, and the marginalisation of women in how history is taught. Herr and

Anderson assert that both AR and feminist research tend to adopt a "more normative" approach to knowledge construction (2015, p. 42). Kemmis et al. explain the required approach by analogy with the approach adopted by a historian given that "Like the historian, we want, first to understand how things work here, how things have come to be, what kinds of consequences our practices […] have produced and do produce" (2014, pp. 67–68). My teaching experience led me to develop a tacit way to "understand how things work here", and the literature on textbooks (Commeyras and Alvermann, 1996; Berkin, Crocco and Winslow, 2009; Woyshner, 2012; Woyshner and Schocker, 2015; Wills, 2016) clearly revealed the enduring exclusion and misrepresentation of women's history. Kemmis et al. informed my choice of methodology, as they suggest that AR can help practitioners to "become alert to clues about how it may be possible to *transform* the practices they are producing and reproducing through their current ways of working" (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014, p. 21). My intention was indeed for my pedagogic intervention in my Grade 11 classroom to be "accompanied by changes in how the doing is thought about, and talked about, and justified" (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014, p. 63). Kemmis et al. call on action researchers to identify a "felt concern" (2014, p. 6) in their practice that is in some way "unjust"; to then "act to transform our practices, our understandings of our practices, and the conditions under which we practise" and to "document and monitor what happens to see if we are now preventing, avoiding or ameliorating the untoward consequences of our previous ways of working" (2014, p. 68). This detailed exposition of AR as a values-driven methodology clearly fitted my intention of challenging the teaching of androcentric history which marginalises women while largely excluding women's history. This also aligns with the objectives of feminist AR as well, as will be evident next.

3.2 Feminist action research and action research (AR)

Feminist action researchers have addressed ways in which feminism influences AR (Maguire, 2001, 2004, 2008; Brydon-Miller, Maguire and McIntyre, 2004; Frisby, Maguire and Reid, 2009). Frisby et al. claim that AR targets "sometimes invisible power arrangements" (2009, p. 14), thus speaking to my aim of problematising the textbook narrative which normalises and obscures its erasure of women's history as standard practice. Their approach as feminists clearly dovetails with AR. This helped me anticipate the way my students might regard it as "normal and natural" that their curriculum and textbook exclude or marginalise women's history (Frisby, Maguire and Reid, 2009, p. 14).

Maguire asserts that AR has largely ignored the challenges posed by feminist scholars since the 1970s, and is at risk of being dominated by a "male monopoly" (2021). In response, she calls on action researchers and feminist researchers to work together in tackling structural modes of exploitation (2021). Her call for an alliance is echoed in the book title, *Traveling companions: feminism, teaching, and action research* (Brydon-Miller, Maguire and McIntyre, 2004). Furthermore, the evident need for ongoing reflection integral to AR is also key to feminist research (Maguire, 2004, p. 124). While Frisby et al. acknowledge the challenges faced in conducting AR informed by feminist theory, they assert its potential value in exposing unexamined "hierarchies and exclusions, while revealing new social change strategies that can directly contribute to the transformative aims of action research" (Frisby, Maguire and Reid, 2009, p. 25). Frisby et al.'s framing of developing the capacity to perceive what might not otherwise be visible was instructive as I explored ways for my students to integrate into their study of history what androcentric history has long obscured, erased, or marginalised. As Frisby et al. assert, "Theories prompt people to ask new questions and to see power dynamics and relationships we might otherwise miss or misread […] As a result, we use theories to help us see and critique the otherwise invisible and taken-for-granted" (2009, p. 16).

What is also instructive here is Maguire's rejection of those who portray AR in a mechanistic way, requiring a progression of pre-determined steps to be followed in sequence, but without reference to its "radical roots" (2021) which require AR to be intentionally transformational, not only of our practices and of our understandings of those practices, but of ourselves and the conditions in which we practice as well. As Reason and Bradbury assert, a merely procedural application of steps would leave AR devoid of its liberatory focus and at risk of "being co-opted by the status quo" that it is instead intended to challenge (2008, p. 5). Kemmis et al. also resist a mechanistic deployment of the AR spiral – act and observe; reflect; re-plan– in favour of a more "fluid, open and responsive" process (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014, p. 18). They suggest these steps be deployed instead "as a heuristic, or rough guide" (2014, p. 89). Using easily-understood phrasing, they urge researchers to identify how things work in their local context. I accordingly structured my DBE to enable students to uncover that "around here" (2014, p. 20) their textbooks are written viewing the past through an androcentric lens that excludes or marginalises women's history in order to open up the opportunity for them to reconceive how school history should be taught.

While Kemmis et al. do briefly note the feminist critique of AR (2014, p. 17), they do not elaborate on or respond to that. In favour of teacher-initiated AR, Kemmis et al. suggest that teachers "are the greatest resource of all for changing educational practice, and that, therefore, teachers' research is the most potent force for changing educational practice" (2014, p. 25). Weiner takes issue with the evident lack of awareness amongst mostly white, male action researchers with the feminisation of education. She claims that Carr and Kemmis (1986) portray teachers as "abstract entities" without any acknowledgement that most teachers are female (2004, p. 632). Weiner suggests that feminist research informs AR and is "generative" in providing women with "a sense of agency" (2004, p. 640), which I found informative as I wanted my students to respond to an enquiry which precisely threw Black women's activism into relief to examine that as a potential way for integrating the teaching of women's history. With a related focus on "experience" which is grounded in practice, Weiner notes that feminist researchers suggested from the 1980s onwards that their work must be "reflexive and self-reflexive" (2004, p. 638); as noted above this similarly is central to the AR spiral, which relies on ongoing self-reflection by the practitioner.

Reinforcing the need for reflexivity, Kemmis urges action researchers to realise that what they discern from their study directly involves them, cautioning researchers "that we must think of interpretation as a process of interpreting ourselves as well as the object we are trying to interpret" (2008, p. 125). Watson-Canning (2019, pp. 54–57) illuminatingly deploys Lawrence-Lightfoot's notion of "portraiture" to envisage her interview-based "portraits", consciously foregrounding her own role as an "interactive participant" in creating meaningful narratives:

> Here, the researcher must acknowledge her active construction of knowledge between the data collected and her experience of collecting that data, as she is an interactive participant in the moments of collection. Not only that, the researcher continues to participate in the creation of meaning as she seeks to define themes. (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005; Watson-Canning, 2019, p. 55)

Explicit reflexive awareness of my feminist positionality in my historical context was key to my project as I constructed the DBE, documented students' responses, and even more particularly as I interpreted them, in order to secure validity in my AR project.

3.3 Validity in action research (AR)

Kemmis et al. reject positivist calls for teachers to remain "disinterested" in their research, instead asserting that teachers conducting AR are "profoundly interested in their practices" (2014, p. 6). This positionality is also made explicit by Herr and Anderson:

> [We] work under the assumption that we are "in" the research, that we are both researchers and actors. There is no pretense of the neutral or objective observer, but rather […] we lay claim to the reality that we are "setting in action" research to address a local context and concern and that we are actively involved in the problem-solving process. (2015, p. 83)

Given this overt stance, Kemmis et al. explicitly call on action researchers to remain self-critical when investigating a "felt concern" in their AR (2014, p. 6). Similarly, Herr and Anderson indicate that regarding validity, "Critical and feminist approaches to research tend to take a more normative position" (2015, p. 42). Furthermore, Herr and Anderson distinguish the approach to validity by feminist and action researchers from that of other qualitative researchers given the latter scholars' "fly-on-the-wall approach" (2015, p. 64). The affirmation of practitioners' own analytical grasp of their practice (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014, p. 11) is evident in feminist AR (Maguire, 2001, 2004, 2021; Brydon-Miller, Maguire and McIntyre, 2004; Weiner, 2004) and in AR more generally (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Reason and Bradbury, 2008; Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014; Herr and Anderson, 2015). Researchers' immersion in their research does not imply advocating a lack of rigour in managing what Kemmis et al. prefer to term "evidence" – "the historian's word" – rather than "data" – "the scientists' word". Indeed, they emphasise researchers must ensure validity by being meticulous in how they gather, interpret, and interrogate evidence (2014, pp. 69–70).

Validity is further secured through rigorous, reflective analysis of the data. Herr and Anderson distinguish between "internal validity" which speaks to the "trustworthiness of inferences drawn from data", and "external validity" which indicates "how well these inferences […] are transferable to other contexts", such as explaining a problem in another teacher's practice (2015, p. 63). Maxwell though cautions that with regard to "external generalizability" in qualitative research the same approach in different contexts may generate different outcomes (1992, p. 293). It would clearly be crucial for the "inferences" I draw to be trustworthy in order to secure "internal validity" (Herr and Anderson, 2015, p. 63), and while they may have value to other history teachers, my research speaks to data drawn from my practice alone.

Regarding "process validity", Herr and Anderson describe it as a pre-requisite for "outcome validity" in that the way the research is conducted informs its findings (1999, p. 16; 2015, pp. 68–69). They assert the need for "a series of reflective cycles that include the ongoing problematization of the practices under study" which furthermore requires a recursive re-examination throughout (1999, p. 16). This reflection on "process validity" appears to me to in part echo what Maxwell (1992, pp. 285–288) calls "descriptive validity". He advises the use

of audio recordings, for example, to counter threats of invalidity regarding research accounts. Furthermore, he does not fully separate observation from theory, but does indicate that differences regarding "descriptive validity" should be resolvable through the relevant evidence, whereas differences about theory address the different category of "theoretical validity" (Maxwell, 1992, p. 287). Maxwell further advises researchers to use terminology that largely originates in the participants' own word use. This would entail ensuring "the unconscious intentions, beliefs, concepts, and values of these participants" and not just to their "conscious concepts'" are accurately portrayed (Maxwell, 1992, pp. 289–290). It was crucial in my interpretation of my students' responses that I reflected their reactions, interactions, and language accurately and based my understanding very closely on those to secure this type of validity. All these advisories regarding validity were pertinent as I gathered, transcribed, and analysed my students' data.

3.4 Document-Based Enquiry (DBE)

My literature review in Chapter 2.2 on the teaching of women's history suggested that there is scope to conduct further research into what can be learnt from student responses in the classroom to the centring of women in an examination of past events. I decided to initiate an extended, in-depth DBE to attempt to avoid the pitfalls previous researchers have noted when examining attempts by teachers introducing discrete supplementary units on women's history (ten Dam and Rijkschroeff, 1996; Levstik and Groth, 2002; Levstik, 2009; Watson-Canning, 2019, 2020). What encouraged me to initiate a DBE was Levstik's assertion that for students to demonstrate historical thinking in learning about women's history, they require "in depth, purposeful inquiry into worthwhile questions about women's historical experiences" (2009, p. 291). In initiating a lengthy, focused enquiry centring Black women in an aspect of the Grade 12 national curriculum, I endeavoured to circumvent the likelihood of my students viewing those women's actions as just "added on" in inconsequential ways rather than integrated into their formal study of history. Tracking their responses during the DBE elucidated a possible way to grapple with the complexity of centring women in the history classroom.

Drawing on best practice and research regarding historical enquiries, the journal *Teaching History* compiled a short guide for teachers entitled "What's the wisdom on enquiry questions?" (2020). A historical enquiry entails a teacher meticulously compiling a coherent succession of content-rich lessons deliberately sequenced around a tantalising question that

students would view as an intriguing "puzzle" (2020, p. 17) worth solving. The "culminating question" (Counsell, 2021, p. 159) must be informed by a teacher's familiarity with scholarship on the topic. The set of lessons must entail scaffolding students' understanding of the knowledge presented in an organised way so that ultimately they are enabled to construct an informed, evidence-based response ('What's the wisdom on enquiry questions?', 2020, p. 16). Furthermore, the enquiry must facilitate students' completion of what Seixas and Morton assert must be "a tangible, lively, substantial, enjoyable 'performance task'" at the end (2013, p. 25). What follows in a DBE is that the documentary evidence teachers select must complicate past events, compelling students to develop an understanding of their complexity as they wrestle with the information in answering the question. Indeed, teachers are advised to reflect on whether their chosen question has given the enquiry the "coherence and focus that are its *raison d'etre*" by problematising past events and "challenging over-simplistic assumptions" ('What's the wisdom on enquiry questions?', 2020, p. 19).

A historical enquiry must also foreground relevant disciplinary thinking concepts that students are required to demonstrate in their interaction with the documentary evidence presented. Their deployment is intended to facilitate students' growing understanding of how those particular historical concepts function in studying the specific period in the past in which the enquiry question is grounded (Seixas and Morton, 2013, pp. 40; 42; Seixas, 2015, pp. 597; 599). Considered planning in the ordering of the lessons is mandatory to facilitate students "using sources to develop and defend claims about the past: drawing inferences, developing and testing hypotheses, comparing and cross-checking" ('What's the wisdom on enquiry questions?', 2020, p. 19). This implies that preparing such a rigorous lesson sequence requires time and deep engagement with the literature to determine effective resources and pertinent disciplinary procedures. Answering the key question must require both drawing on the material students have been exposed to and the deployment of the selected historical thinking concepts to the issues at hand.

Furthermore, Martell and Stevens argue that through the enquiry students must be enabled to become "interpreters of the past" (2021, chap. 3). Insightfully for my project exploring a DBE as a way to integrate misrepresented, sidelined, or erased women's history in the classroom, Martell and Stevens quote Salinas and Blevins in advocating enquiry as a way of "troubling, complicating, countering or resisting narratives that marginalize or omit others from the telling of history" (2021, chap. 1). Such enquiries are therefore not only disciplinary, but critical, as they enable a "contested space" to emerge when students "uncover and confront

inconsistencies in the historical record and reveal voices that were often intentionally silenced or erased" (2021, chap. 1). In constructing the DBE, I deliberately chose to expose students to events which, when explored beyond the textbook, would uncover Black women's centrality in what to me seemed evocative, engaging, and compelling ways. In light of my teaching experience, I reasoned that such exposure might potentially shift the way my students perceived history, and women's role in it, even beyond the limits of the enquiry. The accessible material and appealing activities I intentionally compiled to secure students' ready interest in uncovering and reflecting on pertinent issues are part of my design of the DBE as examined in Chapter 4. My intended mediation of the documentary evidence using selected disciplinary and critical approaches is what I discuss next.

3.5 Approach to documents: Disciplinary Thinking Concepts and Intersectionality

To facilitate my students engaging with documents in a structured way, and their conceptually-informed reflection on how history is constructed for textbooks, I turned to the work of history educators. "There is no stepping outside of history in order to do history", as Seixas (2017, p. 598) reminds us, and focusing on procedural concepts was intended to make the implications of that apparent. Doing history in the classroom requires a practice grounded in "disciplinary concepts" (Mathis and Parkes, 2020, p. 190) that are integral to the study of documents which, by implication, would problematise claims about the past made in the textbooks. As Mathis and Parkes note, Counsell advises the necessity of both substantive content and historical thinking concepts for students to be able to question narratives about the past (Mathis and Parkes, 2020, p. 190). Counsell argues that in the absence of detailed knowledge, students deploying "disciplinary concepts" in isolation cannot enter into discussions integral to a study of the past (2021, p. 170). My intention was indeed to provide the scaffolded opportunity for students "to reconfigure, rearrange [and] challenge" (Counsell, 2021, p. 170) the seemingly immutable textbook accounts, so both documents centring Black women in accounts, and disciplinary thinking, were required.

Lévesque provides insightful commentary on attempts to uncover hidden aspects of the past:

> Indeed, historians make decisions of significance with an eye in the present […] 'Historians,' as Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob observe, 'are frequently exposed to the charge that they write the present back into history [...]. The reverse holds true for African American history […] When scholars began researching the details of slave life […] and free black communities in the urban south, they were recovering stories that had always been there.'

> When, therefore, historians respond positively to the notion of relevance, they do not necessarily (or unconsciously) falsify the past […] On the contrary, they may bring to the surface of historical knowledge aspects of the past previously deemed irrelevant and thus insignificant to study. (Lévesque, 2008, pp. 50–51)

Indeed, in a later edition of Appleby et al.'s *Telling the truth about history* (1994) that Lévesque quotes from, the authors quite emphatically state that white people had long hidden clear traces of Black people's lives and deliberately excluded them from the dominant US account (Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, 1994, chap. 8). My intention was to expose my students to evidence of Black women's actions in securing the ending of bus segregation to see how that informed their view of the textbook's account, their writing of their own narrative, and how they thought history should be taught. An objective in my various lesson activities was precisely to enable students to uncover parts of the past that were not previously viewed as significant but which "had always been there" (Lévesque, 2008, pp. 50–51).

In structuring my DBE, I heeded the challenge posed by Maguire to action researchers as it was apposite to my objective of exploring ways to integrate women's history in the classroom. She asked: "how are you intentionally considering and addressing the intersections of gender, race, class, and other identities and power relations in your project?" (2021). My construction of the enquiry was intended to allow my students to get a glimpse of how in this narrow slice of their curriculum, Black women were integral to that particular moment in the past despite their erasure from the textbooks. As Crenshaw explains in a recent interview with Saar:

> An intersectional approach to women's history understands that women's history is world history. It's Black history; it's colonial history; it's queer history; and it's the history of the working class. The history of women is informed by all the ways the social and political world has been shaped. That's because women are constitutive of every moment in human history. (Saar, 2021)

Without imposing this view on my students, the documents themselves viewed through an intersectional lens were intended to enable students to see Black women's centrality. Crenshaw explains that intersectionality is to be used as a "prism" to view what has not been regarded as significant so that we can "attend to people who fall between the cracks":

> What I want people to understand about intersectionality is that it is a way of seeing; it's a prism that can inform advocacy, policy, and everyday practice in a way that encourages more equitable futures. It's not some formulaic, additive, academic doctrine – it is a concept that is capacious enough to take in and understand the many overlapping social dynamics that inform how inequalities are produced and sometimes overlooked by prevailing ways of thinking about discrimination […]
>
> That's the power of an intersectional framework – it allows us to see how the limited and siloed approaches we've taken to discrimination create crevices that swallow up countless issues. To build more capacious approaches to social justice, we have to attend to people who fall between the cracks. (Saar, 2021)

Using Crenshaw's intersectional lens, I reasoned that documents such as those attesting to the rejection of Claudette Colvin[12] as a suitable figurehead for a bus boycott would throw into relief the complex interconnected ways Colvin was treated at the time. In curating the documents, I intended my students to "see" Black women's actions in response to their historical context as what Counsell explains as "revealing" of the time (2004). I wanted them to "see" not only what the dominant narrative of the events has erased, obscured, or marginalised, but also to understand how that narrative came to be constructed.

Inspired by Hall's advocacy of exploring what the archives have silenced or excluded (2017, pp. 262–263), I hoped that my far more modest attempt in initiating a considered DBE might encourage my students to reflect on the importance of such hidden evidence of Black women's actions. I utilised the disciplinary concepts of causality and significance to facilitate my students' engagement with the documents in this enquiry. Quoting Halldén in an examination of cause and consequence, Seixas warns against students' notion that "'powerful individuals […] direct the course of history in accordance with their own will and independently of others'" (2015, p. 267). This is apposite in guarding against my students simply displacing "great men" with "great women": instead, I intended the focus on causality to facilitate their grasping the interdependence between various role-players' actions in their historical context. Critiquing the "dichotomy between agency and structure" (2015, p. 267), Seixas postulates instead the "dialectical interaction" (2015, p. 267) between "social structures" and "human agency" (2015, p. 266), further claiming that "Collective human agency is itself what produces and reproduces social structures that then act as constraints to human agency in the future" (2015, p. 266). I was interested in how students would respond to an enquiry throwing into relief how the very way Black men in Montgomery treated those Black women who took action to end bus segregation in itself constrained their further agency, furthermore influencing how the textbooks came to erase or marginalised their activism.

To complicate the linear textbook narrative of King directing a boycott following Parks's action which then directly secured a Supreme Court ruling outlawing bus segregation[13], I framed questions based on three approaches to causality (Seixas and Morton, 2013, chap. 4) as included in Figure 3.1.

[12] Claudette Colvin's story appears in the "Brief overview of the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama, with a selective timeline of events" included as Appendix A.
[13] As suggested by the various textbook extracts and graphic non-fiction account included as Appendix B.

Figure 3.1 Causality questions (adapted from Seixas and Morton, 2013, chap. 4)

Change results from 'a complex web' :
Which factors form part of that 'complex web'?
How do we visualise the interplay of multiple factors?
Causes 'vary in their influence':
What is the relative causality of particular factors?
Which factors have greater influence, and why?
'Events result from the interplay' of people and events within their specific historical contexts:
How do people and events connect?
How do people and the historical context of the time interact?

Informed by historians intent on uncovering obscured aspects of the past, I drew mostly on Counsell's unpacking of significance (2004) to encourage my students to reconsider the value of long-erased traces of the past (Lévesque, 2008, p. 50–51). I intended for them to see beyond the role-players and events portrayed as significant in the textbooks. For Counsell, this concept is ontologically distinct in that its quality is "Always ascribed by others" so it changes based on which questions one poses, when one ascribes significance, and where one is located politically (Counsell, 2011, p. 208).

Firstly, significance was defined as "revealing" (Counsell, 2004, pp. 32–33) with further clarification by Worth (2017) in a blogpost as "revealing something about other aspects of the past" and as "creating new links that I had not seen before". Secondly, to scaffold my students' determining the significance of Black women's actions, I thought that inculcating this grasp in engaging with the documents would enable students to see Black women's centrality to both the MBB and the *Browder v. Gayle*[14] case, "resulting in change" (Counsell, 2004, p. 32; Seixas and Morton, 2013, p. 10). Worth suggests that women's historical actions can be viewed as significant even if they do not result in change by using the added criterion of "continuity" in her investigations. I saw this as perhaps part of Counsell's criterion of "resonance" (2004, p. 31), as the marginalisation of Black women in the narrative at the time has persisted in the way the textbooks still narrate the events.

Thirdly, Counsell proffers "remarkable" (Counsell, 2004, p. 33) as "occupying a meaningful place in the narrative" (Seixas and Morton, 2013, p. 24). While Parks was exceptionalised at

[14] *Browder v. Gayle* is discussed in Chapter 5.3 and 5.4 below and further explained in Appendix A.

the time and turned into a silenced icon as the ever-symbolic "mother" of the civil rights movement, what was truly "remarkable" about her defiant activism was obscured. Worth prefers "remarked on" for the women mineworkers she centres in her investigation, but with the insightful caveat that "not one of them appeared to be unique in the way that Rosa Parks (or even Claudette Colvin) were" (2017). Furthermore, Worth distinguishes between how men commented on women mineworkers as they found them offensive, and how women may be "remarked on" for being "extraordinary" (Worth, 2017). This notion of men's pretensions to "decency" supposedly being troubled by women mineworkers brought to mind the "politics of respectability" (McGuire, 2010, p. 92) that informed the choices made by the Black men who determined that Parks was appropriately "respectable" as the symbolic figure for the boycott, while Colvin and Smith, both bus protestors ahead of Parks, were not.

Fourthly, Counsell's criterion of having "resonance" (Counsell, 2004, p. 31) today I thought would challenge my students to look beyond their disconnect from the very different historical context of 1940s-1950s to uncover aspects that were not credited as noteworthy at the time. As Seixas explains, what is credited as significant changes over time and across cultures (Seixas, 2015, pp. 257–258). This criterion is articulated by Worth as demonstrating a "connection between past and present" (2017). Black women's activism was not deemed worthy of inclusion in the narrative that was constructed as early as the production of the graphic nonfiction book (Hassler, Resnik and Barry, 1957), but that does not mean it cannot now be viewed as significant. This is crucial as I wanted my students to reflect critically on the dominant narrative given the various counter-narratives they encountered, and to construct their own account informed by what I hoped would be their newfound understanding of women's significance. In "Looking for History", Seixas writes most insightfully about developing students' ability to identify significance:

> In a more challenging move, they should also be able to explain how a person […] who did not have this kind of impact can be significant for what she reveals to us about issues and concerns that are compelling to us today. Inversely, they should be able to recognize how the authors of historical accounts […] construct the historical significance of particular people and events through those accounts. Most challenging, they should be able to explain how significance can change over time and vary depending on the perspective of different groups. (Seixas, 2015, pp. 258)

Seixas's guidance is particularly apposite here as I intended my focus on significance to challenge my students to perceive Black women's actions in the documents as noteworthy to them in their present context. The issues that I anticipated – but did not suggest – would be "compelling" include the gender-based violence which appears endemic in democratic South Africa, and the *#SayHerName* campaigns in the USA. As McGuire asserts, "Indeed, the bus

boycott was, in many ways, the precursor to the *#SayHerName* twitter campaigns designed to remind us that the lives of black women matter" (2015). As the African American Policy Forum clarify, they intend to raise to public consciousness the "invisible" lives and narratives of those Black women and girls brutalised by police actions (*#SayHerName*, 2014). Part of Parks's activism in the clearly different 1940s context which has been erased from the dominant narrative was her joining the call for justice following the 1949 police rape of Gertrude Perkins (McGuire, 2015, pp. 63–70) having earlier personally investigated, documented, and helped publicise Recy Taylor's 1944 rape (McGuire, 2015, pp. xv–xviii; 6–47). I reasoned that exposure to documents highlighting that activism would shift both how my students articulated Parks's significance, and how they understood Black women's commitment to the boycotting of buses on which they were regularly sexually harassed and abused.

As a fifth criterion for significance, Counsell (2004) includes "remembered" which I omitted as quite evidently Black women role-players are either not "remembered", or they are trivialised and disembodied, as is the case with Parks. This project indeed sought to explore students' responses to my challenging them to question what constitutes the history textbooks' construction.

3.6 Data Collection

In Chapter 4 I explain my lesson sequence in detail, with all discussions and work generated by the DBE serving as data in my AR study. Plenary and group discussions were audio-recorded, whether in class or online, for later transcription. Adherence to COVID-19 regulations such as maintaining distance and mask-wearing resulted in partially-muffled voices in plenary iPad recordings, while isolation following exposure to the virus challenged group work. An unanticipated benefit was that replaying recordings repeatedly and at times at slower speeds to secure accurate transcription resulted in my deep immersion in the data, facilitating subsequent coding. A physical advantage was access to a balcony for group work, as students could remove their masks resulting in improved cell phone recordings for subsequent transcription. All writing, drawings, constructions, and visualisations were collected and transcribed or photographed as qualitative data. While journalling was individual, most of the writing was collaboratively completed in groups, with plenary feedback thereafter. As my methodology was AR, my own participation in the lessons also served as data. The transcripts of our plenary discussions; students' group discussions; their completed activities; journaling; and final group textbook narratives all provided the material for my eventual analysis.

Figure 3.2 Table showing the types of data collected. Also see Chapter 4: Design of the document-based enquiry, where each activity is explained, and especially Figure 4.3 on p.99 for the detailed coding of each data extract.

10 recorded lessons	Recordings of class discussions over 10 extended lessons
6 recorded group discussions	Recordings of each of Group 1 and Group 2's extensive discussions during the three different group activities
2 poems	Group 1 and Group 2's *Prompted Poem*
Multiple photographs of all the written interactions on the large sheets of paper	Class *Silent Conversations* – Students wrote on large sheets that displayed both textual and visual documentary evidence. They responded to the evidence and to one another in silence.
Photographs of Group 1 and Group 2's drawings, diagrams, and constructions	Group 1 and Group 2's *Diamond Deciders* and *Hexagon Honeycombs*
2 *Textbook Entries*	Group 1 and Group 2's *Textbook Entries*
8 written journals	Individual Journalling in response to prompts and where choosing to reflect throughout the document-based enquiry

3.7 Tetreault's Feminist Phase Model as Methodology

Feminist Phase Models and Tetreault's Feminist Framework

As feminist researchers, Crocco (1977), Bair (2008), and Watson-Canning (2019) each provide an overview of the theoretical feminist phase models that have been developed to evaluate the inclusion of women in history textbooks, based initially on the work of Lerner (1979, 2009), with subsequent reflections by McIntosh (1983), Tetreault (1982, 1985, 1986), and Noddings (2001). Tetreault's expansive unpacking of the nature of curricular change in diverse disciplines' attempts to integrate a focus on women has encouraged researchers to deploy or at least respond to her model (e.g., Scheiner-Fisher, 2013; Woyshner and Schocker, 2015; Wills, 2016; Watson-Canning, 2019), suggesting its enduring value beyond research practice in the mid-1980s. In analysing women's portrayal in South African history textbooks, Wills (2016) deploys Tetreault's framework as it sets out the characteristics of each phase's thinking about women's actions. The resilience of Tetreault's model encouraged me to select it as my framework in examining student responses during the DBE to Question 1A:

> How does centring Black women in accounts of the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama inform students' way of seeing events in Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s?

I adapted some of Tetreault's language considering my understanding of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Saar, 2021) and other more recent feminist engagements with history textbooks and teaching (Woyshner and Schocker, 2015; Watson-Canning, 2019). My adapted summary of Tetreault's feminist framework appears next as Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 Tetreault's Feminist Phase Framework (adapted from Tetreault, 1985, 1986)

TETREAULT'S FEMINIST PHASE MODEL FRAMEWORK, as ADAPTED (Tetreault, 1985b, 1986a)	
1 Male History	• Male history is universal history
2 Compensatory History	• View of history unchanged • Some women who fit male norm of greatness included
3 Bifocal History	• Binary view of public and private / male and female • Focus on women as a homogenous group • Focus on women's oppression
4 Feminist History	• Re-think how history is viewed: embrace new categories; regard new aspects of women's lives as significant knowledge in history • Public and private on a continuum in women's lives • Women studied in their particularity, and in their historical context • Intersectional* lens used to study overlap of gender and race, class, age, etc in women's lives • Interdisciplinary** view of knowledge required to study all aspects of women's lives
5 Holistic, Relational History* **	• Holistic view of human history • Public and private on a continuum in all people's lives • Intersectional* lens used to study overlap of gender and race, class, age, etc in people's lives • Interdisciplinary** view of knowledge required to study all aspects of people's lives
* Tetreault's 1985-6 term was 'pluralistic' ** Tetreault's term was 'multidisciplinary' ***Tetreault's term was 'Multi-focal, Relational History' though she does use 'holistic' in examining that phase	

Scheiner-Fisher summarises Tetreault's five phases as follows:

> Male History (in which the absence of women is not noted), Compensatory History (the absence of women is noted; there is a search for missing women according to the male norm of greatness), Bi-focal History (focus on women's oppression and misogyny; women's efforts to overcome oppression are presented), Feminist History (women's experience is analysed within the social, cultural, historical,

> political, and economic contexts), and Multi-focal / Relational History (seeks to fuse women's and men's experiences into a holistic view of the human experience). (Scheiner-Fisher, 2013, p. 5)

According to Tetreault, by excluding women, Phase 1: Male History implies that men's experience represents human experience, so "The knowledge that is researched and taught, the substance of learning, is knowledge articulated by men and about men" (1985, p. 367). Phase 2: Compensatory History adds in those women which the male-gaze views as worthy of inclusion, with men still viewed as "the paradigmatic human being" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 367). These women are seen to excel publicly, for example, as leaders of countries or "reform movements" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 367), so Phase 2 does not question which forms of knowledge are appropriate to history.

Phase 3: Bifocal History focuses on viewing women as a homogenous group whose lives are marked by "oppression" and thus by attempts to overcome "misogyny", with the attendant danger that women are still largely viewed as "passive, reacting only to the pressures of a sexist society" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 374). Marked by binary views of male/female and public/private (Tetreault, 1985, p. 369), Bifocal History stops short of differentiating amongst women in light of their class, race, age, or other distinguishing categories. This implied homogeneity thus does not account for the complexity of Black women's lives that I thought was evident in the documents I selected for the DBE. I could not know, however, if my students would be able to see beyond the stereotypes they resort to in their everyday discourse. Tetreault raises another concern with Phase 3's perspective:

> One of the problems with this general analysis of women's experience is that it eventually leads to reiterating the sexual stereotypes scholars are trying to overcome. Because the public sphere has been internalized as more valuable than the private sphere, there is a tendency to slip back into thinking of women as […] subordinate […] In the main, it emphasizes men thinking and women being thought about. (Tetreault, 1985, pp. 373–374)

The limitations of Phase 3 are largely addressed in Phase 4: Feminist History, which views women's public and private lives as on a continuum rather than as a fixed binary, and foregrounds what in pre-"intersectional" framing (Crenshaw, 1989) Tetreault terms the "pluralistic conceptualization of women" to include the "historical dynamics" of racism and classism (1985, p. 374). As Tetreault asserts, "Scholars […] came to recognize that other variables besides gender shape women's lives – for example, ethnicity, race, and social class – and sought a more pluralistic description of women" (1985, p. 366). Feminist History also entails a decidedly "particularistic conceptualisation" of women, which sees both "the contextual and the personal" as appropriate forms of knowledge to study. It thus values both what women's life stories reveal about how they were perceived in past societies, and also how

women perceived themselves at the time (Tetreault, 1985, p. 375). Unlike Phases 2 and 3, Phase 4 re-examines the forms of knowledge that are appropriate to the study of history, taking clear cognisance of the "content of women's everyday lives" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 374).

Phase 5: Holistic History examines where women and men's lives "intersect", viewing the public and private as on a continuum for both. Similarly, this "pluralistic" perspective foregrounds "the variables of race, sex and gender, ethnicity, social class" (1985, p. 375), while indicating a clear "recentering of knowledge […] a shift from a male-centred perspective to one placing women at the center of their own knowledge", thus presenting "a more holistic view of human experience" (1985, p. 376). It is evident that Tetreault's Phases 4 and 5 seek to find evidence that women's history has been integrated holistically rather than just "added on" in ways scholars have previously found to be problematic. In its consideration of "new questions, new categories, and new notions of significance" (1985, p. 367), Tetreault's framework seemed a suggestive lens through which to view student responses to a DBE centring Black women in events.

Tetreault herself amplified an aspect of her framework I found intriguingly inviting as I wrestled with her somewhat limited framing of "plurality" in looking at what we might see as the "intersecting" (Crenshaw, 1989; Saar, 2021) dynamics affecting women. As Tetreault indicates, "One of the model's strengths is that it 'lives' and can be altered as new phases take shape or current ones are revised" (1985, p. 380). This further coheres with Maguire's challenge to action researchers to consider how they are deliberately taking account of overlapping "identities and power relations" (Maguire, 2021) in their work.

In light of my theoretical framework regarding the teaching of women's history in Chapter 2.2, I realised that a more inclusive definition of what is meant by political history (Hassim, 2006; Woyshner, 2012) might see women's activism as sufficiently significant and causal in events in the past, so that recentring the narrative around Black women's groupings and individuals might "open up" if not subvert the dominant textbooks in ways that approximate the clearly aspirational fourth and fifth phases of Tetreault (1982, 1985, 1986a) and Woyshner and Schocker's (2015) feminist frameworks. I reasoned that if students were able through a DBE to come to view Black women's actions in mid-century Montgomery as significant and causal in securing the ending of bus segregation, this may result in their viewing women's history as integral to – rather than just "added on" – to their curricula. As Tetreault notes regarding the conceptual shifts entailed in her phase model, recording "changes in conceptualization is

important because of the interconnections among what we view as legitimate knowledge, how this view affects what we perceive as appropriately included in the […] curricula" (1985, p. 366).

Tetreault found in deploying her framework during a faculty seminar that her colleagues' inclusion of women uncovered "a reconceptualization of what is worth learning" in their discipline (Tetreault, 1985, p. 378). They further indicated that their emerging practice did not progress in a linear way from Phase 1 to Phase 5:

> As one of the participants aptly put it, "It's going to take an awful lot of work and thinking on my part to digest this stuff in a way that fits with what is already in my head [...]" Those just beginning to think about incorporating women would frequently have anomalies embedded in their reasoning as they struggled to reconcile the "contradictions" of feminist scholarship with long-held theories. Frequently, others would conceptualize across several phases, moving back and forth among them. (Tetreault, 1985, pp. 381–382)

In light of the above, I decided to deploy my adaptation of Tetreault's framework to explore student responses as data in addressing Question 1A, while seeking to avoid the pitfalls encountered in prior research by ten Dam and Rijkschroeff (1996), Levstik and Groth (2002), Levstik (2009) and Watson-Canning (2019, 2020) as discussed in my literature review in Chapter 2.2. Next, I examine my chosen methodology for addressing Question 1B.

3.8 Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) as Methodology

RTA appealed to me as a methodology "for across dataset analysis" (Braun *et al.*, 2019, p. 850) given the diverse forms of data I had gathered for addressing Question 1B:

> How does centring Black women in accounts of the ending of bus segregation of Montgomery, Al. inform students' way of seeing the construction of history in textbooks?

Braun and Clarke's RTA allowed me to reflect directly on my students' responses in the context in which they were spoken or written – and within my students' broader socio-cultural context – providing me with thematically-grouped texts following recursive coding across all lesson activities. As Braun et al. clarify in more recently terming their distinctive approach to TA as "reflexive":

> We settled on using the adjective reflexive for our approach to TA, because we came to recognise that valuing a subjective, situated, aware and questioning researcher, a reflexive researcher, is a fundamental characteristic of TA for us, and a differentiating factor across versions of TA. (Braun and Clarke, 2022, chap. 1)

This overtly contextualised approach appealed to me as cohering with my focused AR of my own classroom practice from a feminist perspective.

Maguire and Delahunt suggest TA is a "flexible method", not bound "epistemologically" or "theoretically", allowing me to apply various theoretical lenses to my qualitative data as I "interpret" it (2017). In line with those assumptions, I used retroduction where applicable to secure rational "explanations" that "are more effective than others" (Fletcher, 2020, p. 219). As Houston explains regarding this approach:

> In retroduction, the researcher seeks to apprehend how Event B was produced by A. This is an a priori process of thinking backward, one that tries to identify the causal mechanisms giving rise to the event. […] Kant said that such questions should take the following form: What must be the case for events to occur as they do? In other words, an inquirer has observed something of interest and now wants to understand the factors that have brought it about. (Houston, 2014, p. 221)

While TA allows for both "data-driven" and "theory-driven" approaches (Clarke and Braun, 2013, p. 120), the authors insist that in RTA researchers are always actively engaged in "generating" the themes. Their chosen terminology indicates that "themes are not 'in' the data, pre-existing analysis, awaiting retrieval" (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p. 593). Instead, they see "knowledge as the actively created product of the interpretive efforts of a particular researcher […] combined with the dataset" (2019, p. 851). RTA enables me to reflect both on how each issue I identified in the data relates to Question 1B, but also on the interconnections between different issues, so that my analysis is synthesised into focused themes. Crucially, these themes are my own constructions, created by me "at the intersection of data, analytic process and subjectivity" (2019, p. 594). This foregrounding of my positionality dovetails with making overt my intersectional feminist stance as discussed previously. Using RTA allows me to both record my students' articulations with validity while acknowledging that I am not just "describing" or "giving voice" to those, so that I "take responsibility" for how I interpret and "shape" my "meaning-making" of the data (Lainson, Braun and Clarke, 2019, pp. 6; 12)[15], an ethical consideration.

In terms of my methodological process, after transcribing the data, I printed the transcriptions, making annotations at points of interest before copying those as comments to my electronic transcriptions, further noting related aspects occurring elsewhere in the data set before constructing my initial coding. I then went through all the data again to note each occurrence

[15] Page numbers refer to the pre-publication online article available here as access to the published journal article could not be secured.

of similar or contrasting evidence before constructing my initial themes. My facilitation as action researcher in my own classroom thus extended into my active role in creating codes and themes based on the carefully transcribed data. As Braun and Clarke assert, "This is also why we now call our approach reflexive TA – to acknowledge the active role of the researcher in the research process" (Lainson, Braun and Clarke, 2019, p. 5). After initially coding the data and constructing my themes, I found they told a somewhat disjointed "story" about the evidence, leading to my wrestling again with my analysis in an iterative process until my themes and sub-themes enabled me to secure a more pleasing fit that intersected with my assumptions, my analytical grasp, and the evidence itself. Braun and Clarke indeed advocate for an "iterative process", clarifying that "codes […] can evolve throughout the coding process […] to better capture the researcher's developing conceptualization of the data" (Braun *et al.*, 2019, p. 848).

When revisiting the data to determine which issues predominated in the students' thinking, speaking, and writing about how history is constructed for textbooks, I identified diverse "meaning-making" (Braun and Clarke, 2022, chap. 2) trends. As Braun et al. indicate, they "view themes as reflecting a pattern of shared meaning, organized around a core concept or idea, a central organizing concept" (2019, p. 845). I also read more widely and deeply about RTA, grappling with the work of Braun and Clarke, and with that of their collaborators (e.g. Clarke and Braun, 2013; Braun and Clarke, 2019; Lainson, Braun and Clarke, 2019; Trainor and Bundon, 2021), and particularly with their more recent articulations (Braun and Clarke, 2022). Their insightful and illustrative guidance helped me reconfigure my codes into two distinct themes, with sub-themes, that more pleasingly told a coherent "story" of my students' overlapping, contrasting, and divergent concerns. As Braun et al. suggest:

> The aim is to provide a coherent and compelling interpretation of the data, grounded in the data. The researcher is a storyteller, actively engaged in interpreting data through the lens of their own cultural membership and social positionings, their theoretical assumptions and ideological commitments, as well as their scholarly knowledge. (Braun *et al.*, 2019, pp. 848–849)

Following this iterative and recursive process, Chapter 6 captures the "story" I "tell" deploying RTA as my approach to address Question 1B.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

To ensure my qualitative AR study was ethically compliant, I paid careful attention to respecting ethical considerations during the entire project (Herr and Anderson, 2015, p. 127; McNiff, 2016, p. 19). Ahead of embarking on this AR study, I wrote to my students' parents

explaining the rationale behind my study in an accessible way devoid of obscure disciplinary language (Alber, 2011, p. 99). As my Grade 11 students were younger than 18, I requested their parents' permission for their daughter's participation in each case.[16] In my students' interests, I committed to fully anonymising them, and their school, in my writing. To gain formal ethical clearance from my university[17], I secured signed permission from my students and from their parents to use their audio-recorded and transcribed spoken responses, as well as all written and constructed work as data in my research. Students and parents were encouraged to contact me at any stage should they have concerns about any aspect of the process. In the event, parents and students were fully supportive of the study, and students remained keen participants throughout. Furthermore, students were entitled to withdraw permission for their spoken and written contributions to be used in my research, but none did so. Students were comfortable being audio-recorded as that had long been the process throughout our school during online or hybrid lessons since COVID-19 lockdown began, and several were online at times during the enquiry. During group work in the adjacent corridor or on the balcony outside, students readily ensured that their discussions were carefully recorded.

Furthermore, as my duty of care as their teacher remained paramount, students were regularly encouraged to voice how they felt in response to what we were studying throughout the enquiry. As they and their parents were apprised in writing that they would not be formally assessed during or after the DBE based on the documentary material and pedagogical activities, this further enabled them to express themselves without reservation throughout. I gathered comprehensive data across ten fifty to fifty-five minute lessons of students' articulations, constructions, and writing, so I had a surfeit of evidence to draw on in framing my analysis (Alber, 2011, p. 171). To further secure ethical validity while transcribing the audio recordings, I replayed snippets multiple times to ensure I was accurately capturing exactly what they had said and the manner in which they had said it. Repeated exposure to the audio recordings and an iterative reading of the transcriptions further enhanced the rigour of my analysis as not only what they said but how they said it was deeply imprinted on me. I used my students' own chosen terminology and language throughout in my analysis, again ensuring the ethical validity of my work. While working meticulously to ensure honesty and accuracy (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 63) in reporting my findings, I fully acknowledge that that this constitutes my "story about the data, not the participants' story" (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 64). My interpretation

[16] The information sheet and consent form are included as Appendix G.
[17] A letter from the School of Education Ethics Review Committee confirming my ethical clearance is included as Appendix H.

of the data, while painstakingly grounded in my students' responses, was throughout informed by my overt positioning as a feminist teacher researching her own classroom practice.

Conclusion

Underpinned by critical realism, this chapter explained my feminist AR project entailed initiating a DBE to generate data for collection, before employing Tetreault's feminist framework and RTA to analyse my findings. My DBE generated rich data, including spoken and written plenary, group, and individual articulations and constructions, which I collected and carefully transcribed. Student engagement was informed by a focus on the disciplinary concepts of significance and causality, while intersectionality was presented as a lens through which to examine the Black women centred in the DBE. A detailed exposition of the DBE lesson sequence during which students worked firstly with the dominant narrative and then with a rich variety of documents excluded by that account is provided next in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE DESIGN OF THE DOCUMENT-BASED ENQUIRY (DBE)

Introduction

It was evident from the outset that my eight Grade 11 students, who had all chosen to study senior history at an all-girls South African school, were keen to embark on a disciplinary enquiry centring Black women with me. I designed the document-based enquiry (DBE)[18] specifically at the disciplinary and cognitive level of my students, who were 16-17 years old and in their penultimate year at school. I further sought out documents and constructed pedagogic activities that would interest, enthuse, and engage them affectively. Knowing that developing familiarity with the texts and interacting with them in the activities would require an extended period of time, I scheduled the DBE to take place over ten consecutive lessons of fifty to fifty-five minutes each, including one whole school day when they were excused from all six regular lessons.

However, as I initiated my project during the COVID-19 pandemic, I faced diverse logistical difficulties to plenary and group discussions and activities. Yolande, Toni, Freye, and Delilah in Group 1, and Veronica, Max, Jane, and Indigo in Group 2 worked collaboratively while several were at times isolating given the mandatory restrictions. For ease of reference throughout, documents and lesson activities were collated into a ring-bound booklet for each student and were also made available on their Microsoft Team for those inadvertently compelled to attend online[19]. Students were therefore able to go back to any document they studied together in plenaries when completing their group work and individual reflection later. To facilitate ease of access for those in class, students had a loose-leaf timeline including a few key dates. Throughout the enquiry, students were prompted to track what they were learning on that cryptic timeline so as to consolidate the sequence of events and their grasp of the historical context for those events. To further facilitate their disciplinary learning, students had a separate one-page outline unpacking key aspects of causality and significance as discussed in Chapter 3.5 to guide their use of those disciplinary concepts.

Unfortunately, despite the extended lesson time secured, there was insufficient time for the intended regular recording of their reflections either electronically or in the exercise book

[18] I explain the concept of a document-based enquiry as a disciplinary and critical classroom practice above in Chapter 3.4

[19] The scanned-in booklet is available here https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NHaW7mectsdmJ_e2y2c6amkoKvm88IGF/view?usp=sharing

provided in class, although some students chose to journal outside of lesson time, thereby providing valuable data. All students did though complete guided reflections in response to several questions at the end of the lesson sequence. Class discussions were recorded on an iPad, but as students were masked indoors during the plenaries, those recordings were at times challenging to decipher, requiring extensive replays at slower speeds to enable accurate transcription. Group discussions recorded on their cell phones where they were seated closer together in the corridor outside my classroom, or maskless outdoors on the balcony adjacent to my classroom, proved invaluable data for collection. The use of multiple spaces facilitated the recording of separate group work hampered inside the classroom by pandemic-imposed barriers between the desks. Time constraints, COVID-19, and students ill at home affected my planned lessons throughout, resulting in necessary adaptations. My own involvement was also predicated on what students asked, although I mostly encouraged others to respond to questions posed or suggested students attempt to answer their own questions later by reflecting on documentary evidence still to come in a subsequent session. At times, when I provided the requested clarity, I overtly clarified that I was actively involving myself in the enquiry rather than just facilitating it.

What took much considered preparation was compiling diverse pedagogical activities, all constructed to elicit not only deep cognitive engagement from my students, but also affective enjoyment as they engaged. In crafting those activities, I drew on my extensive teaching experience informed by the Digital Inquiry Group (DIG)'s disciplinary approach of "reading like a historian" to "open up the textbook" (*Reading Like a Historian*, no date). As Wineburg suggests (2007), students should be contesting their textbook's artificially harmonious presentation of "facts as timeless truths", achieved by suppressing any counter-narratives. This he says accords with the Greek origins of the term "history" which originally meant "to inquire", which "admits no easy answers" (Wineburg, 2007).

Wineburg's questioning of the textbook is distinct from the approach advocated, for example, on an online platform for students that suggests textbooks should be unbiased, "and should tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" (Aggarwal, no date). For Wineburg, such a presentation would entail the silencing of any "discordant notes" (2007). As Myskow, following Paxton, indicates, the "rhetorical style" adopted by textbooks deviates from the way historians write in that their "voiceless" narrative is quite unlike the historians' "highly visible authorial voice" (2018, p. 54). Bridging the resulting chasm between how historians work and how students learn is part of Reisman (2012) and the DIG's initiative (*Reading Like a*

Historian, no date) in teaching students to read documents as if they are professional historians. Where historians reflect as they narrate, school textbooks present a "tidy story" (*Opening Up the Textbook*, no date), thus obscuring the reality that scholars have diverse interpretations of what constitutes the relevant content, and how it should be interpreted (Myskow, 2018, p. 54).

In requiring students to investigate events for themselves in ways that I hoped would enable them to reflect anew on what constitutes relevant knowledge in history, I introduced them to documents that implicitly questioned several textbooks' version (*Opening Up the Textbook*, no date). Therefore, my students were first presented with examples documenting the dominant narrative of the MBB, and then with potential counter-narratives that centred Black women's lived experiences from the 1940s through to the mid-1950s. I reframed the school curriculum and textbooks' narrow focus on the 1955-1956 MBB, intentionally problematising which role-players and factors secured the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Al. over the longer time period. To my knowledge, even existing DBEs, for example, by DIG (*Montgomery Bus Boycott*, no date) do not complicate the narrative as I intended to by compiling Black women-centred documents that would engage students affectively while challenging them to construct their own informed narrative of events. My intention was to complicate the textbook narrative by extending the scope of the question, encouraging students to examine both the longer past and a wider range of role-players in their historical context. I therefore selected documents that would scaffold their ultimate structuring of their own group *Textbook Entry* on the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery. To avoid their inadvertently disseminating the dominant narrative presented by the textbooks, I intended my students to conduct both a critical and a disciplinary historical enquiry which would take into account the misrepresented, marginalised, and erased Black women of Montgomery. Exposing them to "discordant notes" (Wineburg, 2007) was intended to allow them to decide for themselves if and how they wanted to challenge the textbooks in the way they configured their own account.

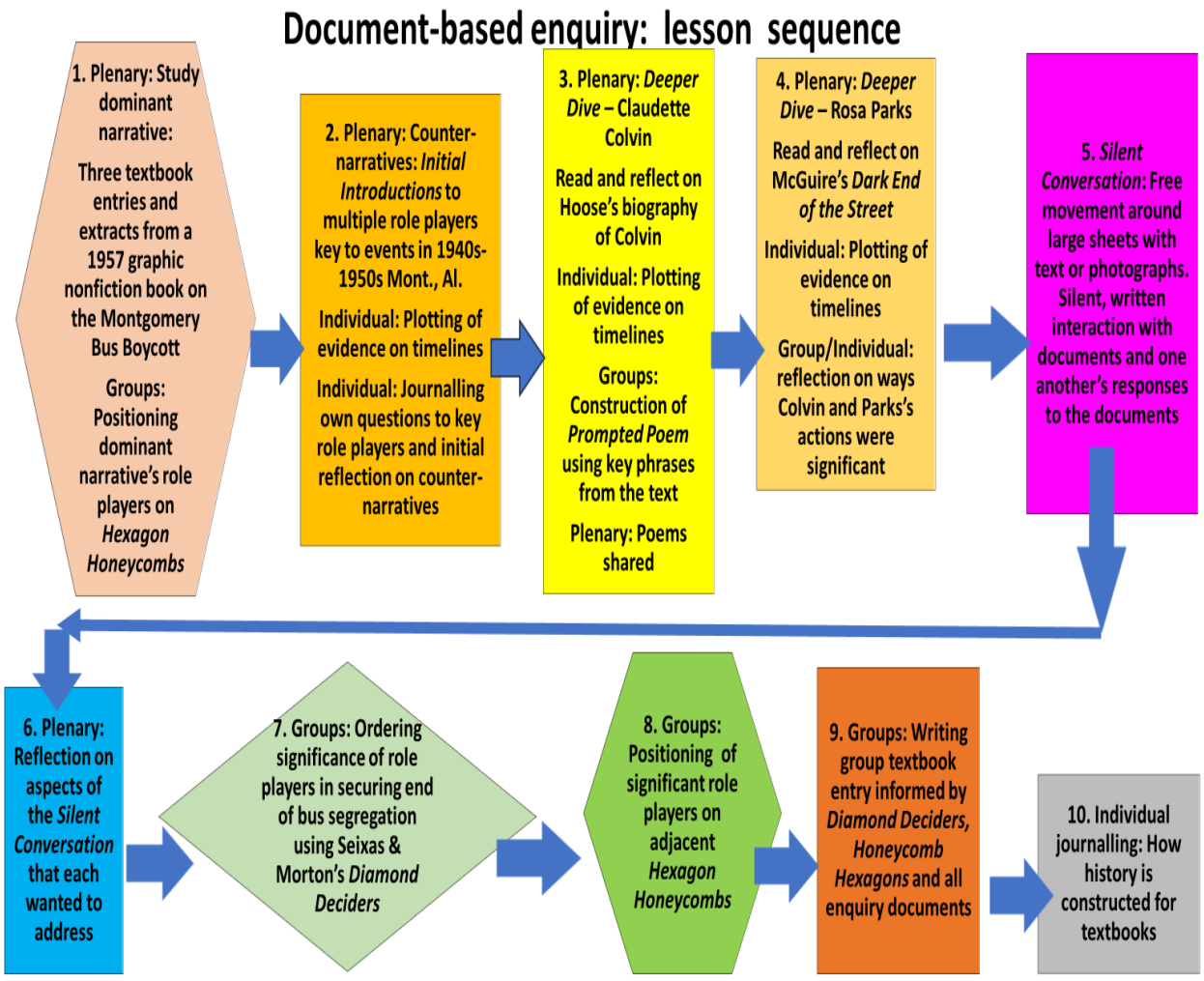
I intended this approach not only to inform students' grasp of what led to the changes in Montgomery, but to further engage their thinking of what constitutes historical knowledge – and how they might come to view women's history as an integral part of that. Beyond this disciplinary approach, I also wanted them to engage in a critical approach to how textbooks construct and transmit school history. As Martell and Stevens explain:

> Often, students learn history through the dominant perspective of the past (even when inquiring about it), and they are part of the transmission (through the official curriculum) of those dominant perspectives over time. To fill this gap, Salinas and Blevins proposed a critical historical inquiry, where students begin to "understand, disrupt and challenge the official curriculum and explore new and

> diverse perspectives that recognize and honor the unique experiences of […] diverse communities". (2021, chap. 3)

I drew on my experience as a history teacher in curating the materials to use during the DBE, consciously incorporating documents that under my guidance two Grade 10 and two Grade 12 students had previously used in their own individual historical investigations, so that I could be assured that the pitch of the texts would be appropriate for my cohort of Grade 11 students. In planning to work within time constraints, I cut and paste from those resources, selecting extracts which would make sense without their accessing the whole chapter or book, knowing even those extracts would take far longer to read – let alone study and use in an activity – than was usually allocated in the type of DBE regularly reviewed in publications like *Teaching History*. Yet as I aimed for complexity of engagement from my students, I reasoned that greater exposure through a variety of pedagogical activities to lengthier documents would be necessary to secure that. I wanted students exposed to a range of role-players typically misrepresented in or omitted from the textbook narratives, and I wanted to include several examples of such textbook narratives beyond their own as the basis for their later reflections on the nature of textbook accounts. The compilation of the extracts was deeply reflective and time-consuming, as I wanted to incorporate sufficient material to highlight the complexity of different Black women's lives to allow for differentiation, nuance, and students' own interpretation of the evidence. I intended the DBE to invite students to re-consider events from multiple previously unencountered perspectives, and not just be given an alternative ready-made account to replace the textbooks' rendition. The individual activities would, I contended, enrich the writing of each group's own ultimate *Textbook Entry*. A flow diagram of my lesson sequence is presented next for ease of reference as I examine each lesson's approach in turn.

Figure 4.1 Flow diagram of the DBE lesson sequence



4.1 Dominant Textbook Narrative

To establish the dominant narrative, students initially read brief extracts on the MBB from their own textbook, *In Search of History* (Bottaro, Visser and Worden, 2015, pp. 133–134); a standard US textbook, *America! America!* (Buggey *et al.*, 1984, p. 653) as included in the DIG activity (*Montgomery Bus Boycott*, no date); a composite textbook construct compiled by the historian Kohl (2005a, 2005b, 2007); and pages from the graphic nonfiction book, *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* (Hassler, Resnik and Barry, 1957).[20] The latter made what I thought the students would see in subsequent documents as the spurious claim that "Because she was tired and her feet ached, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat in the bus"

[20] These extracts have been included as Appendix B, while my "Brief overview of the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama, with a selective timeline of events" is included as Appendix A.

(Hassler, Resnik and Barry, 1957), thus establishing within a year of the boycott's ending the trivialising Parks-trope evident even in current textbooks. No use is made in any of those texts of Parks's own rendition of events, and, as students would later find, it appears Parks was aware of the distortion that became embedded in the dominant narrative:

> 'People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day […] No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.' (Theoharis, 2013, chap. 3)

Furthermore, no mention is made of Parks's earlier Alabama-based activism, which students would later discover included her documenting Recy Taylor's testimony of her rape by white men, and actively seeking justice both in that case and in that of the racialised rape of Gertrude Perkins, amongst her broader NAACP work (McGuire, 2010, chaps 2–3). Similarly, no reference is made to Parks's later activism in Detroit after her bus action left both her and her husband jobless and hounded out of Montgomery, as her biographer Theoharis (2013) records Parks recounting regarding those Montgomery days:

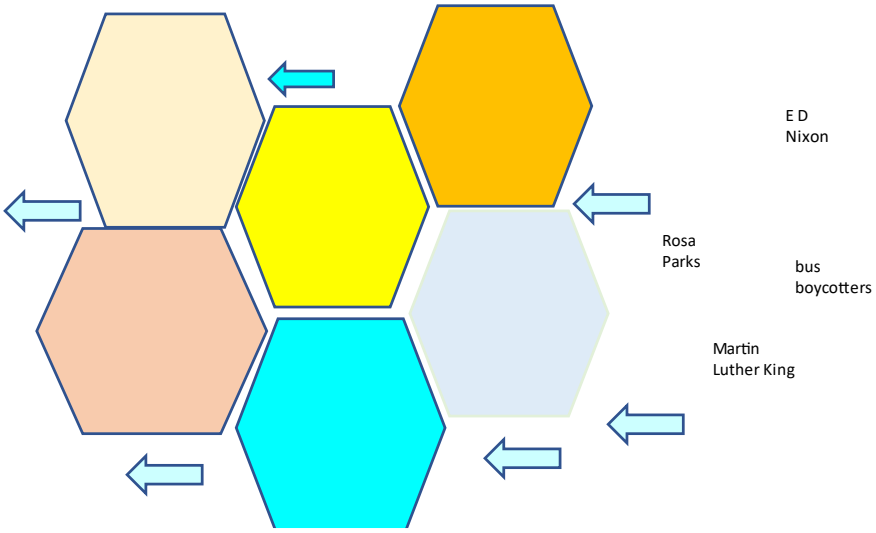
> The phone rang constantly with death threats and coarse insults. "There were people who called to say that I should be beaten or be killed," Parks recalled, "because I was causing so much trouble […] finally when I was dismissed from the job, I remember one person calling and saying she was sorry and then laughing at the end of the conversation before hanging up." (Theoharis, 2013, chap. 4).

Neither is the work of any of the other women credited, even though the boycott was largely organised, funded, and run on a day-to-day basis by the Black women of Montgomery (McGuire, 2010, chap. 3), as would become clear in students' later reading of McGuire's text, and in extracts from interviews at the time with some of those women themselves.

Their own textbook obscured if not erased which court case led to the ruling which ended bus segregation, misleadingly implying it related to Parks: "Meanwhile civil rights lawyers fought the case of Rosa Parks in court. Eventually, in December 1956, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation on buses was against the Constitution of the USA." (Bottaro, Visser and Worden, 2015, pp. 133–134). Hence the public testimony of Aurelia Browder, Claudette Colvin, Susie McDonald, and Mary Louise Smith as plaintiffs in challenging Montgomery's Mayor Gayle in *Browder v. Gayle* is not at all examined in their textbook. Indeed, the relevant Supreme Court ruling regarding the unconstitutionality of bus segregation in terms of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution (*Browder v. Gayle, 142 F. Supp. 707 (M.D. Ala. 1956)*, 1956; Hoose, 2009, chap. 9) is misrepresented in their textbook. Instead, a conflated version of the Parks and *Browder v Gayle* cases – two very separate legal processes – is disseminated, as I hoped would become clear once they read Hoose's text later in the DBE.

To anticipate the rest of the enquiry which would require them to reflect back on the dominant narrative, students were tasked with noting in their journals whose actions that narrative deemed significant and consequential in securing the ending of bus segregation, and why. Students in class and online were presented with coloured hexagons on which to indicate relevant historical actors, and to experiment with their placement in order to explore their connections to one another. They were also given arrows on which to write their explanations of those connections. This was to establish familiarity with the activity as a point of comparison with a penultimate *Hexagon Honeycombs* activity later. Utilising hexagons was intended to problematise the suggestion in the textbooks that securing the end of bus segregation was an uncomplicated, linear process, and introducing the disciplinary concepts of significance and causality was to encourage their "thinking like historians" (Wineburg, 2007).

Figure 4.2 Illustration of the cardboard *Hexagonal Honeycombs* and arrows students used



My inclusion of the pedagogic activity I termed *Hexagonal Honeycombs* was informed by a suggestion by Potash on the educational website "Cult of Pedagogy" (2020).

4.2 *Initial Introductions*

After establishing the dominant narrative, students took turns to present brief *Initial Introductions* to selected Black people from the 1940s and 1950s rewritten from various authentic accounts in the first person where direct quotations were unavailable. I wanted students to reflect on why they were written that way, hoping they would sense that greater immediacy is secured by hearing role-players voice their stories themselves. As Lipscomb suggests in a chapter entitled "How can we recover the lost lives of women?", this "pronoun shift […] is an ethical and empathetic approach that attempts to represent the agency of the

silenced woman" (2021, p. 189). I clearly wanted students to become "aware of the role that many factors (e.g., social class, occupation, gender, age) play in shaping one's attitudes and perspectives on historical events" (*Café Conversations*, no date) even though I thought the students at that stage would know too little about the various characters they introduced to be able to engage in role-playing as suggested by the educational website Facing History and Ourselves' "Café Conversations".

Reaching back to Alabama in the 1940s allowed me to include both Recy Taylor and Gertrude Perkins speaking to their community-supported efforts to hold the white men who raped them to account. Students – including those isolating at home – were encouraged to pose any questions the *Initial Introductions* had left them with, and to journal further questions they might have for the particular role-players they had been introduced to. My intention was for the activity to enable students to decentre King. Furthermore, I wanted it to provide a clear context for Parks as a seasoned anti-rape activist for the NAACP rather than a perchance "tired seamstress", and to broaden the scope of historical role-players and factors beyond those the dominant narrative centred. I intended Parks's *Initial Introduction* to reveal the contemporary roots of how her activism became trivialised, so I included her being "presented" but denied the right to speak by the Black men who usurped control of the boycott at the first public meeting following her court appearance. As McGuire indicates (2010, p. 107), "Reverend Abernathy said as much: 'Mrs. Rosa Parks was presented to the mass meeting [on 5 December 1955] because we wanted her to become symbolic of our protest meeting.'"

In the *Initial Introductions*, students were introduced to E.D. Nixon, the sleeping car porter activist and former president of the NAACP in Alabama state, as he was key to all civil rights protest in Montgomery at the time. Nixon was instrumental in securing new arrival King as leader of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) set up to manage the boycott initiated by Jo-Ann Robinson and her Women's Political Council (WPC). Nixon was also key to approving Parks rather than Colvin or Smith, both bus protestors ahead of Parks, as the figurehead of the boycott. Students were also introduced to lawyer Fred Gray who represented the women plaintiffs in *Browder v Gayle*, further encountering Browder, Colvin, and Smith, leading them to ask why that case and the people involved had been summarily erased from the textbooks. Aurelia Browder's story was in part introduced using her son Butler Browder's own words, conveying his evident dismay at how she has been erased from the dominant narrative. As Butler Browder is quoted as saying: "If it's worth teaching, it's worth teaching

the whole story, not just a portion of it […] [The] parts you leave out may just turn out to make your story a lie." (Gold, 2016). I thought Butler Browder's telling critique might inform my students' ongoing reflection of how history is constructed by and in the dominant textbook narrative.

4.3 *Deeper Dive*: Claudette Colvin and *Prompted Poems*

Following on the *Initial Introductions*, I chose to have students take a *Deeper Dive* into Colvin's story as I thought it would throw into relief the complex nature of the historical context in which she as a fifteen-year-old Black girl acted – and was acted against – at the time. I envisaged the construction of a poem centring Colvin as an evocative activity that would engage students in assigning value to "the content of women's everyday lives", as Tetreault suggests:

> The subtle interactions among gender and other variables are investigated […] This more particularistic conception of women is accompanied by attention to both the contextual and the personal. Questions of sex and gender are set within historical, ideological, and cultural contexts […] Life histories […] shed light on societies' perceptions of women and women's perceptions of themselves. Individual women's experiences are revealed through these stories and contribute to the fashioning of the human experience from the perspective of women. (1985, pp. 374–375)

I anticipated that my students would be responsive to hearing Colvin recount her own story, enabling them to view events in the past from her perspective within circumstances that were decidedly challenging and quite different to their own in the present. I reasoned that by viewing Colvin in her historical context through an intersectional lens, students would be enabled to see her actions as "remarkable", "revealing", and "resulting in change" (Counsell, 2004, p. 32).

It was determined by Nixon and other Black male civil rights leaders that overlapping contextual factors contributed to their deciding that Colvin would be unsuitable as the figurehead of a bus campaign – without even asking her if she was willing to serve as that candidate. And that was in spite of her pastor praising her defiant bus protest act quite emphatically. According to her later retelling of the events, Colvin emphasised this affirmation clearly:

> "I had done something a lot of adults hadn't done. On the ride home from jail, […] Reverend Johnson said something to me I'll never forget. He was an adult who everyone respected and his opinion meant a lot to me. 'Claudette,' he said, 'I'm so proud of you. Everyone prays for freedom. We've all been praying and praying. But you're different – you want your answer the next morning. And I think you just brought the revolution to Montgomery.'" (Hoose, 2009, chap. 4)

In her own recounting of events, students encountered Colvin's insistence that she was multiply targeted for exclusion, tellingly foregrounding her having a baby as a teenager: "Socially, I had three strikes against me: I was an unmarried teenager with a light-skinned baby [...] To them I was a fallen woman." (Hoose, 2009, chap. 10). Colvin was not pregnant at the time of her arrest on 2 March 1955, and her becoming pregnant after the court placed her on "indefinite probation" as a "juvenile delinquent" (Hoose, 2009, chap. 6) as a result of what she was to describe to Hoose as a once-off interaction with a much older, lighter-skinned married Black man, is not further discussed in his book. While Colvin says: "A more experienced and much older man took advantage of me when I was at my very lowest" (Hoose, 2009, chap. 10), the author himself does not express his view on this crucial event, beyond allowing Colvin herself to express how her pregnancy was central to her being dismissed as unsuitable as the face of a bus boycott. I emphasise this as in Chapter 5.2 I discuss how Group 2 choose not to make this distinction. Students read Colvin's rendition of her dire circumstances as she was forced to leave school and was fired from one job after another once her bus activism and subsequent arrest and conviction became known (Hoose, 2009, chaps 9–10). I reasoned students would on reflection note the dominant narrative's clear erasure of the risks and suffering Black girls and women endured, even while centring reprisals against King following his ascendance in the MIA.

Hoose drew on extensive interviews conducted decades later with Colvin, once she had agreed to be interviewed, as well as on other clearly-referenced writing on the *Browder v Gayle* court case, including court transcripts, to write *Claudette Colvin: Twice Towards Justice* (2009). Browder was a fellow plaintiff, along with Colvin, while Gayle, Montgomery's mayor, was defended in court by Knabe, the city's white male attorney. Given the rich use Hoose makes of court proceedings, I was interested to see what students would glean from the young Colvin's demeanour and handling of the attorney's evidently adversarial cross examination. In Hoose's text, despite the "powerful" Knabe's repeated haranguing, the empirically "powerless" Colvin stands up to him, speaking her mind calmly and plainly. As the historian Lipscomb suggests in discussing how women's erased voices can be recovered:

> [T]he narratives that the archive does provide to us are [...] shaped in such a way as to justify the dominance of the powerful. The archive is unreliable. This is a particular problem for those of us who study women – especially women who were largely powerless. When ordinary women emerge from obscurity it is only because they had an encounter with the powerful. (Lipscomb, 2021, p. 180)

Colvin very evocatively "[emerges] from obscurity" in this "encounter with the powerful", and, also in her own words, in recounting the white bus driver and policemen's earlier abuse when

she refused to relinquish her bus seat. As students studied extracts from Hoose's biography, I discussed with them the credibility of the text, noting that Hoose explains in detail where and how he sourced his material, and further explaining that he read the entire text to Colvin, allowing her to make corrections.

Hoose clarifies details of the *Browder v Gayle* ruling, quoting from it, which I thought would provide a clear counter-narrative to the students' textbook which obscured or misrepresented which Supreme Court ruling ended bus segregation, by suggesting it stemmed from a case involving Parks. Indeed, it was the court in the *Browder v Gayle* case that declared the unconstitutionality of bus segregation:

> "We hold that the statutes […] requiring segregation of the white and colored races on the motor buses of a common carrier of passengers in the city of Montgomery [...] [violate] the due process and equal protection of the law […] under the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States." (Hoose, 2009, chap. 10)

Employing a strategy derived from the educational website Facing History and Ourselves (*Found Poems*, no date), students then created what I termed a *Prompted Poem*. Facing History and Ourselves describes the "rationale" for this classroom activity as follows:

> A "found poem" is one that is created using only words, phrases, or quotations that have been selected and rearranged from another text. To create found poems, students must choose language that is particularly meaningful or interesting to them and organize the language around a theme or message. Writing found poems is a structured way to have students review material and synthesize their learning. (*Found Poems*, no date)

I selected this approach to secure close reading of the Hoose extracts, as I considered that to be integral to capacitating my students to thereafter construct group poems. This was intended as an enjoyable, affective activity which I expected them to relish. I wanted them to take seriously Colvin's own voice which featured so prominently in the text, but felt I would secure more buy-in by suggesting a creative outcome than if they had been tasked with a more prosaic approach to the text evident in regular close reading practices (e.g. Sherry and O'Connor, 2021; *Close Reading Protocol*, no date; *Historical Thinking Chart*, no date). Precisely what they selected, how they reasoned about that selection, and what, by implication, they excluded indeed proved to be of immense interest to me, as I examine at length in Chapter 5. As intended, their transcribed group discussions recorded while reviewing and highlighting the text provided rich evidence for analysis in terms of Tetreault's feminist framework (1985), as did the poems they created.

4.4 *Deeper Dive*: Rosa Parks

Where the dominant narrative pays tribute to Parks as the "mother" of the Civil Rights Movement, it reduces her to a mere symbol whose sole act was to stay seated on that fateful day in December 1955 because she was "tired". To enable the students to embark on a *Deeper Dive* into a fully-contextualised Parks, I selected pages from several chapters of McGuire's *At The Dark End of the Street*: *Black Women, Rape, and Resistance – a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*. The detailed, lengthy passages established both the broader historical context of Black women's lives and activism in Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s, including Parks's interactions with Colvin, and Parks's credibility as a seasoned anti-rape activist whose decision to remain seated had nothing to do with her being physically "tired" as claimed in the dominant narratives the students had studied earlier. Indeed, McGuire quotes Parks reflecting on her decision that day: "There had to be a stopping place […] and this seemed to be the place for me to stop being pushed around. I had decided that I would have to know once and for all what rights I had as a human being and a citizen, even in Montgomery, Alabama." (2010, p. 100)

McGuire's text was also chosen as two of my Grade 12 students had previously used it to great effect in their own research for their individual historical investigations[21] previously, suggesting it would prove accessible to other students. I reasoned that the text would engage students and prompt them to reflect on Parks's significance beyond the limits of the dominant narrative. To scaffold their later writing their own *Textbook Entry*, and to elicit further reflection on the dominant narrative, I asked students to make brief bullet points on a graphic organiser (Wise and Cooper, 2019) which asked:

- Why do **you** see Parks and her actions as significant (that is, revealing; resulting in change; remarkable; resonant) and as a causal factor in ending bus segregation?
- Can you slot this evidence into the textbook story without challenging it? Explain.

I intended students to uncover for themselves that even though Parks is mentioned in every MBB narrative, her significance is crucially misrepresented. While other Black women are fully erased from the dominant narrative, I hoped they would hear Parks's own voice long-silenced by her misrepresentation as an accidental, once-off, passive protestor. In the event, Group 2 partially completed their graphic organiser while waiting for Group 1 to finish

[21] My Grade 12 students each year conduct an independent, in-depth historical investigation requiring detailed source use and source evaluation. Each chooses the topic she is curious and passionate enough to research over a period of several months, further setting her own research question.

constructing their much longer *Prompted Poem*, although Group 1's Freye chose to complete hers at home in her journal. Time constraints did not allow for further attention to this activity as I wanted to ensure sufficient time for the next activity – the *Silent Conversation*. Interestingly, Wise and Cooper suggest teacher-created organisers are self-limiting as they can unintentionally curtail "students' thinking to just filling in the boxes, and may allow students to avoid the messy but important work of surfacing key insights or conceptual understanding" (2019). As my intention was precisely to allow for this more "messy but important work" I did not want to cut short their engagement in an activity better suited to such open-ended engagement.

4.5 *Silent Conversation*

To shift from vocalised discussion, and to elicit deeper reflection and interaction, I curated a set of documents pasted onto large blank sheets using mostly photographs and first-person narratives, or else direct quotations compiled by an oral historian who visited Montgomery during the MBB. The open space around the documents allowed for simultaneous, non-linear, multiple engagement with aspects of the evidence. As Clarke indicates, "how you collect data shapes who will participate, and who is willing to tell their story" (Lainson, Braun and Clarke, 2019, p. 9)[22], and a *Silent Conversation* is an inclusive activity that encourages even reticent and reserved students to articulate their considered responses more readily in this written format. This strategy helps students embrace the freedom of expressing whatever thoughts the stimuli – and their friends' annotations – evoke in them, mitigating their concern that their contributions are somehow flawed, which further encourages risk taking ('Critical thinking in practice', 2018, p. 16).

Based on my experience, I initiated the *Silent Conversation* as a focused, reflective activity, hoping that would secure more reflective responses, as the process of reading and writing in response to one another's reflections on carefully chosen stimuli had proved effective in my teaching, although I had not used it within a structured DBE in this way previously. I also expected this activity to engage them affectively, and included in it several evocative testimonies from Black women interviewed at the time in Montgomery. Most of these statements had been collected by Lee, a Fisk University researcher, during the initial months of the boycott (McGuire, 2010, p. 112). I wanted those first-person accounts to scaffold my

[22] Page numbers refer to the pre-publication online article available here as access to the published journal article could not be secured.

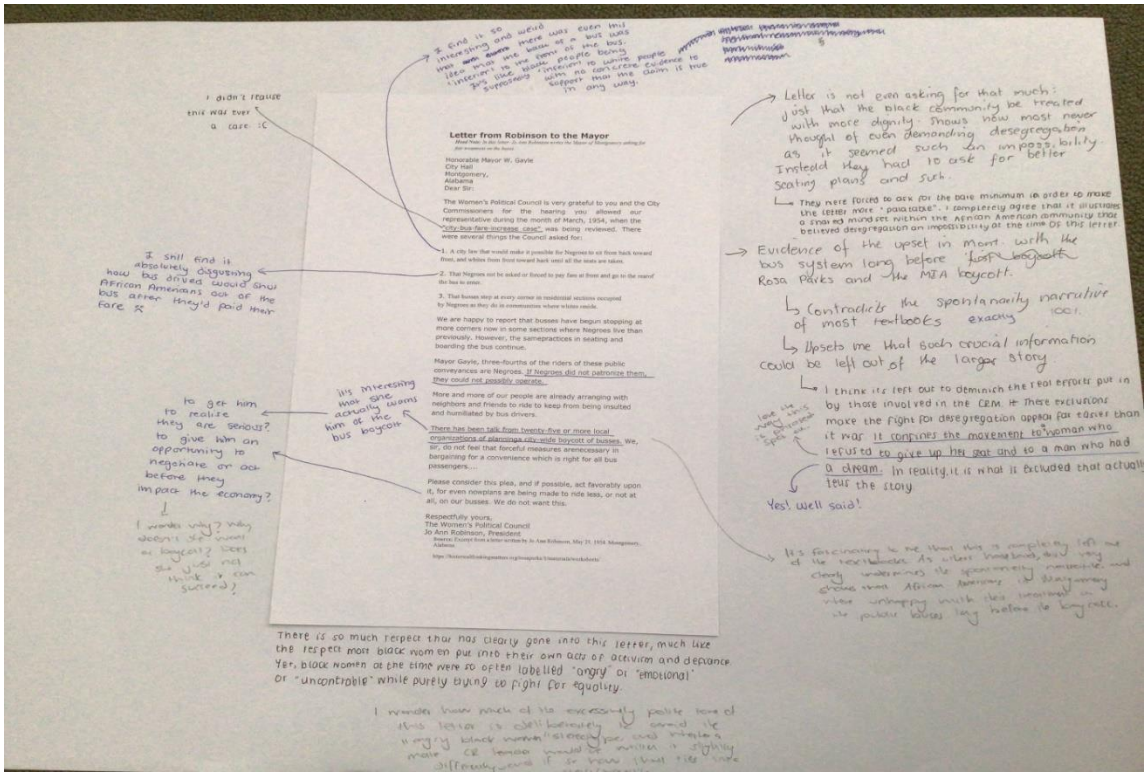
students' use of causality and significance – the two key historical thinking concepts being developed in this DBE – in ways they had not before. As explained by Dabell:

> A written conversation changes classroom dynamics because it slows thinking down and makes everyone really focus on the ideas and views of others. It can make students more contemplative, thoughtful and philosophical and it also creates a superb visual record of thoughts, opinions and questions […] Silent discussions allow us to access and activate student's prior knowledge, stereotypes and preconceived ideas related to topics. It also helps students make new connections and learn from the collective wisdom of the group. (Dabell, 2017)

By way of illustration, next I include several photographs of students' work during the *Silent Conversation* activity.

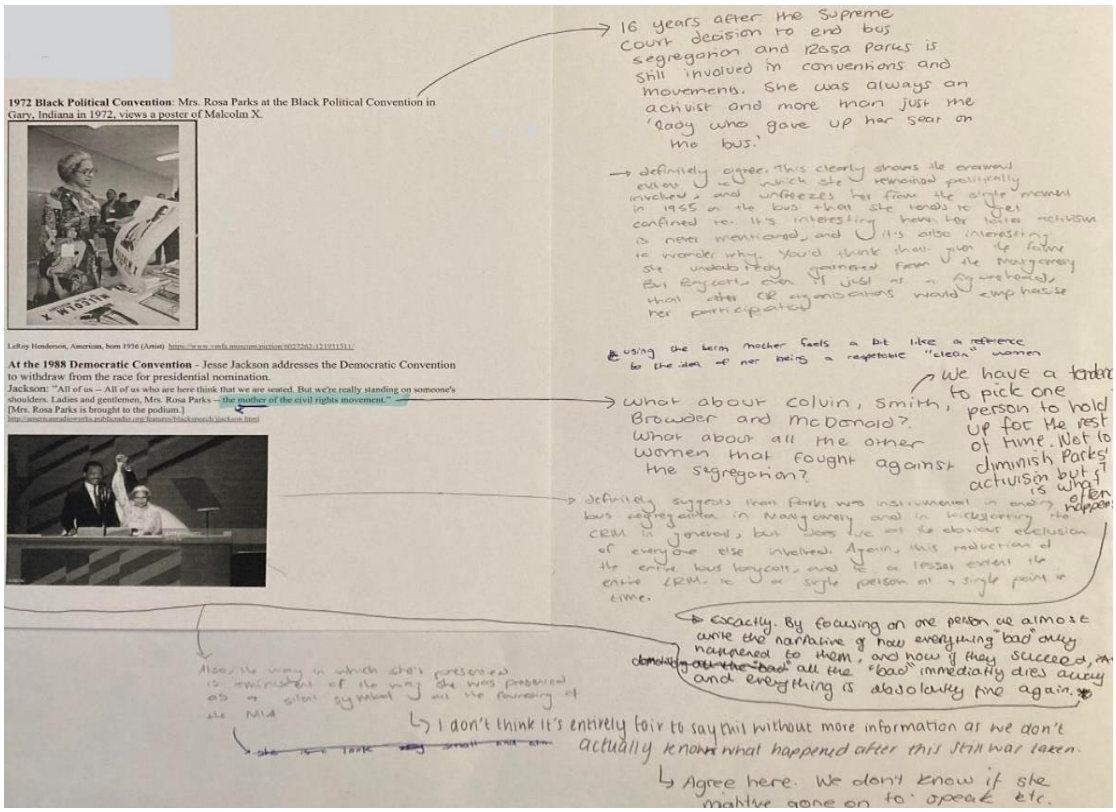
Example of *Silent Conversations* in response to text and one another's writing

Image 4.1 Text as stimulus in the *Silent Conversation*



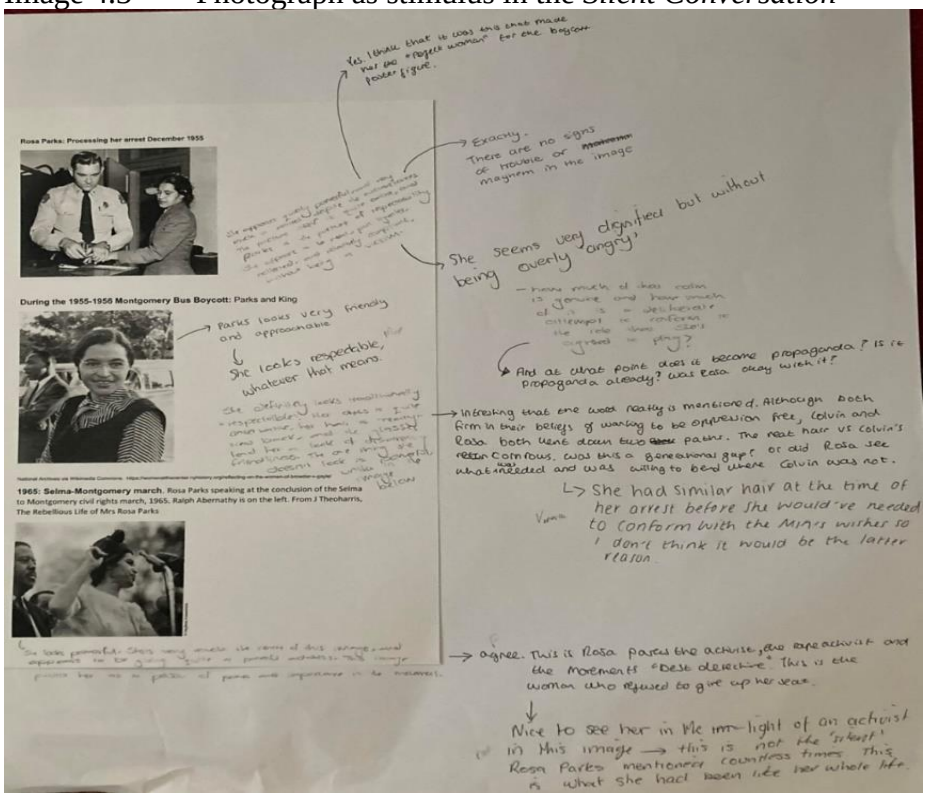
Example of student writing in the *Silent Conversation* in response to photographs

Image 4.2 Photograph as stimulus in the *Silent Conversation*



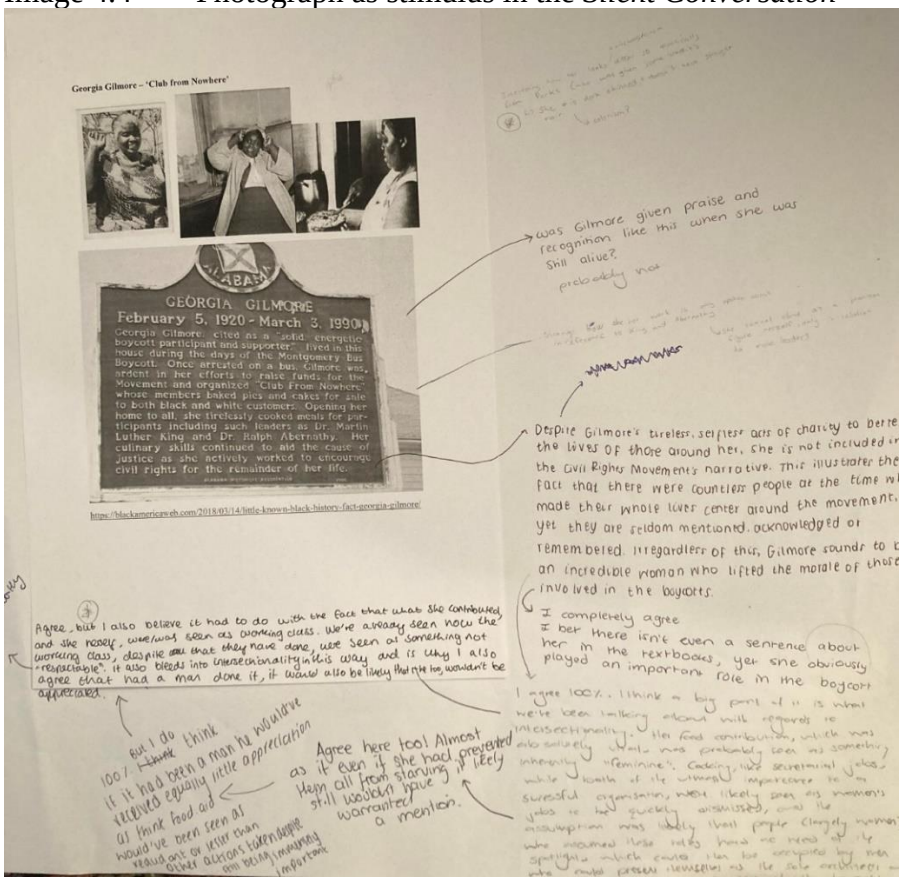
Example of student writing in the *Silent Conversation* in response to photographs

Image 4.3 Photograph as stimulus in the *Silent Conversation*



Example of student writing in the *Silent Conversation* in response to photographs

Image 4.4 Photograph as stimulus in the *Silent Conversation*



To facilitate the activity, I selected stimuli that I reasoned would prompt students to uncover further crucial chasms in the textbooks, if not their deliberate misconstrual of events altogether. The graphic nonfiction *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* (Hassler, Resnik and Barry, 1957) in particular erased the key organisational work of the Women's Political Council (WPC) in the years leading up to the bus boycott and in the day-to-day running of the boycott. Documents included in this activity would I thought clarify that it was Robinson as the WPC president who wrote the pamphlet calling for the bus boycott – not the men depicted in the graphic nonfiction book. Robinson, a middle-class Black women, who was not a regular bus user, recalled her horror at being evicted from a seat she had occupied absent-mindedly in December 1949 (McGuire, 2010, pp. 77–78). It was Robinson and her students who made 52 500 copies of the call to boycott on 1 December 1955 during the night following Parks's arrest; it was her long-established WPC connections that ensured its wide and speedy dissemination across the Black community of Montgomery (McGuire, 2010, pp. 98–99). The graphic book instead has men doing all of this – and only men. The documents were intended to challenge my students to reflect on whether this evidence could be inserted into the dominant narrative without changing it, thus informing their own *Textbook Entries* written later.

Another aspect of the construction of the dominant narrative related to the oft-reported violent attacks on the homes of several of the male Black leaders in Montgomery – for example, the infamous bombing of King's home on 30 January 1956 which led to his much-publicised call to angry protestors to embrace non-violence even when confronted by violent attacks, and the bombing of Nixon's home two days later (Hassler, Resnik and Barry, 1957, p. 7; McGuire, 2010, p. 122). Yet the attacks on Robinson's house, where a window was smashed, and on her car, which had chemicals poured on it, are excluded from the dominant narratives (McGuire, 2010, p. 120). These incidents were included in the *Silent Conversation* documents.

Furthermore, the boycott was run on a day-to-day basis not only by women with previous organisational experience, but was carried out mostly by those Black women who had previously constituted the majority of bus passengers. By utilising documents tracing the roots of the anti-bus segregation action back to Taylor and Perkins's racialised rape in the 1940s, I intended students to see it was Black women, whose oral testimony was included in the *Silent Conversation*, who had indeed suffered verbal, physical, and sexual abuse if not assault at the hands of the white police and white bus drivers, and it was they who rallied actively to ensure the MBB remained feasible. As Parks insisted, they did so not in support of her directly, but because of what they themselves had experienced on a daily basis for years (McGuire, 2010, pp. 111–112). The crucial fund-raising work by the indefatigable cook Georgia Gilmore and her deliberately named "Club from Nowhere" – intended to secure their anonymity and safety at a time of heightened police action against the Black community in Montgomery – would, I thought, centre working-class Black women's crucial actions in funding the alternative transport system (McGuire, 2010, pp. 117–119). As Gilmore later wryly noted regarding her view of the erasure of their contribution: '"We made the world take notice of black folks in Montgomery,' Gilmore said, 'but now we're all in the Club from Nowhere."' (McGuire, 2010, p. 119). I expected Gilmore's voicing that erasure to be heard by students, and to inform their later writing of their own *Textbook Entry*.

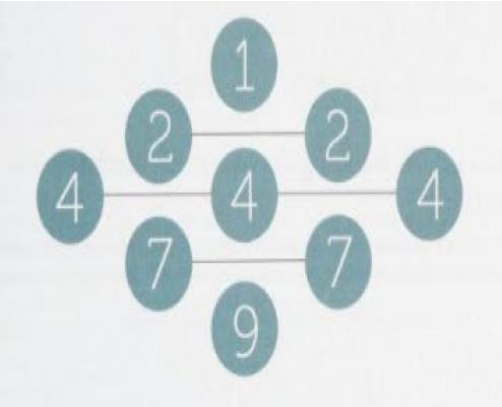
4.6 *Diamond Deciders* and *Hexagon Honeycombs*

As both action researcher and facilitator, I reflected on my intervention throughout, introducing changes to it in order to better secure rich responses from the students in the available time. As the DBE as a result of extensive student engagement had by that stage taken longer than anticipated, I condensed two activities intended to externalise their thinking into one. Both were ways to assist students to deploy disciplinary concepts in planning their final drafts of a

Textbook Entry. Firstly, my *Diamond Deciders* drew on a Seixas and Morton approach to ranking the significance of various historical events (2013, p. 29). The authors suggest the visualisation of a diamond shape when doing so:

Image 4.5 Diamond-shaped decision matrix (Seixas and Morton, 2013, p. 29)

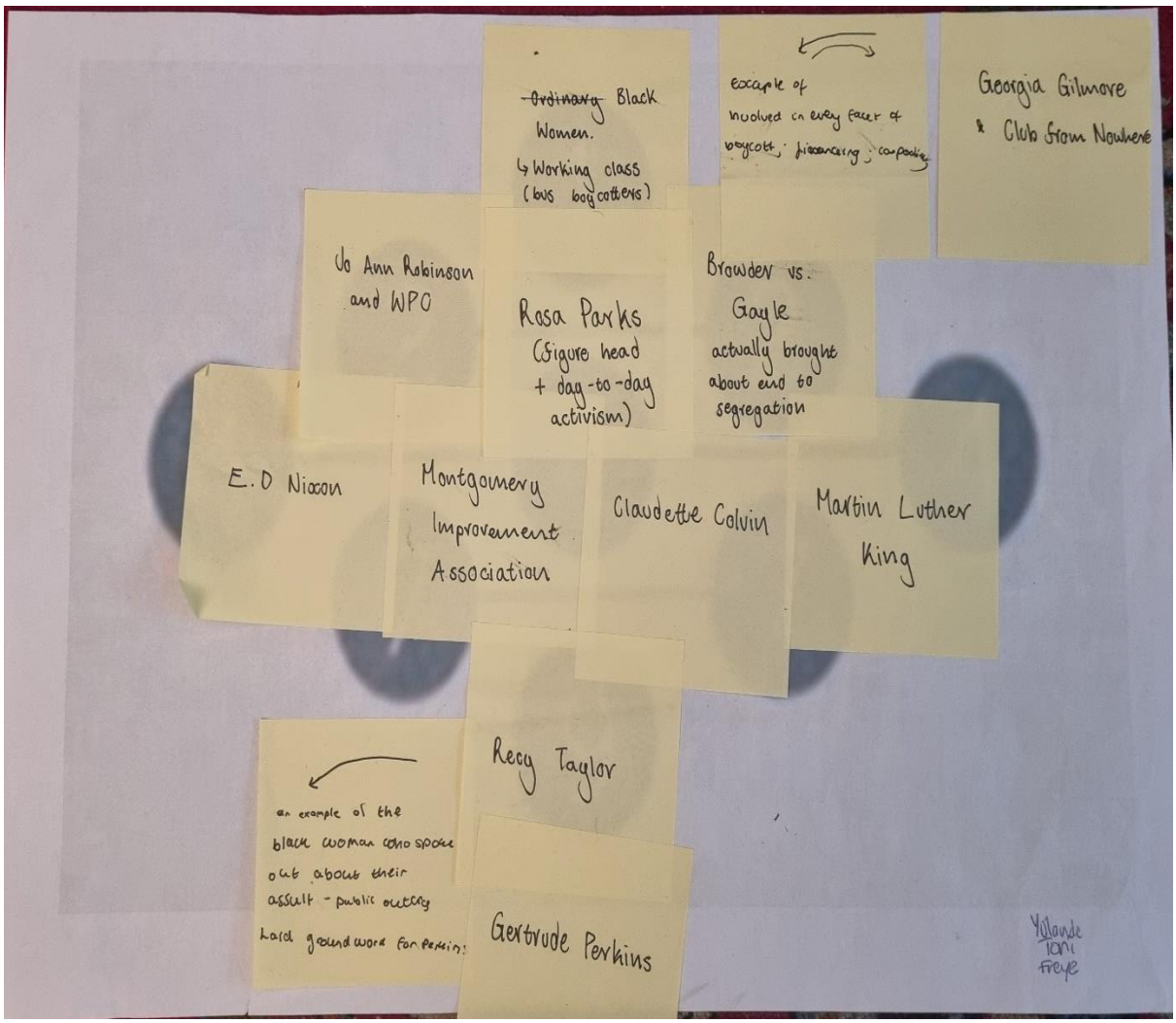
> "The most significant event, person or development should be placed at the top of the diamond. The next two are placed in second position. The three across the centre row share fourth position. The next two, in the fourth row, share seventh position. The least historically significant is placed at the bottom of the diamond." (Seixas and Morton, 2013, p. 29)



As Group 1 wrestled with the constraints of the model requiring them to isolate one factor as most significant, I encouraged both groups to adapt it to suit their thinking instead of being constricted by it. Seixas and Morton provide no reasoning for the specific diamond-9 shape with one preferred factor as most significant, indeed suggesting (somewhat contradictorily) that their "ranking model acknowledges that events, people, and developments can have equal historical significance, though possibly for different reasons" (Seixas and Morton, 2013, p. 29). A key affordance – that the students had to "negotiate a consensus ranking" – was retained when allowing them greater flexibility in deciding on their ranking.

Image 4.6 Group 1's Ranking of Significance

Group 1 chose to deviate from the suggested diamond-9 shape in ranking the significance of various factors. They superimposed post-its on to the *Diamond Decider* shape, clearly suggesting they were opposed to selecting a single person or group as the most significant. Instead, they constructed a ranking that depicted their view of the relative significance of diverse role-players.



The other activity I reprised following students' initial exposure to it at the very outset of the DBE required students to concretise their thinking regarding significance and causality using *Hexagon Honeycombs*. I printed multiple coloured hexagons as a "tool for thinking" as suggested on the blogsite *Cult of Pedagogy* (Potash, 2020). What appealed to me was the potential value of interlocking hexagons constituting "an interconnected web of concepts" (Potash, 2020) , which I reasoned would free my students from the linear approach to causality evident in the textbooks. Students worked with coloured hexagons each representing the role-player or group they decided was significant in securing the ending of bus segregation. They first encountered this way of concretising their thinking based on the dominant narrative; now,

I hoped they would see the necessity of including the wide range of people the enquiry had exposed them to, as well as the interconnectedness of their actions. This was the penultimate activity ahead of writing their *Textbook Entry*, and they were asked to align their labelled hexagons in relation to one another to externalise their grasp of the complexity of significance and causality in events. As they battled to find ways to show how some role-players were connected beyond those six sides, I suggested they make duplicates where needed. They wrote on post-its to explain the connections, or on the hexagons themselves, arranging and rearranging the shapes as they explored various permutations.

Image 4.7 Group 2's Ranking of Significance

Group 2 choose to draw a table indicating their ranking of significance, showing that while they isolated one main factor, they then chose five factors to rank second, three to rank third, and three to rank fourth.

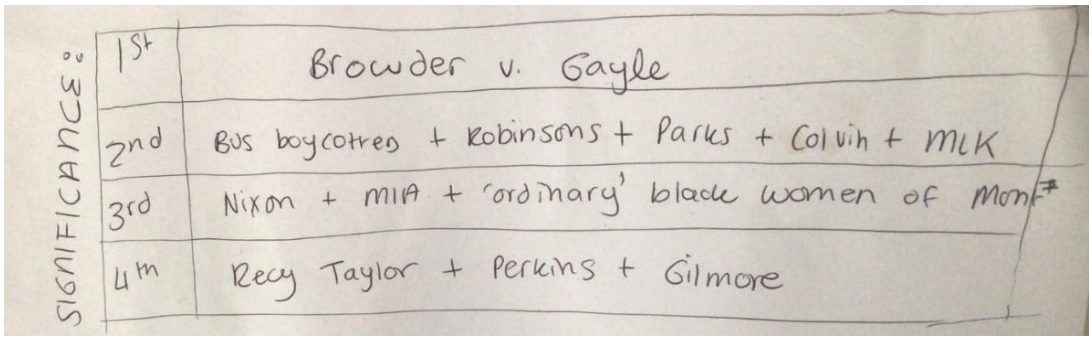


Image 4.8 Group 2's *Hexagon Honeycombs*

Group 2 summarised their ranking of significance in the top right-hand corner of their *Hexagon Honeycombs* sheet. They placed their hexagons around "end of bus segregation" with arrows pointing to that. Each hexagon specifies particular role-players. Their yellow post-its were used to add brief explanatory notes.

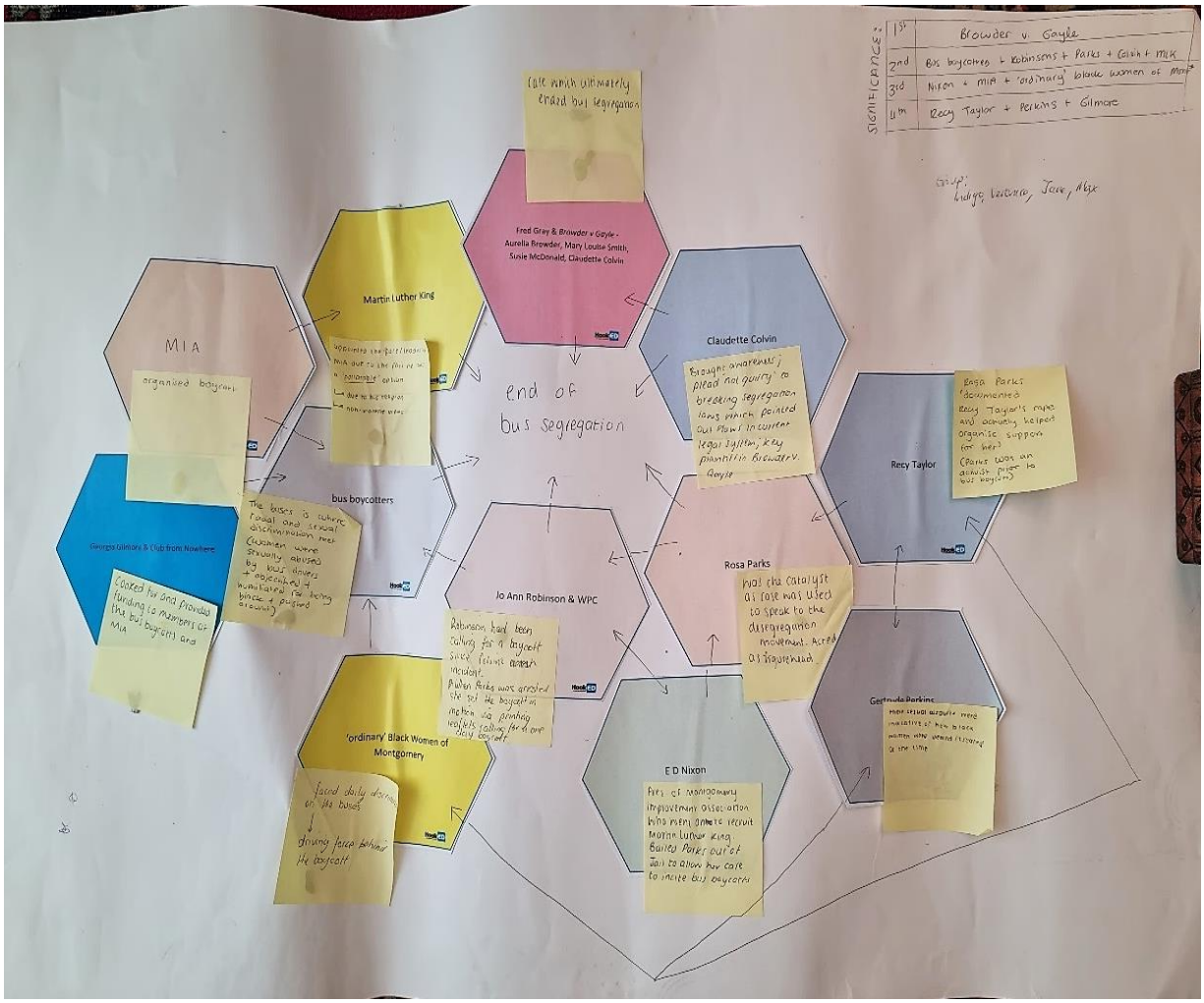
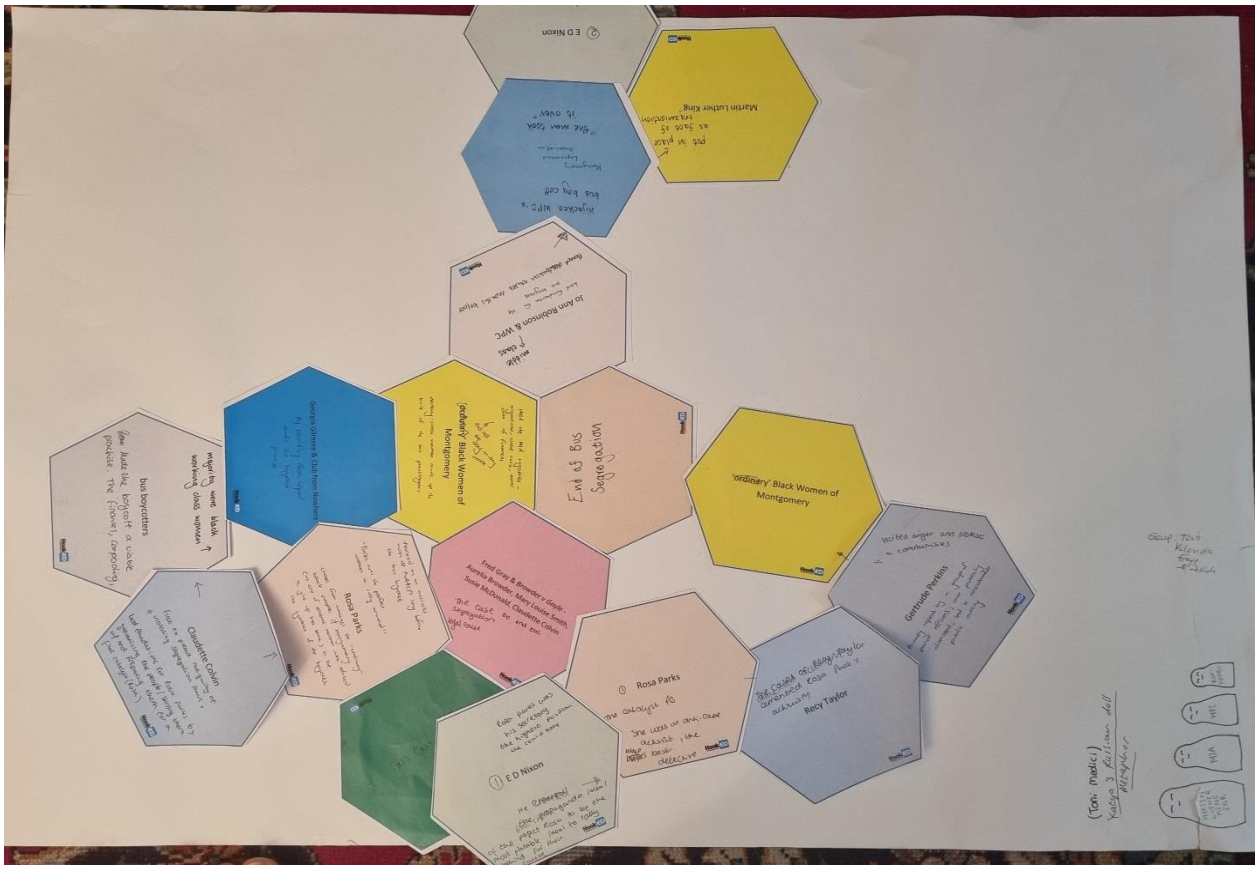


Image 4.9 Group 1's *Hexagon Honeycombs*

The hexagons represent the role-players responsible for the ending of bus segregation. Group 1 wrote brief explanatory notes directly on the hexagons, and Yolande sketched Toni's Russian Doll analogy (discussed later in Chapter 6.1) bottom right. They used two hexagons representing "Black women of Montgomery", scratching out the descriptor "ordinary" to suggest they did not see them as that, and focusing on their key role in securing the end of bus segregation.



I devised the *Hexagon Honeycomb* activity so as to allow students to explore multiple ways of visualising the interconnected causality of role-players as scaffolding ahead of writing their *Textbook Entry*. As Morgan indicates regarding the use of hexagons in a different context, "This technique enables a visual representation of a brainstorming session [..] The patterns of the Hexagons also act as an (sic) powerful aid-mémoire" (Morgan, no date). I reasoned it would enable students to explore divergent perspectives through shared visualisation before committing themselves to a consensus approach to the material. I wanted a strategy which would encourage their exploration of the nuanced links between the various role-players and their activism. The activity was intended to concretise their disciplinary thinking, facilitating their seeing causality as a "web of concepts and clearly explained connections" (Johnson, 2022).

4.7 Writing *Textbook Entries*

As the ultimate outcome of my DBE, and to generate a different form of data to that gathered from plenary and group discussions and activities, each group was tasked with writing their own *Textbook Entry* as a culmination of all the evidence gleaned from the sources they had engaged with during the DBE. Their drafting of *Textbook Entries* was also intended to be informed by their *Diamond Deciders* and *Hexagon Honeycombs*. There was no mandatory prescribed length or style to guide their writing. As was later evident, Group 1 approached the task quite differently to Group 2, also writing far more and taking far longer, resulting in their choosing to spend a Saturday with three of the four available to finalise their narrative, sharing most of their recorded discussions with me thereafter. Another member of the group was at home ill during one of their earlier discussions, although she contributed as far as she could in a call. Group 2's writing was also affected by their initial scribe's absence due to illness in one session. In all cases, absent students responded to and signed off on their group's final submissions.

4.8 Individual Journalling: How is history constructed for textbooks?

Informed by the enquiry and their engagement with the concepts of significance and causality, students were individually tasked with journalling their reflections on how as a result of the DBE they had come to see the construction of history in – and by – textbooks. I intended this journalling to provide rich evidence of their personal reflections to triangulate with data gathered throughout their group activities and plenary discussions. While indeed generating rich data from all students, some students' individual journalled notes were in tension with their discursive engagements and writing as part of Group 2. I reflect further on this in Chapter 7.

4.9 Coding of data in each DBE Lesson Activity

Following transcription and subsequent analysis, data was coded to facilitate ease of reference to their origin in Chapters 5 and 6: Findings and Discussion. Figure 4.3 indicates the coding system adopted.

Figure 4.3 Table showing the coding of data collected according to the Lesson Activity; whether the activity was based on Class, Group, or Individual Work; whether the data is from a Discussion or Writing, or both, as is the case in the *Silent Conversation*; and the Code assigned.

Activity	Class / Group / Individual	Discussion or Writing	Code
Initial Introductions	Class	Discussion	II - D
Claudette Colvin: Deeper Dive	Class	Discussion	CC - D
Prompted Poem	Group 1	Discussion	PP Gr 1 - D
Prompted Poem	Group 1	Writing	PP Gr 1 - W
Prompted Poem	Group 2	Discussion	PP Gr 2 - D
Prompted Poem	Group 2	Writing	PP Gr 2 - W
Rosa Parks: Deeper Dive	Class	Discussion	RP - D
Silent Conversation	Class	Silent Discussion – Writing	SC - DW
Post Silent Conversation	Class	Discussion	Post SC - D
Hexagon Honeycombs	Group 1	Discussion	HH Gr 1 - D
Hexagon Honeycombs	Group 2	Discussion	HH Gr 2 - D
Textbook Entry	Group 1	Discussion	TE Gr 1 - D
Textbook Entry	Group 1	Writing	TE Gr 1 - W
Textbook Entry	Group 2	Discussion	TE Gr 2 - D
Textbook Entry	Group 2	Writing	TE Gr 2 - W
Journalling	Individual	Writing	J - Delilah - W
Journalling	Individual	Writing	J - Freye - W
Journalling	Individual	Writing	J - Toni - W
Journalling	Individual	Writing	J - Yolande - W
Journalling	Individual	Writing	J - Indigo - W
Journalling	Individual	Writing	J - Jane - W
Journalling	Individual	Writing	J - Max - W
Journalling	Individual	Writing	J - Veronica - W

Conclusion

In this chapter I explained my curation of sequenced pedagogical activities to facilitate students' deep engagement in a DBE with carefully compiled counter-evidence to the textbooks' narrative of events. Students were first presented with examples of the dominant narrative before being introduced to a wider range of role-players than that narrative had included. Thereafter, they wrote group poems grounded in a biography of Claudette Colvin before learning in greater depth about Rosa Parks's activism. Following this, they silently

responded to evidence of a range of Black women's actions and articulations. To scaffold their application of disciplinary concepts, students ranked the significance and causal role of all the role-players they had encountered, and configured their multiple inter-connections as they worked to secure the ending of bus segregation. This also served as a way to concretise what they had learned ahead of drafting their own textbook account of events. Finally, students journalled their reflections in response to guided questions on the construction of school history and how they thought it should be taught. Next, Chapter 5 will use Tetreault's feminist phase model to engage with Question 1A, while thereafter Chapter 6 will use RTA to engage with Question 1B.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION – Question 1A

How does centring Black women in accounts of the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama inform students' way of seeing events in Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s?

Introduction

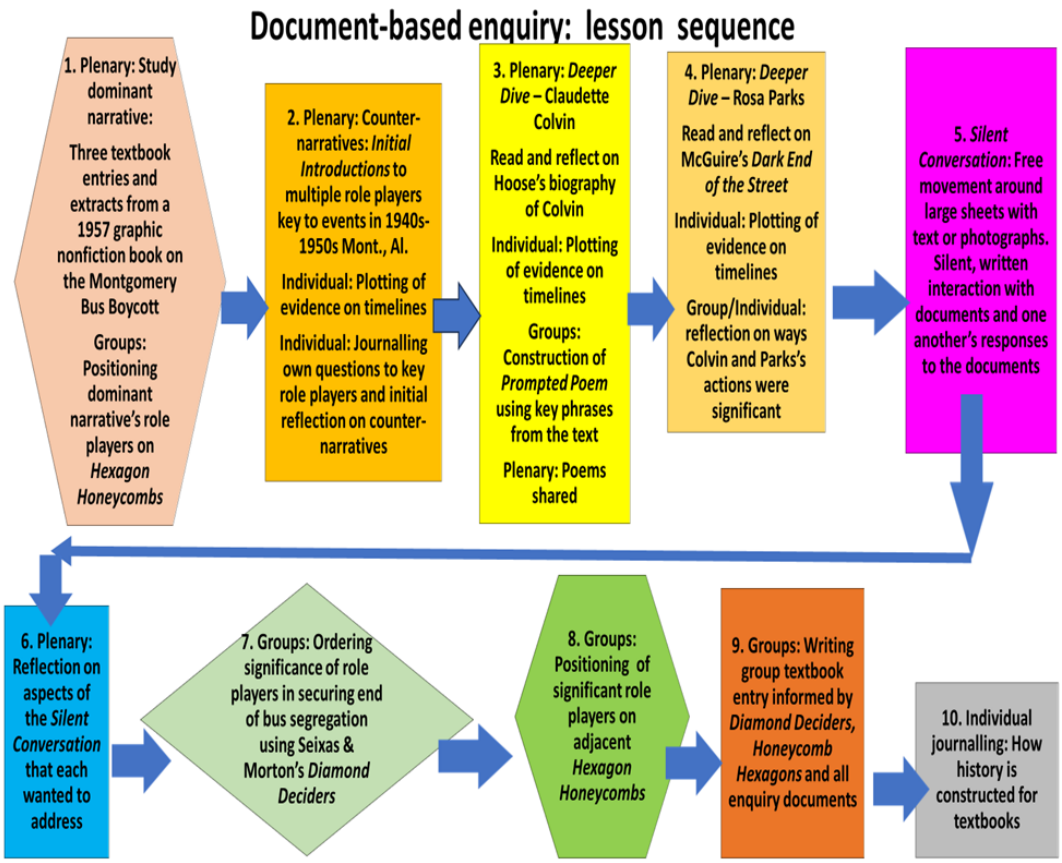
To investigate how centring Black women in a document-based enquiry (DBE) might shift the ways my students perceived women's history, facilitating its integration into my teaching practice, I chose to deploy Tetreault's feminist phase model as a heuristic. My discussion above in Chapter 3.7 indicated Tetreault's framework's rich potential in examining, for example, US women's studies faculty's thinking (Tetreault, 1985) and history textbooks (Tetreault, 1986a) as well as textbooks in South Africa (Wills, 2016). Tetreault's model is useful not only in generating ways to review the substantive material that constitutes history, but also to interrogate what types of concerns, questions, and concepts constitute historical knowledge. This seems to meet historian Scott's requirements for the task facing feminist historians as explained in an interview: "It had long been said that feminist history wasn't simply about adding women to the body of knowledge we call history, but was about critically engaging that history so as to change not just its contents, but its questions and conceptualisations" (Hesford and Diedrich, 2014, p. 199).

To use Tetreault's mid-1980s framework in answering Question 1A, I adapted some of her language, given my understanding of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Saar, 2021) and other more recent feminist engagements with history textbooks and teaching (Woyshner and Schocker, 2015; Watson-Canning, 2019). On the next page, for ease of reference while reading this chapter, I include my adapted version of Tetreault's feminist framework as Figure 3.3. (reproduced from p.68). Thereafter, I include a copy of the flow diagram of my DBE lesson sequence as Figure 4.1 (reproduced from p.80) to facilitate following my analytic application of Tetreault's framework to data collated from diverse DBE activities.

Figure 3.3 Tetreault's Feminist Phase Framework – (adapted from Tetreault, 1985, 1986a). This was discussed in detail in Chapter 3.7

TETREAULT'S FEMINIST PHASE MODEL FRAMEWORK, as ADAPTED (Tetreault, 1985b, 1986a)	
1 Male History	• Male history is universal history
2 Compensatory History	• View of history unchanged • Some women who fit male norm of greatness included
3 Bifocal History	• Binary view of public and private / male and female • Focus on women as a homogenous group • Focus on women's oppression
4 Feminist History	• Re-think how history is viewed: embrace new categories; regard new aspects of women's lives as significant knowledge in history • Public and private on a continuum in women's lives • Women studied in their particularity, and in their historical context • Intersectional* lens used to study overlap of gender and race, class, age, etc in women's lives • Interdisciplinary** view of knowledge required to study all aspects of women's lives
5 Holistic, Relational History* **	• Holistic view of human history • Public and private on a continuum in all people's lives • Intersectional* lens used to study overlap of gender and race, class, age, etc in people's lives • Interdisciplinary** view of knowledge required to study all aspects of people's lives
* Tetreault's 1985-6 term was 'pluralistic' ** Tetreault's term was 'multidisciplinary' *** Tetreault's term was 'Multi-focal, Relational History' though she does use 'holistic' in examining that phase	

Figure 4.1 Flow diagram of DBE lesson sequence. This was discussed in detail in Chapter 4.



To examine the evidence generated by my students during the DBE, I chose to collate each successive activity's voluminous data into distinct pages in one spreadsheet, and then to code their responses to see what recurring themes I could construct based on evidence collated across all activities. As my AR study was qualitative, richer responses more illustrative of students' understandings of events in Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s were identified for analysis in answer to Question 1A. My engagement was informed throughout by Tetreault's framework. In examining the various forms of data holistically in this way, I was able to generate points of comparison on the same or related issues by individual students across different activities, and between the two groups of students, namely, Group 1: Yolande, Toni, Freye, and Delilah (initially absent due to exposure to COVID-19, and again not with them when they drafted their final *Textbook Entry*), and Group 2: Veronica, Max, Indigo, and Jane.

Student articulations and writing across all enquiry activities were categorised according to Tetreault's framework, and they will be examined using that sequentially from Phase 1 through to 5. Tetreault in an extended women's studies seminar with faculty found their thinking was pitched at several phases at once (Tetreault, 1985, p. 382) rather than as progressing from Phase 1 to 5 in a linear fashion. Later in this chapter, I examine the non-linearity some of my students manifest in their responses during the DBE.

5.1 Tetreault's Phase 1: Male History and Phase 2: Compensatory History

The DBE commenced with students recording their responses to four embodiments of the dominant narrative regarding how legalised bus segregation was brought to an end in Montgomery, Alabama. The material comprised extracts from: one standard US textbook; one composite extract by a historian based on a range of widely-used US textbooks; their own textbook, and selected frames from a graphic nonfiction 1957 publication[23], the year after buses were desegregated. The intention was to provide students with a reference point for later comparison with documents centring Black women in accounts of the ending of bus segregation. As the series of lessons unfolded, students voiced their disquiet with the dominant narrative depicted in the above-mentioned texts. It was evident they saw that account as either ignoring the various women whose actions were simply left out – what Tetreault would term Male History, or as erroneously including selective women's contribution – akin to what Tetreault would term Compensatory History (Tetreault, 1985, p. 368). In Tetreault's

[23] These four documents are included as Appendix B.

framework, Phase 1: Male History presents men as the actors in history, so male-centred history is universalised as history.

Scarcely an advance on that, Phase 2: Compensatory History considers from an androcentric perspective which noteworthy women contributed according to "male norms of excellence or greatness", for example, to "reform movements" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 367). Students readily noted the absence altogether of all the Black women (Tetreault's Male History) except for Parks (Tetreault's Compensatory History) in the textbook narratives. The *mis*-representation of Parks as someone who was just too tired to get up from her seat on 2 December 1956 was repeatedly remarked on by students during subsequent activities. In an animated fashion, they challenged the dominant narrative's depiction of the Black men of Montgomery - under the ostensible leadership of Martin Luther King Jr - as responsible for securing their aim following the passive, silent, *in*action of the allegedly tired Parks, which somehow led to a Supreme Court ruling outlawing bus segregation. In Extract 1 from the plenary discussion, students unpack the textbooks' portrayal of Parks.

Extract 1 from Class Discussion Post *Silent Conversation* (Code: Post SC - D)

Turns:

1.	*Max:*	*and she also didn't necessarily play the role they said she played* *which is a kind of difficult thing to contest because it's like - obviously it's bad* *but there's so many Black women left out* *so like please put it in* *But now they told my story wrong - it's frustrating in that way because it's so -*
2.	*Freye:*	*She's misrepresented*
3.	*Jane:*	*She wasn't erased from the story but a lot of what she did was erased from the story*
4.	*Toni:*	*And she was very much cast as a specific character* *right down to like the way she spoke, or I mean didn't speak [laughs]…*
5.	*Yolande:*	*She was portrayed as playing quite like a passive role - she just like didn't want to*
	get	*up and that's like -*
6.	*Max:*	*And she's so quiet and silent* *and I'm like she's so quiet and silent because no one ever let her speak!* [laughs]
7.	*Jane:*	*I mean a lot of the narrative that we're told is that she refused to get up and then the buses were desegregated I think* [laughs]
8.	*Several:*	[laugh]
9.	*Jane:*	*You realise how wrong that was and how much more went into it*
10.	*Max:*	*And then that one sentence in the textbook where it's like Parks's case in court and then the Supreme Court decision and it's like it's a separate -* *it's wrong*
11.	*Several*	[several exclaiming] *it's wrong*

Regarding the exclusion of Parks's prior activism and her flawed presentation in the textbooks, Max (Turn 1) comments that while Parks was not omitted, she "didn't necessarily play the role

they said she played". Freye concurs (Turn 2), claiming Parks was "misrepresented", as does Jane (Turn 3), noting that while Parks was not "erased" from the dominant narrative, "a lot of what she did" was. Toni's reference to Parks as not speaking (Turn 4) is picked up by Max refuting that Parks was not "silent" so much as silenced (Turn 6), leading to much hilarity as evidently students recalled that the Black men who seized control of the bus boycott after the first successful day would not let Parks speak, instead presenting her as a silent symbol of their struggle. Yolande (Turn 5) interprets this depiction of Parks as "passive" given it was rooted in her remaining seated. Jane (Turn 9) shows she has learned "how much more went into" securing the ending of bus segregation than Parks's refusal "to get up" (Turn 7). Max (Turn 10) reinforces her earlier claim (Turn 1) regarding how the dominant narrative has inaccurately depicted Parks's role by noting their own textbook's conflation of Parks's legal case and the *Browder v Gayle* Supreme Court ruling which ended bus segregation. It would appear that students clearly dispute the veracity of the textbook narrative which even when it includes a woman like Parks as worthy of mention, it misrepresents her in her totality – barely pitching that narrative at the level of Compensatory History, as so much of it is "wrong" (Turn 11)[24].

[24] The theme of 'Erasure and Misrepresentation' will be examined more directly below in Chapter 6, as the focus here is on mapping student responses onto Tetreault's framework.

Students also questioned how the dominant narrative constructed Parks's image, as is evident in Extract 2 below from the plenary discussion after the *Silent Conversation.*

Extract 2 from class discussion Post *Silent Conversation* (Code: Post SC - D)

Turns:

12.	*Jane:*	*She kinda like – she birthed it – like she started it?*
13.	*Indigo:*	*Like she incited the actions as well – because it's very interesting – if you look at the fact that she wasn't actually allowed to speak and wasn't allowed to motivate and inspire people with her words* *(Indigo is referring here to the public meeting where the male-led MIA usurped Robinson and Parks' initiatives, also denying Parks an opportunity to speak)*
14.	*Teacher:*	*Are you comfortable with that - her being called the mother?*
15.	*Max:*	*It's very um - in some ways it can be so patronising?*
16.	*Several:*	[talking at same time] *Yah / Yah exactly*
17.	*Yolande:*	*The role of a woman - she couldn't be like the leader of the civil rights movement - she had to be the* mother *of the civil rights movement*
18.	*Toni:*	*But also the fact that we have a different idea now of the word mother and motherhood to what they had then [..] and then that's a factor that's even more patronising - that generates the idea that okay a mother's role would be to be quiet in the background - not the leader - not the face*
19.	*Max:*	*Yah [speaking at same time] it solidifies her status as a symbol not as an activist. To say someone is like the mother of the movement is to give all these sort of connotations of its very - it's very like poetic and very kind of wrapped up in all sorts of imagery. To call someone a leader and an activist - it's paying due respect to the role that they played instead of trying to like call them some kind of icon or symbol. It's not bad to do that to people but sometimes it can be a bit much especially if you haven't paid them the respect they deserve [..]*
20.	*Toni:*	*And mother specifically [..]*
21.	*Max:*	*Yah*
22.	*Toni:*	*[…] It* separates *her from the movement - this is the birth - she's the mother of the movement - that's something else - she's not like* in *the movement - yah*

Here, Max suggests (Turn 15) that portraying Parks as the "mother of the movement" was "patronising". Toni (Turn 18) insightfully takes this further by saying it would have been even more condescending at the time when a mother was expected "to be quiet and in the background", clearly showing her grasp of the necessity of distinguishing the use of the term "mother" at the time from its current usage. Despite not having been exposed to these insights formally, Toni's distinction is insightfully resonant of what in diverse ways Barton and Levstik (2008, p. 209),[25] and historians Rubin (2017) and Smith (2020),[26] all point to as the need to

[25] Barton and Levstik suggest that "current understandings never fully match the meanings that language carried in its own time" (2008, p. 209)

[26] In 'The Emergence of Conservatism as a Political Concept in the United States before the Civil War', Smith examines the shifting meanings connoted by that term over time: "In a sense, my approach here is to interrogate conservative as one of those malleable key words that offer a way of measuring the continuities and transformations of American politics." (2020)

distinguish between how a term was used in the past from its current usage. Rubin articulates her concern with the "illusion" that we simply "share a language" with those in the past:

> But can any historical analysis be imagined that uses solely the concepts available at the time? Any claim that we share a language through shared words […] is an illusion […] Even words that seem familiar have had very different meanings at different times, and are thus no more useful than neologisms unless we study that historicity. (Rubin, 2017, p. 240)

Toni here is demonstrating exceptional disciplinary thinking, differentiating their present use of language from the connotations those same terms may have carried in the past.

Furthermore, in Extract 2 above from their plenary discussion, Max (Turn 19) insightfully elaborates that instead of "paying due respect" to Parks by depicting her as "a leader and an activist", Parks is shown instead as "some kind of icon or symbol", her choice of terms clearly contrasting the dynamic "activist" with the passive "symbol" that Parks was presented as in the textbooks. Toni (Turn 22) intriguingly considers the nature of birth to suggest that the appellation of "mother" divided Parks from the movement as it conveyed that she was "separate" from it rather than part of it. This discussion (Extract 2) demonstrates how students during this plenary are able to reflect impressively on the very meaning of the terms used to describe Parks when constructing the textbook accounts, interrogating their creation of a particular *mis*-representation of Parks.[27]

It was evident that students distanced themselves from the version of the Montgomery story portrayed in what, using Tetreault, I identify as Phase 1: Male History and Phase 2: Compensatory History. I will next examine student contributions that can variously be pitched at Phase 3: Bifocal History, Phase 4: Feminist History or Phase 5: Holistic History on Tetreault's feminist framework. My discussion will be grounded in how students speak and write about the various Black women who they claim were erased by or incorrectly depicted in the dominant textbook narrative.

5.2 Tetreault's Phase 3: Bifocal History

Group 2 – Max, Indigo, Veronica, and Jane – critiqued the textbook narrative as discussed above, and an examination of their articulations and writing during various lesson activities, with a particular focus on their work on Claudette Colvin, will, as I demonstrate in this discussion, situate their thinking as largely characterised by what Tetreault terms Phase 3: Bifocal History. As Tetreault explains that binary way of seeing:

[27] Student reflections on the construction of history for textbooks is considered in greater depth in Chapter 6.

> Emphasis is on the misogyny of the human experience […] The paradoxes of women's existence are overlooked with this emphasis on oppression […] Too much emphasis on women's oppression perpetuates a patriarchal framework presenting women as primarily passive, reacting only to the pressures of a sexist society. (Tetreault, 1985, p. 374)

Women's apparent passivity is conveyed in the question: "How did notable and ordinary women respond to their oppression?" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 369). Several of Group 2's articulations appear to focus on the portrayal of women in stereotypical ways, as evident next in this extract from an earlier plenary discussion.

Extract 1 from Class Discussion during *Initial Introductions* (Code: II – D)

Jane: *I made a note the other day about this one textbook when we read it […] and when they called her 'tired' and 'angry', I just said: "The description of Parks fits with the stereotype that passionate Black women standing up for themselves are 'angry'". The textbook like positively plays with that stereotype.*

Here Jane clearly critiques the textbook's dismissive portrayal of the one woman it does include in its account, showing she fully distances herself from its flawed Compensatory History approach. Jane is so distressed by the textbook's portrayal of Parks that she inadvertently forgoes the chance (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 78) to focus on its particular *mis*representation of Parks given the complete absence of "anger" in Parks's defiant yet reserved refusal to vacate her bus seat evident in the documents she has encountered in the DBE. It appears that Jane feels compelled to find a way to make the documentary evidence fit her "all-pervasive" (Conway, 2006, p. 15) prior beliefs regarding the "stereotype" she believes is deployed to dismiss women's activism. Affected by "powerful emotional attachments" (Middendorf *et al.*, 2015, p. 171) to notions that she internalised prior to the DBE about how women are dismissively portrayed in society, Jane sees in the text what she expects to see: evidence to confirm her strongly-held views on how women were depicted in the past, thus partially "opening up" (no date) the textbook's portrayal of androcentric history. Later, Jane repeats this assertion with regard to Colvin, a very different activist, using the same terms.

Extract 1 from Group 2's discussion while drafting their *Prompted Poem* (Code: PP Gr 2 - D)

Jane: It's a passionate Black woman being labelled emotional and angry

I had in part curated documents for the DBE precisely to throw into relief clear delineations between the diverse Black women – like Parks and Colvin – who fought to end bus segregation so that my students could perceive each role-player in her particularity, rather than as an amorphous member of a homogenous group. Such generalised articulations – "emotional and angry" – fit the specifications of Bifocal History, where "personality traits that have been

traditionally ascribed to women" are "perceived as deficient" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 369). Even while wholeheartedly rejecting such stereotypes, and emphatically critiquing the textbooks' uncritical rehashing of them, these comments inadvertently articulate an undifferentiated grasp of Black women in generalised terms. Tetreault's comment on this tendency is apposite: "One of the problems with this general analysis of women's experience is that it eventually leads to reiterating the sexual stereotypes scholars are trying to overcome" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 373). Jane's emotional reaction to what she perceives to be the denigration of all women in similar ways appears to partially impede her speaking to evidence in the documents that distinguishes their individual activism. Her view of the distinguishing features of each Black woman's activism is affected by a "cultural parallax" (Woyshner and Schocker, 2015) which determines that she sees all women as similarly denigrated by the male-gaze. Furthermore, Tetreault's Bifocal History retains the male-focused division between the "public" and "private" spheres that is evident in the textbooks' centring of men while sidelining women. As Tetreault explains further, "Because the public sphere has been internalized as more valuable than the private sphere, there is a tendency to slip back into thinking of women as inferior and subordinate" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 373). Seeing women as "inferior and subordinate" was never Group 2's intention, and they remain throughout the DBE wholeheartedly receptive to my centring Black women in events as a way of exploring the teaching of women's history. However, paradoxically, their strongly-held prior beliefs compel them to condemn the generalised oppression of all women as a group, somewhat hindering their fully integrating key evidence from the documents of women's differentiated particularity.

Before examining Group 2's *Prompted Poem* it is pertinent to note that I intended the activity to provide students with the creative opportunity to give voice to Colvin's own articulation of her experience of what led to the ending of bus segregation. I was employing a strategy derived from the educational website, Facing History and Ourselves (*Found Poems*, no date), by providing selected extracts from several chapters of Hoose's biography – which he titled: *Claudette Colvin: Twice Towards Justice* – as evocative prompts in this exercise. To understand what Group 2 are referring to in their discussions and writing, it is instructive to look at some of the extracts from Hoose's biography that they draw on. In his descriptions, Hoose clearly distinguishes between how the white male Montgomery authorities treat Colvin following her bus protest on the one hand, and how the Black community and civil rights activists respond to her actions on the other hand. In Hoose's Chapter Four, the students read how Colvin recounts the white bus driver as saying, '"I've had trouble with that 'thing' before.

He called me a 'thing'" (2009, chap. four). They also read Colvin recounting that '"More cops looked up when we came in and started calling me 'Thing' and 'Whore'" (2009, chap. four). By way of contrast, students later read in Chapter Six how Hoose clearly explains why Colvin was not chosen as the face of a bus boycott despite Robinson, the leader of the Woman's Political Council (WPC) which had long planned a bus boycott, vouching for her appropriateness. This is evident in the next extract:

Lines from Hoose: Chapter Six

1. Was she too young? Could a rebellious teen be controlled? Who was this girl anyway?
2. Doubts crept in. A swarm of adjectives began to buzz around Claudette Colvin,
3. words like "emotional" and "uncontrollable" and "profane" and "feisty."
4. The bottom line was, as Jo Ann Robinson tactfully put it, that
5. "opinions differed where Claudette was concerned."
6. E. D. Nixon later explained, "I had to be sure that I had somebody I could win with."
7. So the leaders of the burgeoning Montgomery bus revolt turned away from Claudette Colvin. (2009, chap. six)

It is evident that key civil rights activist Nixon (Line 6) was determined to ensure that the spark for the boycott came from someone he "could win with". Those in the Black community dismissing Colvin as "emotional", "uncontrollable", "profane" and "feisty" (Line 3) could not be ignored by Nixon, as he anticipated they would be reluctant to support a boycott fronted by what they saw as a sassy, combative, irreverent teenager they could not control. Group 2 in their *Prompted Poem* included below embrace the opportunity afforded them to demonstrate their affective concern for Colvin by paying tribute to her activism which has been fully erased by the textbooks' Male History approach. In doing so they clearly draw on what they have gleaned from Hoose's text to evocatively demonstrate their "care for" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, pp. 234–237) the defiant teen.

Group 2's Complete *Prompted Poem* on Claudette Colvin (Code: PP Gr 2 – W)

Lines:

1. *Claudette Colvin*
2. *Have you ever heard the name Claudette Colvin?*
3. *Refused to give up her seat*
4. *'feisty' and 'uncontrollable'*
5. *This is my constitutional right*
6. *'emotional' and 'profane'*
7. *A little girl worthy of ridicule*
8. *Ostracised but not worth the movement*
9. *'a thing'*
10. *The thing that changed Montgomery*

It is evident that in starting their poem with "Have you ever heard the name Claudette Colvin?" (Line 2) that Group 2 are directly addressing the erasure of Colvin's activism in the way the

history of Montgomery has come to be written by textbooks in both Male History and Compensatory History. They then directly quote one key line from Colvin: “This is my constitutional right” (Line 5), which is what she defiantly declared while white policemen were dragging her off the bus – indicating that she knew that even in terms of Montgomery’s segregationist bylaws she had the right to remain seated if there were no empty seats available further back in the bus. To this extent, then, Group 2 are embracing the opportunity afforded them to give voice to Colvin’s own lived experience. It is apparent that they recognise and applaud Colvin’s refusal to relinquish her seat which resulted in her being the one who “changed Montgomery” (Line 10). This was their own formulation, and not taken from Hoose’s text. They appear to have based it on Reverend Johnson’s praise of the young teen at the time, as recounted later by Colvin to her biographer: “And I think you just brought the revolution to Montgomery” (2009, chap. 4). This fits with Tetreault’s Bifocal History regarding a focus on what women did in “areas traditionally dominated by men” (1985, p. 369) – in this case, in taking a public, political stand against oppression, fully distancing their writing from both Male and Compensatory History.

In their writing, Group 2 demonstrate careful close reading of Hoose’s text, picking up on the pejorative language used to diminish her in order to voice their disapproval of how the young teen was treated. In doing so, they integrate key aspects of Colvin’s experience into their writing. What is of interest is their choice not to distinguish between the clearly abusive white bus driver – who demanded Colvin give up her seat, telling the similarly offensive white policemen that he had trouble with “that thing” before – and those well-intentioned Black men like the activist Nixon who made no such insulting comments, only doubting her credentials as the “face” of a successful bus boycott in an admittedly conservative Christian society. In the Hoose extracts we read together, the white policemen, like the white bus driver, clearly sexually harassed Colvin, even guessing her bra size and making lewd comments about her body (Hoose, 2009, chap. six), all issues which deeply troubled Group 2, evident in their use of the term “a thing” (Line 9). Disturbed by the insulting terms used to depict Colvin, they do not value the way the documentary evidence distinguishes between the racialised sexual harassment of Colvin, and Nixon’s evident concerns regarding Colvin as the fitting face of civil rights action. While showing their evident disapproval of how Colvin was treated, this generalised view of the homogenous nature of women’s oppression (Tetreault, 1985, pp. 373–374) again places their writing in Tetreault’s Bifocal History.

To further understand Group 2's writing, it is insightful to examine parts of their discussion on how best to use the terms they do draw on from Hoose's in Extract 2 below:

Extract 2 from Group 2's discussion while drafting their *Prompted Poem* (Code: PP Gr 2 - D)

Turns:

1.	*Veronica:*	*Maybe we could use some of the adjectives that - the negative adjectives that they used to describe her like: 'emotional', 'uncontrollable', and 'feisty'- like some of those*
2.	*Jane:*	*or we could use the adjectives that they used to describe her to describe how they ditched her*
3.	*Veronica:*	*ohhh*
4.	*Jane:*	*so, we say the way they ditched her was 'nasty' or whatever*
5.	*Indigo:*	*So, she was 'emotional' but in like a positive way - it was a good thing that she was 'emotional' about this because firstly its natural to be 'emotional' about being called all of these things and treated the way she was. But also, she was passionate and she like took stands*
6.	*Jane:*	*Again - it's a passionate Black woman being labelled 'emotional' and 'angry'*
7.	*Indigo:*	*And then we can - I think we can list the ways she was described and then go and like debunk it and be like 'feisty' - what? - dadadada*
8.	*Max:*	*yah*
9.	*Indigo:*	*And that way we'd be showing what she did - and then if we had time afterwards, we can go and do like a response to that*
10.	*Jane:*	*It could kind of be like: 'emotional' – no, she was passionate, or fighting for a cause sort of thing*
11.	*Indigo:*	*yah*
12.	*Jane:*	*'uncontrollable' - she …*
13.	*Indigo:*	*Or we can be like - she did all that - but she's just 'emotional' or she's just 'feisty'*
14.	*Veronica:*	*I feel like that sounds better*
15.	*Indigo:*	*We can kind of make it like a sarcastic poem and be like -*
16.	*Jane:*	*She cried when she heard people use the N-word - but she was just 'emotional'*
17.	*Veronica:*	*Or stood up for what she believed in, but she was just 'uncontrollable'*
18.	*Indigo:*	*Yah exactly - let's look at what those things are*
19.	*Max:*	*Let's get some key phrases from what you just said - what you said was really good Like she stood up for what she believed in; next line - 'uncontrollable' We can put those things in context*

In the extract above, Group 2 discuss in depth how Colvin was seen as too "emotional" (Turns 1; 5; 6; 10; 13; 16), "feisty" (Turns 1; 7; 13), and "uncontrollable" (Turns 1; 12; 17; 19) to merit inclusion by the Montgomery civil rights organisers. Their poem implies that their answer to Tetreault's Bifocal History question: "Who oppressed women and how were they oppressed?" (1985, p. 369) would be that in this context all men – from Nixon to the white male authorities, oppressed Calvin. From Group 2's binary perspective, it is not necessary to distinguish between the white male authorities' deliberate degrading of Colvin with the very real concerns the highly seasoned civil rights activist Nixon had for rejecting Colvin as a candidate for their cause. Hence, they segue from the descriptors used by the local Black

community (Extract 2 above) to her sexual objectification by white authorities as a "thing" (Extract 3 below):

Extract 3 from Group 2's discussion while drafting their *Prompted Poem* (Code: PP Gr 2 - D)

Turns:

20.	*Indigo:*	*Oh, and also, we can call her a 'thing' because she's called that* *So we can get something she did that's really great and then we can like oh, but she's just a 'thing'*
21.	*Jane:*	*yah*
22.	*Max:*	*The line that I've written down here is - 'A thing' - the thing that changed America*
23.	*Indigo:*	*But also let's be careful that we don't like to over-emphasise*
24.	*Jane:*	*I don't think we should say America - we should say 'the thing that changed Montgomery*'

In this extract, Indigo says "we can call her a 'thing' because she's called that" (Turn 20) but without drawing attention to the vastly different context in which the white bus driver and policemen disparaged Colvin on the bus and at the police station where they took her after arresting her, all the while making explicitly lewd comments about her body. Crucially, Group 2 do not follow Max's insightful call (Extract 2: Turn 19) to "put those things in context", echoing Veronica's suggestion (Extract 2: Turn 17) to state that Colvin "stood up for what she believed in". Furthermore, despite Indigo perceptively suggesting they "get something she did that's really great" to implicitly question Colvin being dismissed as just a "thing" (Turn 20), they ultimately ignore the specifics of her "great" actions in their poem. Group 2's *Prompted Poem*, therefore, does not fully capture their own discursive insights.

This tension between their stated intention and their eventual writing – which fits within the parameters of Tetreault's Bifocal History – gave me pause for thought as I sought to understand that phenomenon. In terms of Tetreault's framework, Bifocal History retains the binary division between the male-dominated public sphere, and the private sphere to which women are expected to be largely confined. It is evident that Group 2 unwittingly revert to the dominant narrative's focus on the public sphere, unconsciously effacing Colvin's own perspective on her activism and its resulting fallout. Unintentionally, given their evident distaste for how Colvin is treated, Group 2 deal in the very "stereotypes" Jane so vehemently rejects elsewhere. This is despite Group 2 reading how Colvin herself claimed that personal events in her life informed both her activism and her eventual rejection by Nixon as the potential "face" of a bus boycott. They also read her recount quite distinctly how she was abused by the white male authorities. Yet evidence of a young teen's personal experience is not what they have come to value in studying school history, and they would need further scaffolding to value it here.

Furthermore, members of Group 2 elsewhere acknowledge and articulate their understanding that Nixon's decision not to sanction a boycott foregrounding Colvin – as advocated for by the WPC's Robinson – was based on multiple criteria. In this comment from a plenary discussion Jane clearly shows she understands the intersectional factors resulting in Colvin not being deemed suitable to spark a successful boycott:

Extract 3 from Post *Silent Conversation* Class Discussion (Code: Post SC - D)

Jane: *Like they say Colvin was poor and she lived in a bad area and her skin was darker and she was pregnant and she was younger and she faced a lot - many more different types of discrimination*

Neither here nor in their *Textbook Entry*[28] later do Group 2 think it necessary to mention that Colvin was seen as a poor fit by Nixon because she was a pregnant teenager, too young, too dark-skinned, and too poor to withstand the scrutiny of even the local Black population with their middle-class aspirations, let alone the disparaging racism of the broader white majority. Furthermore, as Group 2 elsewhere acknowledge, following Colvin being criticised by the local Black community for sporting corn-rows, and for her defiant attitude on the bus, the teen was taken advantage of and "impregnated" by an undisclosed older Black man, resulting in her getting pregnant. "Impregnated" was Veronica's term coined during the *Deeper Dive* plenary discussion into Colvin (Code CC – D), and was later used by Jane while debating what to include in their poem (Code: PP Gr 2 – D). In unintentionally turning away from the particularities of Colvin's impoverished, highly compromised, and vulnerable lived reality, Group 2's thinking is again situated in Tetreault's Phase 3, which conceives of women and men in "generalized terms" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 373). In Group 2's rendition, Colvin is portrayed as being dismissed by an unnamed corporate other, and is portrayed as the undifferentiated "emotional" and "profane" woman who is allegedly objectified by all as a "thing" (Line 9: PP Gr 2 - W).

Another illustration of members of Group 2's depiction of Black women as an undifferentiated group suffering objectification which places their writing within Bifocal History is Jane's response to a stimulus during the *Silent Conversation*, where students externalised their thinking by writing on and around documents, and one another's responses, without speaking, as the following excerpt makes clear.

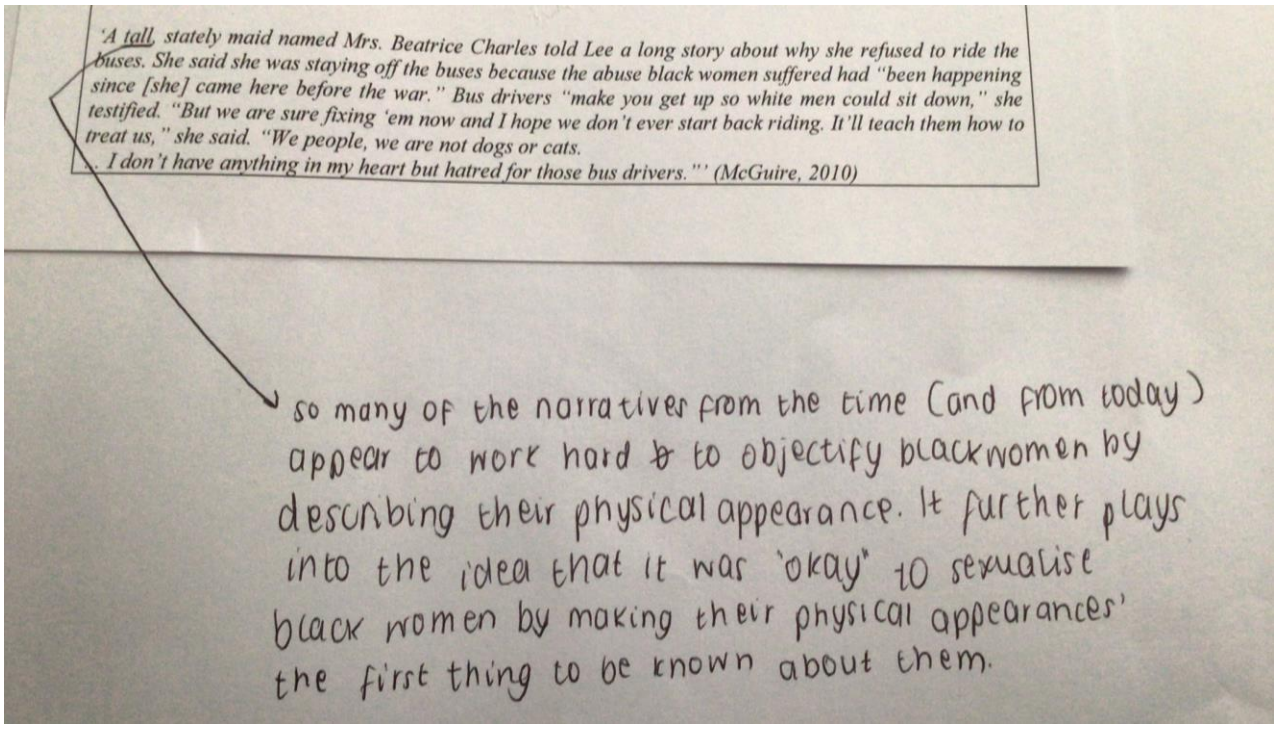
[28] Group 2's *Textbook Entry* is included as Appendix F and is discussed below in 5.3 and again in Chapter 6.

Extract 1 from *Silent Conversation* (Code: SC - DW)

Jane: *So many of the narratives from the time (and from today) appear to work hard to objectify black women by describing their physical appearance. It further plays into the idea that it was 'okay' to sexualise black women by making their physical appearances the first thing to be known about them.*

Of interest is the way Jane here implies no distinction between "narratives from the time" and "from today": she appears here to be fitting new evidence into her preconceived notion of the supposedly universal "objectification" of women. In looking at that evidence more closely, we find her comment provoked by the interviewer's description of bus boycotter Beatrice Charles as a "tall, stately maid", as Jane makes clear by drawing an arrow from the word 'tall' to her comment.

Image 4.1 Jane's writing in *Silent Conversation* in response to an extract centring a boycotter, Mrs Beatrice Charles in McGuire's *At the Dark End of the Street*



What Jane appears not to value in Charles's testimony at the time of the bus protest is the boycotter's own evocative portrayal of the "abuse black women suffered" on the buses leading to her refusal to ride on them as "We people, we are not dogs or cats". Viewing the documentary evidence affected by her prior belief regarding how all women were sexualised and objectified, Jane objects to the interviewer describing her as "tall" and "stately". Jane appears here to be alert to descriptions of women's "physical appearance" to confirm her preconception that any such categorisation – however tenuous – validates her projecting her own deeply held notions of how women were depicted then as now. This is not to suggest that Jane is deficient in any

way in her reading of the text. Acknowledging the alterity of the past through "perspective recognition" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, chap. 11) of past role-players was unfortunately not one of the disciplinary concepts explicitly focused on in preparation for the DBE, and as part of my ongoing AR reflection I came to realise this as an oversight on my part, as acknowledged in Chapter 7.2. Black women of Montgomery's quoted testimony, featured here as documentary evidence in the *Silent Conversation*, is not what strikes Jane as noteworthy. I had intended that their eyewitness accounts would uncover Black women's long-erased determination to ensure the boycott succeeded. Instead, preoccupied as she is by her own sociocultural preconceptions of how women then as now are sexually degraded through descriptions of their "physical appearance", Jane unintentionally misses the very salient traces of the roots of Black women's activism, and even that activism itself. Keen to voice her profound distaste for women's oppression, Jane unwittingly renders Charles as the perennial, voiceless, oppressed woman Tetreault portrays in Bifocal History.

Furthermore, Group 2's explanations for the subordination of the Black women to the Black men in determining who became the "face" of the boycott (Parks not Colvin, despite her earlier bus protest), who addressed bus boycott meetings (Black men not women, as Parks was denied the right to speak) and who called for the boycott (King not Robinson, despite her long-term planning, and her organising the printing and distribution of pamphlets announcing the boycott) inadvertently overlooks the particularities which accounted in detail for these events. This again fits Tetreault's depiction of Bifocal History: "In the main, it emphasizes men thinking and women being thought about" (1985, p. 374). This reversion to women as passive is close to the misrepresentation of Parks as the silent, passive, accidental trigger of the bus boycott which members of Group 2 earlier rejected, as was discussed in examining their disaffection from the textbook narrative above. Discomfited by this, I was led to question what might explain their apparent framing of their discussions and writing in such a way as to not match up to their own professed thinking elsewhere on the topic. It appeared as if in light of the strongly-held affective preconceptions they brought to class, they were partially resisting learning new ways to write about women's history, unwittingly ignoring the particularities they had previously noted in the documentary evidence they had encountered. Reflecting on this, I realised I needed to understand how that was possible given their own enthusiastic embrace of the opportunity to explore women's history and their evident disaffection for both Male History and Compensatory History.

Further disquiet arose when I transcribed Group 2's summary dismissal of how the fifteen-year-old Colvin became pregnant in the first place. As context, in Extract 1 below, as action researcher in my own classroom, I encouraged Group 2's Veronica to answer her own earlier question posed during the *Initial Introductions* regarding which "man" Colvin was referring to there:

Extract 1 from Class Discussion during Claudette Colvin: Deeper Dive (Code: CC - D)

1.	*Teacher:*	*So, Veronica – Can you answer your own earlier question?*
2.	*Veronica:*	*I think she's speaking about the man who impregnated her*
3.	*Teacher:*	*Yah - so what makes you think that?*
4.	*Veronica:*	*I can't remember the exact wording - but I think she said something about being taken advantage of and obviously he was much older than she was*
5.	*Teacher:*	*So, I'm stirring here - Freye what does it sound like to you?*
6.	*Freye:*	*Statutory rape*

It is evident here that Veronica (Turn 4) is fully cognisant of the way Colvin's pregnancy came about, as she recalls Colvin in the *Initial Introductions* saying she was "taken advantage of" by a man who was "much older than she was". I posed a follow up question to Freye, as during their break earlier I had overheard her bemoan the way rape was presented as seduction in novels several of them had read. Picking up on that, I wanted Freye to express her grasp of the documents by drawing on her prior understanding. Without a moment's hesitation, Freye called out the man's actions as "statutory rape". I then explained that I had verified that in the 1950s sex with a minor would indeed have been termed statutory rape in that context, so Freye's use of the legal definition was entirely appropriate.

However, despite this earlier plenary discussion, Group 2 later decide at length to discount how Colvin became pregnant altogether, as is evident in their group discussion below in Extract 4:

Extract 4 from Group 2's discussion while drafting their *Prompted Poem* (Code: PP Gr 2 - D)

Turns:

25.	*Jane:*	*And then do you guys want to mention the man who impregnated her?* *But I mean I just – I hate that that has become so much of a story*
26.	*Indigo*	*Yah, I agree with you I don't think that we should mention it*
27.	*Jane*	*It's so irrelevant – I mean yah okay that wasn't the reason - the fact that she got pregnant wasn't even the reason - she was already being ridiculed way before that happened - so it's really irrelevant*
28.	*Max*	*No, I also don't think it's very relevant – Cos I just think -* *She mentions – she says like by time that happened like when they picked Parks – I was already out of the running. And me being pregnant meant that I would never get back in.*
29.	*Jane*	*I think it's either been added to the narrative just because of like shock value: oh, you hear about that and you like people then like oh let me read more you know which is awful, but I mean realistically we all do it and um also so that it can diminish her – because she's kind of like – oh well she got pregnant.* *She allowed herself to be in that situation.*

Here Indigo (Turn 26) and Max (Turn 28) dispute the relevance of Colvin's pregnancy. It appears that Max (Turn 28) is somewhat confused by the chronology of events – despite my encouraging students to plot events on a loose-leaf timeline throughout – as transpires in a subsequent plenary where she queries this. Colvin's refusal to relinquish her seat was on 2 March 1955, and her case was initially heard on 6 May 1955. Based on when Colvin's son was born – 29 March 1956 – the incident leading to her pregnancy must have occurred after her court appearance in May 1955, and probably in June 1955. It was only much later, on 2 December 1955 – after Parks refused to give up her seat – that she, not Colvin, was chosen as the face of the bus boycott. While historian Theoharis is adamant that "Several of Montgomery's civil rights leaders had decided months before they learned of her pregnancy not to pursue her case", she also concedes: "But now they had more reason to distance themselves" (Theoharis, 2021, p. 76).

Group 2's interaction above (Extract 4) disturbed me as Colvin's bus activism and later participation in the *Browder v Gayle* case was absent from all three textbook narratives the class had studied, and clearly absent from the much-publicised graphic nonfiction version published in 1957. It was also not central to my presentation of the documentary evidence. When Jane proclaims (Turn 25): "I hate that that has become so much of a story" she is unintentionally ignoring what she has previously learned in the DBE: that Colvin's bus protest – let alone her pregnancy – was not in the dominant textbook narrative at all, so there is no evidence there of it having become "so much of a story". Jane's assertion not only misrepresents the documentary evidence – but also how she encountered that evidence, as it was not at all the focus of the documents I compiled for the DBE. Indeed, the students' initial

realisation that a young girl had refused to relinquish her bus seat nine months before Parks had astounded them precisely because all of them except for Toni, as indicated in her journal (Code J–Toni–W), had no notion of it previously. Even textbooks not included in their selection that do mention Colvin's bus action do not speak to her pregnancy at all. The text they were using to draft their *Prompted Poem* was clearly a detailed biography based in large part on lengthy interviews with Colvin herself where she chose to speak to the definitive impact her pregnancy had on how she felt those in the civil rights movement in Montgomery perceived her. What firmly situates Group 2's interaction within Bifocal History is how they in this particular respect inadvertently discount Colvin's own voice in narrating her version of events. They unintentionally stray from Colvin's account in Hoose's text of her own lived experience in articulating what is "relevant" (Turns 27; 28) in telling her story. It is apparent that considering pregnancy and childbirth as key information to include in a historical narrative is outside the scope of what they are accustomed to after years of immersion in Male History which values men's public lives, only including, as Compensatory History, those exceptional women who from a male viewpoint appear to achieve in the public sphere. Tetreault acknowledges this by categorising detailed concerns with women's personal and private lives as new forms of knowledge quite outside the scope of Bifocal History which still largely centres men's lives in the public sphere (Tetreault, 1985, pp. 373–375). By dismissing the importance of Colvin's pregnancy, Jane (Turns 25; 27), Indigo (Turn 26), and Max (Turn 28) are unwittingly indicating that they do not view the "activities of women in the private sphere" as significant (1985, p. 375).

To understand Extract 4 from Group 2's discussion while crafting their *Prompted Poem*, I find that Berger's *Ways of Seeing* as referenced by Woyshner and Schocker (Berger, 2008, pp. 8–9; Woyshner and Schocker, 2015, p. 447) has resonance, as Group 2 appear to resist associating themselves with the significance of Colvin's teen pregnancy, and by so doing, acquiescing – at least, in their minds – in attempts to "diminish her" (Turn 29). As Berger writes: "The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe [...] We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves" (2008, pp. 8–9). Berger invites me to engage with my students' responses to discomfiting evidence as informed by their "looking at the relations between things" and themselves. It is evident that Group 2's resistance to writing Colvin's "impregnation" and pregnancy into their work arises from their evident affective discomfort at examining the connection between those events and themselves, as they see themselves as becoming complicit in the conservative 1950s judgement of Colvin –

intended to denigrate her – if they note those events in their writing. They contend that drawing attention to Colvin's pregnancy would imply that they judged her for allowing herself to land up in that compromising position: "oh well she got pregnant" (Turn 29). According to Ellsworth (1997, p. 57), this "hatred or fear of one's own implication in what's being taught" results in an "active yet unconscious refusal" to integrating disruptive knowledge. In Kumashiro's terms (2000, p. 43), they "unconsciously" push back against noting evidence that may portray them as complicit with any form of oppressive behaviour. It would appear that Group 2's motivation is clearly laudable in that they are determined to distance themselves from any condemnation of the young teen. Inadvertently, though, they suppress Colvin's own centring of the role her unplanned pregnancy played in her being shunned by the civil rights community of Montgomery.

What is more astounding is Jane's insistence (Turn 29) that the "story" of Colvin's pregnancy has been added "because of like shock value" as if it were included to sensationalise the events. That is not the tone Hoose adopts at all: instead, he lets Colvin do the talking, and ventures no opinion on how she got pregnant. McGuire's *At the Dark End of the Street* – the only other source students encountered which mentioned Colvin's pregnancy – did so without sensation in the context of elaborating on the multiple ways in which Nixon suggested Colvin would be unsuitable as the face of a bus boycott. It is evident that they knew this, as was previously indicated in a plenary discussion (Extract 3, Code: Post SC – D) where Jane acknowledged Colvin faced "many more different types of discrimination", as detailed here by McGuire in the extracts they studied:

> For starters, an unwed pregnant teenager might be a divisive symbol for a community where fissures of class, religion, and color already presented tough challenges. Her stomach was beginning to swell, Nixon argued […] Colvin's dark skin color and working-class status made her a political liability in certain parts of the black community. Colvin's mother was a maid, and her father did yard work. They lived in one of the poorest sections of town. (McGuire, 2010, p. 91)

In light of VanSledright and Maggioni's work on epistemic cognition as discussed in Chapter 2.1, I would suggest that Group 2 appear to revert to their own interpretations of the discomfiting evidence they wish to ignore as it does not "cohere with [their] worldview", resulting instead in "willy-nilly" deductions (VanSledright and Maggioni, 2016, p. 143). Disturbed as they are to be seen to denigrate Colvin should they reference her pregnancy, they distance themselves quite decisively from acknowledging it at all. Their rejection of the evidence that Nixon and others felt Colvin's teen pregnancy would make her a "divisive

symbol" (McGuire, 2010, p. 91) in the Black community is, however, not based on what in disciplinary terms are "sound criteria" at all. As VanSledright and Maggioni explain:

> A learner who commits himself to the belief that history is merely opinion may repeatedly dismiss accounts that do not cohere with his worldview. Such a move often reinforces the idea that a knower's subjectivity should be allowed to trump the potential value of struggling to make sense of particular objects from the past that challenge her existing viewpoint and that evidentiary support is thus little more than a personal choice […] Without pursuing interpretive decision criteria […] learners may draw the conclusion that knowers have license to interpret accounts willy-nilly. (VanSledright and Maggioni, 2016, pp. 142; 143)

It is evident that overwhelmed by their "personal, experience-based opinions" (VanSledright and Maggioni, 2016, p. 136) Group 2 rationalise their dismissal of Colvin's pregnancy as significant to their enquiry. Scott in an interview problematises the ahistorical fetishising of "experience" as if constituting self-evident or "transparent" truth (Hesford and Diedrich, 2014, p. 199) most instructively, reiterating her 1991 essay which postulates that "experience" needs to be "contested": "Experience is at once always already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted. What counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straightforward; it is always contested, and always therefore political" (Scott, 1991, p. 797). Group 2's rationalisations indicate in the first instance that they need further scaffolding in disciplinary literacy, and an awareness of how their affective responses to the evidence informs their decision to ignore aspects of it. Clearly, they are quite unaware that they are misapplying preconceptions which they acquired in their particular and unexamined social milieu. Instead, powerfully affected by their beliefs, they utilise those notions as if they are ahistorical truths, equally valid in the context of Montgomery in the 1950s as they deem them to be in their present context. As students – rather than historians – they are unaware of the need to contextualise their current notions as acquired – uncritically – in a particular environment that they "have been socialized into" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, p. 219). As Barton and Levstik explain regarding the necessity of contextualising our current "perspectives" historically:

> This is the recognition that our own perspectives depend on historical context: They are not necessarily the result of logical and dispassionate reason but reflect the beliefs we have been socialized into as members of cultural groups. It's one thing to recognize that others' perspectives are influenced by social, cultural, religious, political, and economic forces; it's quite another to recognize that our own are just as much the result of context […] [Our] own attitudes, beliefs, and intentions are historically and culturally situated, just as those of people in the past were. (Barton and Levstik, 2008, pp. 219; 223)

Unused as Group 2 are to valuing a girl's most personal testimony as historical evidence – as their textbooks largely disseminate Tetreault's Male History or Compensatory History (Tetreault, 1985; Wills, 2016) – they resist this, and unwittingly decide what constitutes historical knowledge based on their long years of exposure to androcentric history. Yet as

Barton and Levstik explain, "Only by recognizing how the perspectives of people in the past may have differed from our own will we be able to make sense of their practices" (2008, pp. 207–208).

It is apparent that Group 2 would need further support in developing their disciplinary, critical, and affective literacies to enable them to re-examine the value of women's key life experiences – including pregnancy and childbirth – as appropriate "categories" when writing the history of the past. This would include acquiring further disciplinary competency in acknowledging past perspectives as distinct from their own. It would also require further engagement in using critical concepts (Rubin, 2017) like intersectionality, not only to uncover traces of the past obscured or erased by the textbook narrative, but also in order to view that evidence as integral to their study of history. Even more crucially, Group 2's evident affective resistance to reframing their writing in light of new forms of historical evidence they earlier in the enquiry appeared to grasp, indicates that I need to find strategies to inculcate in my students a self-reflexive awareness of their preconceptions. These concerns are further explored when addressing Question 2 in Chapter 7.3. Next, I turn to Group 1's work, examined through the lens of Tetreault's Feminist History.

5.3 Tetreault's Phase 4: Feminist History

While Group 2, as was evident above, unwittingly ignore the specificity of Colvin's perceptions and activism, Group 1 do not. Instead, they embrace the evocative prompts Colvin affords them to construct a poem richly suggestive of Tetreault's Phase 4: Feminist History. For Tetreault, Phase 4 signifies Feminist History, where the "most important idea to emerge is that women's activities, not men's, are the measure of significance" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 374).

> What was formerly devalued, the content of women's everyday lives, assumes new value as scholars investigate […] childbearing […] female sexuality, female friendship […]
>
> A marked difference here is the pluralistic conceptualization of women that emerges. […] The subtle interactions among gender and other variables are investigated […] This more particularistic conception of women is accompanied by attention to both the contextual and the personal. Questions of sex and gender are set within historical, ideological, and cultural contexts […]
>
> Life histories and autobiographies shed light on societies' perceptions of women and women's perceptions of themselves. Individual women's experiences are revealed through these stories and contribute to the fashioning of the human experience from the perspective of women. (Tetreault, 1985, pp. 374–375)

Levstik and Groth's findings in observing eighth graders' encounter with a unit on women's history would appear to support Tetreault's expectations that in studying women's history, students can move beyond viewing women as a homogenous grouping. The eighth graders were clearly able to ask questions which confirmed they could distinguish amongst the women in their study:

> In sum, these eighth graders understood that "women" did not exist as a single category but as a multiplicity of perspectives, and they pointed to this as one of the most important aspects of the unit; in particular, they said that they enjoyed learning about women in different social conditions. Their responses suggest that this kind of perspective recognition is attainable at least by middle school and probably sooner. (Levstik and Groth, 2002; Barton and Levstik, 2008, p. 218)

Next, I illustrate Group 1's demonstration of Tetreault's Phase 4: Feminist History using three examples from the enquiry process: Group 1's *Prompted Poem*; Group 1's *Textbook Entry*; and a plenary discussion with all students. First, I examine how Group 1's poem is richly illustrative of their centring Colvin in her particularity in their writing.

Tetreault's Feminist History: Group 1's *Prompted Poem #1* – "I won't straighten out my hair until they straighten out this mess"

Group 1 – Yolande, Freye, and Toni[29] – frame their poem making more extensive use of Colvin's own words, as well as descriptions of her actions, to clearly draw into sharp relief Colvin's perception of herself and her public persona. In that way parts of their *Prompted Poem* meet the requirements of Phase 4, while others will be examined further below in light of Phase 5: Holistic History. This will become apparent by analysing extracts from their discursive engagement with Hoose's text, as well as by examining parts of their poem.

[29] Delilah was isolating due to exposure to COVID-19, although she attended the plenary online preceding their writing of their poem.

Extract 1 from Group 1's discussion while crafting their *Prompted Poem* (Code: PP Gr 1 - D)

Turns:

1.	*Toni:*	*And also, the stuff about her hair* [Referencing how Colvin stopped straightening her hair, sporting corn rows instead]
2.	*Freye:*	*Yah, I went straight to the hair* [laughs]
3.	*Toni:*	[quoting Colvin] 'I won't straighten out my hair until they straighten out this mess'
4.	*Freye:*	*She's so cool - Also I didn't know - I thought it* [embracing natural hair] *was a slightly later concept - [..] like the whole Black Power and Black pride and everything came a bit later - and here she was saying like actually: this was ridiculous*
5.	*Yolande:*	[talking at same time] *Also I like this - this person who I don't remember who says that she's like - she's a wonderful person and still says like she used to keep her hair* 'neatly styled' *and she's* -
6.	*Toni:*	*And now she's like* [talking at same time]
7.	*Yolande:*	*And now she won't straighten her hair* [talking at same time]
8.	*Toni:*	*Also, I like that she wanted to be* 'President of the US' [quoting Colvin] *She just like wrote that down!*
9.	*Freye:*	*She's so cool!*
10.	*Toni:*	*Are we putting anything in the poem about um*
11.	*Yolande:*	*I think we must* -
12.	*Toni:*	*The guy who got her pregnant?*
13.	*Freye:*	*Definitely!*
14.	*Toni:*	*Also, I like how she says,* 'He was the first person to understand my hair'. [why she chose to wear corn rows] *Cos it shows you that that was obviously like great for her and that was her way of expressing her political and just kind of like general social view at the time. People didn't take it seriously. The others are just like: 'You're stupid' - Not like: This is a relevant expression of how you're feeling*
15.	*Yolande:*	*She says* 'The revolution is here we need to stand up' [quoting Colvin]

In focusing on Colvin's explanation for why she embraced her natural hair (Turns 1-7), Group 1 is centring Colvin's own rendition of her experience and allowing it to "speak for itself" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 370). Colvin in her words and actions is bridging Bifocal History's private/public divide; by allowing her to be so fully present in all her complexity in their *Prompted Poem*, Group 1 have Colvin assume agency by proclaiming her personal hair styling choices are a public statement, and a direct indictment of the political "mess" (Turn 3) her society is in. This foregrounding of "things formerly perceived as trivial, namely the activities of women in the private sphere" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 375) – such as the way Colvin fashions her hair – is precisely the type of "attention to both the contextual and the personal" required in Phase 4. As Yolande indicates (Turn 15), for Colvin, sporting corn rows was her way of "standing up" for the "revolution". Freye (Turn 4) sees Colvin's "corn rows" as pre-empting the notion of "Black pride" embraced by the Black Power Movement the following decade. Toni (Turn 8) connects this self-pride to Colvin's evident confidence when asked what she would like to be when she's older, as she has the self-belief to proclaim: "President of the US". With evident enthusiasm, they view Colvin as a remarkable young woman whose bus action

was only part of how she took a political stand in public, where "political" is reenvisaged as acknowledging "women's political involvement on their own terms" (Woyshner, 2012, p. 367)[30]. Their exuberance in discussing Colvin, as Freye makes clear by twice exclaiming "She's so cool" (Turns 4; 9), indicates their admiration for the youthful activist. It appears that their emotional engagement enriches their learning by enhancing their determination to portray Colvin in evocative ways. It is remarkable that Group 1 have responded to my centring Colvin through this activity by integrating her actions – and her presentation of those – as appropriate knowledge for their consideration as history students. In viewing how Colvin styles her hair as a form of activism, Group 1 have not only reconceived what constitutes political action, but also what qualifies as appropriate knowledge in studying history. As Tetreault writes regarding Feminist History: "Efforts are made to reconceptualize knowledge to encompass the female experience" (Tetreault, 1986a, p. 216).

Following Colvin's lead, Group 1 then contextualise her vulnerability to the unnamed (at her parents' insistence) far older Black man whose apparent understanding of her choice of corn rows (Toni, Turn 14) might very well be termed "grooming"[31]. Next, in Extract 2 of their discussion, they further grapple with how that man took advantage of the situation.

Extract 2 from Group 1's discussion while crafting their *Prompted Poem* (Code: PP Gr 1 - D)

Turns:		
1.	*Toni:*	*But also, I think we can segueway* [sic] *from the hair to whole baby situation because she mentions* 'He was the first person to understand my hair'
2.	*Yolande:*	*yah*
3.	*Toni:*	*So that was kind of like an indication of trust - someone who understood*
4.	*Freye:*	*What about - because it's kind of sad the way she became - when she said, 'the revolution is here we need to stand up' and then go next line:* 'He would agree'. *It kind of makes it - I don't know - it makes it seem more childish in a way - in a sense - a little bit naïve - I don't know -*
5.	*Toni:*	*Oh yeah yeah yeah! No, I get you. He would agree with what she said, and she took that as like a sign of - like a child would trust an adult [..]*
6.	*Yolande:*	*But she does know - like she said -* 'I knew I was getting in over my head'. *Should we put in* 'He was so much older than me'*? Or something like that?*
7.	*Freye:*	*And then we go straight into I didn't want to believe it [her pregnancy] was true*

[30] See discussion in Chapter 2.2 regarding Woyshner's advocating for a "reconceptualization of political history" (2012, p. 367).

[31] "I believe the term was first used […] in the late 1970s to describe aspects of a seduction pattern of offender behavior […] The term grooming then evolved, as language does, and spread into more common usage by law enforcement, other professionals, and then by the media and laypersons." (Lanning, 2018, p. 5).

Freye (Turn 19 above) gestures towards understanding how Colvin was taken advantage of by suggesting that she was "a little bit naïve", with Toni (Turn 20) suggesting that Colvin took the older man's agreeing with her as a "sign" that she had reason to "trust" him as an "adult". Having just shown Colvin as outspoken, forthright, and knowing her own mind, they also show her as young, impressionable, and clearly outmanoeuvred in a once-off encounter Freye previously called out quite definitively as "statutory rape" (Code CC – D). This is apparent in their *Prompted Poem* included in full below, although aspects of it will be discussed later. In their *Prompted Poem* they demonstrate their "perspective recognition" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, chap. 11) of Colvin in all her complexity and particularity.

Group 1's *Prompted Poem* on Claudette Colvin (Code: PP Gr 1 – W)

"Rebellion was on my mind that day"

Now I was a criminal
guilty of all charges
They pulled me off
because I refused to walk off
No sir
He called me a "thing"
I was too smart to fight back

I cried a lot
and people saw me cry
They kept saying I was emotional
Tell me, sir, who wouldn't cry?

"She had always kept her hair neatly styled
Then came one day with corn rows"
I won't straighten out my hair, sir
Till they straighten out this mess

He was the first person to understand my hair
He was so much older than me
Had so much more experience
I hoped and prayed and pretended it wasn't true
Three strikes against me
An unmarried teenager with a light-skinned baby
They all turned their backs on me
I wasn't ashamed

It was my constitutional right!
Rebellion was on my mind that day
You and the others have changed your ideas since December 5, have you not?
No sir. We haven't changed our ideas. It has been in me ever since I was born.
Did you have a leader?
Did we have a leader? Our leaders is just we, ourselves
Gaze level, voice even, and intense
We were treated wrong, dirty and nasty

Get up
No sir

Group 1 here have Colvin speak in her own voice about the impact her pregnancy and the birth of her "light-skinned baby" (Line 21) had on how she was treated in her community, and even then, asserts that "I wasn't ashamed" (Line 23). As the father's identity was never disclosed, Colvin felt rejected by the Black community who speculated he was white, which she denied. Group 1's focus on Colvin's pregnancy is in stark contrast to Group 2's various

pronouncements, as discussed above, where Colvin's pregnancy was regarded as "irrelevant" (Extract 4, Turns 27-28, Code: PP Gr 2 - D). Furthermore, in not shying away from her pregnancy, Group 1 are drawing attention to one of Tetreault's suggested "new categories to be added to the study of history, for instance, housework, childbearing, and childrearing" (1985, p. 370).

For Tetreault, what is crucial in Feminist History is precisely this decisive shift where women's lives in their entirety are centred, and not just those aspects that were previously viewed as relevant historical knowledge when viewed through an androcentric lens. Group 1 demonstrate disciplinary literacy in allowing Colvin to centre how she became pregnant, and how she experienced the political consequences of that by being shunned by the very civil rights community she felt part of following her activist refusal to relinquish her bus seat. In doing so, they go beyond Group 2's Bifocal History reading of Colvin's story which dichotomises her "private" pregnancy – which they choose to ignore – and the "public" rejection she experiences, and instead ensure that that the "public and the private are seen as a continuum in women's experiences" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 370). Group 1 in their first collaborative response to my centring Black women in the documents demonstrate a fine sense of ease in recognising and integrating what Tetreault terms the "new categories" of knowledge about women's lives as appropriate historical knowledge. It is evident that Group 1 develop an intersectional[32] (Crenshaw, 1989; Saar, 2021) "perspective recognition" of Colvin, viewing her in her particularity, as limited by her particular "social conditions" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, p. 218) in ways Group 2 do not. Other aspects of Group 1's poem will be analysed as evidence of Tetreault's Holistic History further below. Next, I consider how Group 1's *Textbook Entry* is pitched at the level of Feminist History.

Tetreault's Feminist History: Group 1's *Textbook Entry* – Rosa Parks: "resolute anti-rape activist"

Group 1 demonstrate much attention to the particularities of the Black women whose role in ending bus segregation they foreground, as their analysis moves beyond a "monolithic" view of women as oppressed (Bifocal History) by wrestling with the complexity of the various women's "contextual" and "personal" circumstances (Tetreault, 1985, pp. 374–375). In Group 1's *Textbook Entry*, Parks emerges not as the inactive "face" of the bus boycott, but rather as a

[32] Tetreault, as noted previously, uses the term "pluralistic" in discussing Phase 4: Feminist History (Tetreault, 1985, pp. 374–375)

woman constrained by her social context, consciously choosing to present her public persona in the way best calculated to serve the broader interests of the movement she has long served as an anti-rape activist. Elsewhere, Toni insightfully suggests that the way she acts publicly was Parks's choice:

Extract 1 from Class Discussion during Rosa Parks: *Deeper Dive* (Code: RP - D)

Toni: *She's making a deliberate decision to fall in line with the way that she was presented. She's kind of understanding what they're* [the MIA] *doing and choosing to go along with it. Playing her part, essentially.*

In Extract 1 from Group 1's *Textbook Entry* discussed next, they engage with a level of specificity which clearly meets Tetreault's requirements for Feminist History where "Women's experience is allowed to speak for itself. Feminist scholarship is rooted in the personal and the specific; it builds from that to the general" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 370). As will be evident in the discussion that follows, it is clear that Group 1's writing[33] fits Tetreault's requirements for Feminist History in being "rooted in the personal and the specific".

Extract 1 from Group 1's *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 1 - W)

Lines:

The Activism of Rosa Parks

1. *Rosa Parks is most famously known for refusing to give up her seat on a bus. However, this was not a*
2. *spontaneous one-time act of protest by Parks as some would like you to believe. James F Blake, a vicious*
3. *bigot, was a Montgomery bus driver who never faced charges for his racially motivated attacks of black*
4. *women. In 1943, Rosa Parks who refused to pay at the front of the bus and then renter through the back,*
5. *had a violent altercation with the driver who threw her off his bus. Following this, she joined the NAACP.*
6. *The NAACP's best investigator, Rosa Parks was a resolute anti-rape activist. It was she who was sent to*
7. *record, investigate and document Recy Taylor's savage assault by white racists. It was she who spent*
8. *hours doing important administrational work for the NAACP. It was she who, after her arrest, went*
9. *directly to Fred Grey's office to continue her activism. And it was she who decided to allow herself to*
10. *become E.D Nixon's "Perfect Woman" as a symbol to rally behind in the boycott.*

In this section entitled "The Activism of Rosa Parks", Group 1 depict Parks as a "resolute anti-rape activist", emphatically drawing attention to her agency by repeating "It was she" (Lines 6, 7, 9) in order to make that clear. Parks's agency is further highlighted by their noting that she proactively "decided to allow herself" to embrace being the "symbol to rally behind in the boycott" (Lines 9-10). Parks emerges as quite consciously choosing to protest, a far cry from the textbook's Compensatory History depiction of her as a tired, passive, accidental protester "as some would like you to believe" (Line 2). Group 1's account engages in an intertextual

[33] A complete copy of Group 1's *Textbook Entry* is included as Appendix E.

way directly with the textbooks' misrepresentation which minimises Parks's civil rights work by themselves explicitly drawing attention to that activism. They provide clarity on the nature of Parks's prior anti-rape work by explaining she was the one "to record, investigate and document Recy Taylor's savage assault" (Lines 6-7). In addition, they contextualise her 2 December 1955 bus action as her second altercation with that "vicious bigot" (Lines 2-3), the infamous bus driver Blake (Lines 3-4), "who never faced charges for his racially motivated attacks of black women". Furthermore, they pointedly indicate that immediately after securing her release following her arrest, Parks "went directly" to civil rights attorney Fred Grey's office "to continue her activism" (Lines 8-9).

Yet again, Group 1's *Textbook Entry* differs from Group 2's in drawing on the depth of evidence gleaned throughout the enquiry to ensure that, however briefly, they allow key women to be fully realised in their particularity, and, by so doing, distinguish them from one another. Where Group 2's narrative is firmly ensconced in Bifocal History with its focus on oppression as if women form a homogenous grouping, Group 1's narrative differentiates between Colvin, Parks, and Robinson, while also rejecting the descriptor "ordinary" for the countless Black women of Montgomery, such as Gilmore, who made the boycott happen and ensured it continued day after day. As Yolande exclaims while they are constructing their textbook account:

Extract 1 from Group 1's discussion while writing their *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 1 - D)

Yolande: *There were no 'ordinary' Black women in Montgomery!*

Another example of Group 1's language choices depicting women as operating at Tetreault's Phase 4 are the multiple active terms used in their depiction of Robinson and the Women's Political Council (WPC), who are shown as a force to be reckoned with at every stage. This is evident in their writing in Extract 2 below.

Extract 2 from Group 1's *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 1 - W)
Lines:

Jo Anne Robinson and the Roots of the Boycott

11. *Upon the news of Rosa Park's arrest, Jo Anne Robinson did not hesitate before sending out that important*
12. *call to boycott. Months before Rosa's arrest, the WPC, Woman's Political Council, had been planning,*
13. *preparing, for a boycott. They planned routes for distribution of leaflets, organised carpools and*
14. *alternate options for the busses. Personally, more than a year before these events, activist Jo Anne*
15. *Robinson had sent a letter to the Mayor of Montgomery asking him for small requests to prevent*
16. *humiliation and discomfort. These are the black woman who then filled the roles in the Montgomery*
17. *Improvement Association, after the MIA undermined their efforts and seized control of the boycott and*
18. *the attention that came with it. Jo Anne Robinson became a chief strategist for the MIA, negotiating with*
19. *city leaders and bus company officials, edited the MIA newsletter, offering her car up to ferry people to*
20. *and fro from work all the while she held down a full-time teaching job.*

In Group 1's account under the heading "Jo Anne Robinson and the Roots of the Boycott", they write that the WPC previously "had been planning" and "preparing" (Lines 12-13) a boycott, including "planned routes" for pamphlet distribution and "organised carpools" (Line 13). Robinson herself had previously "sent a letter" (Lines 14-15) to the mayor. The WPC staffed the day-to-day functioning of the boycott despite the male-led MIA usurping their leadership, while Robinson herself took over strategy, "negotiating with city leaders and bus company officials", and then also "edited the MIA newsletter" even as she "held down a full-time teaching job" (Lines 18-20). None of this shows women subjugated to inaction: their narrative is highly evocative in showing the WPC as actively engaged over a period of time in working to end bus segregation, and continuing to do so even when the Black men of their community, instead of applauding their work, "seized control of the boycott and the attention that came with it" (Lines 17-18). Clearly, this account is evidence of how Group 1 have been informed by the enquiry in their conscious shaping of their own narrative on a level that Tetreault's criteria define as Feminist History. By using diverse active terms to demonstrate Robinson and the WPC's key work ahead of and during the boycott, their writing resonates again with what in Chapter 2.2 I discussed as Woyshner's "reconceptualization of political history […] to include the role of women in social movements" (Woyshner, 2012, p. 367).

It is again evident that Group 1 have responded to my initiating a DBE centring Black women by clearly integrating those women's actions into their construction of this historical period – rather than merely adding them in a tokenist, androcentric way. Their framing of the WPC and Robinson's initiatives clearly reveals those as fully-fledged public political actions, even though the Black men in Montgomery stole the WPC's limelight, denying them a place in the

story as told by Male History and Compensatory History textbooks henceforth. Next, I turn to data from diverse activities in which several students from both groups demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the issues arising from racialised rape, sexual assault, and abuse, while one student grapples to grasp those same issues.

Tetreault's Feminist History: Plenary Discussions - Racialised rape, sexual assault, and abuse

In their plenary *Initial Introductions* where students read aloud brief first-person accounts by way of introducing their assigned person in the context of Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s, Joe Azbell, editor of a local newspaper at the time was quoted as saying: "'Gertrude Perkins is not even mentioned in the history books, but she had as much to do with the bus boycott and its creation as anyone on earth.'" (McGuire, 2010, pp. 63–64). Later during the *Silent Conversations*, students read first-hand testimonies by Black women who articulated their experiences before and during the bus boycott. In the plenary thereafter, I encouraged them to suggest why Azbell might have made that claim given Perkins was raped at gunpoint by uniformed white police officers in March 1949 – years before the bus boycott began in December 1955. Excerpts from their responses are included as Extract 4 below.

Extract 4 from class discussion Post *Silent Conversation* (Code: Post SC - D)

Turns:

23.	*Teacher:*	*So now you're talking to him (Azbell), and you are like saying to him: Could you explain? Can you put words to that? Could you put the words to it for him?*
24.	*Max:*	*I'd say - what he's saying is that - obviously what we've been studying is the intersectional oppression of Black women in Montgomery and I think that what he's saying is that the buses is the place where all that oppression met - it was a place where Black women mainly felt it the keenest – like you could feel it there on the buses the most because it was an example of sort of all the aspects of their lives in which they were downtrodden and in which they were oppressed and it was that one specific thing where all those sectors met each other to form sort of like just a very ghastly experience obviously and I think that's what he's saying. He's saying that for the women in Montgomery those sexual assaults even outside the buses and the bus routes still had to do with the buses because it was where all of that met. The problem is like they couldn't not take the bus so yah I think - I don't know - it was unavoidable.*
25.	*Jane:*	*Yah it was unavoidable*

Here Group 2's Max (Turn 24) explains at length what she understands to be the connection between the racialised sexual abuse meted out by white bus drivers in "a place where Black women felt it the keenest", and Jane (Turn 25) agrees with her that taking the bus was "unavoidable" for Black women. This situation arose as buses were Black women's mode of transport in commuting to their predominant place of work – white domestic households.

Max's articulate explanation (Turn 24) indicates she clearly grasps the need to tease out the connection which at first glance appears counter-intuitive, especially in the case of Perkins, given she was raped almost seven years prior to the commencement of the boycott. At this juncture it is apparent that Max – and Jane by agreeing with her that women could not avoid the buses – both grasp the need for detailed contextualisation in order to demonstrate how the boycott was firmly rooted in the lived experience of Black women for whom catching the bus daily was that "one specific thing where all those sectors met each other to form sort of like just a very ghastly experience" (Turn 24). Yet Group 2's final *Textbook Entry* makes none of these specifics clear, as is evident in Extract 1 below.

Extract 1 from Group 2's *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 2 – W):

> *For decades black women had faced intersectional discrimination and oppression in Montgomery, and this was keenly felt on the buses, where women were objectified and humiliated by bus drivers and other passengers.*

Here, Group 2 expect their phrase "intersectional discrimination and oppression" to do all the work for them – without further elaboration, as if the terms themselves convey the specifics of Black women's "ghastly experience" (Max, Turn 24) that they have been grappling with in the DBE. What they leave out is precisely the detailed grasp evident in Max's incisive exposition (Turn 24 above); without that particularity and decoding, their eventual writing does not as clearly demonstrate the emphatic grasp they display in their class discussion above. The very contextualisation and depth of detail required to account for events in Montgomery is not expanded on in their later *Textbook Entry*, leading me again to grapple with that disconnect.

With regard to the six white men's brutal gang rape of Taylor in 1944, and two white policemen's rape of Perkins in 1949 – both introduced without any graphic detail in the enquiry – and the ongoing sexual assault and abuse of Black women by white men generally, it was not immediately apparent to most students why white men would so regularly rape and assault the Black women they claimed to despise. This is evident in Extract 2 below.

Extract 2 from *Silent Conversation* (Code: SC - DW)

Turns:

1. *Indigo:* *On the one hand, white men expressed their distaste for African Americans, and then they rape African American women?*
2. *Freye:* *Rape is about power. Distaste would have very little to do with it in an "attraction way". In fact, that they express their distaste only further indicates that they would be willing to assault Black women in an effort to further humiliate, shame and brutalise the people they saw as lesser and as second-class citizens as well as dominate them in a disgusting show of power.*

This excerpt from the *Silent Conversation* is indicative of some students' initial confusion, evident in Indigo's comment (Turn 1), prompting Freye (Turn 2), drawing on her own

insightful understanding that "Rape is about power", to explain that to her classmates. Clearly, Freye has reflected on rape and brings her prior and very pertinent understanding to bear in the face of Indigo's confusion. Freye was the one who previously called out Colvin's "impregnation" (Veronica's term) by a much older married man as "statutory rape" without a moment's hesitation. Her cognitive grasp is enhanced by her affective condemnation of racialised rape as "a disgusting show of power" (Turn 2). Indigo on the other hand demonstrates elsewhere too that she resists internalising the point made here by Freye. This is evident in Extract 2 below.

Extract 2 from class discussion during Rosa Parks: *Deeper Dive* (Code: RP - D)

Turns:

1.	*Toni:*	*But it's weird how much it's weaponised - we've only heard this being done - like weaponising rape and sexual violence like in war situations where everyone's like already completely out there. With this completely different mindset – not that it excuses it in the slightest - but this completely bizarre mindset…*
2.	*Indigo:*	*Would that - would it help the white men who did rape African American women with this whole thing of: 'Oh I would never do that because I'm so repulsed by African American people' but in reality - like I know we said it's racist but I think it could also have possibly been as a way to defend or to kind take away from attention to what they were doing to say oh I would never do this - it's unbelievable that I would ever want to be involved with an African American woman.*

Here, after Toni (Turn 1) questions the "bizarre" mindset allowing white men to "weaponise" the rape of Black women, Indigo (Turn 2) ventures into a curious supposition regarding what she conjectures white men would have used in their defence – and all this in spite of the emphatic evidence in the *Initial Introductions* that both Taylor and Perkins's rapes failed to result in charges, let alone convictions, of any of the white male perpetrators. Indigo's language here – "be involved with an African woman" – again indicates she has not understood Freye's explanation that "Rape is about power", not "attraction", nor Toni's framing of the brutal, racialised assaults as the "weaponisation of rape".

In deploying the concept of "weaponising rape" during war to this quite different historical context, Toni (Turn 1) is overtly emphasising its use uncovers a "completely different mindset" to that when it is used as a weapon of war. That is, she is not unthinkingly applying an allegedly presentist concept not in use at the time[34]. Instead, Toni is consciously articulating that she has not encountered its use outside of war in this way. She is using the concept as a lens to uncover the significance of white men brutally raping Black women in the 1940s and 1950s Montgomery context – evidence long-erased by the Male History and Compensatory History

[34] Indeed, as Paterson (2016) asserts, there are suggestions that the declared illegality of rape as a weapon of war can be traced back several centuries to the trial of Peter von Hagenbach in the 1470s (Gordon, 2013).

textbooks – without imposing inappropriate notions onto that. By way of contrast, Indigo (Turn 2), albeit unwittingly, is *mis*applying a notion of her own unexamined construction to the evidence, persisting with her *mis*understanding that rape implies white men were "involved with" Black women, as opposed to brutalising them.

To the extent that Feminist History in part entails a grasp of how their activism "contributed to women's greater self-determination through the right to control their bodies" as well as how "race, ethnicity, social class […] affect women's experiences" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 370), it would seem that focusing on the racialised rape, sexual assault, and abuse as a dominant aspect of Black women's "social context" and "past experience" in Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s is a prerequisite. It would further appear that the enquiry on its own did not suffice to shift all students' thinking to consistently demonstrate this level of analysis.

As is indicated next, Toni in her journal elaborates on her views regarding the "bizarre mindset" (Turn 2 above) which saw white men rape the Black women they despised with impunity. Toni understands the imposition that Black people pay at the front of the bus and then re-enter via the back – to avoid their Black bodies touching those of white people – as evidence of white men's "cognitive dissonance", as she notes in response to this McGuire extract: "Considering white men's long history of 'integrating' with black women, this rule was particularly galling" (McGuire, 2010, p. 72).

Extract 1 from Toni's Journal (Code: J - Toni - W)

Toni: *It's a bizarre form of cognitive dissonance*

Toni's grasp of this disconnect is further explored when she contrasts the 'different directions' in which rape is "weaponised":

Extract 2 from Toni's journal (Code: J - Toni - W)

Toni: *White men weaponising rape to belittle and degrade black women as a form of both racial and sexual violence AND white women weaponising rape allegations against black men.*

Elsewhere Toni journals:

Extract 3 from Toni's journal (Code: J - Toni - W)

Toni: *The trope of black men raping white women as the catalyst for racial violence in the US – so much as an allegation of a black man raping a white women could have a catastrophic effect whereas the reverse solicited no response from authorities.*

Toni is again using the notion of "weaponising" rape as a lens through which to view the complexity of its gendered and racialised prevalence in Montgomery, rather than imposing her own views on evidence from the time, as Indigo unintentionally does above (Extract 2, Turn 2, Code: RP– D).

In an earlier plenary discussion while reading *Initial Introductions* to key Montgomery role-players, Toni wrestles with what she in Extract 1 above from her journal calls the "cognitive dissonance" of these clearly contrasting responses. She does this especially in light of the white chief of police refusing to pursue charges against Perkins's police assailants because "charges of this nature, even though untrue […] are often used to destroy goodwill between the races." (McGuire, 2010, p. 66). Toni's lengthy engagement with this, and Delilah's online response, is included as Extract 2 below.

Extract 2 from class discussion during *Initial Introductions* (Code: II - D)

Turns:

7. Toni: *And then the other thing - I thought it was quite strange - I think it's the mayor? - oh no when the chief of police said they didn't want to charge them because this is the sort of thing 'was used to destroy the goodwill between races '*

I thought that was quite interesting because of the reverse of the stereotype when they claimed black men raping white women has kind of been used as an impetus for like - the cause of race riots in America -

It's quite interesting how when it's the reverse and how it's treated completely differently and how now these cases are just dismissed and hardly looked at
[she means – the cases of white men raping Black women]
And when the reverse happens when there's only so much as an allegation of the opposite - and kind of then an entire town is up in arms just because of an allegation *of Black men raping white women*

8. Delilah: *I just wanted to kind of say something just to back up what Toni said about the quote saying that 'charges of this nature even though untrue are ruining goodwill between the races'. And the fact that - the* actual *charge they are accusing them of is something so awful.* That's *what's ruining it.* The rape *is so awful.* That *might also 'ruin goodwill between races'. It's just kind of ridiculous!*

Toni's examination in Turn 7 of the plenary above shows she clearly sees the "cognitive dissonance" in the "race riots" instigated by white people to "so much as an *allegation* of Black men raping white women" given that directly contrasts with the white police chief's refusal to act on actual testimony and evidence of white men raping Black women. In Turn 8 Delilah – at home isolating due to exposure to COVID-19, and largely silent online – was so emotionally disturbed by the evidence that she felt compelled to interject, voicing her horror at the police chief's claim that Black women bringing allegedly false rape charges against white men were to blame for damaging race relations. Delilah is emphatic that "what's ruining it" is indeed the "awful" rape itself. Delilah's discomfort in learning how white authorities deflected rape charges with spurious claims is evident in her exclamation: "It's just kind of ridiculous!".

As indicated in Extract 2 from the plenary discussion above, Toni feels keenly the injustice of "an entire town […] up in arms" – meaning, a white town – because of "an *allegation* of Black men raping white women". Toni's perception of egregious wrongdoing tellingly identifies the

complexity of reactions to racialised rape at the time. In deploying Tetreault's feminist framework to evaluate history textbooks, Wills directly references how the racialised killing of Black men was rationalised: "Feminist scholarship has underscored the gendered violence of lynching Black men by white men in the South […] which has convincingly illustrated how prevailing ideas of white and black sexualities galvanised a powerful myth of the black rapist and the white victim." (Wills, 2016, pp. 41–42).

Toni's insightful grasp of the divergence in response to the actual racialised rape by white men, as opposed to the merest "*allegation* of Black men raping white women" speaks to the requirements of Tetreault's Phase 5: Holistic History as well. Indeed, much of her engagement with the enforced segregation of white and Black bodies on the Montgomery buses, despite the widespread practice of white men abusing, sexually assaulting, and raping Black women with impunity, and the accompanying "weaponising" of rape as Toni terms it by white women of "allegations against black men" not only demonstrates Feminist History, but also fits the expectations of Holistic History which is discussed in the next section. For Tetreault, Holistic History "continues many of the inquiries begun in the previous phase […] At every juncture, the variables of race, sex and gender, ethnicity, social class […] to name but a few, are taken into account" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 375).

In her work on rape, Gqola engages with the white supremacist "stereotyping" of Black men as a threat to white women. She also discusses its problematic corollary: Black women as "hypersexual and therefore impossible to rape", leading to the rationalisation that white men doing so "does not count as harm":

> The stereotype of the Black male rapist of white women has been central to the rise of racism, and it has also been used as justification for lynching and killing tens of thousands of Black men across the globe. […] The same white supremacy that constructed the stereotype of Black man as rapist, created the stereotype of Black women as hypersexual and therefore impossible to rape. Making Black women impossible to rape does not mean making them safe against rape. It means quite the opposite: that Black women are safe to rape, that raping them does not count as harm and is therefore permissible. (Gqola, 2015, pp. 4–5)

It is clear that Toni's sophisticated grasp of the "cognitive dissonance" evident in the lived experience of Black women in Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s informs the final drafting of Group 1's *Textbook Entry*, demonstrating the bridging of the private-public divide in their tracing of what they term the "epidemic of racially-motivated sexual violence" which they then link to the resulting boycott by asserting: "The accumulation of this violence took place along the Montgomery bus routes" (TE Gr 1 – W). Further aspects of their *Textbook Entry* will be

discussed in Chapter 6. First, though, I shall examine ways in which student discussions and writing fit Tetreault's requirements for Holistic History.

5.4 Tetreault's Phase 5: Holistic History

Building on Phase 4, Tetreault situates Phase 5 history as examining, *inter alia*: "How did the variables of race, ethnicity, social class, marital status, and sexual orientation affect women's and men's experiences in history?" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 372). Next, I illustrate students' demonstration of Tetreault's Phase 5: Holistic History by using two examples from the enquiry process: plenary discussions during the *Initial Introductions*, and during and after the *Silent Conversation*, and a further examination of Group 1's *Prompted Poem.*

Firstly, it is instructive to apply Tetreault's Holistic History lens to understanding the way students grapple from the outset in a plenary discussion with the established activist Nixon's emphatic rejection of the variously-discredited Colvin, and his embrace of the suitably-comported and married Parks as the ultimate face of the boycott.

Tetreault's Holistic History: *Initial Introductions* and *Silent Conversation* - Parks as the "perfect woman" to be the "face" of the boycott

For Tetreault, Holistic History further articulates the "public" and "private" spheres as on a "continuum" already evident in Feminist History, but within the context of engaging with the "nodal points where women's and men's experiences intersect" (1985, p. 375). While engaging with *Initial Introductions* to key Montgomery role-players, students already suggested veteran activist Nixon was on the lookout for the appropriate person to use in igniting mass activism in Montgomery against bus segregation. This is evident in their plenary discussion in Extract 3 below:

Extract 3 from Class Discussion during *Initial Introductions* (Code: II - D)

Turns:

9. *Max:* *They were looking for a catalyst - a person who could represent them that they could get behind.*

10. *Toni:* *Weird in a way - the people in the WPC - and the NAACP - They were looking for a person who was kind of I don't know - more like* palatable *to like white people in a way - so and it's weird - they must have been between a* rock and a hard place. *They didn't feel like they could - I don't know - they were trying to present the idea of the best of their society in a way because they were already dealing with racism and being treated as inferior - they needed kind of everything else - you know - as like put together as possible, as you know - as stereotypically perfect and ideal as possible as they were already going to be badly treated regardless of what was going on*

11. *Max:* *I think they're just worrying about her* [Claudette Colvin's or Mary Louise Smith's] *history and her circumstances and the context might sort of diminish her role. You know - try and make her out to seem* [LOUDSPEAKER INTRUDES FROM EVENT OUTSIDE] *like immoral* […] *or just problematic or in any way shape or form as a danger to society*

12. *Veronica:* *I feel like they might try to - they would have tried to use her* [Claudette Colvin's] *circumstances to justify the arrest um which just kind of diminishes their credibility as an organisation*

13. *Max:* *I think another thing that's interesting is how it seems almost like they weren't fighting case by case. They were looking for* the *case to make a stand on. They weren't trying to take* everyone's *story and fight for every single person who did this*
[refused to give up their seat on a bus]
So, they were looking for the *person they could* all *rise behind and get behind and they made that one person* the *case that they'd fight.*

14. *Teacher:* *Do you agree with that?*

15. *Several:* *Yah / yes*

16. *Teacher:* *You haven't even been here for an hour today. And you've already got amazing insights into what things were like in Montgomery at the time. Toni, do you want to give me some words to - you have to speak a bit louder because the mike won't pick you up with him* [LOUD NOISE FROM OUTSIDE]
What do you mean by 'between a rock and a hard place'?

17. *Toni:* *Um I don't know - They were trapped between trying to sort of - they were already being in an extremely difficult situation of trying to spark this movement and get this going while white people were being very racist and their whole movement is likely to be dismissed and even ridiculed and what not and now they're trying to kind of I don't know* meet people's expectations *- people who are already racist and who are already kind of political and they're trying to kind of - what's the word - um they can't afford to have anyone who has anything even* slightly *kind of amiss about them. They kind of envisaged - there wasn't a candidate - they were looking around for someone who had to be* perfect *in every way except for being African American essentially. And I think it's this effort to find someone who was like kind of perfect* […] *They were trying to find this person who was as kind of* palatable *to white people in a way and it's a compromise view in a sense as you're looking for someone who meets their expectations when the whole point is that you're trying to overturn the system. So, in the first place they have to meet certain requirements of the system to do that.*

In Extract 3 from their plenary discussion above, students articulate that Nixon was searching for a "catalyst" (Max, Turn 9) or the "perfect woman" who would be "palatable" (Toni, Turn 10) to white people to ensure the necessary traction needed to secure the end of bus segregation. Max (Turn 9) and Toni's (Turn 10) terms are readily taken up by other students, who repeatedly

use them in their own responses following this exchange. Veronica (Turn 12) shows she gets Toni's point regarding Parks's "palatability" by noting that Colvin's "circumstances" would have been used to undermine the boycott organisers' "credibility", as clearly Colvin was not "stereotypically perfect and ideal". Max (Turn 13) consolidates the discussion, suggesting the organisers wanted to identify "*the* person they could *all* rise behind and get behind" rather than tackle each instance of resistance to bus segregation.

It is interesting that in this interchange, students are grounding their thinking in their understanding of the perspectives of role-players at the time in their specific context, rather than imposing their views on to them. Impressed by their early deductions[35] based on engagement with the initial documentary evidence, and their fine attempts at "perspective recognition" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, chap. 11) – without that concept being explicitly taught and unpacked – I commended them (Turn 16), saying "you've already got amazing insights into what things were like in Montgomery at the time".

Realising the explanatory value of her phrase, as teacher-researcher I (Turn 16) asked Toni to further unpack her reference to "a rock and a hard place" (Turn 10). Toni (Turn 17) demonstrates an intriguing grasp here of the dialectic entailed in activists challenging the system while accommodating that same system's sensibilities and prejudices. Even at this early stage in the enquiry, Toni's framing of long-time activist Nixon's dilemma shows a keen sense of how several "variables" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 372) might affect how their boycott will be perceived. At this point, none of the students is cognisant of the need to project a figurehead that appeals not only to sympathetic white people, but more particularly to the aspiring Black community rooted as they were in a conservative reading of Christian mores and behaviour. This tentative engagement with multiple socio-cultural intersections in what was clearly a highly gendered, race-based society already approximates meeting the expectations of Tetreault's Holistic History.

Even at this early juncture, Toni is already grappling with a male activist acknowledging the need to "meet people's expectations" regarding the exemplary qualities the symbolic figurehead of the boycott would need to embody given the beliefs of the time. Later, after Veronica and Toni view an image of Parks outside the court in the *Silent Conversation*, Toni develops her line of reasoning further, as Extract 5 below reveals.

[35] The *Initial Introductions* constituted the second activity, following their reading of extracts from three textbooks and the 1957 graphic non-fiction book.

Extract 5 from Class Discussion Post *Silent Conversation* (Code: Post SC - D)
Turns:

26. *Veronica:* *I think she's trying to look professional to – to like garner respect*
27. *Toni:* *She's making a deliberate decision to fall in line with the way that she was presented. She's kind of understanding what they're doing and choosing to go along with it. Playing her part, essentially.*

Here Toni (Turn 27) suggests that Parks actively chose to comport herself so as to project an image that embodied the expectations of the local community in order to secure the success of the campaign launched in her name. This brings to mind what Scott, as quoted by the historian Kelley, terms a "tactical choice" to depict the strategic yet seemingly everyday decisions made by Black people in their daily battles with injustice (Kelley, 1993, p. 77; Woyshner and Schocker, 2015, p. 448). According to Toni, Parks's agency is evident in the way she ensures that she matches the image the conservative and largely church-based men in the MIA have decided is strategically essential to win support for their cause. Parks's choice can be viewed as what Kelley, acknowledging Scott, terms "infrapolitics": "Like Scott, I use the concept of infrapolitics to describe the daily confrontations, evasive actions, and stifled thoughts that often inform organized political movements" (Kelley, 1993, pp. 77–78). Following Kelley here, it would appear that Toni grasps the political significance of Parks's strategic choices.

While Parks – in Toni's view (Turn 27 above) – chooses to conform in order to secure their ultimate aim of bus desegregation, Freye in constructing their *Prompted Poem* (as discussed earlier) notes how by way of contrast Colvin defied convention by wearing her hair in corn rows. Freye there links that directly to Colvin's readiness to take political action against bus segregation, suggesting "we can do the hair and then like 'rebellion was on my mind that day"' (Code: PP Gr 1 – D). In Extract 3 below, Freye again draws attention to this distinction between Colvin and Parks while examining an image of Parks outside court.

Extract 3 from *Silent Conversation* (Code: SC – DW)
Turns:

3. *Max:* *She looks respectable, whatever that means*
4. *Toni:* *She definitely looks traditionally 'respectable'*
   Her dress is quite conservative, her hair is 'neatly' tied back,
   and the glasses lend her a look of disarming friendliness.
5. *Freye:* *Although both firm in their beliefs of wanting to be oppression free, Colvin and Rosa both went down two paths. The neat hair vs Colvin's corn rows. Was this a generational gap? Or did Rosa see what was needed and was willing to bend where Colvin was not?*

In responding to a photograph of Parks showing her as "respectable, whatever that means" (Max, Turn 3) and as "traditionally 'respectable"' (Toni, Turn 4), Freye distinguishes directly between how Parks and Colvin present themselves. Freye in her depiction of Colvin's "corn

rows" as opposed to Parks's "neat hair" (Turn 5) is bridging the private/public divide given women's very presentation of their bodies is seen as a consciously-informed political act. In so far as Freye and Toni see Parks's presentation of herself as part of a complex interplay with the self-appointed Black men who seized control of the boycott initiated by her own refusal to give in to yet another indignity imposed by a white male bus driver, their insight fits Phase 5: Holistic History.

Furthermore, Group 1 demonstrate insightful understanding of the complexity of the socio-political context in which Nixon chooses to distance any planned boycott from Colvin. As previously discussed, Toni (Extract 3; Code: II - D) identifies that Nixon is acutely aware of how fronting a boycott with a young, extremely dark, and clearly impoverished girl – compounded later by her evident pregnancy by an unnamed man – would backfire on the movement given the evident middle-class sensibilities of the largely conservatively-Christian Black people, let alone that of the largely hostile white supremacist majority. Next, there is further evidence in Extract 2 below of Group 1 paying focused attention to the complexity of a central role-player's decision-making in initiating causal actions. This is even more intriguing given their expressed disaffection for what they elsewhere identify as Nixon's evident misogyny. Their affective concern for the political issues at stake in securing an end to bus segregation enhances their historical understanding of Nixon's key role in events.

Extract 2 from Group 1's discussion while writing their *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 1 - D)
Turns:

1.	*Toni:*	*The whole thing was like ED Nixon - like credit where credit is due -*
2.	*Freye:*	*Exactly!*
3.	*Toni:*	*This guy put like a whole lot of thought into this thing*
4.	*Freye:*	*He was so - like - such a politician!*
5.	*Toni:*	*He was! He would have made a brilliant, brilliant* […]
6.	*Freye:*	[speaking at same time] *it's incredible how intelligent his politically-motivated schemes were*

Group 1 are here demonstrating sophisticated understanding by reading "against the grain" (Benjamin, 1940, sec. vii)[36] of the critical way McGuire presents Nixon as undermining Robinson, despite all her efforts to promote Colvin as an appropriate catalyst to use in launching a proposed boycott. Here Toni (Turn 1) suggests that they give "like credit where credit is due" in admiring Nixon for his shrewdness as a "brilliant" politician (Turn 5). Freye (Turn 6) enthusiastically supports that, exclaiming: "it's incredible how intelligent his

[36] The phrase is borrowed from Walter Benjamin: "A historical materialist therefore dissociates himself from it as far as possible. He regards it as his task to brush history against the grain." (Benjamin, 1940, sec. vii)

politically-motivated schemes were". Students' "caring that" (Barton and Levstik, 2008) Nixon's decisions ultimately facilitated success is evident in their recognition of the value of his strategy, with their affective engagement enriching their historical learning.

This is further testimony to Group 1's willingness to "recognise" Nixon's "perspective" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, chap. 11) while reserving their keenly-felt condemnation of his misogyny. They clearly credit Nixon's understanding that Colvin's personal circumstances might make her easy prey for public detractors from their goal of securing bus desegregation. This was yet again evidence of Group 1's ability to articulate at the level of Tetreault's Holistic History, even when that required reading "against the grain" (Benjamin, 1940, sec. vii) of the very documents they encountered in the enquiry.

Tetreault's Holistic History: Group 1's *Prompted Poem* #2 – "Gaze level" and "Our leaders is just we ourselves"

Group 1's *Prompted Poem* (included in full previously) depicts Colvin as a compelling young activist with the conviction to stand up for herself in her knowledge that "it's my constitutional right" (to remain seated in the bus) in the face of the confrontational cross-examination by city attorney Knabe during the *Browder v Gayle* case. It had previously been assumed by Nixon that Colvin would collapse under hostile public scrutiny, yet the court transcript as included in Hoose's biography reveals her defying the white male-gendered Knabe's repeated insistence that people "stopped riding the buses for certain named things […] that is correct, isn't it? […] for certain things that Reverend King said were the things they objected to" (Hoose, 2009, chap. 9).

Knabe taunts the plaintiffs in *Browder v Gayle* with the claim that King orchestrated the whole boycott by dictating his grievances to the Montgomery community. Before examining an extract from Group 1's *Prompted Poem* where they directly address this, it is instructive to examine how in defining Holistic History, Tetreault writes:

> At every juncture, the variables of race, sex and gender, ethnicity, social class […] are taken into account. Accompanying this particularistic perspective is attention to the larger context […] Historians ask how gender asymmetry is linked to economics, family organization […] and politics.
>
> At this phase, a revolutionary relationship comes to exist between things traditionally treated as serious, primarily the activities of men in the public sphere, and those things formerly perceived as trivial, namely the activities of women in the private sphere. This new relationship leads to a recentering of knowledge in the disciplines, a shift from a male-centred perspective to one placing women at the center of their own knowledge. (Tetreault, 1985, pp. 375–376)

In the following lines from their poem, Group 1's rendition of Colvin's court appearance in *Browder v Gayle* places her "at the center of [her] own knowledge", as Holistic History requires (Tetreault, 1985, pp. 375–376).

24 It was my constitutional right!
25 Rebellion was on my mind that day
26 You and the others have changed your ideas since December 5, have you not?
27 No sir. We haven't changed our ideas. It has been in me ever since I was born.
28 Did you have a leader?
29 Did we have a leader? Our leaders is just we, ourselves
30 Gaze level, voice even, and intense
31 We were treated wrong, dirty and nasty

32 Get up
33 No sir

In this extract, Group 1 have Colvin face up to Knabe with her "gaze level" (Line 30). Furthermore, in Lines 26-31, Group 1 focus on Colvin rejecting the attorney's insistent claims that King incited all bus protests. Group 1's poem constructs the highly gendered and racialised interaction between the now 16-year-old Colvin – previously rejected as the "face" of the boycott, who had recently given birth, leaving her even more vulnerable – and the unflinching white male attorney, repeatedly insinuating King was behind her actions. With this depiction using a court transcript from Hoose's biography, Group 1 articulate their grasp of Colvin as a 16-year-old activist who knows her own mind even when that is being undermined by a patriarchal legal institution, as evident in Line 27's: "No sir. We haven't changed our ideas. It has been in me ever since I was born.". The repetition of "No sir" (Lines 27; 33) emphasises Colvin indeed centring her own defiantly-held views in response to the white male attorney's accusations.

As I shared with my students, Hoose defends the credibility of his extracts from the *Browder v Gayle* court proceedings in a bibliographic note on one of his key sources, *The Judge: The Life and Opinions of Alabama's Frank M. Johnson, Jr.* by Frank Sikora:

> Sikora, a former reporter for The Birmingham News, has done a great deal to keep Claudette's name from simply disappearing. He tracked her parents down during the 1970s and wrote the first newspaper story about her contributions to U.S. history. In *The Judge*, he recovered and published parts of the transcript of the *Browder v. Gayle* hearing, allowing us to hear Claudette's actual words and filling in Judge Johnson's impressions of her testimony. He provided the basis for my book's Chapter 9. (2009, n. Bibliography)

It is Group 1's rich use of Colvin's "actual words" and the judge's "impressions of her testimony" that ensure a Phase 5 "holistic view of human experience" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 371). Hoose explains how he conducted fourteen lengthy interviews with a much older Colvin, once

she finally agreed in 2006 to share her story with him. I discussed the various origins of the book in a plenary (CC – D), and Group 1 readily embraced the opportunity to use Colvin's own words, attorney Knabe's interrogation, and various descriptions of Colvin while testifying, as prompts in their poem. This is evident in Extract 3 of their discussion below.

Extract 3 from Group 1's discussion while crafting their *Prompted Poem* (Code: PP Gr 1 - D)

Turns:		
23.	*Toni:*	*'*Rebellion was on my mind that day'
24.	*Freye:*	*'*I decided I wasn't gonna take it anymore'
25.	*Yolande:*	*Yah!*
26.	*Toni:*	*She's cool – I really like how she – She sounds like one of those activists already. Also –* *'*I knew the rule'
27.	*Freye:*	*Yes!*

As the above snippets from their almost fifty-minute engagement indicate, their discussion while constructing the poem gives further insight into their choices as they reviewed the text. In Extract 3, Toni (Turn 23) and Freye (Turn 24) focus on Colvin's deliberate, conscious decision to protest the bus driver's unfair imposition that she move, as Toni (Turn 26) quotes her saying she "knew the rule" that she could remain seated as there were no vacant seats behind her. Group 1's evident enthusiasm for Colvin's public performance in court is quite palpable in their discussion in Extract 4 below, and their affective engagement enhances the attention they pay to evidence presented in Hoose's text.

Extract 4 from Group 1's discussion while crafting a *Prompted Poem* (Code: PP Gr 1 - D)

Turns:		
28.	*Toni:*	*Her testimony is* so cool*!* *[…] cos she's clearly a* very *good speaker! I really like it when she says '*No sir. We haven't changed our ideas. It's been in me ever since I was born*.'*
29.	*Yolande:*	*It's so annoying that they didn't let her – she wasn't allowed like – she wasn't there -*
30.	*Freye:*	*She's* so cool*!*
31.	*Yolande:*	*Where was that?*
32.	*Freye:*	*'*Did we have a leader? Our leaders is just we, ourselves'
33.	*Toni:*	*And again, she says, '*No sir*.' And the way she keeps saying: '*Our leaders is just we, ourselves. We all spoke for ourselves*.' And he* [attorney Knabe] *keeps trying to trip her up and she just says what she does and then she says: '*We were treated wrong, dirty and nasty*.'* *And then when they describe her, they say: '*Her gaze level, her voice even and intense*'.*
34.	*Freye:*	*yessss!*

Above, in response to their emphatically pointing out the young Colvin's self-assurance in front of an evidently hostile white male cross-examiner and three white male judges, Group 1 use Colvin's own words to speak her truth, and are evidently enthralled by her testimony calling it "so cool" (Toni; Turn 28) and exclaiming "She's so cool!" (Freye; Turn 30), while Yolande

(Turn 29) is annoyed at Colvin's exclusion from the boycott. Toni (Turn 28) is clearly enthralled by Colvin's performance, noting "she's clearly a *very* good speaker!" It is evident that Freye (Turn 32) – "Did we have a leader? Our leaders is just we, ourselves" – and Toni (Turn 33) – "We all spoke for ourselves" – are impressed by Colvin's articulation of how the people of Montgomery had no need for leadership as they led and spoke for themselves. Their "caring for" the young teen evidently has what Barton and Levstik term "cognitive payoffs" (2008, p. 236) as their affective engagement informs their learning here.

In using Colvin's articulate response to Knabe, who disputes her every attempt to assert her own truth, Group 1 has Colvin speak the broader public truth – as they quote her (Turns 28; 32) clearly saying "we" not "I" – for all Black people of Montgomery. Group 1's use of Colvin's framing here speaks more pointedly to Black women's very personal truth of being repeatedly verbally and sexually abused by white male bus drivers. By choosing Colvin's simply-framed yet deeply evocative expression, they directly situate the struggle to end segregation in the longstanding trauma that using the buses signified to the Black women of Montgomery. In doing so, Group 1 place Colvin's defiance in the public sphere as rooted not in the say-so of some Black male leader as alleged by Knabe (Toni, Turn 28), but in the very personalised experience of Black women. There is no private/public divide here as there is in Bifocal History; instead, the everyday experience of Black women, and Colvin's sustained activism in the face of it, places the private and public spheres on a continuum as is required by both Phases 4 and 5 of Tetreault's framework.

Furthermore, in their poem, Colvin's defiant "gaze" directly meets Knabe's as he incessantly cross-questions her: "Gaze level, voice even, and intense" (Line 30; PP Gr 1 – W). Here Group 1 are drawing on Hoose's biography for several powerful descriptors of Colvin's demeanour as she asserts the Black community's shared motivation for boycotting the buses. Their writing resonated with me when reading Woyshner and Schocker (2015, p. 448) who remind us of bell hooks's contention in "The oppositional gaze: Black female spectator" (1992) that "There is power in looking":

> By courageously looking, we defiantly declared: "Not only will I stare. I want my look to change reality." Even in the worst circumstances of domination, the ability to manipulate one's gaze in the face of structures of domination that would contain it, opens up the possibility of agency.
>
> […] The "gaze" has been and is a site of resistance for colonized black people globally. Subordinates in relations of power learn experientially that there is a critical gaze, one that "looks" to document, one that is oppositional. In resistance struggle, the power of the dominated to assert agency by claiming and cultivating "awareness" politicizes "looking" relations – one learns to look a certain way in order to resist. (hooks, 1992, p. 116)

It is evident from hooks's framing that the young Colvin has already developed this capacity "to look a certain way in order to resist" as that is how Group 1 portray her both in their discussions, and in their poem. In so powerfully asserting Colvin's resolute agency in this way, the students are drawing attention to their considered choices. This is reinforced in Toni's subsequent reflection on the process of utilising a close reading of texts to construct a *Prompted Poem*, included below as Extract 5.

Extract 5 from Group 1's discussion while crafting a *Prompted Poem* (Code: PP Gr 1 - D)

Toni: *It made us a lot more aware of like how she was speaking and how she presented herself versus how other people presented her cos like the tone of what she says is very different – and also if you selectively choose stuff it's interesting – because you can kind of paint her entirely differently – so depending on whose words you're using she can either look like this kind of child-victim you know, no agency, not really in control of the situation – didn't do anything – kind of got pregnant and was pushed out the movement.*

And if you rely solely on her own *words, it's very much this recurring refrain of I'm not ashamed, like I'm proud of what I did. I stand by what I did. And she i*s very *self-assured throughout the entire thing.*

We tried to write it mostly in her own quotes, And it's like really interesting to see how sure *she is. She* knows *she was right. She never really wavers about that. Like really awesome.*

In this reflection above, Toni suggests the process of examining the documents in order to write the poem made them "a lot more aware" of how Colvin "presented herself versus how other people presented her", as it helped them realise how Colvin's "tone" and articulation gave her the agency denied her by those depicting her as a "child-victim". Toni's assertion that Colvin "is very self-assured throughout the entire thing" is precisely what their poem as included above conveys. Toni's insight into the lesson activity clearly indicates that in this instance my pedagogic intervention had indeed enriched their learning, enabling them to capture Colvin's resistance to white male authority at the level of Holistic History. It provided scope for their affective engagement with Colvin, thereby exposing the differences between her own view of her actions, and the perspectives of others about her. Toni reveals this disciplinary grasp in explaining that "if you selectively choose stuff", "you can kind of paint her entirely differently". It underscores Barton and Levstik's contention that "affective engagement leads to […] cognitive payoffs" and it enhances the "likelihood that learners will consider alternative perspectives" (2008, p. 236).

Conclusion

My intervention centring Black women readily resulted in students throughout the DBE detecting their absence from or misrepresentation in the textbook narratives, clearly indicating they had come to view events in Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s in ways that challenged what Tetreault classifies as Male History or Compensatory History. Individual students in Group 2 at various times demonstrated their clear grasp of the import of distinctive evidence of diverse Black women's particular centrality in events and of the significance of their individual lived experiences in understanding their roles. Elsewhere, their preconceptions of women as an amorphous oppressed group in the past took precedence in their discussions and writing, indicating their way of seeing events as Bifocal History, which reinscribes the public/private, male/female divide as before. Their affective concern not to be associated with discriminatory views evident in the past partially impeded their learning from the DBE in a sustained way. By way of contrast, Group 1's discussions and writings demonstrated their embrace of new knowledge of Black women's lived experience in all its intersectional particularity, with women's personal actions constituting political action, thus bridging the private/public divide. This pitched Group 1's work at the level of Tetreault's Feminist History, and where they demonstrated this in examining the way particular women related to men in authority, their emerging capacity to speak and write at the level of Tetreault's Holistic History became evident. In the next chapter I turn to examining evidence across all DBE activities that addresses Question 1B regarding students' way of seeing the construction of history in and by school textbooks.

CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION – QUESTION 1B

How does centring Black women in accounts of the ending of bus segregation of Montgomery, Alabama inform students' way of seeing the construction of history in school textbooks?

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3.8, Braun et al.'s Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) formed the basis of my analysis of the data used to consider Question 1B. Using RTA implied that I as the action researcher interacted actively with the data generated by my students in the DBE to construct two themes based on my own interpretation, resulting in highly contextualised knowledge (Braun *et al.*, 2019, p. 851) grounded in my own classroom practice. This process was "iterative" (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p. 593; Braun *et al.*, 2019, p. 848), leading ultimately to my framing two broad themes, each "organized around a core concept or idea, a central organizing concept" (Braun *et al.*, 2019, p. 845). Each theme was constructed by me as a "storyteller" reflecting on the dataset to "provide a coherent and compelling interpretation of the data, grounded in the data" (Braun *et al.*, 2019, pp. 848–849). In framing each theme, I integrated several significant and at times overlapping threads that I had identified through a recursive engagement with my students' views on the construction of history across all classroom activities. The two themes are discussed in this chapter respectively as:

6.1 Erasure and Misrepresentation in Textbooks
and
6.2 Appropriate Language Use in Writing a Group *Textbook Entry*.

6.1 Thematic Focus: Erasure and Misrepresentation in Textbooks

In constituting this theme, I drew on how students during diverse activities expressed surprise at who and what was excluded from or misrepresented by the dominant textbook narratives, viewed earlier in Chapter 5.1 through Tetreault's lens as Male History (erasing all women role-players) and Compensatory History (misrepresenting Parks). Moving on from the issues already discussed there, in this chapter I will examine students' engagement with the construction of history for textbooks as manifest in further data which I collated into each of the following three focal areas:

6.1.1 Textbooks isolate a single leader, and erase the context of events: Group 1 grappled with the way the dominant narrative credited King with leading the boycott seemingly singlehandedly after its supposedly spontaneous start, and the erasure and misrepresentation of the specific Montgomery context.

6.1.2 "Did we have a leader? Our leaders is just we, ourselves"[37] - Textbooks centre male leaders, erasing or misrepresenting "everyday" citizens, particularly "ordinary women": Students questioned the textbooks' denial of causal complexity by focusing on "big men", erasing or misrepresenting the role of the "ordinary citizens", and especially the controversially-termed "ordinary" Black women of Montgomery.

6.1.3 How textbook history is – and ought to be – constructed: Students journalled their post-enquiry reflections on how they now viewed the textbook construction of history as misrepresenting the past, suggesting how instead it ought to be constructed in various ways.

These three threads were variously evident in students' use of the words and phrases listed below as Figure 6.1. When examined in the context of the discussions or written work from which they originate, they facilitated my generating a thematic focus – Erasure and Misrepresentation in Textbooks – which encompassed all three concerns. My intersectional feminist positioning was already evident in my curating of the enquiry documents centring Black women excluded from, or misrepresented in, the dominant narrative of the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery. It is further evident in my later deducing this theme from the students' data. This though is in line with what Braun et al. describe as:

> a deductive orientation, where the researcher approaches the data with various ideas, concepts, and theories, or even potential codes based on such, which are then explored and tagged within the dataset. In practice, any researcher will approach the data with preconceived ideas based on their existing knowledge and viewpoints. (Braun *et al.*, 2019, p. 855)

While my "preconceived ideas" based on my "existing knowledge" is evident in my construction of this theme, it is rooted in my compilation of an extensive list of words and phrases students themselves repeatedly used and presented here as Figure 6.1. This data is drawn from my transcriptions across all DBE activities. The list is not arranged in a hierarchical sequence, and while it is presented here without the context in which the words and phrases were used, the RTA that follows situates each quoted extract in the particular lesson activity in which they originate using the coding previously provided in Figure 4.3. Words and phrases that speak to the theme in related ways are, where possible, sequenced close together, although there is overlap throughout. For instance, I have sequenced "misconception of an event" after "misconstrued the narrative", although "misconstrued" conveys a sense of the "misconception"

[37] From Group 1's *Prompted Poem*, quoting Claudette Colvin's testimony in *Browder v Gayle*, after city attorney Knabe tried repeatedly to entrap her into conceding that King was the instigator and leader of their bus protest. Their complete poem is included as Appendix C.

being deliberate, akin to "manipulation", which follows next. These types of terms all speak to a form of misrepresentation, and indeed the term "misrepresented" appears close by. Some of this notion speaks to the different focus on erasure included near the top of Figure 6.1 as evident in the phrases "written out of history" and "removed from history", as those phrases still retain a sense of agency in the erasure, evident also in the term "censored".

Figure 6.1 Words and phrases used in generating 6.1 Thematic Focus: Erasure and Misrepresentation in Textbooks.

	6.1 Thematic Focus: Erasure and Misrepresentation in Textbooks
1	'written out of history' / 'total rewrite of history' / 'rewritten' / 'rewrite'
2	'exclusion'/ 'excluding' / 'excludes crucial narratives' / 'constructed to exclude'
3	'deliberately left out' / 'role of those who are left out' / 'parts left out' / 'so many Black women left out'
4	'not at all mentioned'
5	'overlooked'
6	'removed' / 'removed from history'
7	'erasing' / 'erased' / 'erasure' / 'what she did was erased from history'
8	'cutting out things' / 'cut entire people & organisations out of a narrative'
9	'censored'
10	'hide' / 'hidden'
11	'minimised'
12	'downplayed' / 'downplaying'
13	'reduced' / 'reduction'
14	'diminished'
15	'the event was made too much of or too little of'
16	'forgotten'
17	'get lost in the shadow of the person who is centred'
18	'simple story'/'simplify history'/'simplification'/ 'overly simplified to a linear understanding of history'/ 'simplified linear narrative' / 'oversimplification of events' / 'history is reduced to its simplest form' /
19	'ignoring' / 'ignored'
20	'omitted'
21	'what else has been lost?'
22	'eradicating the actions and stories of other groups'
23	'didn't play the role they said she played'
24	'misrepresented'
25	'misconstrued the narrative'
26	'misconception of an event'
27	'manipulation'
28	'written in the POV of the winner'
29	'wave to the side'
30	'discrediting'
31	'a picture is painted rather than the truth'
32	'does not give an accurate impression of the reality'

Next, each of the constituent areas of student concern within this thematic focus will be examined in turn.

6.1.1 Textbooks isolate a single leader, and erase the context of events:

Journalling proved a rich resource for exploring how centring Black women in the DBE shifted student thinking. How students viewed the textbooks is evident by looking at extracts from their individual reflections, starting with an extract from Delilah's journal.

Extract 1 from Delilah's journal (Code: J - Delilah - W)

Delilah: *Additionally, it appears that history in textbooks builds up big names such as Martin Luther King to justify their significance sometimes discrediting others or ignoring their attributes completely. Textbooks would like us to believe specific individuals led revolutions rather than groups of people and events.*

I used to believe the textbook narrative to be correct and unbiased, however I now believe that there are parts left out and a picture is painted rather than the truth. Additionally, textbooks seem to be biased in the people they focus on and give credit to.

As Delilah reflects, textbooks centre "big names" like King as the leaders of "revolutions" ostensibly "to justify their significance", to the exclusion of those who are demeaned or left out, further suggesting that in the process "a picture is painted" whose veracity she has come to question, while previously she had not. Delilah's sentiments are explored in more detail in a Group 1 discussion which she unfortunately missed while isolating at home, as evident in Extract 6 discussed next.

Extract 6 from Group 1's discussion while crafting their *Prompted Poem* (Code: PP Gr 1 - D)

Turns:

35. *Toni:* *Also, what I find quite interesting about this whole thing is the emphasis amongst everyone who is actually involved in saying: 'we have no leader'. Reminds me a lot of the like student movement and the SDS* [Student Democratic Society] *when they didn't want leader. And yet, and yet every single thing you like read about it - puts like a very definitive leader - they all put Martin Luther King like on it and it's just -*
36. *Yolande:* [laughs] *He's not the leader - and yet [according to the textbooks] he was the leader!*
37. *Toni:* *They pin the bus boycott on him and yet every single person saying - we didn't have a leader - we weren't led – 'We all spoke for ourselves.' We did our own thing. And then everything you read about it exactly contradicts that. I find that quite interesting. Also, I can't quite figure out like who benefits from kind of putting the whole movement on just one person because then in one way it like reduces the movement and in the other way it like makes him the hero –*
38. *Yolande:* [indistinct]
39. *Toni:* *Why - what was the point of reducing the entire thing to like Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks? He* [Nixon] *said: he* [King] *was the most palatable person - they had nothing on him it means no-one knew who he* [King] *was until he joined, so he didn't have anything for them to worry about. Because they could have just added - just like there were some other people - they could have just had a wider cast of people involved*
40. *Freye:* [indistinct] *back to the personal*
41. *Toni:* *It was very much a one-man-show at some point - they were like 'Martin Luther King'*
42. *Yolande:* *Also, I think now like looking back, it's just Martin Luther King*
43. *Toni:* *But I just find it weird. Remember there were so many people who were committed - who were like - we don't have a leader - and it kind of just ended up - but maybe it's not like that - it's more the way it's been told - the textbooks have chosen to tell it*
44. *Freye:* *Definitely!*
45. *Toni:* *It's just being told - that Martin Luther King was all about love and everything and being so like - not - it's shown that he doesn't actually do much - he's just like - ugh - love everyone [..] but he actually did like - he went to -*
46. *Freye:* *Even if they like focus on one single person - they can't kind of wave to the side the encroachments that were committed against the 'lesser' people*
47. *Toni:* *The other tendency - not just linked to the boycott movement - the tendency to like isolate things as a way to kind of avoid the background and everything else*
48. *Freye:* *Exactly!*
49. *Toni:* *Like in a completely different way like people like to pretend that the Holocaust just happened. And like the antisemitism never existed because they don't want to grapple with the fact that* the world *was deeply antisemitic; people had very ugly views and opinions and it all built up. And they don't want to acknowledge the fact that like half the world was complicit and it was building up.*
And it's similar with this sort of thing:
they like to pretend that it all just happened, so you don't have to grapple with the fact that the US was deeply racist, and people had been deeply opposed to that racism for centuries and then like everything happened as a result of that. And they don't like the idea of a catalyst as that suggests other things and they want you to think that the other things just don't exist because they make you uncomfortable.
50. *Freye:* *That's why the textbooks were like - and it's embarrassing*
51. *Toni:* *And it makes you feel guilty, and it makes you feel like - you know*

In the above discussion, Group 1 grapple with trying to account for the various textbooks' centring of King's leadership alone – with Parks mentioned as a symbol – when the evidence they gleaned during the enquiry instead suggests a richly complex array of role-players. Toni (Turn 37) is puzzled as she "can't quite figure out like who benefits from kind of putting the whole movement on just one person". Yolande proclaims (Turn 42) that on "looking back [in the textbooks] it's just Martin Luther King". Toni (Turn 35) suggests by way of analogy that the claim from Colvin and Smith in the *Browder v Gayle* court hearing that "we have no leader" is akin to the 1960s Students for a Democratic Society's denial of hierarchical leadership in their ranks. Toni is here exploring what they have learnt elsewhere in the curriculum to see if it sheds any light on the quandary of single, male leadership that was so emphatically disowned by Black women at the time. Furthermore, Toni (Turn 45) implies the image of King retained in the textbook is an innocuous, sanitised one that portrays him as being "all about love and everything", rather than as a proactive campaigner, seen as sufficiently "palatable" to lead the protests as the white authorities "had nothing on him" (Turn 39) to use to discredit him. This further deflects the narrative's focus from what Freye (Turn 46) calls the "encroachments committed against the *lesser* people" as the textbook erases all reference to the historical context of the endemic racialised sexual assault of Black women-turned-activists by centring the "one-man-show" (Toni, Turn 41) which – the textbooks imply – magically ended bus segregation.

Beyond this, Toni (Turn 47) suggests – and Freye (Turn 48) agrees – that the textbooks' "tendency to like isolate things" is a way to deflect from the widespread societal acceptance of "deeply racist" views in the US over the centuries. Toni (Turn 49) does this by analogy with those claiming the Nazi genocide "just happened", instead of "[grappling] with the fact that *the world* was deeply antisemitic". Toni is engaging with why the textbook erased racialised sexual violence as the immediate context for the boycott initiated and run by Black women, suggesting that if this were acknowledged it would leave the presumably mostly white US student cohort feeling "uncomfortable" (Turn 49) and "guilty" (Toni, Turn 51). Freye (Turn 50) implies that this failure to include the actual context in which the boycott happened is "embarrassing", indicating a clear indictment of how history is constructed in textbooks. It would appear that in the absence of a theoretical articulation that might have explained the complete erasure of the pertinent historical context of the endemic racialised harassment, assault, and rape of Black women in Montgomery in the 1940s-1950s, students cast around to find an analogous

deflection of complicity in antisemitism to be of compelling explanatory value in understanding the textbooks' isolation of a single "palatable" (Toni, Turn 39) leader as instrumental in securing change. In drawing this analogy, Toni is suggesting that textbook compilers are ensuring students "don't have to grapple with" the "fact" that "people had very ugly views", and that "like half the world was complicit" (Toni, Turn 49). According to Toni and Freye, it was the specific Montgomery context, not King, which propelled what in the next thematic focus are called the "ordinary" citizens – especially the Black women – to themselves fight for the change.

6.1.2 "Did we have a leader? Our leaders is just we, ourselves"[38] - Textbooks centre male leaders, erasing or misrepresenting "everyday" citizens, particularly "ordinary" women:

In their individual journal entries, students reflected on their concerns regarding the textbook construction of history. This is evident in the following extracts, where Veronica and Jane each separately consider how in the writing of history, certain narratives are left out.

Extract 1 from Veronica's journal (Code: J - Veronica - W)

Veronica: *How do historians decide on a narrative / what to exclude? - what the specific thought process is –*

Extract 2 from Jane's journal (Code: J - Jane - W)

Jane: *How do those constructing History choose to prioritise certain narratives over others?*
History is constructed in such a way that it is overly summarised and excludes crucial narratives.
It also centres the narrative around men, namely white men, eradicating the actions and stories of other groups. This depiction of History found in textbooks ultimately tells the wrong story as most Of the causes and effects of events are completely left out. I thought the History found in textbooks was reliable and informative, but I have since realised this is entirely untrue.

Veronica (Extract 1) questions how historians decide on what to include and "exclude", while Jane (Extract 2) in similar vein asks how they decide which "narratives" to "prioritise". Jane admits that while previously trusting textbooks, she has come to see them as centring "white men" and "(telling) the wrong story" to the point where she no longer trusts the veracity of their construction of history "as most of the causes and effects of events are completely left out".

Next, Indigo similarly reflects on the decentring of women in an extract from her journal.

[38] From Group 1's *Prompted Poem*, quoting Claudette Colvin's testimony in *Browder v Gayle,* after city attorney Knabe tried repeatedly to entrap her into conceding that King was the instigator and leader of their bus protest. Their complete poem is included as Appendix C.

Extract 1 from Indigo's journal (Code: J – Indigo – W)

Indigo *Centres men - excludes women while emphasising the role of men*
Objectifies women - describes women in ways related to their physical appearance and structure
- also describes women to do with their relations with the men in their lives, such as husbands

Like Jane, Indigo (Extract 1) claims that male-centring "excludes women", further suggesting that even where women are included in textbooks, they are described in terms of "their relations with the men in their lives". This is reminiscent of Group 2's Bifocal History as discussed in Chapter 5.2 above as it generalises "men" and "women" as distinct but undifferentiated groups, with its underlying "oppression narrative" which "Objectifies women". Next, an extract from Max's journal also considers the impact of women's dismissal from accounts.

Extract 1 from Max's journal (Code: J – Max -W)

Max: *Some of the women were also extraordinary activists but despite being integral to ending bus segregation their roles are often dismissed both now via their exclusion in the textbook, and then when they were also excluded from the narrative, and in certain aspects of the movement itself.*

Specifically, regarding the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Max sees the lack of acknowledgement for "extraordinary [women] activists" who played "integral" roles at the time was compounded in the way the construction of the 'narrative' subsequently omitted their contributions.

Next, in Extract 4 below, Toni considers how the textbook narrative has replicated a young teen's exclusion at the time without questioning it.

Extract 4 from Toni's journal (Code: J - Toni - W)

Toni: *By rejecting Colvin as a potential face of the bus boycott, Nixon was structuring the narrative in a certain way and leaving Colvin out of it, and historians since then seem to have largely accepted this structure.*

In a related vein to Max, Toni here tackles the way the textbook construction of events compounds civil rights stalwart Nixon's dismissal of Colvin as the "potential face" of the boycott by "leaving" Colvin "out of it" altogether. Max (Extract 1 earlier) and Toni (Extract 4 above) both draw a thread through from past exclusion to present erasure in textbooks.

Turning now from their journals to data gleaned from their *Silent Conversation*, students starting with Freye (Extract 4) articulate their responses to a photograph of countless Black people walking instead of catching the bus.

Extract 4 from the *Silent Conversation* (Code: SC - DW)

Freye:

Lines:

1. A very powerful visual of the drive behind the protest, in that 40 000 people were willing to walk countless
2. miles in order to show support and ensure that their voices were heard. The boycott and its resulting
3. desegregation of buses case would not have even reached the Supreme Court if it hadn't been for these
4. citizens. The textbooks downplay the role and bravery of the "ordinary" black people protesting, in
5. favour of billing a single person as solely responsible for everything. And yes, whilst Rosa, or Jo Ann or
6. MLK and the planning they put into it is important, it was still down to everyday citizens who were
7. given the chance of saying no to something that would inconvenience them and put their lives in danger,
8. and NOT TAKING IT. Their role and the necessity of their role is minimised. Why is this? Perhaps it is
9. more convenient to have the masses believe that only someone 'special' can rise up and challenge the
10. ruling body, and not everyday citizens to discourage this sort of behaviour.

Freye questions at length the "downplaying" of the "role and bravery" of the allegedly "ordinary" boycotters "in favour of billing a single person as solely responsible for everything" (Lines 4-5). Furthermore, Freye uses scare quotes to dismiss the suggestion that these unnamed Black people were at all '"ordinary"', implying that instead they were quite extraordinary in that it was they who together ended bus segregation. Freye is intent on grappling with the need to explain how the historical account came to be constructed so that the "role and the necessity of their role" (Line 8) of "everyday citizens" (Line 6) is "minimised" (Line 8). She appears to suggest that textbook writing is calculated to "discourage this sort of [protest] behaviour" (Line 10) to keep the citizenry disempowered. Indigo and Jane respond directly to Freye's observations in Extract 5 below.

Extract 5 from the *Silent Conversation* (Code: SC - DW)

Turns:

6.	*Indigo:*	*Yes, to distract people from remembering the power they hold.*
7.	*Jane:*	*I completely agree that 'ordinary' citizens' roles are downplayed. They completely altered their life to fight for justice, yet textbooks make [it] out to be something that was far easier than it was. I think this has been done as it is far simpler to credit it all to King or Parks so that the individual stories do not need to be told.*
8.	*Indigo:*	*Yes, if it wasn't for 'ordinary' citizens who supported the boycott so well, the pressure would not have been placed on the economy and the Supreme Court to the extent that it was.*

Both Group 2's Indigo (Turns 6;8) and Jane (Turn 7) in responding to Freye's *Silent Conversation* above (Extract 4) appear to grasp the vital role and influence of those '"ordinary"' citizens. Indigo (Turn 6) concurs with Freye's claim that the textbook reduced a movement to a single leader "to distract people from remembering the power they hold". Jane (Turn 7) indicates the sacrifice of the '"ordinary"' boycotters, who "completely altered their life to fight for justice". This is somewhat at odds with Group 2's eventual formulations when deciding whose roles to prioritise in ordering significance[39], and in framing their *Textbook*

[39] In the *Honeycomb Hexagon* activity discussed further below

Entry, leading me to question how they later inadvertently came to ignore what they appeared to learn in this *Silent Conversation.*

During the *Silent Conversation* students also encountered Georgia Gilmore's "Club from Nowhere", so-titled to avoid the constant police harassment meted out to boycott stalwarts who ran the community initiative. They cooked and sold endless meals to raise substantial funds to maintain the boycott's carpool. As McGuire writes in the excerpt provided as a stimulus in the *Silent Conversation*:

> [Quoting B.J. Simms:] "This fine woman and her team represented the grass-roots type of support and enthusiasm that launched the boycott and kept it moving to the very end." Without support from working-class women like Gilmore, the bus boycott would have failed. And yet Gilmore, like all the women who risked their lives and livelihoods to make the thirteen-month protest possible, has been relegated to the footnotes of history. "We made the world take notice of black folks in Montgomery," Gilmore said, but now "we're all in the Club from Nowhere." (2010, p. 119)

Regarding McGuire's claim in the stimulus above that Gilmore and the other Black women have "been relegated to the footnotes of history", Jane writes:

Extract 6 from the *Silent Conversation* (Code: SC - DW)

Jane: *Much like so many other influential black women have.*

Jane is even more emphatic in Extract 7 below.

Extract 7 from the *Silent Conversation* (Code: SC - DW)

Jane: *Despite Gilmore's tireless, selfless acts of charity to better the lives of those around her, she is not included in the CRM's narrative. This illustrates the fact that there were countless people at the time who made their whole lives centre around the movement, yet they are seldom mentioned, acknowledged or remembered. Irregardless of this, Gilmore sounds to be an incredible woman who lifted the morale of those involved in the boycotts.*

Jane here (Extract 7) bemoans Gilmore's absence from the "CRM's narrative" given her "tireless, selfless acts of charity". Indeed, she claims that "Gilmore sounds to be an incredible woman who lifted the morale of those involved in the boycotts".

Despite this, Group 2's later ranking of role-players in their *Diamond Decider* order of significance and their arranging of the *Hexagon Honeycombs* belies Jane and Indigo's earlier enthusiasm noted in Extracts 5-7 above from the *Silent Conversation.* This is evident in Extract 1 below where they dismiss Gilmore's significance.

Extract 1 from Group 2's constructing *Hexagon Honeycombs* discussion (Code: HH Gr 2 - D)

Turns:		
1.	*Veronica:*	*If anyone was the* least *significant it would be Georgia Gilmore*
2.	*Indigo:*	*Yah sorry, I agree*
3.	*Jane:*	*Yah, we didn't even learn about that – like it doesn't have to be something on the Hexagon.*

In the above discussion, Veronica (Turn 1) asserts that "If anyone was the *least* significant it would be Georgia Gilmore", while Indigo (Turn 2) admits somewhat apologetically "Yah sorry, I agree", and Jane (Turn 3) boldly claims "we didn't even learn about that", emphatically if unintentionally ignoring what she had previously articulated in Extracts 6-7 of the *Silent Conversation* earlier. It would appear that they are discrediting the value of historical knowledge presented largely through photographs and selections of quoted oral testimony to the point where that evidence "doesn't have to be something on the *Hexagon*" (Turn 3). In their final *Textbook Entry*[40], Group 2 do find place for Gilmore, but without specifics regarding the crucial nature of the role Jane earlier claimed Gilmore had played with her "tireless, selfless acts" which "lifted the morale of those involved in the boycotts" (Extract 7, Code: SC – DW). Yet again Group 2 reveal the lasting impact of androcentric school history as they do not credit the detail of women's everyday lives evident in the documents they encountered. In unwittingly discounting their prior articulations made during the *Silent Conversation*, they particularly appear to question the value of this aspect of the DBE. Extract 2 below from their *Textbook Entry* demonstrates how their writing has shifted from their earlier pronouncements.

Extract 2 from Group 2's *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 2 - W)

Lines:

1. *Martin Luther King Jr, the leader of the MIA (Montgomery Improvement Association) used*
2. *sermons to rally followers and called for non-violent protest. King and the MIA sustained the*
3. *bus boycott so that it ultimately lasted thirteen months. Thousands of African American*
4. *Montgomery citizens, most of them women, supported the boycott despite backlash from the Ku*
5. *Klux Klan and white supremacists. Georgia Gilmore and her Club from Nowhere is an example*
6. *of the relentless support for the boycott.*

Here Group 2's reference to Gilmore (Line 5) is tagged on to a paragraph that – like the textbook narrative they elsewhere critique – still centres King and the MIA (Line 1) by claiming it was they who "sustained" (Lines 2-3) the boycott, with only a token reference to Gilmore as providing "relentless support" (Line 6) for that boycott. They depict Black men and women in their traditionally-assigned places across the public/private divide: King and the MIA in leadership in the public sphere, while the women did as expected by extension of their roles as reproducers of the family, providing "support" for an initiative directed by the men. Group 2's account here diverges from their earlier enthusiasm for Gilmore above. Their writing also discounts any suggestion of the Black women of Montgomery as the mainstay of the bus boycott.

[40] Group 2's full textbook entry is included as Appendix F.

A quite distinct perspective on leadership emerges in Group 1's discussion when compiling their *Prompted Poem* about Colvin, as discussed earlier in Chapter 4, and in their final *Textbook Entry*, as will be discussed next.

Extract 2 from Group 1's *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 1 - W)

Lines:

7. Ultimately the Montgomery bus boycott was an intricately planned and complicated social
8. movement spearheaded by "ordinary" black women in response to their violent and racially
9. motivated sexual abuse and harassment. It was organised by them, funded by them, and
10. ultimately through Rosa Parks, led by them despite the MIA's takeover.
11. What should also be noted here is that Martin Luther King Jr. is considered important and that
12. his leaving out of this narrative is not accidental but intentional. He is significant but not in the
13. context of the boycott. He did not launch the boycott, the boycott launched him, and this is what
14. is made apparent in the constant emphasising of the black woman's work, rather than his own.

In this extract from Group 1's textbook account, they conclude that the Black women of Montgomery "spearheaded" (Line 8), "organised", "funded", and "led" (Lines 9-10) the bus boycott. These terms are indicative of dynamic, public activism clearly material to the protest, again showing how they see the women's actions as integral to their narrative of past events. They explicitly reject the dominant narrative which centres King, and speak directly to that in their conclusion, making their intentions clear, as they choose to focus instead on the – by implication – extraordinary Black women who "spearheaded" the "movement" (Line 8), while contextualising King's very ascendance in the movement as a direct outcome of the women's protest, as "He did not launch the boycott, the boycott launched him" (Line 13). They further clarify "this is what is made apparent in the constant emphasising of the black woman's work, rather than his own" (Lines 13-14). Indeed, they explain that "leaving [King] out" was not "accidental but intentional" (Line 12). By framing their exclusion of King in this way they resolve their quandary of how to pay him due credit for his "significant" (Line 12) role later, without ignoring the compelling evidence of the centrality of Black women's activism in Montgomery which they have gleaned and internalised through the enquiry. In doing so, they appear to distance themselves from what Martell and Stevens (2021) see as a major error in "traditional historical study". Their more critical orientation evident here enables them to "think about how the past was changed by collective movements of people. One of the main flaws of traditional historical study is that it leaves students with an impression that important individuals were the main drivers of the past." (Martell and Stevens, 2021, chap. 2).

Next, in Extract 3, Group 1 discuss framing their *Textbook Entry* in a way that engages with the construction of the textbook narrative they are challenging.

Extract 3 from Group 1's discussion while writing their *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 1 - D)

Turns:

7.	*Toni:*	*Write this in a way that like the textbook is self-aware of how other textbooks have kind of misconstrued the narrative. So that the event was made too much of or too little of. Are we?*
8.	*Yolande:*	*She's asking - Are we going to say that like*
9.	*Delilah:*	*That's a very good question*
10.	*Toni:*	*Are we going to point out in our Textbook Entry that other textbooks have got it wrong before?*
11.	*Several:*	*Mmm*
12.	*Freye:*	*I think we can do it almost passive-aggressively*
13.	*Delilah:*	*I think we can point out that this was not a spontaneous one-time act* as some would like you to believe!
14.	*Freye:*	*yah yah yah* [cheering]

Group 1's intertextual reference to the standard textbook's approach which has King front and centre indicates that they are determined to deviate from the dominant accounts. They even address the reader directly to explain why they have not centred King. This intertextuality with the standard textbook's approach is clearly by design, as Extract 3 above reveals. Toni (Turns 7; 10) queries whether they are going to tackle the way textbooks have "misconstrued" or got events "wrong" before. Freye (Turn 12) suggests they can do so "almost passive-aggressively", leading to Delilah (Turn 13) emphatically formulating that as "this was not a spontaneous one-time act as *some would like you to believe*" to applause from Freye. Freye's enthusiasm yet again underscores their positive affective engagement with the pedagogical activities in the DBE.

As discussed in Chapter 2.3, Wineburg's findings (2001, pp. 34–35) regarding the disjuncture in his study between school principal Colleen's emotional response to evocative evidence and her own studiously dispassionate writing of the narrative later is insightful here. It illuminates how Group 1 were at pains to fit the tone and language use of the very textbooks they critiqued. Even so, they consciously confronted traditional textbooks with an intertextual reference to their centring of King, so that their entry, unlike that of the school principal Wineburg critiques, was not devoid of "emphasis, judgement, and doubt", nor was it "without a teller" (Wineburg, 2001, p. 34). By way of contrast, Group 2's entry remained in line with traditional textbooks in its style, brevity, and omission of much of what they had appeared to learn during their enquiry.

Next, Extract 1 below from Group 1's extensive engagement while constructing their *Hexagon Honeycombs* provides illuminating depth to their consideration of how their account differed

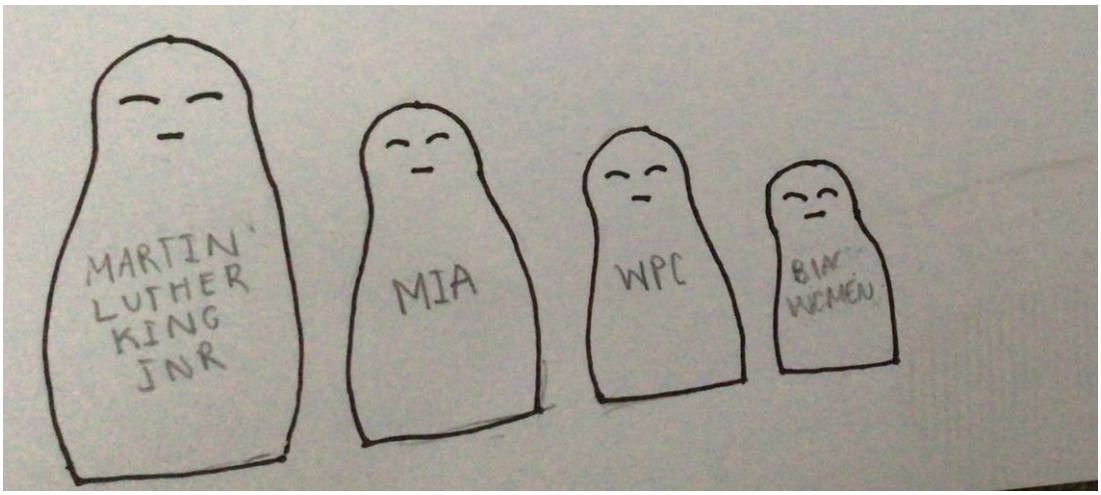
from the traditional narrative regarding what led to the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, and how they see King's role in that. Extract 2 that follows directly after is Yolande's sketched depiction of their discussion in Extract 1.

Extract 1 of Group 1's discussion while arranging their *Hexagon Honeycombs* (Code: HH-D)

Turns:		
1.	*Toni:*	*OK what are we saying about King?*
2.	*Delilah:*	*Uh – that's a really good question*
3.	*Toni:*	*He does come across as quite a façade. I mean if they laid the groundwork - Robinson and the WPC - and they kind of set everything in place - and then the MIA kind of swooped in at the last moment and took it over a little bit and then they put King in charge of it*
4.	*Delilah:*	*Mmm - So let's do that then*
5.	*Freye:*	*So are we saying he's a façade - and came into power by them [indicating MIA] or him* [indicating Nixon]
6.	*Yolande:*	[to Toni] *Just say what you're saying! Say what you're saying!*
7.	*Toni:*	*If you have your Russian doll, right?*
8.	*Freye:*	*Yes*
9.	*Toni:*	*And you have what ended bus segregation in Montgomery, it would be Martin Luther King, right? And you'd assume that's it - you open it, and it's actually the MIA, because they were actually the organisation* behind *Martin Luther King; you open that, and it's the WPC.*
10.	*Freye:*	*Yes! Yes!*
11.	*Toni:*	*Because they hijacked the WPC*
12.	*Delilah:*	*Let's write that*
13.	*Toni:*	*And yah you open that, and it's 'ordinary' Black women*
14.	*Yolande:*	*Wow*
15.	*Freye:*	*Yes, Russian dolls!*
16.	*Toni*	*And it's layers and layers and layers*
17.	*Delilah*	*Do we want to write hijacked over here [refers to MIA]*
18.	*Yolande/ Freye:*	[excited - talking about Toni's Russian doll analogy while Delilah is asking about what they are writing and where]
19.	*Toni:*	*They took the entire business from the - the WPC laid the groundwork; they were wanting a bus boycott much earlier, so they hijacked WPC's bus boycott*
20.	*Freye:*	*And put MLK as the façade*

Extract 2 from Group 1's discussion while arranging their *Hexagon Honeycombs* (Code: HH-D)

Below is Yolande's sketch of Toni's "Russian doll" (Turn 7) analogy to capture what ended bus segregation. King is the outer Russian doll, or "façade", with the MIA who "put King in charge" next, having "kind of swooped in at the last moment" (Turn 3), and when "you open that, and it's the WPC" [Women's Political Council] (Turn 9) who "laid the groundwork" (Turn 19), and when "you open that, and it's 'ordinary' Black women" (Turn 13) who actually drove the bus boycott.



In Extracts 1 and 2 above, students assert that King only appears to be a powerful leader who secured an end to bus segregation, and is instead but a "façade" (Toni, Turn 3; Freye, Turns 5; 20). As Toni explains, "behind" King were the MIA who "swooped in at the last moment" (Turn 3) to "hijack" (Turns 11; 19) the bus boycott once Robinson and the WPC had "kind of set everything in place" (Turn 3). Toni's richly illustrative "Russian doll" (Turns 7; 9; 13) analogy here – evocatively sketched by Yolande (Extract 2 above) underscores how they viewed the not so "ordinary" Black women and WPC as the most significant role-players. Their language depicts their view that Black women's limelight was "hijacked" by the male-led MIA who were "behind" the creation of King's leadership position. Their vivid depiction presents their critical appreciation of the key role of Black women's activism that is fully erased by the dominant textbook versions. Furthermore, their complex understanding of the disciplinary concepts of causality and significance is evident in both their discussion and in Yolande's sketch, and their excitement at Toni's construct is again evidence of how their positive affective engagement in the DBE contributes to their insightful work.

Next, in Extract 8 of the *Silent Conversation* below, Freye and Toni challenge the dominant narrative's framing of Parks's bus activism as "spontaneous".

Extract 8 from the *Silent Conversation* (Code: SC - DW)

Turns:

7. *Freye:* *'spontaneous' - is this the right word to describe it? I believe it discredits her* [Park's] *earlier activism.*
I believe that this is completely inaccurate and also what the entire bus boycott is frequently reduced to.

8. *Toni:* *I can't quite figure out who benefits from making it seem entirely unplanned?*
Maybe it just makes the history more digestible. I think we have a tendency to simplify history to avoid looking at what the bigger picture shows us, which can often be uncomfortable. The recasting of the bus boycott as a "spontaneous" protest that miraculously ended segregation eliminates the need to lay bare all the ugliness and violent racism and struggle that preceded it.

Here Freye (Turn 7) explores her concern with the textbooks' rendition of Parks's supposedly "spontaneous" bus protest which belies both Parks's earlier activism, as well as erasing the entire context of the boycott. Toni (Turn 8) suggests that textbooks contrived to call the protest "spontaneous" to do away with "the need to lay bare all the ugliness and violent racism and struggle that preceded it", echoing what she claimed previously "that they like to pretend that it all just happened, so you don't have to grapple with the fact that the US was deeply racist" (Extract 6; Turn 49; Code: PP Gr 1 - D). Toni's concern here is indicative of an overlap between the current sub-theme of textbooks centring male leaders, erasing or misrepresenting "everyday" citizens, particularly "ordinary" women, and the first sub-theme, of textbooks isolating a single leader, and erasing the context of events. Toni (Turn 8) suggests the textbooks without any contextualisation depict the "spontaneous" protest as "miraculously" successful in desegregating buses, obviating the need to account for the relentless organisation and daily efforts of the Black women of Montgomery to realise that achievement.

Next, in Extract 9 below, students engage with the way the Black men of the MIA eclipsed the boycott's long-time organiser, Robinson, in the dominant narrative of events in Montgomery.

Extract 9 from the *Silent Conversation* (Code: SC - DW)

Turns:

9.	*Yolande:*	*Not only were black women written out of history / misrepresented by the media at the time but their efforts were also disregarded by male leaders at the time, as in the case of Robinson, when the decision to appoint King as the leader of the MIA and thus the bus boycott was done without her knowledge despite her role in organising the boycott*
10.	*Max:*	*Can't imagine how frustrating it must be to not even be involved in electing the leader of the boycott that you organised!!*
11.	*Freye:*	*I believe this to be correct. It was perhaps more "believable" that such a large undertaking could only be carried out by the men in those times. This brings up intersectionality of being a black woman. Not only are you fighting to be taken seriously as a black person in the face of racism, but as a woman in the face of sexism. This is a visceral reminder of many of the other women who might have simply been written out of history. What is horrifying is how easily and quickly and thoroughly it can be done. For our education tools to follow this trend?? Horrifying.*

Yolande (Turn 9) in Extract 9 responds by lamenting how a formidable leader like Robinson was summarily "disregarded" by the men who seized control of the very boycott she had invested years preparing for, while Freye (Turn 11) contextualises this as evidence of the "intersectionality of being a black woman" at the time. Max's exclamation (Turn 10) indicates she clearly cares about Robinson who she surmises would have found it "frustrating" to be excluded in this way. For Freye it is "horrifying" that this subversion by the Black men of the women's activism at the time is further compounded when the textbook narrative fails to account for this and instead solidifies their being "simply […] written out of history". Freye is appalled that the "abuse" of Black women is thus erased altogether in the way the account has come to be constructed. Clearly, what Freye draws from the centring of Black women in the enquiry is considerable alarm and shock at "how easily and quickly and thoroughly" Black women's powerful activism in the face of the "racism" and "sexism" they have long suffered can be so easily "written out of history" by the way the textbooks – her "education tools" – have structured their account. It is evident that Max and Freye's emotional engagement with the documents is enhancing their historical understanding. Elsewhere, in Extract 1 from her journal, Freye elaborates on her views.

Extract 1 from Freye's journal (Code: J – Freye - W)

Freye: *It scares me. This total rewrite of history to suit some unknowable end, at a whim. What else has been lost? And have we really found all that has been erased here?*

Here Freye articulates her fear at what she sees as the capricious rewriting of events in the textbook narrative. In Extract 2 below, she questions the impact of such rewriting further.

Extract 2 from Freye's journal (Code: J – Freye - W)

Freye: When things are removed from history it is to the detriment of future society. We learn from the past. One of the protest's driving factors was the abuse that the women faced. By erasing this, you are erasing the injustices done to them. Other than sexism and palatability of the leaders being men, how and why were women so easily erased? Was it because women's problems, when not able to politically further your aims, cease to be relevant? Why?

In this reflection, Freye is troubled by the ongoing impact of a narrative that erases the "abuses" and "injustices" Black women faced, affecting not only those historical women but succeeding generations who would potentially "learn from the past", but cannot, as "When things are removed from history it is to the detriment of future society". Freye's apprehension regarding textbooks' erasure, omissions, and removal of Black women as key role-players leads directly to the next thematic sub-focus drawing on data from student journalling regarding how textbook history is – and ought to be – constructed.

6.1.3 How textbook history is – and ought to be – constructed.

Students journalled how their thinking about the construction of history in textbooks had changed as a result of conducting the enquiry, and how they subsequently thought history should be taught, generating rich data. Their journaling is distinct from the other evidence collected as they were not directly in conversation with one another while writing, although some explicitly refer to what a classmate raised previously or use another's phrasing in their response.

Extract 5 from Toni's journal indicates her grasp of what it means to claim that history is constructed.

Extract 5 from Toni's journal (Code: J - Toni - W)

Toni: I think one of the key things for me is that History is constructed, not just told. And construction by its nature means that some things are deliberately chosen, and other things are just as deliberately left out. History is reduced to its simplest forms for textbooks, and part of this reduction and simplification involves cutting out things that complicate the story the textbook is trying to tell. In our world, this means that history is often constructed to exclude women and people of colour. Additionally, historical narratives in textbooks often centre around an individual, and everyone else involved can quite easily get lost in the shadow of the person who is centred in the textbook narrative.

In this reflection from Toni's journal, she brings to the surface the insightful implication that history is "not just told" but "constructed", entailing that aspects which complicate the story, such as the lives of women, are "deliberately left out". Erasure is a theme running through

many journal reflections, as is the way the textbook narrative chose to "centre around an individual", thus "cutting out things that complicate the story" – such as Colvin, and the entire *Browder v Gayle* case – so that "everyone else involved" is "lost in the shadow of the person who is centred". While Toni's approach is informed by this enquiry, she broadens it to suggest that this "reduction" generally tends to "exclude women and people of colour". Toni's position on the construction of the textbook narrative is reinforced in Extract 6 from her journal:

Extract 6 from Toni's journal (Code: J - Toni - W)

Toni: *And how involved are the subjects of a historical narrative in constructing their own narrative?*

Here, Toni asks somewhat rhetorically – given how regularly she raises the exclusion of "subjects" from the textbook construction about events involving them – how much of a role they have in determining that account.

Turning now to Extract 1 from Yolande's journal, she is even more explicit than Toni was above on what she thinks the textbooks leave out.

Extract 1 from Yolande's journal (Code: J – Yolande - W)

Yolande: *It is constructed from the widely known narrative. It is censored (as seen in the exclusion of resistance to the sexual violence in the narrative of the Mont. boycotts) and overly simplified to a linear understanding of history being a set of steps that follow neatly after each other until a conclusion is reached at the narrative ending. From the activities I have discovered that this method of constructing a linear narrative does not give an accurate impression of the reality.*

Yolande (Extract 1) describes the textbook narrative as "censored" in that it leaves out Black women's motivation for their activism. Yolande sees this "exclusion" as suppressing the crux of the bus protest: "resistance" to the race-based sexual assault of Black women. Beyond this, she sees the textbook as misrepresenting events by presenting a "linear" account with a "set of steps that follow neatly after each other". Yolande's critique implies she has developed a far more complex grasp of how events unfolded in the past.

Similarly, Extract 3 from Freye's journal picks up on the exclusion from the narrative of Black women's resistance to white men inflicting "sexual violence" on them as key to understanding their activism.

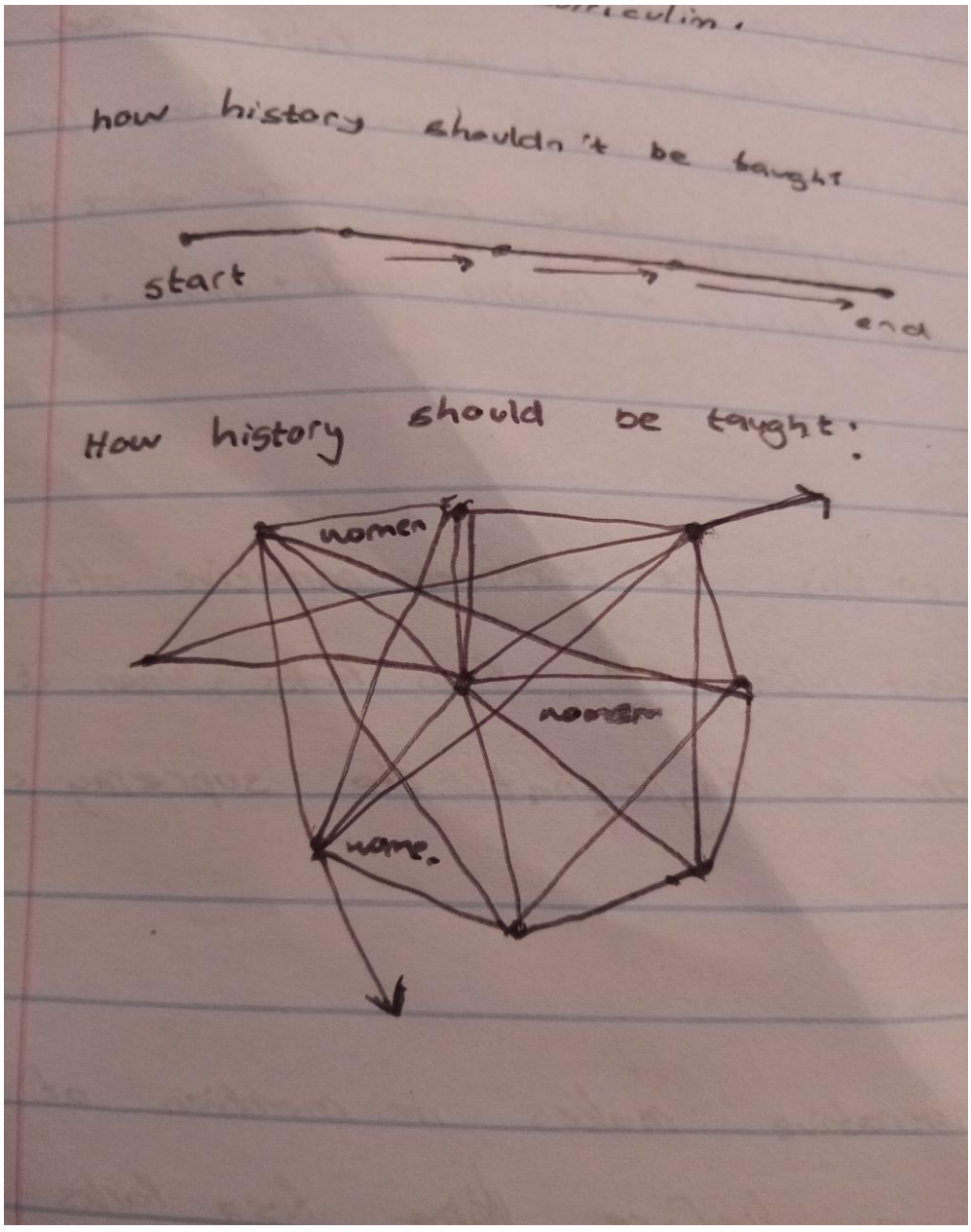
Extract 3 from Freye's journal (Code: J – Freye - W)

Freye: *The politics of respectability seemed to also play into what was constructed in the textbooks. The racially motivated sexual violence is not at all mentioned in the textbooks, despite its absolute importance. This is what motivated the working-class Black women of Mont. to end the bus segregation, as they were the ones who were harassed sexually and physically by bus drivers every day.*

Freye echoes some of Yolande's sentiments in Extract 3, specifically the "absolute importance" of "racially motivated sexual violence" which nevertheless is excluded from the textbooks. Freye sees the "politics of respectability" at play in the narrative's construction as it entails avoiding any mention of sexual impropriety on the part of the white male assailants – including the bus drivers – altogether. Both Yolande and Freye indicate in their individual journalling that the enquiry has informed their framing of how they have come to see textbook construction, and both reference what is for them its most jarring exclusion.

Below, Yolande's journalled sketch (Extract 2) and its caption (Extract 3) indicate how she suggests history should be taught, in contrast to how she perceives it is being taught.

Extract 2 from Yolande's journal (Code: J – Yolande - W)



Extract 3 from Yolande's journal (Code: J – Yolande - W)

Yolande: *I think school history should be taught as the web of factors that it is and not a simple story and not a simplified linear narrative. I also think that women should not only be included in the narrative but a focus of the curriculum.*

Here Yolande (Extract 2) further rejects the "linear narrative", or "simple story", as removed from the "reality" of the time, suggesting instead the presentation of a "web of factors", with women as a "focus of the curriculum". This conceptualisation of women as an explicit "focus" integrated throughout the syllabus, rather than just added in at one point, shows that Yolande has internalised the necessity of not just "adding in" women in ways they can also then be summarily removed: her takeaway from the enquiry is seeing women's history as an integral part of the complexity that is her suggested way of constructing a textbook account.

To externalise her thinking, Yolande draws a rough yet evocative sketch of the contrast between the two approaches to constructing an account of the past. In her drawing, Yolande describes "how History shouldn't be taught" above a line punctuated by nodes. She draws one-directional arrows to indicate a simplistic, homogenous, linear progression from "start" on the left to "end" on the right. Below that she writes "How history should be taught" above a complex set of crisscrossing rhizomatic lines with multiple nodes and the word "women" integrated within the sketch at different points. The arrows, instead of linear and one-directional, point in various directions. Above the sketch in her journal (Extract 3), Yolande explains that "history should be taught as a web of factors" with women as "a focus of the curriculum", which she reinforces in her sketch by centring women in several places.

Next, Extract 4 from Freye's journal interestingly resonates with Yolande's vision as portrayed in her sketch as discussed above.

Extract 4 from Freye's journal (Code: J – Freye - W)

Freye: *It's a complicated web of interconnectedness and sometimes it is impossible to find a singular point at which to start, that there are so many singular points at which one could start means that a narrative can be different depending on which starting point you choose.*

Freye (Extract 4) similarly raises the "complicated web of interconnectedness" evident in Yolande's rhizomatic sketch (Extracts 2-3) to note the issue of positionality in the construction of history, insisting that "a narrative can be different depending on which starting point you choose". Intriguingly, as in Yolande's depiction, there is no obvious starting point for Freye, who remarks on the implicit challenge given the absence of linearity: where to begin?

Given Yolande and Freye's intriguing suggestions above regarding how history should be taught, it is noteworthy that each student's implicitly rhizomatic approach affords a far richer way to study history than that suggested by the linear narrative they both reject. As Strom (2015, p. 322) indicates, this approach "breaks from the linear […] conceptualisations of teaching" which Yolande rejects as entailing "a simplified linear narrative". It facilitates both Yolande's "web of factors" and Freye's "complicated web of interconnectedness" – evidence of how they have come to "think differently and in more complex ways" (Strom, 2015, p. 322) through the course of the DBE. As Strom explains:

> Central to rhizomatics is the rhizome, a tuber or bulb that grows unpredictably in all directions. For philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Felix Guattari (1987), the rhizome offered an alternative to the linear thinking prevalent in Western society […] In contrast […] a tuber is an a-centered constellation of heterogeneous elements connected to each other. […] Rhizomatics offers a frame that breaks from the linear […] conceptualizations of teaching […] Instead, rhizomatics provides tools with which to think differently and in more complex ways about teaching and classroom activity. (Strom, 2015, p. 322)

Next, in Extract 5, Freye not only asks what the intention is of those constructing the textbook narrative, but further explores a potential answer to her question.

Extract 5 from Freye's journal (Code: J – Freye - W)

Freye: *I want to know, for each time a constructed narrative is different, why and for what purpose the author had in doing so. I can assume some, like for propaganda reasons, palatable reasons etc written in the PoV* [point of view] *of the winner.*
History is written by the winners - is a popular saying. It is also true to say that history is written for the winners. But if the "enemy" is the majority, what do you do then? The textbooks are framed to put as little of the blame on the white people as possible by downplaying their brutality and actions.

In Extract 5 above, Freye is suggesting the intention in the construction of textbook narrative could be "propagandistic" – persuasive of a particular ideology; or to be "palatable" – to ensure the account is acceptably framed to the reader who is assumed to have a particular mindset; or to express the "winner's" perspective. Indeed, Freye postulates that an account is constructed to be "palatable" to or "*for*" white people – the "winners" – to avoid exposing their brutality towards their ostensible "enemy", the Black minority. Her insight is resonant of Toni's critique regarding the erasure of international complicity in antisemitism during the Nazi genocide (Extract 6; Turn 49; Code: PP Gr 1 - D), as here Freye suggests textbooks construct accounts that deliberately understate the culpability of the majority, "downplaying" their "actions", if not totally absolving them of "blame". It appears this enquiry has prompted Freye to reflect incisively on the resulting deliberate skewing of a narrative to free the dominant group from

responsibility for past events, and her lengthy exposition reflects her journalling at home outside of class time in order to tease out her various concerns.

Next, Toni in Extract 7 below questions the possible tailoring of the construction of the textbook narrative to their South African context.

Extract 7 from Toni's journal (Code: J - Toni - W)

Toni: *And how area-specific is the construction of history? To what extent is our history influenced by the fact that we're learning it in South Africa in the 21st century?*

Toni is questioning how far the present local context might impact the nature of the account in their textbooks. Although she does not elaborate, she would know that post-democracy, apartheid history is taught differently to how it was previously taught, but her point here appears to be more generally to question how far what they learn is "influenced" by their particular historical context.

In Extract 2 below, Max questions what measures are in place to critically examine textbook narratives.

Extract 2 from Max's journal (Code: J - Max - W)

Max: *What steps are currently being taken to ensure we are consistently and critically reviewing the dominant textbook narrative to make sure we are not misrepresenting certain events or excluding entirely certain key features.*

I think that if wherever possible an analysis of the faults of the textbook - such as in this document-based enquiry - which might even lead to a widespread effort to relook at how we construct these textbooks and how we can better represent these events.

Having decided that textbook constructions distort "events" or disregard "key features", Max (Extract 2) proactively calls for these "faults" to be remedied on an ongoing basis – perhaps along the lines of their DBE, as a preliminary to a more thorough "relook at how we construct these textbooks". Max clearly advocates a "widespread effort" to remedy the systemic flaws she has identified during the enquiry.

Acknowledging her view of the shortcomings of textbooks, Jane in Extract 3 suggests her solution.

Extract 3 from Jane's journal (Code: J - Jane - W)

Jane: *The cause and effect of historical events is not as simple as what is put across by textbooks. To uncover the whole truth and develop a full understanding requires using an array of sources, not just a textbook.*

I believe that the way in which History is taught in school should change completely. After learning about the way in which the Montgomery boycott occurred in the format we were taught in, I now think this is one of the only ways a broad understanding of historical events can be grasped. Using an array of sources and learning about narratives, causes and effects that would otherwise be excluded allows one to realise how History truly comes about. Furthermore, comparing this opposing narrative to that of what is described in textbooks can further broaden historical understanding. Additionally, it is crucial to research the role of those who are left out of the traditional narrative.

Jane (Extract 3) recommends one remedy to the "simple" causality presented by textbooks, to gain insight into what "would otherwise be excluded", and to "uncover the whole truth" is utilising "an array of sources". The unwitting dissonance evident in Jane's self-reporting of her views here, given her earlier spoken articulations, was most striking on reading her journal. Jane summarily discredits Gilmore's significance in compiling Group 2's *Hexagon Honeycombs*, claiming they had only learned about her in the *Silent Conversation*, where indeed diverse personal accounts from Black women were centred. By implication, Jane there discounts the "array of sources" presented "to uncover" women's importance in past events, instead of further examining them. Similarly, Jane (Extract 4, Turns 27-28, Code: PP Gr 2 - D) dismisses as "irrelevant" Colvin's testimony about the enduring impact her pregnancy had on how she was shunned in civil rights circles. I found this disconnect surprising. In light of this, I was intrigued to read an interview in which Braun claims it is crucial in RTA to engage with data that catches you unawares: "It's really vital to get to the unexpected and unanticipated, which I think is the most exciting thing about qualitative research – when you're surprised by the data" (Lainson, Braun and Clarke, 2019, p. 8)[41]. What further surprised me was the spirited way Group 1 and Group 2 in dissimilar ways agonised over the appropriate terms to use in writing their *Textbook Entry*, which is my next thematic focus.

[41] Page numbers refer to the pre-publication online article available here as access to the published journal article could not be secured.

6.2 Thematic Focus: Appropriate Language Use in Writing Textbook Entry

After immersing myself in the data in a process termed "familiarization" (Braun *et al.*, 2019, p. 853), the second major thematic focus identified based on my coding was entirely unexpected, and showed divergent engagement with the discursive nature of textbook construction. My analysis was initially "inductive", rooted as it was in my noticing interesting engagement within each group as they grappled with which terms to use in their textbook entries. As Clarke and Braun explain, "an inductive orientation" is

> where the researcher starts the analytic process from the data, working "bottom-up" to identify meaning without importing ideas. […] Coding inductively does not mean that we assume the researcher is a "blank state," but, instead, that the starting point of the analysis is with the data, rather than existing concepts or theories (Braun *et al.*, 2019, p. 853)

Later, in trying to make sense of the "latent" as opposed to "surface" meaning of Group 2's data – analysed next as "verbal policing" – I was compelled to read widely, indeed drawing on ideas outside my existing theoretical framework.

As I engaged analytically with the seemingly divergent discursive concerns of the two groups, I explored ways to synthesise a thematic focus that might include both sets of issues. I had previously coded those engagements under different themes, but then realised that what was central to both despite their evident differences was their extensive exploration of what would be the appropriate terms to use at key points in their textbook entries. Braun et al. advise that prospective "candidate" themes need to be examined to see beyond their "semantic" meaning, requiring the researcher to "start to see the meaning beyond the obvious" (Braun *et al.*, 2019, p. 853):

> Semantic codes stay at the "surface" of the data, capturing explicit meaning, close to participant language. Latent codes focus on a deeper, more implicit or conceptual level of meaning, sometimes quite abstracted from the explicit content of the data. [...] these codes represent ends of a continuum of ways of looking at data, rather than a binary. Initial coding for most TA projects is often semantic, and it can be hard to move beyond this level, to start to see the meaning *beyond* [their emphasis] the obvious. (Braun *et al.*, 2019, p. 853)

What I was looking for in constructing themes grounded in the coded data was indeed a "central organizing idea that captures a meaningful pattern across the dataset, as well as different manifestations of that pattern" (Braun *et al.*, 2019, p. 855). Hence, I reframed my "candidate theme" as Appropriate Language Use in Writing a Group *Textbook Entry*, as it captured both Jane and Veronica's verbal policing of the term "rape" in Group 2's textbook discussion, as well as Max and Indigo's defence of its use. My new theme further captured Group 1's grappling with discerning language that was appropriate to textbook writing. Group 2's

disagreement regarding the use of the term "rape" will be discussed first. Thereafter, Group 1's discursive engagement in drafting their *Textbook Entry* will be analysed. These two sub-themes are briefly depicted next:

6.2.1 Group 2: Verbal policing of the term "rape", and defence of its use as appropriate: Here Jane (and Veronica, who supports her) policed their use of the term "rape", while Indigo and Max pushed back against that veto, based on the understanding they had gained during the enquiry of the importance of racialised rape in motivating Black women's activism.

6.2.2 Group 1: Selecting appropriate textbook language with care: Students grappled with finding appropriate words to use, debating their use of emotive terms even as they broke with textbook convention by engaging intertextually with the dominant narrative in textbooks, and by inserting their own voice into their narrative.

Next, I first focus on data generated by Group 2 (6.2.1) before turning thereafter to data generated by Group 1 (6.2.2).

6.2.1 Group 2: Verbal policing of the term "rape", and defence of its use as appropriate

As discussed in Chapter 5, Group 2's *Textbook Entry*[42], similar to their *Prompted Poem*[43], does not quite capture the particularity and depth of historical contextualisation they demonstrated elsewhere, as the following excerpts show.

Extract 3 from Group 2's *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 2 – W)

Lines:

7. *women were objectified and humiliated by bus drivers and other passengers. […]*
8. *Rosa Parks, a longtime activist who had supported Recy Taylor in her sexual assault case, refused to*
9. *give up her seat on a bus. […]*
10. *[Robinson] had a key role in organising the boycott, which Parks became the figurehead of, as desired*
11. *by E.D. Nixon who viewed Parks 'clean' and appropriate for the cause.*
12. *Martin Luther King Jr, the leader of the MIA (Montgomery Improvement Association) used sermons to*
13. *rally followers and called for non-violent protest. King and the MIA sustained the bus boycott so that it*
14. *ultimately lasted thirteen months. […] Georgia Gilmore and her Club from Nowhere is an example of*
15. *the relentless support for the boycott.*

Group 2's account broadly claims that "women were objectified and humiliated by bus drivers" (Line 7), and although they mention Taylor's "sexual assault case" (Line 8), they do not connect this directly to Black women's resulting activism. Instead, they tag on Gilmore in a supportive role only (Lines 14-15), insisting it was King and the MIA at the helm who "sustained" (Lines 13-14) the campaign, despite earlier discounting this. In describing how

[42] Group 2's complete *Textbook Entry* appears as Appendix F.
[43] Discussed above in Chapter 5.2

Parks "became the figurehead" (Line 10), they without further explanation attribute the choice of Parks to Nixon's perception that she was '"clean' and appropriate for the cause" (Line 11). This is in spite of their own earlier confusion in a plenary discussion about what this connoted, as is evident in Extract 6 below.

Extract 6 from class discussion Post *Silent Conversation* (Code: Post SC - D)

Turns:

28.	*Teacher:*	*What does 'clean' imply?*
29.	*Jane:*	*Her appearance? How she looked?*
30.	*Freye:*	*She didn't have sexual -*
31.	*Indigo:*	*But it's interesting because - doesn't Parks have a daughter?*
32.	*Teacher:*	*No, she doesn't have children*
33.	*Indigo:*	*Not? But is she married?*
34.	*Teacher:*	*She is married* [Indeed, they had just read about her husband's response to her fronting a boycott]
35.	*Indigo:*	*So, it doesn't relate to sex after marriage?*
36.	*Toni:*	*It's sex before marriage that was considered like 'dirty'*

In this extract from an earlier plenary discussion, it is evident that Indigo and Jane could not initially grasp Nixon's connotations in using the term "clean" to convey the suitably married Parks's sexual propriety as conceived by a conservative, Christian community. This initial confusion did not inform Group 2's subsequent *Textbook Entry* though. They construct their own account expecting their readers to know what Jane (Turn 29) and especially Indigo (Turns 31; 33; 35) could not fathom at all regarding the connotations of "clean", until Toni (Turn 36) explained, indicating little attention to the potential challenges the use of this term would pose to their imagined students. Next, Extract 4 from their writing is further instructive of the ways Group 2 turn away from contextualising events in Montgomery.

Extract 4 from Group 2's *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 2 – W)

Lines:

16. Claudette Colvin was arrested for not giving up her seat on a bus, and during her arrest was verbally
17. abused by the officers and afterwards faced humiliation at school and in her community. Many,
18. including Colvin herself, thought that this incident was enough to spark a boycott however, like others
19. before her, Colvin did not end up being the face of the movement due to the politics of respectability.

In this excerpt, Group 2 circumvent what Group 1's Freye identifies in an earlier plenary as Colvin's "statutory rape", further omitting how Colvin was subjected to derisive sexual comments by the police officers during her arrest, referring instead only to how she was "verbally abused" (Lines 16-17). They indicate "Colvin did not end up being the face of the movement due to the politics of respectability" (Line 19) without clarifying what that means, despite their previously articulating the intersecting ways Colvin was found to be wanting by civil rights organiser Nixon. Unintentionally, their own textbook account lacks the contextualisation and specificity they identify as lacking in the dominant narrative as they appear to edit out the very depth of detail and insight they previously gleaned. This led me to

question yet again what might possibly account for their apparent resistance to framing their own writing in ways that avoid the pitfalls that they critique in the dominant narrative, given their evident wholehearted support for the necessity of integrating women's history into their narrative.

What is further evident from Group 2's discussion is their intentionally framing both the racialised gang rape of Taylor by six white men, and the similarly racialised rape two white police officers perpetrated on Perkins, without using the relevant term. I had been particularly mindful of my duty of care in exposing young women to the brutal rape of Taylor, and of Perkins – albeit without any graphic detail – and had sought professional advice regarding this exposure ahead of initiating the DBE. The clinical psychologist consulted indicated that given the endemic prevalence of gender-based violence in South Africa[44], and its widespread media exposure, there was no way my students could avoid being confronted with its reality on a daily basis, irrespective of their own personal life histories (Manson, 2021). Brief references to two incidents of white men's rape of Black women in Montgomery in the 1940s, as an integral part of our enquiry into what provided the impetus for the sustained challenge to bus segregation, were deemed appropriate by the psychologist. Furthermore, she pointed out that in legal terms, there is a clear distinction between rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment, and the "reality" of the rape – albeit without graphic detail – need not be "softened" or "euphemised" in any way. (Manson, 2021)

My concern was explicitly articulated early in the DBE, as is evident in Extract 7 from a plenary discussion below.

Extract 7 from class discussion Post *Silent Conversation* (Code: Post SC – D)

37.	*Teacher:*	*Is it unethical to expose you to it* [the rape of Taylor, and of Perkins]*?*
38.	[Several]	[at same time] *No!*
39.	*Jane:*	*I think it's really important to*
40.	*Max:*	*Yah*

[44] Official South African Police Services statistics indicated that 41 739 rapes were reported in the year 2021-2022, with 42 780 reported in 2022-2023 (*Annual Crime Stats 2022/2023 Crime Stats Presentation*, 2023). The support, counselling, and advocacy group, Rape Crisis, suggested in 2018 that an estimated 645 580 "sexual offences" were committed per year, with most going unreported for diverse reasons ('The real numbers on sexual offences', 2018). According to research consultant Sigsworth at the Institute for Security Studies, the actual incidence of rape remains "unknown" and largely "unknowable" (Afrika Check, 2023). As discussed by Smythe (2015, p. 86), outdated estimates suggest only One in Nine rapes are reported – hence the campaign set up in 2006 by that name. The fact-verification organisation, Afrika Check, has been unable to verify such estimates (Leech, 2023).

I as their teacher (Turn 37) directly tackled the issue of whether it was "unethical" of me to have them hear very briefly about the rape of Taylor and Perkins. Several (Turn 38) emphatically said "no", and Jane (Turn 39) voiced no objection to the term "rape" being used at the time at all, instead suggesting "I think it's really important to" do so. Despite this interaction, the use of the term became a contested issue later, as is clear from Group 2's lengthy interaction in Extract 1 below.

Extract 1 from Group 2's discussion while writing their *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 2 - D)

Turns:

1.	*Indigo:*	*Yah, I think you can just say as evident in the rape and sexual abuse of Recy Taylor and Gertrude Perkins*
2.	*Jane:*	*I think rape is quite an intense word to use in this -*
3.	*Max:*	*It* was *rape!*
4.	*Jane:*	*Yah but it has ugh - it's not as easy to just say rape - it's a word that's like super triggering. Rather just say sexual assault*
5.	*Veronica:*	[at same time as Jane] *sexual assault*
6.	*Max:*	*But in the same way - I know it's a triggering word - but in the same way does sexual assault pay it like the*
7.	*Indigo:*	*No, I don't think it does*
8.	*Max:*	*- the due like horrendous description that it* [several talking at once so indistinct]
9.	*Indigo:*	*We want to like go into what happened to Taylor and Perkins specifically and then we* do *have to mention that Perkins was raped by like six men* [she's muddled the number of assailants with the Taylor case, where there were indeed six] *and that's -*
10.	*Jane:*	*I just don't think you can use the word rape - that's quite triggering*
11.	*Indigo:*	*I also disagree* [with Jane] *because I think that it's -*
12.	*Max:*	[speaking at same time as Indigo] *It's not meant to be* [triggering]
13.	*Indigo:*	*Yah and also that was - the fact was that it was horrific that that happened - but it happened.*
14.	*Veronica:*	*I feel like you could get the same effect by saying 'severe sexual assault' or like not severe - but another word - as opposed to using the word 'rape'*
15.	*Jane:*	*But the same way you wouldn't use like the N word - it was what they were called. It was a word thrown around at the time but it's also a triggering word*
16.	*Indigo:*	*Yah I just think that like sexual abuse and assault can't -*
17.	*Max:*	[speaking at same time as Indigo] *It's not paying -*
18.	*Indigo:*	[speaking at same time as Max] *They don't mean the same thing*
19.	*Jane:*	*It's not downplaying what they went through - it's maybe just not triggering the people who are reading this who have maybe experienced the same thing. Because I think to use that word - I don't think it's appropriate - I don't think it's necessary*
20.	*Veronica:*	*I feel we're like getting um too stuck on like specifics and specific details - I think we should just write kind of an overview and then add things in. I feel we should talk about and mention Gertrude Perkins and Recy Taylor by name and then talk about the connection that um has to Rosa Parks. To be like - she wasn't just a woman - she was you know some kind of activist.*
21.	*Jane:*	*But also, if you say she was a victim of sexual assault it's very clear what it means*
22.	*Indigo:*	*It's interesting to me what Recy Taylor would have thought - if she had a say in the documentary that was made - the documentary that was literally called 'The Rape of Recy Taylor'*
23.	*Jane:*	*Ooh I don't want to hear that word - if you guys want to talk about it -*
24.	*Max:*	*Okay, let's just say sexual assault*

Here Jane (Turns 4, 10, 19, 23) rejects their use of the term “rape”, even in their discussion. Initially, she (Turn 2) pushes back with “I think rape is quite an intense word to use in this”, which Max (Turn 3) rebuts, emphatically exclaiming “It *was* rape!”, implying the history should be accurately recorded in their *Textbook Entry*. Indigo (Turn 9) agrees, saying “we *do* have to mention that Perkins was raped”. While Veronica, with Jane (Turn 5), insists they could instead use “sexual assault”, Max rebuts this, claiming that term does not convey the required “due like horrendous description” (Turns 6, 8), and Indigo (Turns 7, 11) concurs, asserting “They don’t mean the same thing” (Turn 18). Even though Max (Turn 6) concedes “rape” may be “triggering”, she insists (Turn 12) “It's not meant to be”, again pushing to use the term as suitable in the particular context.

It clearly appears to Jane – in the context of the current high incidence of rape in South Africa – to be a “triggering” word to use, much like the “N-word” in the US, given the possibility that “people who are reading this who have maybe experienced the same thing” (Turn 19). It is though plausible to distinguish conceptually and historically between the use of the two terms, as Jane in an unrecorded follow-up conversation with me indeed conceded. It appears that she (Turn 15) is conflating two unrelated issues regarding acceptable language use. Jane inadvertently applies the social condemnation of deploying “rape” in an *in*appropriate context – such as in defeat in sport, thus trivialising the criminality committed in an actual rape. This conflates that prohibition with the unrelated practice of avoiding clearly offensive terminology and substituting the “N-word” instead.

Throughout, Veronica attempts to resolve the disagreement by suggesting they rather use the term “sexual assault” (Turns 5; 14), ultimately encouraging them to move on and specify the “details” later. Indigo intriguingly tries to take the focus back to the agency of the actual survivor in question by wondering (Turn 22) “what Recy Taylor would have thought” about its use in titling the documentary, “The Rape of Recy Taylor”, released after her death in 2017. It was in part this loss of Taylor’s voice in policing the term she herself had used to accuse the six white rapists that troubled me in their discussion while writing their *Textbook Entry*. However, Jane (Turn 23) recoils from even considering Indigo’s question with “Ooh I don't want to hear that word” with such vehemence that Max (Turn 24) defers to her with “Okay, let's just say sexual assault”.

I was disturbed on listening to the recording of this interaction in Group 2 – as I was with Group 1 when it took place – and afterwards checked in with Jane personally regarding her evident discomfort at the time. As a woman living in a country ravaged by gender-based violence[45] rather than as her teacher, I explicitly indicated concern for her well-being. Jane confirmed that she had since reflected on her earlier stand, and had developed a better grasp of why using the term might be considered appropriate within the context of white men's deliberate and brutal rape of Taylor, and of Perkins. We further discussed how such usage could be seen as distinct from the clearly unacceptable use of the N-word, even in a society plagued by rape. Reassured by the engagement that as far as I could discern, Jane was not personally traumatised by Max and Indigo's attempted pushback, I was compelled to reflect on what else might have led to her taking the stand she did so insistently. In search of other explanations, I read more widely, following a hunch informed by my understanding of issues prevailing in their popular culture. As Houston indicates:

> If, however, evidence from the empirical world is lacking, then alternative hypotheses need to be propounded and tested […] until the point the inquirer has sufficient evidence to make a compelling case regarding some of the factors affecting causality in the area of inquiry pursued. (Houston, 2014, p. 221)

Applying retroduction, my "educated guess" (Mukumbang, 2023, p. 102) led me to explore the work of feminist linguist, Cameron (1995), and especially two of her most pertinent blogposts (2018, 2022). It appeared to me that Jane and Veronica were wanting to "police the boundaries of acceptable discourse", as Cameron insightfully explains in critiquing the creation of "shibboleths":

> A shibboleth is a kind of linguistic password: A way of speaking […] to identify another person as a member, or a non-member, of a particular group […] The most obvious sign that a rule functions as a shibboleth is that its observance or non-observance becomes an acid test of whether someone is friend or foe. The use of a prescribed form means the writer is 'one of us', a political ally on the right side of whatever the argument is, whereas failure to observe the rule indicates that the writer is […] on the wrong side of the same argument. Another sign of a shibboleth is that you can't question either the rule or the argument that justifies it without being assumed to have the 'wrong' political beliefs […]
>
> If language matters, then we need to be able to reflect critically on the way we use it. And there is nothing reflective, or self-reflexive, about the shouty, judgy, self-righteous policing of anyone who doesn't sound just like you. (Cameron, 2018)

Despite their undeniably good intentions, Jane and Veronica's protestations are inadvertently what Cameron terms "judgy" and "self-righteous". Elsewhere, in a blogpost on "The dangers of purity", Cameron articulates this type of calling-out as "one-upping" and "claiming the moral high ground", explaining further that "One problem with this kind of policing is that it

[45] See Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* (2015) in which she has a chapter entitled "The Female Fear Factory" referring to what she terms the "manufacture of female fear [that] uses the threat of rape and other bodily wounding". *Female Fear Factory* is also the title of her follow-up volume (2021).

often owes more to the latest viral hot take than to any deep understanding of the way language and communication work" (Cameron, 2022). I argue that my two students may indeed have been motivated by one such provocative opinion regarding the term being "triggering", and their resulting wish to dissociate themselves from the projected "harm" they envisage its use entailing. Cameron pointedly references the way controversial views in the third decade of the twenty-first century tend to spread rapidly at the expense of thoughtful, considered reflection.

I contend that there are three distinct but mutually reinforcing reasons why this accounts for resistance to integrating previously acknowledged evidence into their writing. Firstly, Jane's use of the term "triggering" is indicative of the type of popular discourse that has been "mainstreamed" to the extent that the issuing of "trigger warnings" has become "ubiquitous" (Vingiano, 2014). As Vingiano contends in a *Buzzfeed* article online, "it's clear that the phrase itself came to fruition online […] Now it's moving back offline […] most notably onto college campuses" (Vingiano, 2014). In the past decade this term has been adopted by, for example, college students demanding the censoring or removal of texts they find "triggering", as Duignan writes in an article online (2023). Some students at Harvard Law School have gone as far as proposing "that rape law should not be taught, because its content would inevitably distress some students" (Duignan, 2023). Vingiano quotes a former editor of a feminist forum explaining the prevalence of performative warnings against material that could be seen as "triggering": "There's this feeling: 'How many problematic things can I point out about this article to show that I am a feminist, or the most able to identify all of the problematic language?'" (Vingiano, 2014)

The pertinence of this phenomenon is reinforced by the prevalence of "wokeist" notions that I can attest anecdotally are evident in the language that has become aspirational amongst a vocal group of students at our school in recent years. This demonstration of "performative woketivism" (Cohen, 2020) or "performative allyship" (Kalina, 2020, pp. 478–481) prioritises the avoidance of certain terminology over critical engagement with the substance of systemic oppression. This performativity also ignores both the evidence presented, and the disciplinary thinking integral to the DBE. As Felman asserts, "ignorance, in other words is nothing other than a desire to ignore: its nature is less cognitive than performative" (Felman, 1987, p. 79; Di Paolantonio, 2018, p. 5).

Secondly, while not the focus of this current study, what further provides insight into such unreflective engagement manifesting in the history classroom is the way communication on

digital platforms has demonstrably been "gamified", as Nguyen relates. He explains that such sites use "metrics" (2021, p. 1)[46] that encourage rapid scrolling rather than the type of nuanced, reflective engagement history teachers need to instil in the classroom: "The technology invites us to focus our cares on the narrow task of getting points and going viral. And that goal is in tension with our interest in having morally sensitive and openhearted communication" (Nguyen, 2021, p. 4). As sites like "Twitter can't offer a score based on quality of engagement, empathy, or depth of thought" (Nguyen, 2021, p. 23), their programming instead tends to "discourage further reflection on one's values" (Nguyen, 2021, p. 16). Incentivising the frequency of multiple, brief interactions and "de-emphasizing the quality of any particular interaction" (Nguyen, 2021, p. 13) normalises communication as being about point scoring rather than about nuanced understanding. This predisposes users to become accustomed to superficial interactions which when unwittingly transferred to the classroom may manifest in discourse that is more about point scoring through censoring language rather than about the type of reasoned argument drawing on empirical evidence required in studying history.

Thirdly, adolescents' immersion online escalated during COVID-19 lockdown (Rouleau, Beauregard and Beaudry, 2023) in contexts where such access was possible. Given studies outside the field of history education showing that "Social media are an indispensable modern adolescents' daily ritual" (Hudimova, 2021, p. 1) and "an integral part of teens' daily life" (Zhang, Liu and Chung, 2021, p. 1), it seems intuitive that "Adolescents worldwide alleviated the negative experiences of social distancing by spending more time on digital devices" (Marciano *et al.*, 2022, p. 1). As my student cohort were all sufficiently well-resourced to attend lessons online during lockdown, and whenever compelled to isolate following exposure to the virus even once schools reopened, the following US-based survey appears relevant to our South African context as well: "Social media have become a ubiquitous presence in teens daily life. A recent national survey in the US showed that almost half of the teens from 13 to 17 years old were online "almost constantly", and nearly all (97%) of them used at least one type of social media." (Zhang, Liu and Chung, 2021, p. 2). Indeed, it seems apposite to claim with "judgemental rationality" (Go, 2019, pt. 01) that students' exposure to popular media during and post-pandemic lockdown influenced their conception of social discourse, given the prevalence of studies researching the impact of increased online engagement on diverse aspects of students' well-being in recent years.

[46] Page numbers refer to the pre-publication online version available here as access to the published chapter could not be secured.

In Táíwò's terms, my students' pushback, while intended to express care for a traumatised reader of their *Textbook Entry*, quite unwittingly leads to them expecting "the traumatized to shoulder burdens alone that we ought to share collectively, lifting them up onto a pedestal in order to hide below them" (2022, chap. 5). Táíwò's work in the context of "identity politics" allows me to suggest that my two students may be demonstrating "felt superiority" by "overstating" the potential "harm" to those imagined future readers they are "deferring" to (2022, chap. 3). Táíwò indicates that this performance – even when well-intentioned – does nothing to address the structural injustices that have resulted in the very real "harm" or "serious material consequences" survivors continue to suffer (Táíwò, 2022, chap. 3).

Ultimately, Group 2's *Textbook Entry* inadvertently re-silences Taylor and Perkins's voices given they both courageously proclaimed their rape by white men at the time, yet had their voices silenced by their omission from the textbook narrative. This led me as action researcher in my own classroom to reflect on which pedagogical approaches may have enabled me to secure their integrating this testimony more fully into their writing. This is further explored in Chapter 7.3. Next, I turn to Group 1's discursive grappling with the language they should use in framing their *Textbook Entry*.

6.2.2 Group 1: Selecting appropriate textbook language with care

During a textbook writing session, Group 1 in Extract 4 below raise concerns about whether their entry is appropriately framed for a textbook.

Extract 4 from Group 1's discussion while writing their *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 1 – D)

Turns:

15.	*Toni:*	*You're a very good writer - but it's a textbook and it's sounding a little bit wobbly - which isn't bad but like*
16.	*Delilah:*	*I think what Toni is trying to say you're not boring enough to write textbooks*
17.	*Freye:*	[laughs] *I'm not taking offence don't worry*

Here Toni (Turn 15) tries gently to curb their scribe Freye's enthusiastic phrasing by suggesting "it's sounding a little bit wobbly". Delilah (Turn 16) by implication claims textbooks are "boring", whereas Freye's phrasing is not. This brief interaction already provides insight into Group 1's clear engagement with the notion of constructing their entry in a way that conforms to what they have internalised are the expectations of a school history textbook. Before considering further extracts of Group 1's grappling to formulate their writing in ways they deemed appropriate, scholarly articulations on textbook writing provide some context on what would better serve the pedagogical needs of history students:

> McKeown and Beck (2010) propose various ways textbooks can be modified to make them more engaging and comprehensible to students, including greater "connectivity" between the reader and the text through the use of more overtly emotional language that "draw[s] connections between events and agents' emotional responses to events" (p. 17). […] According to Crismore (1983, p. 29), a feature of considerate texts is that they provide an "author perspective on the content". This inclusion of the writer's own view toward the subject-matter also suggests a more 'visible author' – but one that seems to perform a pedagogical rather than a disciplinary function to make texts more comprehensible to learners by explicitly 'spelling out' opinions or evaluations of the content for them. (Myskow, 2018, p. 54)

As the following discussion, Extract 5, will indicate, Group 1 do "spell out" their viewpoints even while they appear to censor their "more overtly emotional language".

Extract 5 from Group 1's discussion while writing their *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 1 – D)

Turns:

18.	*Yolande*	*Freye - Stop it! It's too emotional. It was - uh you can't - I don't think we can say 'propaganda figure'.* *Toni, can we say 'propaganda figure' - or is that too emotional a way to say it? Is there a better way to word it?* [Toni was unresponsive as she was at home ill]
19.	*Delilah*	*Not emotional - but too -*
20.	*Yolande*	*Passive-aggressive?*
21.	*Delilah*	*Yah it's too taking a side - Surely, she* [Parks] *symbolised what the bus boycott was about?*
22.	*Yolande*	[emphatically] *She symbolised* what E.D. Nixon thought -
23.	*Freye*	*I should say 'perfect woman' - that's in the title* [of the paragraph she was writing]
24.	*Delilah*	*Haven't we said that already?*
25.	*Freye*	*We haven't said 'searched for a perfect woman'*
26.	*Yolande*	*That's perfect!*
27.	*Freye*	[reading as she types] *It was* she *who allowed herself to become ED Nixon's perfect woman*
28.	*Delilah*	*To symbolise the boycott*
29.	*Freye*	*Rosa Parks was busy being a legend!*

In Extract 5 above, while framing Parks as Nixon's "perfect woman" (Freye, Turn 23) to front the boycott, Freye had clearly typed something to the effect of Parks serving as a "propaganda figure" (Yolande, Turn 18), resulting in excited interjections from the other two in the ill Toni's absence. Concern was raised that Freye was being too "emotional" (Yolande, Turn 18), "passive-aggressive" (Yolande, Turn 20), and "too taking a side" (Delilah, Turn 21). Group 1 appear to be grappling with working within what they think a textbook account should look like by reflecting on their overt positionality and tone, leading to them questioning the appropriateness of their language choice. It is evident that they want to construct an account that establishes the events as they see them, while remaining within the framework of an acceptable textbook. Freye (Turn 27) in emphasising "It was *she* who allowed herself to become ED Nixon's perfect woman" clearly sees Parks as choosing to conform to the public image that the boycott – in Nixon's view – had to present in order to secure its success. Having

established Parks's agency in comporting herself within the confines of that role in her phrasing, Freye (Turn 29) could not resist exclaiming in admiration: "Rosa Parks was busy being a legend!" It is interesting to see how Group 1 juggle what they perceive as appropriate textbook construction with what they think and passionately feel about the role-players themselves.

A later exchange, Extract 6, shows how carefully considered their framing is of how the male-led MIA seized control of the boycott that Robinson's WPC had long-planned and put into action following Parks's resolute refusal to vacate her seat.

Extract 6 from Group 1's discussion while writing their *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 1 - D)

Turns:

30.	*Freye:*	*These are the women who then filled the roles of -*
31.	*Delilah:*	*the MIA following their -*
32.	*Freye:*	*I was going to say 'hijacking'*
33.	*Delilah:*	*Oh, I had the word - not 'repositioning'. I'm just going to search a synonym for 'taking over'*
34.	*Freye:*	*'Repossessed'?*
35.	*Delilah:*	*They didn't 'repossess' it. That implies that they had it before!*
36.	*Freye:*	*Ohhh nice Delilah. After the MIA took over -*
37.	*Yolande:*	*Just say - took over the boycott without involving -*
38.	*Freye:*	*How do you say, 'shoved them out'? - I know that's not a polite word*
39.	*Yolande:*	*I know I know it's hard!*
40.	*Delilah:*	*I'll google it – 'shoved them out'*
41.	*Freye:*	*You know sometimes there's like a term - a specific one word*
42.	*Yolande:*	*[calling] Toni? Toni? [she is clearly not there]*
43.	*Freye:*	*Like you work someone out subtly - there's a single word for that*
44.	*Yolande:*	*'Undermined'?*
45.	*Freye*	*Yes 'undermined' is the word we're looking for! – 'undermined their efforts and seized control of the boycott and the attention that came with it'*
46.	*Yolande*	*Oooh ooh* [excited]
47.	*Delilah*	*That's really good. I wish Freye wrote all history! That would be so much fun!*

Here Freye, aware of the connotations, rejects her own suggestions, "hijacking" (Turn 32) and "shoved them out" (Turn 38), seeking instead a way to express their view without falling foul of what they assume are a textbook's requirements for less overt positionality. Freye (Turn 45) embraces Yolande's (Turn 44) offer of "undermined". Delilah's (Turn 47) enthusiastic praise, exclaiming "I wish Freye wrote all history! That would be so much fun!" reinforces her earlier implication that textbook accounts are "boring", and despite her joy in Freye's natural expression, she supports her concern for circumspection in framing their entry.

What Group 1 are unaware of is that concern has been raised on a scholarly level with the way textbooks are written, with education researchers acknowledging the resulting chasm created

between historians and students. What is in part "fun" (Delilah, Line 47) about Freye's writing is precisely her "authorial voice" (Myskow, 2018, p. 54) even while she is careful in her word selection. Freye ensures that their entry conveys their view that the men in the MIA supplanted the very Black women who for years had been laying the groundwork for a successful bus boycott, furthermore securing the "attention that came with it" (Freye, Turn 45). Together Group 1 ensure that their *Textbook Entry* articulates their perspective and, in Delilah's view, is not as "boring" as standard textbooks. In their writing, then, Group 1 carefully integrate their subjective responses to the documents in the enquiry with their sense of what is appropriate diction in a textbook. In this respect their writing is far more nuanced, expressive, and engaging in its approach than that of Wineburg's head teacher[47], Colleen, whose ultimate writing – like that of Advanced Placement student Derek, he finds so disappointing, as she appeared to cling to the "tenaciously held belief that, when writing history, one should be cool, dispassionate, scientific, objective" (Wineburg, 2010, p. 89). This is an impressive achievement indicating Group 1's sophisticated integration of what they have learned during the DBE into their eventual writing.

Group 1 spent several sessions constructing their narrative, even meeting at their own initiative on the weekend following this interchange to complete it. Their engagement with how they frame it provides some insight into why it took them so long to settle on their entry. Arranging its structure and deciding what to include and how to do that had already been time-consuming, as they made skilful use of the combined *Diamond Decider* and *Hexagon Honeycomb* activities. In Extract 7 below, Group 1 reflect on the process of writing a *Textbook Entry.*

Extract 7 from Group 1's discussion while writing their *Textbook Entry* (Code: TE Gr 1 - D)

Turns:

48.	*Toni:*	*Writing a textbook is actually hard work*
49.	*Yolande:*	*Also, we're Grade 11 students, not like*
50.	*Toni:*	*No*
51.	*Delilah:*	*I feel like, I feel like you. That's a very good point!*

Grappling with how to express what they had learned during the DBE was clearly a challenging process, as Toni (Turn 48) admits, saying it "is actually hard work", while Yolande (Turn 49) makes what Delilah (Turn 51) concedes is "a very good point": they are but "Grade 11 students not like" – I infer she means – history textbook writers. Group 1's earnest enthusiasm in crafting their *Textbook Entry* as the final outcome of their engagement with the DBE prompted

[47] As discussed earlier in Chapter 2.3.

me to consider what that implied for relevant pedagogical approaches to be used by history teachers as will be evident in Chapter 7.3.

Conclusion

In this chapter I used RTA to explore students' understanding of the construction of historical accounts for school textbooks. While students variously critiqued textbooks' centring of single, male leaders, Group 2's *Textbook Entry* reverted in part to the dominant narrative, choosing to ignore vital detail they previously showed much appreciation for regarding the historical context and women's centrality in that. Group 1 draws on their grasp of other historical periods as they grapple with accounting for how history has come to be constructed in textbooks, with two students intriguingly suggesting history should be taught in a non-linear way with women as an integrated focus throughout. In framing their own *Textbook Entry*, both groups discussed appropriate language use. Group 2 disagreed quite vehemently over the suitability of using the term "rape" in a textbook, leading me to reflect on what pedagogical strategies might assist students who affectively resist integrating disconcerting evidence into their historical writing. Group 1, in their consideration of appropriate language use, found creative ways to curtail their affective responses to the documentary evidence in their writing, while giving voice to their deliberate decision to not centre a single, male leader in sharp distinction to the textbook narrative.

Next, I briefly set out my conclusions to Questions 1A and 1B as detailed in Chapters 5 and 6. Thereafter, I turn to my reflections on the affordances of my DBE, briefly suggesting what I might do differently in a future iteration thereof, and what its limitations are given my particular school context. Finally, I consider my contributions to knowledge in history education by addressing Question 2.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS (Questions 1A and 1B); REFLECTIONS; AND CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE IN HISTORY EDUCATION (Question 2)

Introduction

In this final chapter I first conclude my findings in addressing Questions 1A and 1B (7.1):

1. How does centring Black women in accounts of the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama inform students' way of seeing:

A events in Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s?
B the construction of history in school textbooks?

I then reflect on my AR project (7.2) noting its affordances in the context of the existing literature. I also consider its limitations given my particular local context was privileged in ways that are not replicated in the majority of South African schools. Informed by my analysis in addressing Questions 1A and 1B, I then explain how my current study contributes to knowledge in history education by addressing Question 2 (7.3):

2. How does action research using a document-based enquiry inform our understanding of pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning history?

My AR study critiques the false binary postulated by history education specialists between cognitive and affective learning during an enquiry. In response, I assert the crucial role of affect as fundamentally intertwined with critical disciplinary learning in history education. Foster, as referenced by Barton and Levstik, claims that historical enquiry is mostly grounded in "knowledge, not feeling or imagination" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, p. 207), yet my study shows that affect considerably enhanced the disciplinary learning of some of my students, while at times impeding others from consistently demonstrating the disciplinary thinking they exhibited elsewhere. As part of the iterative process required by AR, I wrestled with this quandary given the enormity of the challenges it poses to teachers aiming to secure the learning they intend through carefully constructed lessons. I contend that for several students, their affective engagement during the DBE enhanced their historical learning, manifesting in their demonstrating sophisticated critical and disciplinary literacies. A further affordance was my picking up on what lay behind the affective responses of those who demonstrated "epistemic wobbling" (VanSledright and Maggioni, 2016, p. 140) rather than sustained progression at times. I saw such manifestations as "new or different untoward consequences" (Kemmis,

McTaggart and Nixon, 2014, p. 68) of my intervention that could not in a future DBE be averted through further planning given the unknown and unknowable nature of each new cohort in their particular context. I therefore articulate my contribution to history education by examining the challenges my study shows teachers facing, thereby addressing gaps evident in existing research. I analyse why further planning – even where that presupposes an open-ended dialogic approach – is inadequate to ensure that students learn what teachers intend, given each new cohort will pose distinct difficulties for even the best prepared teacher. This in part informs my ultimate contribution in the form of a model constituting three intersecting pedagogical approaches to facilitate the learning of material experienced affectively by students as "difficult knowledge" (Britzman, 1998, p. 117) in the classroom. My model will more broadly serve as a framework to enable enriched teaching and learning in the history classroom, making a unique contribution to history education. Synthesising what this study has shown, I argue for the utility of reconceptualised disciplinary, critical, and psychosocial literacy approaches for teachers to adopt and adapt afresh as required in their localised contexts each year. I assert that my model, which highlights the key role of affect, makes it possible for learning even disruptive and discomfiting knowledge to be both relational and relatable for students in their localised context. I further assert that it capacitates teachers to enhance student learning of all history. Next, I examine my conclusions to Questions 1A and 1B in turn before expounding the implications of my DBE for integrating women's history in the classroom.

7.1 Conclusions to Question 1A and 1B

Question 1A.

How does centring Black women in accounts of the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama inform students' way of seeing events in Montgomery in the 1940s and 1950s?

All students were keen to critique the textbooks' Male or Compensatory History and it was consistently evident that they intended drafting their own narratives accordingly. What was of unexpected interest beyond their shared disenchantment with the misrepresentation and erasure of Black women was the divergence in their ways of seeing women's history when plotted in terms of Tetreault's framework, and the consistency with which they did so. In including Black women, some students wrote Bifocal History, largely referencing them as an amorphous, oppressed group, even unwittingly reverting at times to the very stereotypes they elsewhere critiqued quite vehemently. Given their previous immersion in a male-centred study of the past which devalued women's experiences, they did not consistently see the particularity of

women's personal lives as relevant to their historical study. This at times led to their inadvertently diminishing the value of women's lived experiences they elsewhere acknowledged as significant. This was particularly the case where their affective concern not to be associated with past discriminatory views impeded their learning from the DBE in a sustained way. At times, they referenced the documents in tenuous ways to confirm their preconceived notions about sexism in the past, or rationalised why the evidence uncovering personal aspects of women's lives should be ignored. This was in tension with their earlier pronouncements in plenary sessions where they had exhibited a finer grasp of historical thinking concepts. On reflection, I realised they would require further scaffolding in using the disciplinary concepts of causality and significance in order for them to fully integrate documentary evidence into their writing in a sustained way. This was especially evident where that information was unintentionally experienced as discomfiting.

Other students' affective engagement served to enhance their disciplinary learning. Their way of seeing events presented as Feminist History with nuanced recognition of what Tetreault terms the "new categories" of knowledge about women's lives as appropriate historical knowledge. They drew on those new forms of knowledge in framing individual Black women's actions as significant and causal in securing the end of bus segregation. Their writing captured diverse women's personal choices and actions as demonstrably political. Ultimately, their way of seeing events in Montgomery centred the extraordinary yet uncredited Black women's conscious resistance to the racialised sexual abuse, assault, and rape long inflicted on them by white men. Furthermore, in depicting Black women's interactions with men, they foreground particular women speaking for themselves, writing what Tetreault suggests would be Holistic History. This was most evident in their focused deployment of Colvin's unflinching gaze while defying the city's white attorney's every attempt to undermine her credibility as a plaintiff in court. Their way of seeing events was clearly informed by their integrating previously uncredited substantive knowledge of the Black women encountered in the DBE to demonstrate their articulate grasp of their causal significance in ending bus segregation. In doing so, they exhibited exemplary critical and disciplinary learning.

Question 1B.

How does centring Black women in accounts of the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama inform students' way of seeing the construction of history in school textbooks?

Using RTA, I analysed how all students reflected critically on how textbooks have misrepresented any women they paid token reference to, while excluding others altogether.

Several students suggested the textbooks' erasure of the context in which Black women found themselves in the 1940s and 1950s was intended to avoid white students having to confront their forbears' complicity in centuries-long racialised sexual abuse. Several students went beyond noting such flaws to questioning why they arose, and what that implied about the epistemic grounding of the history they learned at school. They explored how textbooks are constructed to focus on singular men whose ostensible leadership overshadowed Black women's activism to the point of virtual exclusion. Several students advocated for history to be taught through the use of multiple sources, as in their DBE. Two intriguingly suggested history should be taught in a non-linear way with women as an integrated focus throughout. Others, while including women, in part unintentionally manifested a partial throwback to the textbooks they had previously critiqued. The long shadow of years of traditional pedagogy was evident in their narrative still centring men, with the very women they had previously enthused over unwittingly diminished by their use of passive terms which belied their activism. This was in sharp contrast to the active terms used by others who consistently captured the dynamism and centrality of Black women's actions.

Whereas some contrived to restrain their language choices so as to fit what they had internalised as textbook diction, others vehemently disagreed about the appropriateness of a term they deemed would trigger students. Evidently discomfited by what they had learned, some were driven by an unconscious need to virtue-signal their disaffection in order to retain their sense of themselves and how they wished to be perceived in their social milieu. This led me to conclude that teachers need appropriate pedagogical strategies in place to pick up on and address such unanticipated resistance to integrating disconcerting material. Other students not only centred Black women throughout their writing, but further used a distinctive authorial voice to clarify the ways in which their account differed from the dominant narrative, while still ensuring their language was not what they deemed would be inappropriately emotive. They constructed a narrative which was able to break with the "tenaciously held belief that, when writing history, one should be cool, dispassionate, scientific, objective" (Wineburg, 2010, p. 89). It is evident that centring Black women in the DBE informed students' ways of seeing differently, depending on their own prior positioning. In response to the DBE, all students were able to critique the textbooks' representation of events, although not all were consistent in producing counter-texts as a result. Next, given my conclusions to Questions 1A and 1B, I assert the value of a DBE in integrating women's history.

My study demonstrates the rich potential of a carefully constructed extended DBE in integrating women's history

In light of my findings in addressing Questions 1A and 1B, I argue that my study contributes to filling the enduring gap in research regarding the integration – as opposed to the mere addition – of women's history into our classroom practice. My project comprehensively addresses the gap in empirical work on the teaching of women's history that has, as Crocco asserts, remained a "novelty" (2018, p. 344), despite its necessity not only to secure "social justice, but equally as a matter of truth-telling" (2018, p. 351). All students critiqued the textbooks' erasure and misrepresentation of women, further contextualising the 1950s protests by noting Black women's racialised sexual abuse on the Montgomery buses. In doing so they readily identified the "apparent contradictions and inconsistencies in the historical record" (Jay, 2021, p. 310). Several students further explored what Jay, acknowledging Reisman, terms the "historical problem space" that in his study students "struggle to locate" (2021, p. 310). Clearly, my carefully structured pedagogical activities juxtaposing the textbooks with evocative documents centring Black women facilitated the creation of "a contested space" as these students were able to "reveal voices" that had been "silenced or erased" previously (Martell and Stevens, 2021, chap. 3). They fully embodied Black women in their particularity in their discussions and writing, demonstrating a clear appreciation of diverse women's individual choices and actions as constituting political activism (Woyshner, 2012, p. 367) integral to securing change. They provided consistent evidence of incorporating new forms of knowledge excluded from the dominant androcentric accounts. In Tetreault's terms, by treating women's personal actions as "serious" rather than "trivial" (1985, p. 375), these students impressively reconceived the substantive history they were learning (Tetreault, 1985, p. 376). Next, I reflect on my study, examining its affordances for teaching and learning, consider what I would do in a future iteration of my DBE, and note its limitations given my particular school context.

7.2 Reflections

Reflection in action research, feminist action research, and reflexive thematic analysis

As mine was an AR project with an overt focus on exploring the potential of a DBE as a way to integrate the teaching of women's history in the classroom, I had to consider how my findings would inform and transform my teaching by reflecting on what I had learned (Kemmis, 2009, p. 472). Both RTA and feminist AR required me to continually examine

myself and my pedagogy as an integral and iterative part of the process. To Kemmis this implies "that we must think of interpretation as a process of interpreting ourselves as well as the object we are trying to interpret" (2008, p. 125). Reflecting on my AR required me to remain cognisant that I was, as teacher-researcher, embedded in the project I had initiated and was now interpreting. As a history teacher who has sought over the past more than two decades to continually improve my teaching, I realised that simply reflecting on my practice was not qualitatively the same as critiquing it reflexively as part of my AR. Braun and Clarke clarify, "We are adopting the term *reflexability* to capture the idea that an ability with reflexivity is something that we can grow and upskill on" (2020, p. 3). To me this implied that while I found this requirement to be daunting, it was an ability – or reflex-ability – I could with practice develop during the course of my project.

Affordances of my DBE

My students' rich engagement with the Black women whose voices I centred during the DBE exceeded my expectations in surprising ways, and I grew as a practitioner through and from their discursive interactions. Who I was – and who I was becoming through my reflexive AR – was integral to my whole project. It was evident that I had achieved much disciplinary "success in establishing problems worth solving and in enthusing pupils in the effort […] by enshrining a concept in an enquiry question" (Counsell, 2011, p. 217). Ensuring the requisite flexibility in my Grade 11 teaching programme for an extended enquiry also proved to be key to deepening students' immersion in the activities. In addition, curating carefully considered activities and evocative women-centred documents facilitated more reflective engagement by all students than is generally evident when doing routine source-based classwork or when completing prescribed source-based assessments. Extensive peer-to-peer learning was encouraged by the discursive nature of the collaborative activities which required substantial, deliberative close-reading of the documents in response to open-ended enquiry questions. My in-depth knowledge of the historiography of the topic and of the relevant literature were integral to my painstaking curation of accessible documents and appealing pedagogical activities. Indeed, some students were so enthralled by the creative nature of the *Prompted Poem* activity that they voiced their preference for writing in this way over the more formal activities that characterise their English (Language Arts) lessons. I was impressed throughout by the rich evidence of student enthusiasm in their animated discussions, despite the challenging COVID-19 constraints such as masking, physical distancing, and online attendance on their unfettered interaction. I was quite overwhelmed by the commitment demonstrated by

three students who met on the weekend to complete their submission, as despite working through a number of lunch breaks they had not yet reached finality. Several students' reflections indicated they were conscious of the power of the process in transforming their thinking about the place of women's history in school history.

My extended DBE afforded some students the opportunity to express views which were in tension with those they expressed elsewhere, unintentionally throwing into relief the inherent danger for me as teacher-researcher in taking their self-reflections at face value. Braun and Clarke's suggestion in an interview that I as researcher-teacher must reflect on what "surprised" me in the data encouraged me, as they appeared to value the uncovering of "unexpected and unanticipated" evidence (Lainson, Braun and Clarke, 2019, p. 8)[48]. A key commitment of my approach to teaching has always been not to set a ceiling on any student's potential, and all students were indeed able to challenge the textbooks' marginalisation, exclusion, and misrepresentation of Black women. Given their insightful interactions in every plenary discussion, I had not anticipated that a closer analysis would reveal that some students were at times discomfited in ways that obstructed their fully integrating women's history, while other students were not. As Kumashiro explains, "we often feel uncomfortable with ideas that disrupt norms" (2009, p. 27), and even as an experienced classroom teacher, I had no way of anticipating my intervention would unwittingly unsettle how some students made sense of themselves in the world in ways that would in part impede their learning.

Turning to the literature to situate my findings, I realised that my emerging grasp of unconscious resistance to disruptive knowledge also explained a phenomenon I have recently picked up on in my teaching practice. Individual students have expressed discomfort when made aware, however gently, that their articulations – whether verbal or written – unconsciously indicate views they would themselves publicly disavow, such as racism, sexism, or a colonial mindset. Some students have appeared to push back against the slightest intimation that they, albeit unwittingly, display perspectives they know are frowned upon in their social circles. On reflection, my AR project afforded me crucial insights into the challenges I still face in my local context which remains beset with the difficulties attendant on confronting a complex colonial and apartheid legacy in a deeply divided, patriarchal society almost three decades into a fledgling democracy.

[48] Page numbers refer to the pre-publication online article available here as access to the published journal article could not be secured.

My study shows in "granular" depth how my carefully constructed extended DBE enhanced students' disciplinary and critical literacies

I maintain that my DBE informs teaching and learning in the history classroom by demonstrating how several students were enabled to enact criticality and disciplinary thinking most impressively, indicating a remarkably sophisticated and nuanced grasp of the topic. I assert that through this AR study, I contribute to addressing the empirical gap identified by Jay regarding the impact of a history teacher's practice on their students. My project comprehensively tracks my intervention in initiating the DBE as well as "whether and how it changes students' knowledge, processes, and epistemic stances", thereby addressing the need for research that draws on the "granular level" in the classroom (Jay, 2021, p. 322). The value of such knowledge – self-reflexively constructed by action researchers in their own workplace – is that it is "produced out of their own lived realities as professionals" (Anderson and Herr, 1999, p. 20; quoted by Weiner, 2004, p. 632). I argue, therefore, that my AR study provides a significant "knowledge base that is otherwise unavailable" (Herr and Anderson, 2015, p. 50).

I contend that my carefully curated pedagogical activities drawing on my deep substantive and procedural knowledge enabled students to develop and display complex historical learning. For example, my depth of experience enabled me to pick up on a seeming limitation of the *Diamond Deciders* activity, thereby transforming it into a richer opportunity for students to demonstrate impressive proficiency in disciplinary thinking. On observing them struggling to fit their thoughts into Seixas and Morton's evidently proscriptive diamond-nine shape (2013, p. 29) as detailed in Chapter 4, I encouraged students to adapt that model to best fit their thinking based on the documents they had studied. I was emboldened to make this suggestion by knowing that Seixas and Morton had aimed to instil a "powerful understanding" (2013, pp. 8–9) of historical thinking concepts through their suggested activities. Paradoxically, it was evident that students were finding their model was limiting their thinking. Indeed, students appeared quite enthralled to be encouraged to break from the design suggested by esteemed educational experts in this way. It made several students particularly confident to subvert the shape altogether, insisting, based on their newly-acquired deep knowledge of the topic, that several factors were indeed the most significant, thus eschewing the proscription that they settle on only one. As they moved from a hierarchy of significant causes to understanding both their relative causality and their compounding effects, these students indeed demonstrated their facility at "[grappling] with the tensions, complexities, and problems embedded in historical thinking concepts" as intended by Seixas and Morton (2013, p. 4).

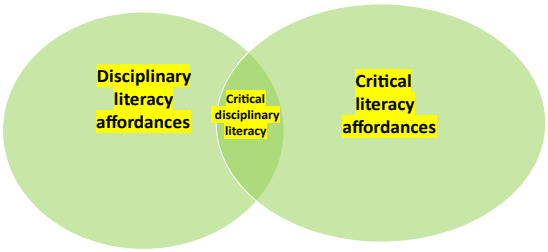
Furthermore, given evident time constraints, I on the spot also modified the intended use of the *Hexagon Honeycombs* to connect that activity directly to the preceding *Diamond Deciders*, suggesting students use the two strategies concurrently. It was evident that, as intended, students constructively challenged each other, proposing alternative reconfigurations and including overlooked interconnections between previously misrepresented or erased role-players, all the while justifying their proposals with detailed evidence. Enriched by this activity, several students were further empowered to complicate the textbooks' linear narrative, with one ingeniously conceiving of tracing causality and significance as akin to unpacking nested Russian dolls. This insightful visualisation articulated a more complex understanding of how to enact disciplinary thinking when engaging with documentary evidence erased from the dominant narrative. This evocative way of discrediting the textbook's postulation of a single male leader orchestrating the whole bus boycott as a mere "façade" indicated a complex level of historical learning that was enthusiastically embraced by others. It further inspired them to infuse their writing with an authorial voice quite unlike the textbooks they explicitly distanced themselves from to explain their critical positionality to the reader. Their writing overtly reflected their critical perspective on women's history as necessarily integrated into the narrative of events in the past. They demonstrated sophisticated conceptual understanding of the importance of the evidence they had gleaned from the documents, integrating new forms of knowledge excluded by the dominant androcentric view of events into their decision-making and subsequently into their writing.

While it was evident throughout the DBE that all students rejected the dominant narrative's description of the bus boycott as "spontaneous" – as if arising "out of nowhere", two students separately in their journals critiqued such reductionist accounts with sophisticated visualisations of how history should be taught in schools. Instead of a simplified linear progression, each conjured up a presentation of history being taught as an interconnected web of factors, with women integrated throughout. Intriguingly, as discussed in Chapter 6.2, this brings to mind the concept of rhizomes. As Haustein explains, in a rhizome all "entanglements" are connected, while none predominates, and as rhizomes "change and proliferate, but never […] appear out of nowhere" (Haustein, 2021, pp. 328; 335). What follows from this exposition is that these two students' way of seeing also entailed examining the longer past, as indeed had been my intention in curating documents that allowed students to trace the mid-1950s activism back to at least the 1940s. Furthermore, as rhizomes do not simply materialise, framing

unfolding events in terms of this conceit allowed those students to speak and write about Black women's activism as their reaction to the long-standing abuse and assault by white men that was ultimately rooted in slavery. That in itself indicated their critical disciplinary learning during the DBE. But their suggestions are instructive more broadly in history teaching. Indeed, I realised on reflection that it would enrich students' understanding if teachers could enable them to view past events as manifesting rhizomatic "entanglements" that develop and transform in this way. These intriguing metacognitive insights which the students directly attributed to the DBE go beyond what I imagined they would be able to construct from the activities I curated.

My DBE enabled students to demonstrate critical and disciplinary literacy as interlocking competencies rather than as divergent

Figure 7.1 Visualisation of the DBE's intersecting disciplinary and critical literacy affordances



I contend that by setting up a DBE that enabled students to develop interlocking disciplinary and critical literacies, I address a lacuna Jay pinpoints in history education research which postulates these as divergent research approaches. Although Jay's concern is with teacher education rather than with student learning, even greater gaps exist in the literature regarding the latter. I maintain that in Jay's phrasing I contribute to the "field's coherence" as a result (2022, p. 357). Indeed, I concur with Santiago and Dozono who reject "the false dichotomy between historical inquiry and criticality" (2022, pp. 173–195) as in my AR project students indeed applied both approaches concurrently. Their grappling with the discordance between what they learned from the DBE and what the textbook narrative espoused led several students to ask pertinent critical questions, even endeavouring to answer those themselves in sophisticated ways. In doing so these students were careful to distinguish their own views informed by their current historical context from their portrayal of events in the past, and did not collapse past and present racialised misogyny and sexism into one. They both demonstrated their quest for a critical reinterpretation of events to restore the marginalised, erased, and

misrepresented women to their account, and exhibited exemplary disciplinary thinking while doing so. It became clear they were adopting a "mountaintop perspective", seeing the past with "greater clarity" (Gangl, 2021, p. 513) as they did so. These students emphasised diverse Black women's centrality in securing the change they sought. They openly acknowledged the views of past role-players as historically contextualised, differentiating those from their own, even insisting they "give credit where credit is due" to key male activist Nixon notwithstanding their disaffection for what they perceived as his misogyny.

What I would do in a future iteration of this DBE

Given the rich responses secured throughout the enquiry from all students, I would ensure a similar time frame in a future iteration, as much of the rich data came precisely from the opportunity afforded students to delve at length into the evidence in their groups. I would also use similar pedagogical activities. To further facilitate students' capacity to challenge the textbooks' centring of individual male leaders by focusing on the work of the collective, I would incorporate the critical approach of "thinking like an activist" articulated by Martell and Stevens (2021). For example, they suggest asking: "Did a group of people at the time engage in collective actions? (Was there a "trigger event" that gained public attention?) […] Did the group's collective actions lead to a change in society?" (2021, chap. 2). I would also inculcate the need for "perspective recognition" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, chap. 11) rather than "perspective-taking" (Seixas, 2017, p. 601) to enhance students' capacity to acknowledge how people in the past viewed events, and to clarify the distinction between recognising those views and adopting them. Some students were at risk of inappropriately "speaking for" (Lipscomb, 2021, p. 186) people in the past in decontextualised ways, undermining both the disciplinary and critical approaches to learning history. In advice that resonates with me given the ungrounded affective pronouncements by some, Lipscomb quotes Townshend who, in writing about a widely misrepresented woman in history, "stresses the utter importance of not 'projecting motivations and feelings onto the woman that she in fact never harbored'" (Lipscomb, 2021, p. 186). Given the advisory to historians not to impose their own views unreflexively, it follows that novice interpreters – our students – clearly need to be taught the disciplinary and critical dangers inherent in careless projection of their own unexamined notions on to evidence from the past.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study arise from the privilege I had to conduct it in an extremely well-resourced independent school quite unlike the majority of South African public schools. While Soekoe (2021, p. 26) found that the recommended class size in public schools should not exceed 40 students, the unfortunate reality is that in most areas historically impoverished during apartheid, structural inequality persists three decades into democracy, resulting in even larger class sizes and a grievous lack of resources. Indeed, the responsible cabinet minister tellingly admitted in response to a parliamentary query in 2022 that "There are currently no legislated norms and standards for learner-to-educator ratio in public schools" (Nkosi, 2022). My unusually small cohort of eight students enabled all students the opportunity to be active participants in the DBE in ways that would be difficult to replicate in most public schools.

Furthermore, I was able to free up ten lessons for the DBE by starting the final Grade 12 curriculum early in Grade 11, securing as part of that one full day when my students were excused from regular lessons. By doing so I was able on the spot to adjust and even redesign the planned pedagogical activities to best secure a richer and more in-depth engagement by my students in the allocated time frame. I also asserted the freedom to design class, group, and individual tasks quite unlike those prescribed for assessments in high school history, another affordance I would not have been able to secure in an average public school in South Africa.

While the South African national curriculum advocates for a "rigorous process of enquiry" to facilitate the acquisition of the necessary "skills and concepts" ('Curriculum And Assessment Policy Statement Grades 10-12 History', 2011, pp. 8–10), the time allocated for coverage of the mandatory content in the Grade 12 exit year is insufficient to allow for anything like an extended DBE such as I initiated. Indeed, there would at best be one lesson allocated to the MBB – if that, when studying the Civil Rights Movement in the USA. I contend that depth is sacrificed for superficial curriculum breadth in ways quite unsuited to securing the disciplinary learning required. My study shows the disciplinary value of affording students the time and space to interact at length with documents in ways that interest them and engage them affectively. Next, I turn to my contribution to knowledge in history education.

7.3 Contribution to Knowledge in History Education - Question 2

How does action research using a document-based enquiry inform our understanding of pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning history?

My AR project did not end with framing the conclusions to Question 1A and 1B as set out above, nor with my reflections on my study. Instead, given the iterative nature of AR, those conclusions and reflections generated new understandings, leading to Question 2 as a way to frame my contribution to knowledge in history education. AR using a DBE enabled me to construct knowledge based on my empirical research against the backdrop of existing scholarly literature, and the gaps identified in that work.

My study advocates for creating opportunities for affective engagement to enhance students' learning

Informed by this study's analysis, I argue that consciously collating documents and pedagogical activities that elicit affective engagement was key to several students' development of sophisticated disciplinary and critical progression during the DBE. I concur with Barton and Levstik who reference McCrary's claim "that providing accurate information without attention to affect rarely leads to changes in stereotypical perceptions" (2008, p. 236). By engaging their emotions, I facilitated their seeing women's history as integral to their study of the past in ways not evident in previous studies where such knowledge was ultimately dismissed by students as not proper history (e.g., Levstik and Groth, 2002, pp. 244–245).

I argue, therefore, that I contribute to addressing the "paucity of research into the role emotions play" (Levy and Sheppard, 2018, p. 383) by tracking the positive way several students' affective engagement with documentary evidence during various pedagogical activities clearly enriched their learning. In my study, several students' constructive affective involvement concurs with Barton and Levstik's contention that "how they feel about history rather than what they think about it" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, p. 229) is key to encouraging their learning. My findings show that these students articulated their concern and "care for" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, pp. 234–237) the Black women presented in the DBE. They were keen to learn from Black women regarding how change was secured through their diverse efforts, "caring that" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, pp. 232–234) their activism had been uncredited, marginalised, or misrepresented in the textbook narrative. This affective involvement with past role-players deepened their reflection as they demonstrated not only

"emotions of conflict and difficulty" but the "joys and passions that are also present in the ideas and work of social studies education" (Sheppard, Katz and Grosland, 2015, p. 167). It is evident that given sufficient opportunity in an extended DBE, several students grasped the opportunity to form a "relationship" of care with "the object of study" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, p. 229), and this further facilitated their cognitive learning. Their engagement with diverse role-players and attendant socio-political issues they "care about" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, pp. 229–232) saw them grapple passionately with one another about how they could best capture their understanding in their writing. These students' exuberance in discussing particular role-players, their concern for the political issues at stake, and their expressions of disdain, dismay, and disgust all enhanced their learning. In light of this study, I therefore advocat**e** for creating opportunities for affective engagement to enhance students' learning in the history classroom.

My study asserts that beliefs internalised uncritically from students' social milieu may affectively result in "epistemic wobbling" in the history classroom, impeding their disciplinary learning

My study provides clarity on the ways affect may – in contrast to the previous discussion – unintentionally disrupt learning for some students in the history classroom. I argue that where substantive evidence presented to students is experienced as emotionally threatening what they believe, and how they identify, they may unconsciously resist learning. Careful teacher planning may be stymied where that entails exposing even highly enthusiastic students to knowledge that unintentionally unsettles their sense of self and the image of themselves they wish to project socially. This coheres with Ellsworth's insistence that what challenges teachers is that their students' "unconscious constantly derails the best intentions of pedagogies" (1997, p. 55). I assert that my empirical findings emphatically concur with education scholars who determine that "Facts are weak interventions into the belief structures of individuals, particularly when those facts relate to issues of significant personal/political importance" (Garrett, Segall and Crocco, 2020, p. 315). In Chapters 5 and 6, I showed how some students "do not abandon beliefs called into question by factual information; they resist modes of reasoning that threaten their identities" (Alcorn, 2013, p. 46; Garrett, 2017c, p. 69). This calls into question the broader utility of Reisman et al.'s disciplinary suggestion – made by them in the context of racial unease emerging in the history classroom – that teachers should get students to draw on their substantive knowledge of the topic (2020, p. 332). I maintain that such an intervention will not suffice when introducing students to new evidence they experience as disruptive of their epistemic beliefs. In my DBE, such knowledge was not in the

textbooks, and while all students readily identified that omission, further intervention would have been necessary to ensure all were able to integrate it in a sustained way as intended. Given that disruptive knowledge in my DBE subverted the textbooks' androcentric perspective and the traditional selection and presentation of content, students had not previously viewed such evidence of women's experiences as inherent to their study of history. For students to see substantive traces of women's lives as indispensable – as necessitated by Tetreault's Feminist and Holistic History (1985, pp. 374–376) – requires critical disciplinary literacy that does not presuppose students are familiar with the very new forms of knowledge that they may be affectively challenged by in the first instance.

I assert that I contribute to knowledge in history education by accounting for some students' epistemic inconsistency in ways not evident in existing scholarship which has to date neither circumvented nor been able to explain this variance comprehensively. I argue that students may manifest "epistemic wobbling" (VanSledright and Maggioni, 2016, p. 140) when their embedded assumptions, uncritically absorbed in the social milieu they inhabit, unintentionally impede their learning discomfiting knowledge in the history classroom. I maintain that students may unconsciously resist internalising the more complex understanding they manifest elsewhere, because that very understanding is grounded in information that unintentionally subverts their sense of self. I am able to do so as my AR project using a carefully constructed extended DBE clearly differs from O'Neill et al.'s instrumental quantitative approach (2022), as their methodology was not intended to facilitate their explaining the variance they found in their data. My in-depth qualitative approach allowed me to pick up on how some students' responses were influenced by their perception of "the relation between things" presented as evidence in the DBE and how they saw themselves (Berger, 2008, p. 9), and further, how they wished to be seen by others in their social milieu.

Barton and McCully contend that students "face strong pressures of identification outside the classroom" (2012, p. 397) – a claim borne out by this study – with "difficult history" researchers (e.g., Barton and McCully, 2010, 2012; Epstein and Peck, 2018; McCully, Weiglhofer and Bates, 2021) identifying students' community, religion, and home as the key influences on students' epistemic cognition. Further clarity is provided by Di Paolantonio, who references Lacan to suggest that those researching resistance to "difficult knowledge" need to focus on "our investments in certain narratives" and "logics that protect our illusions of ourselves" in order to "work-through and 'own-up' to our projections, illusions, and

misconceptions" (2018, pp. 5–6). I maintain that in my study, some students felt psychosocially compelled by unexamined notions internalised in their social milieu to resist integrating information they found disrupted their ways of seeing themselves and the ways they wish to be seen by others in their social environment. This resulted at times in their turning away from what Kidman describes as "knowledge about the past that induces a sense of shame, discomfort or anger" (2018, p. 98) in ways that I could not have anticipated in advance.

My study shows that student learning in history is neither predictable nor necessarily progressive, but may instead be uneven and recursive when students get "stuck"

My AR study identifies challenges in securing student learning as a predictable linear outcome of teacher-initiated input, where even students' self-reflections cannot simply be relied on as evidence of their sustained grasp. I demonstrated how some students at times exhibited unsophisticated or problematic ways of reasoning alongside more "sophisticated" thinking, thus subverting Shemilt's expectation that disciplinary learning in history would progress in distinct stages (O'Neill *et al.*, 2022, p. 66). I therefore concur with those researchers claiming their studies have not found evidence of "stage-like developmental progression" in student learning in history (O'Neill *et al.*, 2022, p. 72). I further concur with Britzman's dismissal of educational approaches that presuppose a teacher's '"bag of tricks' or scripted linear lesson […] will necessarily produce a similar product each time it is delivered" (Loutzenheiser, 2010, p. 130). Even when teachers plan their lessons knowing that students are not "blank slates" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 73) or "passive sieves in which teachers pour content knowledge" (Watson-Canning, 2019, p. 146), they cannot know which epistemic beliefs, preconceptions, and identity preoccupations each student brings to class.

I argue that history learning may indeed be uneven and seemingly recursive, with evidence of students' understanding existing on multiple levels at once. In a related way, Tetreault found her colleagues admitted their emerging practice of integrating women into their teaching was pitched at different phases in her feminist framework at once "as they struggled to reconcile the 'contradictions' of feminist scholarship with long-held theories" (1985, pp. 381–382). I concur with Kumashiro (2000, p. 44) who suggests students can become both "unstuck" or freed from prior ways of seeing, and paradoxically even more "stuck" in earlier perspectives if the lesson material subverts their feeling good about themselves. Kumashiro though does not indicate how teachers are to go about securing students' affective release from such cognitive

paralysis. Furthermore, teachers face considerable challenges in knowing in advance how to prepare their lessons to facilitate student learning.

My study shows that history teachers cannot know what their unknown and unknowable students will learn

My study contends that teaching history requires engagement with unknown and unknowable students (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 79) in the ever-changing present (Steinmetz-Jenkins, 2022), informed in unconscious affective ways by their social milieu and the historical context of their particular present (Epstein, 1998; Angier, 2017). Having learned that perspectives on the past may differ, it is evident that some students in my study conjectured that their contentious explanations – which to them appeared to "flow naturally from inside" themselves (Haider, 2021) – were as plausible as any others. This manifested at times in their adopting a problematic unhistorical "'anything goes' conception" (O'Neill *et al.*, 2022, p. 59).

I contend that teachers must anticipate their students may draw uncritically on their "experience" (Scott, 1991; Hesford and Diedrich, 2014), pushing back against "attacks on what they take to be distortions of their experiential truth" (Scott, 2022). I therefore argue that what students may assume is their commonsensical understanding is instead influenced by preconceived notions uncritically internalised in their social milieu. What is required is to cultivate in students the awareness of the need "to stand back, outside of oneself" – as Haider suggests in a different but related context – in order to secure the requisite "self-reflexiveness" (2021). I therefore maintain that we need to go beyond exploring ways for students to use disciplinary concepts as they engage with potentially disruptive knowledge. We also need to explore strategies to instil in students the application of that same rigour to their own preconceived notions for learning of potentially discomfiting knowledge to take place at all.

I concur with Aronson who suggests those teaching for "social justice" need to be "flexible" and open in their planning, anticipating that each new cohort's ways of seeing the curriculum will be mediated by their own "experiences and positionalities" (Reyes *et al.*, 2021, pp. 7–8). However, that approach in itself is insufficient. In light of my findings I argue that given the "unknowable and uncontrollable" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 78) nature of teaching, there is no assurance that enacting a "living" history curriculum that "[ebbs and flows] with the context in which we teach" (Reyes *et al.*, 2021, p. 8) will secure the intended learning. Just as history is written by historians who "exist in the present" and whose "work will always reflect

contemporary realities" (Blain, 2022), so too must we consider that history is also studied by students affectively ensconced in their particular present. Rubin assures us that historians would readily call out a colleague should they make "pointless, lazy or careless use" of current concepts (2017, p. 244). It is imperative for us as teachers to discern ways to respond to such inappropriate use by our students. When we encourage them to recover marginalised or misrepresented voices from the past – a critical approach, informed by the present – we need to anticipate that some students may fetishise their own unexamined frames of reference as ultimate truths, universally as applicable in the past as in their particular present.

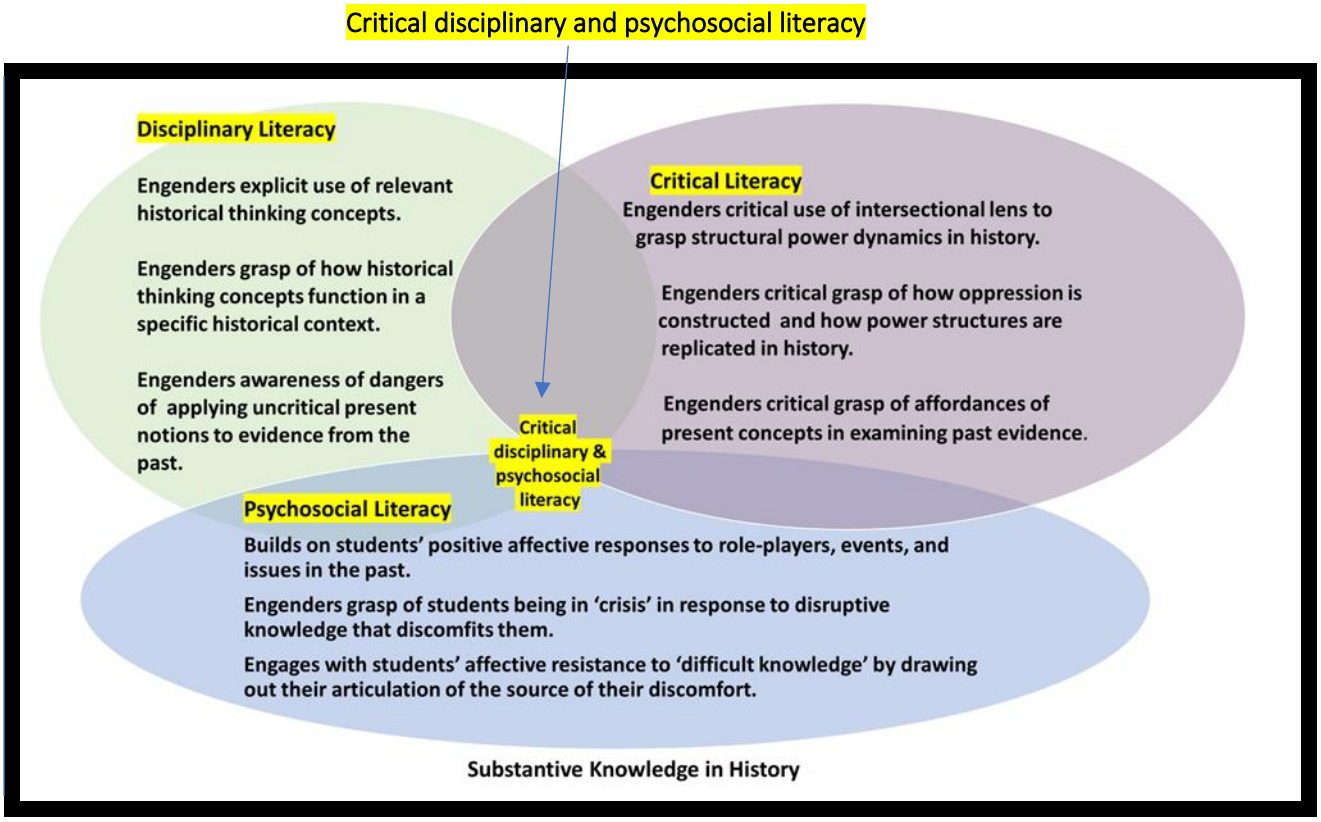
What challenges teachers further is that even though they may be thought to inhabit the same present as their students, this need not be the case, further exacerbating teachers' inability to plan in advance for how each cohort may draw on popular but unexamined notions. Steinmetz-Jenkins encapsulates for me the reality that despite my best efforts to be a perceptive teacher, what the present and its connection to the past may mean to each new cohort as informed by their diverse sociocultural contexts is not what it may mean to me. He quotes Geroulanos, Wheatley, and Edelstein who assert that "The present time is not the same present across cultures, classes, nations, political or ethnic or social groupings" (Steinmetz-Jenkins, 2022, p. 4). It follows that we cannot determine what affective notions students will bring to bear on their interpretation of the past in advance of engaging with each new cohort. There is no knowing with any certainty what that would entail for each class, each year.

I maintain that to develop students' critical disciplinary literacy, teachers need to inculcate a self-reflective awareness in them of what they are doing when re-examining the past through current concepts. In part the aim would be to circumvent students seeing the past they seek to uncover as if through a "smokescreen" instead of from a "mountaintop" (Gangl, 2021, p. 513). Unaware as they were of what feminists term their "politics of location", some of my students were not always attentive to the discomfiting voices of role-players in the past "whose ways of thinking are so different" from theirs (Hall, 2017, p. 254). Performatively demonstrating their unreflective "woke" positionality instead, they accordingly pushed back affectively against the importance of infusing their writing with the key aspects of women's lives they elsewhere in the enquiry saw as significant. Despite their proclaimed keen interest in women's history, this blinkering thwarted their sensitivity to women in the past's own understanding of their situation.

Ensuring each new cohort's self-reflexive examination of their own historically-based unconscious beliefs is, furthermore, far from straightforward. In a different terrain, Haider (2021) encourages activism, while acknowledging he is advising "Politics Without Guarantees". Haider invokes the evocative Socratic call to "Know thyself", which to Gramsci meant knowing yourself "as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory". What follows for Gramsci is the need '"to compile such an inventory" (Haider, 2021). Clearly, teachers are not equipped in advance with a failsafe way to enable their students to take stock of the "traces" their sociocultural milieu has left and is leaving on them. To the extent that these unproclaimed, unconscious, and unexamined vestiges inform and transform student responses to learning potentially discomfiting aspects of, for example, women's lives that straddle the patriarchal public-private divide evident in traditional textbooks, the consequence is that teachers cannot plan to secure their "intended" and "enacted curriculum" (Watson-Canning, 2020, p. 67). Students' affective preconceptions may unintentionally obstruct their way of seeing evidence they have previously appeared to learn. Given that existing research, including this current study, indicates that students may variously "diffract" their teacher's curriculum (Watson-Canning, 2019, pp. 130–134); that students' way of seeing a lesson may be affected by a "cultural parallax" (Woyshner and Schocker, 2015, p. 447); and that students may even resist learning altogether (Kumashiro, 2002; Loutzenheiser, 2006) when that learning unexpectedly unsettles their sense of self or challenges their preconceptions in disruptive ways, the consequence is that teachers cannot know what students will learn, or even what they have learned after a lesson sequence. Kumashiro suggests that students may indeed double-down on their prior convictions when confronted by discomfiting knowledge. I argue that teachers need to assist students through the resulting "crisis" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 74) in order that they may integrate what they experience as "difficult knowledge". Coming to realise this through my AR has sensitised me to the attendant difficulties, leading to my reconceptualising the following overlapping pedagogical approaches to address such difficulties.

I contribute three reconceived and intersecting pedagogical approaches to facilitate and enhance teaching and learning in the history classroom.

Figure 7.2 A schematic visualisation of my re-conception of intersecting literacy lenses to capacitate and enhance student learning of substantive knowledge in the history classroom, including when students experience the material as "difficult knowledge"

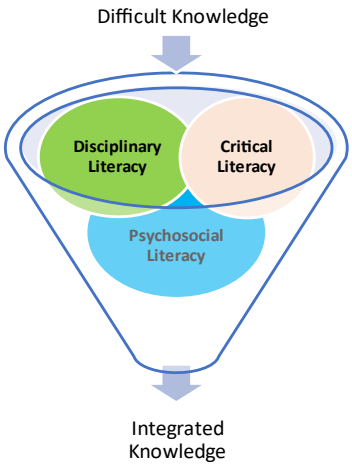


In light of how I have grown as a history teacher through this AR study, I contribute three interlocking literacy lenses to facilitate and enhance teaching and learning in the history classroom. These reconfigured ways of seeing and using disciplinary, critical, and psychosocial literacies are intended to capacitate history teachers in scaffolding student learning of substantive knowledge. This includes enabling teachers to detect and respond constructively to students affectively resisting the learning of substantive content that students experience as disruptive and discomfiting. I contend history teachers need to intervene in the "space" Kumashiro notes (2000, p. 46) between what teachers intend and what students learn using three reconceptualised approaches to "notice" (Reisman, Enumah and Jay, 2020, pp. 323–324) and engage directly with students' unconscious yet "active refusal" (Ellsworth, 1997, pp. 56–57) to integrate what they experience as "difficult knowledge" (Britzman, 1998, p. 117). This would clearly require history teachers to have the necessary flexibility and time in their

schedule for iterative work in order to enable student learning. I maintain that these three congruent pedagogical approaches would in the first instance assist teachers to detect the nature of student resistance to disruptive evidence. They would further serve as flexible lenses through which teachers would be enabled to discern appropriate interventions in light of what they have picked up on in their students' specific responses in their localised context. They would also facilitate the formulation of issue-specific questions to pose to students that are grounded in intersecting disciplinary, critical, and psychosocial literacies. Such questions would engage students in constructive self-reflection and make possible their learning discomfiting knowledge, thus reconceiving their understanding of the period under review as they integrate that new knowledge. In the case of students resisting "difficult knowledge", these interlocking literacies would serve as filters to facilitate the integration of substantive knowledge, as conveyed by Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3 Disciplinary, critical, and psychosocial literacies as filters for 'difficult knowledge'

This figure depicts disciplinary, critical, and psychosocial literacies as filters for what students experience as "difficult knowledge" in order to facilitate their learning and integrating such knowledge despite its evident challenges to them.



I contribute a reconceived disciplinary literacy lens

I argue that teachers deploying a reconceptualised disciplinary literacy lens would be better placed to pick up on what is obstructing learning in order to guide students to understand how and where their problematic interpretations are not grounded in the specifics of the evidence presented to them. I contend that drawing on relevant historical thinking concepts to frame pertinent questions would be a productive disciplinary intervention where students misrepresent or dismiss evidence whose significance they previously grasped. As Levisohn, (2015, p. 623) quoting Nehamas, reminds us, "We often grant a particular reading plausibility

by not looking enough at its details". This expands on a disciplinary process termed "redirecting to textual evidence" (Reisman, Enumah and Jay, 2020, p. 332) and, I maintain, would be directly useful in refocusing students on the particularity of the evidence they are unconsciously turning away from owing to its causing them discomfort.

I assert that teachers need to foster students' disciplinary literacy by using pertinent historical thinking concepts to frame questions that redirect students to the "historical problem space" (Jay, 2021, p. 310) in the evidence that they are unable to locate, or that they previously identified but unconsciously resisted exploring in depth. Merely presenting students with multiple perspectives and tasking them with discerning the differences between them will not suffice to secure their learning. Instead, teachers' questions need to challenge students to confront and engage with "the uncomfortable uncertainties of the incomplete documentary evidence" (Jay, 2021, p. 313), enabling them to grasp not only how but also why a "salient issue" may be depicted in divergent ways in various narratives (Jay, 2021, p. 318). Indeed, I contend that teachers should remain cognisant of Counsell's advisory that "There is much more to learning about causal analysis than merely doing causal analysis" (2000, p.70), and that "'doing' the various skills of history" (2000, p. 55) will not on its own result in students developing disciplinary proficiency.

I contend further that the utility of a disciplinary lens would be amplified by explicitly drawing on the full range of overlapping yet distinct thinking concepts identified by history education specialists (e.g., Counsell, 2004, 2011, 2021; Lévesque, 2008; Seixas and Morton, 2013; Seixas, 2017; Worth, 2017). This would include, for example, "perspective recognition" (Barton and Levstik, 2008, chap. 11) so that students could be challenged to reflect more directly on their unintentional imposition of their own present-day views and experiences on to role-players in the past. Specific disciplinary concepts in history education are pertinent to guiding students to see people's views as arising within their particular historical context. Documentary evidence must be contextualised (Seixas, 2015, pp. 597; 599; Wineburg and Reisman, 2015, p. 637; Counsell, 2021, p. 159) to engender in students the requisite understanding of how historical thinking concepts function in studying a specific period in the past. Hence, for example, erased or misrepresented role-players' significance and causality in events – a key focus of my DBE – need to be critically re-examined in order to recover and restore their voices to the narrative. As Levisohn points out in critiquing Wineburg's deductions (2001), a teacher could usefully challenge Derek, the student whose inconsistent thinking I sketched in Chapter 2.3, as follows:

> 'Derek […] it seems like you've changed your mind about what happened. How does that cohere with your interpretation of the documents ten minutes ago?' We might discover that the student has not recognized the contradiction. Or we might discover that the student has an ingenious (or nutty) way of reconciling his choices. (Levisohn, 2015, p.621)

Levisohn terms Derek's predicament as one of "epistemic instability" (2015, p. 622) which appears to resonate with what VanSledright and Maggioni term "epistemic wobbling" (2016, p. 140). As he asserts, "good historical interpretation is a matter of being open to the right kinds of things, of asking the right kinds of questions […], of making the right kinds of legitimate assumptions while avoiding the wrong kinds" (Levisohn, 2015, p.628). Questions grounded in disciplinary literacy are needed to guide students to realise, for example, the ahistorical or flawed nature of their rationalisations for resisting evidence they find discomfiting. I contend that questions framed using an expanded literacy lens would constitute a key pedagogical intervention where affect disrupts student learning.

I contribute a reconceived critical literacy lens, intersecting with the above disciplinary lens

I contend that a reconceived critical disciplinary literacy lens would facilitate teaching students to see the continuities – and detect the distinct discontinuities – in power relations from the past through to the present. I argue that despite the enduring nature of injustice from the past through to the present, students need to be guided to grasp not only the continuity, but also, the discontinuity in the application of structural and systemic oppression today as opposed to an earlier period. This again focuses on the congruence of disciplinary and critical literacies during an enquiry as it deploys critical historical thinking concepts, to examine, for example, how "power dynamics in relation to race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality, and class" (Santiago and Dozono, 2022, p. 174) manifested differently in the past as opposed to the present. To discern the lost voices of role-players marginalised or excluded by the textbooks, teachers need to draw on concepts that expose the obscured power relations in the past – a critical literacy. Students also need to be taught to situate past voices in their historical context, acknowledging that those role-players' circumstances were clearly different to their own current context – a disciplinary literacy. I contend that an enhanced disciplinary lens which specifies, *inter alia,* Seixas and Morton's change and continuity (2013) as a historical thinking concept, would be valuable to assist teachers in ensuring their students distinguish, for example, past racialised sexism and misogyny from how such structural processes manifest currently – a critical literacy. Teachers' questions would guide students to acknowledge that while forms of oppression today have clear

roots in the past – a critical literacy – students need nevertheless to acknowledge the past's alterity, and not impose their unexamined current notions of that oppression on to their reading of past role-players' perspectives. Students' epistemic beliefs need critical examination, rather than their "willy-nilly" (VanSledright and Maggioni, 2016, p. 143) application to the very different context in which people acted in the past. This requires teachers to directly address with their students the dangers of drawing unreflectively on their own experience, or on unexamined hot-takes they have internalised from their popular culture, as some of my students did in the DBE.

I further argue that a reconceptualised critical literacy lens would enable teachers to detect and focus attention on the structural oppression and injustice that remains untouched by students' performative resistance to disconcerting evidence. To facilitate the framing of constructive questions that encourage students to reflect on their uncritical notions, I argue for the utility of approaches that problematise how students performatively demonstrating their epistemic beliefs leaves the structural injustices at issue unchallenged. In the context of racial tensions in the classroom, Reisman et al. insightfully suggest asking students "But how does that leave the original problem of inequality unchanged?" (2020, p. 334). Deploying critical concepts relevant to uncovering the power relations in the period under review would be useful in informing teachers how best to pose questions regarding the "serious material consequences" (Táíwò, 2022, chap. 3) of, *inter alia*, racism and patriarchy. As Táíwò insists:

> But aside from involving attitudes and interpersonal dynamics, oppression – racism […] [and] patriarchy – also have serious material consequences […] All of these consequences of bigotry, from the attitudinal to the material, have to be dealt with if we are to address oppression. (2022, chap. 3)

Such a pedagogical approach would have facilitated, for example, my challenging the problematic reasoning of those students who turned away from acknowledging the significance of the statutory rape that led to the young teen Colvin's unchosen pregnancy in the first place. It would also have facilitated questioning those who decried the use of the term "rape" as "triggering" while not engaging with the structural injustices and power dynamics that made it possible in the past, and still facilitate it in the present.

I contend that a reimagined critical lens, in tandem with a disciplinary lens, would facilitate drawing students' attention to the disciplinary significance of evidence that was overlooked, misrepresented, or marginalised in the past as it challenged hegemonic power relations. This would enhance teachers' capacity to draw students into the "contested space" (Martell and

Stevens, 2021, chap.1) entailed by competing narratives by guiding them to understand why those narratives were constructed in such divergent ways. I argue that drawing on particular critical concepts that foreground the obscured power relations at play in the historical period being studied would enable teachers to detect and engage constructively with students' affective resistance to knowledge that discomfits them. Given the focus of my DBE centring Black women in events, an intersectional lens (Crenshaw, 1989; Saar, 2021) proved insightful to enable students to engage with racialised sexism and misogyny intersecting with colourism, classism, and ageism in the past. Such a pedagogical approach would further assist teachers to guide students to appreciate the disciplinary significance of integrating new forms of knowledge that were previously discredited as "trivial" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 375) or not appropriate to their historical study, such as, for example, pregnancy or childbirth (Tetreault, 1985, p. 374). In my study, some students at times affectively resisted integrating such details into their writing for tenuous reasons which could have been interrogated using a critical literacy lens.

I assert, therefore, that interlocking disciplinary and critical lenses would better equip a teacher to reflect back to students how their way of seeing the past is context-bound in their particular present. A critical orientation – essential to recovering lost traces of the past which are key to teaching women's history as an integral part of our practice – must be judiciously deployed by students to avoid them drawing on their unexamined "prior experiences" (Santiago and Dozono, 2022, p.176) in non-disciplinary ways. I argue that an intersecting disciplinary and critical approach would help teachers frame questions that enable students to self-reflect on their responses. Such questions would throw into relief the disciplinary and critical problems implicit in students' classroom practice, making it possible for students to progress in their learning instead of being "stuck" (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 44). As Miles and Gibson suggest, "Inviting students to think about how present-day questions, concepts, methods, and language shape how they understand the past encourages them to reflect on their own historical positionality and how it shapes their understanding of the past" (2022, p. 14)[49]. I argue that an interlocking disciplinary and critical literacy lens would indeed capacitate teachers and facilitate and enhance student learning in the history classroom.

[49] Page numbers refer to the preprint copy available here https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00933104.2022.2115959

I contribute a reconceived psychosocial literacy lens, intersecting with the above disciplinary and critical lenses

I assert that with a reconceptualised psychosocial literacy lens I contribute to filling the gap in research on students' affective responses in the history classroom where the importance of emotions "remains primarily hidden" (Sheppard, Katz and Grosland, 2015, p. 157). In crafting an enhanced psychosocial approach, I respond in depth to the call by Boler for researchers "to develop pedagogies that can engage emotions and affect as part of the necessary work of 'critical pedagogies' […] that invite students to reflexively re-evaluate closely-held assumptions, values and beliefs within a socio-historical frame" (Boler and Zembylas, 2016, p. 27). This gap in research has been variously identified by Barton and Levstik (2008); Garret (2017a; 2020); Levy and Sheppard (2018); Miles (2019); Zinga and Styres (2019); Garrett, Segal and Crocco (2020); and McCully, Weiglhofer and Bates (2021). I argue for a psychosocial literacy lens as a pedagogical approach to facilitate teachers' capacity to pick up on and intervene when students affectively resist learning. This current study validates the claim by Garrett et al. that "emotionally invested ideas are […] just as much 'facts of the matter"' (2020, p. 319) as the content being studied. Earlier in this chapter I demonstrated how several students' affective investment in past role-players and socio-political issues augmented their sophisticated engagement with the evidence in the DBE. Learning from that, I contend that a psychosocial lens which enables teachers to detect where affect is disrupting learning would provide a key pedagogical strategy in the history classroom.

I assert that using a psychosocial literacy lens, teachers would be enabled to pick up on where the notions students uncritically absorb in their social milieu may be derailing their performance of critical disciplinary thinking in the history classroom. As this study shows, where the knowledge students encounter discomfits or subverts their projected identities, they may unwittingly push back against that evidence by finding whatever is at hand, however spurious, to rationalise their "ignore-ance" (Ellsworth, 1997, p. 57). I maintain that teachers using a psychosocial literacy lens would be empowered to help their students "work-through" and "own-up" to their "projections, illusions, and misconceptions" (Di Paolantonio, 2018, pp. 5–6) where those are disrupting their learning.

I further contend that to integrate the teaching of misrepresented, marginalised, or erased history in the classroom, teachers need a psychosocial literacy lens to enable them to mediate students' affective resistance to new forms of knowledge they may find disruptive. Teachers need to be enabled to discern and respond to particular students' unintended pushback against discomfiting knowledge by directly addressing the emotional cause of their manifest discomfort. A reconfigured psychosocial lens would enable a teacher to detect instances where students' articulations and writing are evidence of them being in "crisis" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 74) emotionally as a result of the discordance between the self they wish to project socially, and the subverting knowledge they encounter in the history classroom.

Furthermore, as Reisman et al.'s particular focus on racial tension in the classroom indicates in ways that speak directly to the findings in this current study, "people often fear being characterized as 'racist' so much that this characterization becomes the focal problem rather than the actual problem of racism or discrimination" (2020, p. 335). This is quite apposite given my findings, where some students were discomfited by how they would be seen to the point where that trepidation unintentionally diverted them from the "actual problem" they were intent on addressing. I showed how some students at times feared embracing disturbing details of Black women's lives, while unwittingly overlooking the particularity of each woman's oppression and the specifics of Black women's individual and collective activism in the face of that as central to the changes secured in Montgomery. This led to their writing not fully unpacking the actual oppressive acts they elsewhere acknowledged as significant while unintentionally retaining women in a largely supportive role in their narrative of events. What follows is that the enduring impact of that oppression on past and present injustices was not questioned. Instead, students performatively demonstrated adherence to their preconceived but unexamined notions internalised from their social milieu in ways that partially impeded their own learning. As Felman explains regarding the inability or the unwillingness to admit being implicated by evidence, this "is not a simple lack of information but the incapacity – or the refusal – to acknowledge one's own implication in the information" (1987, p.79). Similarly, Middendorf et al. point to a way of understanding students' dismissal of documentary evidence as resistance to being "implicated in events of the past" (2015, p. 171)

I contend that a psychosocial literacy lens would enable teachers to perceive the affective nature of students' pushback, and furthermore, would assist them in getting their students to articulate which feelings are driving their resistance to internalising the evidence they encounter in the

classroom. Deploying a psychosocial lens, teachers would frame questions which "engage the affective side of learning to focus them on why they feel provoked and uncomfortable" (Zinga and Styres, 2019, p. 47). As Epstein and Peck speculate – albeit without providing the pedagogical strategy I proffer here – "asking young people to recognize their emotional responses to difficult histories may be a more productive approach" (Epstein and Peck, 2018, p. 9) for teachers to follow. Similarly, Garrett et al. suggest that questioning students about their "belief and emotion" serves to credit "those domains as part of our engagement with others on issues that matter, especially when they are shrouded in overt ideology and controversy" (Garrett, Segall and Crocco, 2020, pp. 320–321).

I maintain that using this enhanced psychosocial approach would facilitate student understanding of the source of their discomfort, helping them to see that their "identities and self-images" (Miles, 2019, p. 475) have been subverted by their perceived relationship with the evidence presented in the classroom. By foregrounding their emotions, students would be guided to recognise that they have "powerful emotional attachments to their worldviews, as the basis for their beliefs about their self-identity" (Middendorf *et al.*, 2015, p. 171), resulting in their unconscious resistance to learning. By validating students' affective responses in this way, teachers would enable students to engage constructively with the knowledge they have in part turned away from. I contend, therefore, that deploying a psychosocial lens would enable teachers to address the necessity of moving students from what Miles, following Britzman, terms "learning about" to "learning from" (2019, p. 491) when engaging with disruptive knowledge.

Therefore, informed by my AR study using a DBE, I assert that to engage students manifesting affective resistance, teachers need to draw out the ways that students' responses are a consequence of their sense of themselves and their identities being unintentionally discomfited. A psychosocial lens deployed in combination with the disciplinary and critical literacies would, I contend, be a sound pedagogical approach in addressing the gap between what the teacher intends and "enacts" (Watson-Canning, 2020, p. 67) and what the students believe and feel, and therefore, what they learn ‑ and do not learn ‑ given their particular social context. It is up to us as history teachers to facilitate our students' capacity to integrate substantive knowledge that disturbs them despite the evident "impossibility" (Felman, 1987; Ellsworth, 1997) of doing so. While remaining modest about our capacity given the seemingly insurmountable difficulties, I argue we must be cognisant of the complex challenges students face in doing so.

My reconceptualisation of three interlocking pedagogical approaches is my contribution to how we might engage with our students' unconscious pushback in the history classroom as a potentially promising way for history teachers to indeed make it possible for their students to learn disruptive knowledge. Beyond this, I contend that these three interlocking lenses would serve as "appropriate pedagogy" (McCully, Weiglhofer and Bates, 2021, p. 513) in the history classroom more generally for teachers seeking to capacitate students cognitively, critically, and affectively in the history classroom.

Implications for the history curriculum and recommendations for further research

The implication of this AR study for the history curriculum is the necessity to allocate more time for in-depth investigations given the significant opportunity for student growth afforded by my DBE. The broad content coverage that is currently mandatory is at the expense of the profound disciplinary and critical learning made possible through students' exposure to a range of documentary evidence mediated by carefully constructed pedagogical activities designed to enhance their engaged reflection on that material. Furthermore, rolling out ready-made scripted lessons to history teachers without securing their professionalism – through comprehensive knowledge of the historical context, of the historiography of the events, and of the thinking behind the relevant disciplinary proficiencies – will not in itself suffice in engendering depth of historical learning in the students. Furthermore, teachers must be equipped to capacitate students in plenary discussions during and after a DBE, and my model is intended to enable them to do so. Given the rich and generative responses of my students, I call for empirical research investigating the use of my model in history classrooms beyond my local context.

I argue that my study has made a significant contribution to research into teaching and learning in history education particularly in light of the still-limited attention paid to date to students' affective responses to learning in the history classroom. I assert that further research into how affect has the potential to enhance learning for some while obstructing learning for others is essential to facilitating enriched learning for all in the history classroom. Further psychosocial research into the impact on student learning of their immersion in their particular social milieu – where their identities and how they are seen remains of paramount importance – is clearly advised by the findings of this current study. I contend that where history education researchers have to date largely focused on cognitive disciplinary and critical approaches, much scholarly work remains to be done which deploys an affective and psychosocial lens to student learning

in the history classroom in order to address the dearth of research into this crucial aspect of history education. In light of studies outside the sphere of history education documenting the extensive impact of teenagers' daily immersion in social media, I further recommend empirical research into the implications for history education of students becoming affectively ensconced in the notions they uncritically absorb from that media.

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[50] Aligned with emerging feminist practice (Pérez, 2021) to make women's scholarship more visible, I have chosen to include authors' first names in the bibliography. First names are generally a reliable guide to an author's gender (Cameron, 2021). Where more than two authors are referenced, I have used a semi-colon to separate the entries.

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Appendices

Appendix A Brief overview of the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama, with a selective timeline of events

Bus regulations in force in Montgomery, Alabama in the mid-1950s held that Black people had to pay at the front of the bus and then exit and re-enter from the back to avoid walking passed white passengers allocated the first ten seats in the front. They also had to move to the back even if they were seated in an allowed section should the seat be needed for a white person, or if a white passenger sat down in the same row as them or opposite the aisle from them. They did not have to move, though, if there was no open space further back where Black passengers were already standing, as schoolgirl Claudette Colvin pointed out on 2 March 1955 when the white bus driver ordered her to give up her seat and move to the back. Despite protesting that she was not contravening the regulations and knew her 'constitutional rights', white police officers were summoned by the bus driver to arrest her. Colvin was further manhandled and sexually abused by the white police officers during and following her arrest. As Colvin told Hoose, the bus driver referred to her as 'that thing', and the police taunted her en route to the police station and at the station:

> All ride long they swore at me and ridiculed me. They took turns trying to guess my bra size. They called me "nigger bitch" and cracked jokes about parts of my body. [...] More cops looked up when we came in and started calling me "Thing" and "Whore." (Hoose, 2009, chap. 4)

Despite her innocence on all charges, Colvin was subsequently convicted for assault and battery. The remaining charges of disorderly conduct and the breaking of a segregation law were dropped, and Colvin was declared a 'juvenile delinquent' and placed on 'indefinite probation'.

On 29 April 1955, Aurelia Browder was forced by a white bus driver to stand after giving up her seat for white passengers. On 21 October 1955, Mary Louise Smith refused to relinquish her seat for a white passenger. Susie MacDonald had been similarly mistreated several times on Montgomery buses. On 1 February 1956 lawyer Fred Gray sued the Montgomery's mayor Gayle in a civil case in the federal district court, challenging the constitutionality of bus segregation on behalf of initially five, and ultimately four, Black women. Jeanetta Reese was intimidated into withdrawing as a plaintiff, leaving Browder, Colvin, MacDonald, and Smith as plaintiffs in *Browder v Gayle.*

Rosa Parks, who had been arrested, fined, and found guilty of contravening the state segregation law following her refusal to give up her bus seat on 1 December 1955 was not included in the civil case lodged by Gray as she was awaiting her appeal in a criminal case in a local Montgomery court. Gray wanted to challenge the constitutionality of the bus regulations through the federal court system, and reasoned that Parks's criminal case would be tougher to escalate to the Supreme Court.

> As Gray later wrote, "I wanted the court to have only one issue to decide—the constitutionality of the laws requiring segregation on the buses in the city of Montgomery." If Browder, Smith, Colvin and McDonald sued the city, they could make the claim that their 14th Amendment rights had been violated by the segregationist practices of the city and the bus company. (Gold, 2016)

When they finally appeared in federal district court as plaintiffs in *Browder v. Gayle* on 11 May 1956, Browder was 37, Colvin was 16 and had recently given birth, Macdonald was 77, and Smith was 19. Mayor Gayle's attorney, Walter Knabe, tried to trick and browbeat the plaintiffs into acknowledging that Martin Luther King Jr, a recent arrival in Montgomery who had never used the buses, had instigated the bus boycott and was manipulating them to stay off the buses. Smith testified that "He [King] didn't represent no one. We represented ourselves. We appointed him as our leader […] he and his assistants." (Hoose, 2009, chap. 9). Colvin in turn responded to Knabe's assertions with: "Did we have a leader? Our leaders is just we, ourselves. We all spoke for ourselves." (Hoose, 2009, chap. 9).

Bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama was ultimately declared unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court order in November 1956 upholding the June 1956 ruling made by the federal district court in the *Browder v. Gayle* case. Writing for the 2-1 majority, Judges Johnson and Rivers ruled:

> We hold that the statutes and ordinances requiring segregation of the white and colored races on the motor buses […] [violate] the due process and equal protection of the law […] under the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. The "separate but equal" doctrine set forth by the Supreme Court in 1896 in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson can no longer be applied. (Hoose, 2009, chap. 10)

An order was served on city authorities in light of that ruling on 20 December 1956. As a result, the organisers called off the bus boycott that had been in place since 5 December 1955 – the day Rosa Parks appeared in court following her refusal to give up her seat on 1 December. White segregationists reacted violently to the desegregation of buses, attacking passengers and civil rights activists in the wake of the enforcement.

To understand particularly Black women's active organisation of and enthusiastic participation in the bus boycott on the day of Parks's court appearance, and Browder, Colvin, MacDonald, and Smith's willingness to serve as plaintiffs in *Browder v Gayle,* it is necessary to look beyond events in Montgomery in 1955 and 1956. Most of the regular bus passengers ahead of the boycott were Black women. According to historian Daniella Maguire, the historical context of the fight against bus segregation in Montgomery is the mistreatment of Black passengers, and particularly the physical and sexual abuse and assault of Black women by white men, on and off the buses in Montgomery. For Black women working largely as domestics in the homes of white women, buses were their only means of transport, and they could not avoid using them despite their abhorrence of how they were treated by white bus drivers and white

police officers. Black women were further physically and sexually abused at their places of work by their white employers. As McGuire asserts:

> The 1955 Montgomery bus boycott, often heralded as the opening scene of the civil rights movement, was in many ways the last act of a decades-long struggle to protect black women, like Taylor, from sexualized violence and rape. The kidnapping and rape of Recy Taylor was not unusual in the segregated South. The sexual exploitation of black women by white men had its roots in slavery and continued throughout the better part of the twentieth century (McGuire, 2010, p. xviii)

Rosa Parks was commissioned by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to investigate Taylor's kidnapping and rape by six white men in Abbeville, Alabama, in 1944. This was in itself dangerous work, with a deputy sheriff known for his violent behaviour driving up and down passed Taylor's home while Parks interviewed her, eventually threatening to lock Parks up if she did not leave. Parks thereafter joined others in setting up the Alabama Committee for Equal Justice to seek justice for Taylor, whose home was firebombed, and her family harassed, while Taylor herself received multiple death threats. Parks investigated numerous incidents of racist brutality against Black people in Alabama. She was also active in efforts to secure justice for Gertrude Perkins after two white police officers raped her in 1949. The impact of the rape of Perkins on Black women's resistance and activism in Montgomery is evidenced by a comment from Joe Azbell, formerly editor of the *Montgomery Advertiser*: "Gertrude Perkins is not even mentioned in the history books […] but she had as much to do with the bus boycott and its creation as anyone on earth" (McGuire, 2010, chap. 1)

Although justice was never secured for Taylor, or for Perkins, Black women in Montgomery were well aware of the ongoing danger white men, particularly those in authority, posed to them, and this served as incentive to them in actively participating in all aspects of the bus boycott for 381 days in 1955 – 1956. As McGuire explains:

> It was much easier, not to mention safer, for black women to stop riding the buses than it was to bring their assailants – usually white policemen or bus drivers – to justice. By walking hundreds of miles to protest humiliation and testifying publicly about physical and sexual abuse, black women reclaimed their bodies and demanded to be treated with dignity and respect. (McGuire, 2010, p. xxi)

This is supported by Colvin's testimony in *Browder v Gayle* in response to city attorney Knabe's direct question:

> "Why did you stop riding the buses on December fifth?"
> "Because," Claudette answered, her gaze level and her voice even and intense, "we were treated wrong, dirty and nasty." (Hoose, 2009, chap. 9)

It is further supported by oral history compiled by Willie M. Lee, a researcher from Fisk University during the early months of the bus boycott, and by court testimony delivered by 28 Black women when King faced conspiracy charges in court on 19 March 1956 (McGuire, 2010, chap. 3). For example, as Irene Stovall explained:

> Irene Stovall, a mother and domestic servant, told Lee that she was "never gon git back on dem ole buses" because the bus drivers sexually harassed her. They "say nasty thangs and dey talk under folks' clothes. They ain't gittin no more of my dimes."'

With complaints by Black people against city and bus authorities escalating in the 1940s and 1950s, the Women's Political Council (WPC), was set up initially in 1946 by the academic Mary Fair Burks, and later headed by her colleague at the Alabama State College, Jo Ann Robinson, from 1950. The WPC initially sought minor amendments to the bus regulations to secure greater dignity for Black passengers. In 1954, as city authorities remained uncompromising, Robinson conveyed to mayor Gayle the warning that Black residents were contemplating a bus boycott, but to no avail. Robinson and the WPC put plans in place for an eventual boycott, and she personally motivated for one following Claudette Colvin's arrest in March 1955. E.D. Nixon a key civil rights organiser and seasoned campaigner, found Colvin to be unsuitable as the face of a bus boycott after visiting her home in a run-down area of Montgomery. Nixon was an organiser for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Union and the Alabama Voters League, and the local and later state president of the NAACP. Nixon argued that Colvin would not withstand scrutiny in the admittedly conservative Christian milieu, not only as she was too poor, too dark-skinned, and too young, but ultimately also because she was an unmarried, pregnant teen. Colvin felt she had been variously rebuffed by the Black community following her bus protest in March 1955, and was therefore vulnerable to the grooming attentions of an older, Black man who claimed to understand her defiant corn rows and bus protest as a political protest against white supremacy. As she was 15 at the time, the once-off event that led to her pregnancy would even at the time have constituted statutory rape, but as Colvin's adoptive parents would not let her explain who the man was publicly, fearing recrimination and action from his allegedly estranged wife, Colvin's pregnancy appeared to be evidence of what white segregationists disparagingly regarded as the licentiousness of Black women. As Rosa Parks later conceded regarding the white media's likely reaction: 'They'd call her a bad girl and her case wouldn't have a chance.' (McGuire, 2010, chap. 3).

Following Mary Louise Smith's bus defiance in October 1955, E.D. Nixon declared the 18-year-old an unsuitable candidate to launch a bus boycott, given her extremely poor family background, and disputed allegations that her father drank too much. When Rosa Parks – an experienced NAACP civil rights activist and anti-rape investigator – was arrested for refusing to relinquish her bus seat on 1 December 1955, Nixon declared her to be eminently suitable as the perfect symbolic front for a successful boycott.

> "She was secretary for everything I had going," Nixon told reporters, "the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the NAACP, Alabama Voters' League, all those things." Plus, he said, she could "stand on her feet, she was honest, she was clean, she had integrity. The press couldn't go out and dig up something she did last year, or last month, or five years ago. They couldn't hang nothing like that on Rosa Parks." (McGuire, 2010, chap. 3).

Despite Parks's husband's entreaties that Parks not agree to Nixon's request given his well-grounded concerns for her safety in a clearly volatile climate where white

supremacists reacted violently and with impunity, Parks chose to participate actively. She further knowingly comported herself in court and in public in ways best suited to secure a successful boycott, given her lucid awareness of the conservative milieu in Montgomery.

> From that moment forward, Rosa Parks's history as an activist and defiant race woman disappeared from public view. Nixon and others promoted her as a model of the middle-class ideals of "chastity, Godliness, family responsibility, and proper womanly conduct and demeanor." She was the kind of woman around whom all African Americans in Montgomery could unite. (McGuire, 2010, chap. 3).

This image of Parks not only erased her activist past, but further belied her working-class status by presenting the economically vulnerable 42-year-old as a placid, matronly, middle-class woman. Ultimately, Parks and her husband lost their jobs, and were hounded out of Montgomery as a result, as they were unable to find work there, and Parks was subjected to constant death threats. Parks, her husband, and her mother ultimately moved to Detroit at the insistence of her brother, and Parks continued her radical activism there for decades thereafter.

Following Parks's arrest, Jo Ann Robinson, an English professor at Alabama State College, and president of the largely middle-class professional Women's Political Council (WPC), called for a one-day bus boycott on December 5, the day Parks appeared in court. Robinson and two students mimeographed about 52 500 pamphlets overnight, and the WPC in accordance with their long-standing readiness for just such a bus protest, widely distributed them along pre-arranged routes. On the evening following a resoundingly successful one-day protest with approximately 90% of Black passengers boycotting the buses, Nixon and other prominent Black men who were mostly ministers inaugurated the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), displacing Robinson and the WPC who had long planned the boycott. Martin Luther King Jr., a little-known Baptist minister, was nominated by E.D. Nixon, and elected as the MIA's president, with Nixon reckoning that the young new arrival had not been in Montgomery long enough to be compromised in any way. King addressed the first of countless such mass public gatherings to rally support for a sustained boycott. Parks though was merely presented to the assembled audience, and was not granted the opportunity to address the meeting by the Black ministers who assumed control of proceedings. Jo Ann Robinson ensured that Black women she knew well and trusted were appointed to key staffing positions in the MIA, with even King later conceding that she was key to its success.

> In fact, it was Robinson, "more than any other person," according to King, who "was active on every level of protest." As long as WPC members handled the day-to-day business of the boycott, Jo Ann Robinson did not challenge the MIA's male leadership. "We felt it would be better," Robinson said, "if the ministers held the most visible leadership positions." (McGuire, 2010, chap. 3).

With male ministers as the face of the boycott, and King ostensibly at the helm, the invaluable day-to-day activism of the countless Black women who organised the protests, staffed the car pools, and fund-raised for them has been all-but erased from the dominant narrative. This obscures the boycott's origins as active resistance by Black women to their

denial of dignity and safety in an environment where they were constantly subjected to abuse, assault, and rape by white men:

> Women walked, Parks claimed in an interview in April 1956, not merely in support of her but because she "was not the only person who had been mistreated and humiliated […] Other women had gone through similarly shameful experiences," Parks said, "some even worse than mine." (McGuire, 2010, chap. 3)

Black women, especially those serving as domestics in white suburbs, were integral to the boycott's success, and paid a high price for their activism. While attacks on King and Nixon's homes received widespread media coverage, the cost to Black women was obscured and largely forgotten.

> Since black women provided the backbone of the boycott, they were also the primary targets of white retaliation. Aside from getting fired from their jobs […] African-American women walking to work remained vulnerable to physical and sexual harassment. Whites in passing cars pelted pedestrians with "water balloons and containers of urine" […] Jo Ann Robinson was terrified when two white men threw a brick through her window. Shortly thereafter she saw two policemen pour acid on the hood of her car. […] Armed whites stood on street corners and jeered at the walking women. (McGuire, 2010, chap. 3)

Georgia Gilmore set up the *Club from Nowhere* to fundraise for the boycott through the sale of cooked meals and snacks, deliberately choosing that name to obscure from the watchful white city authorities which women were responsible for the initiative. In light of the erasure of working-class Black women's integral role in sustaining the boycott, Gilmore later commented wryly: "We made the world take notice of black folks in Montgomery," Gilmore said, but now "we're all in the Club from Nowhere." (McGuire, 2010, chap. 3)

What *did* receive widespread media coverage was King's arraignment following charges of conspiracy brought against him and 88 others in 1956. King was found to be guilty of conspiracy in light of a 1921 statute criminalising those who pursue a boycott without due cause. When authorities targeted the car pools that were organised, run, and funded by Black women, King was again arraigned in court, emerging from that now inconsequential ruling to widespread acclaim following the Supreme Court order upholding the earlier federal district court's ruling in *Browder v Gayle*. The media focus on King diverted attention from the fact that the case had been won by Browder, Colvin, McDonald, and Smith as plaintiffs, with Fred Gray as their attorney. While King rose to prominence as an acclaimed civil rights leader through his impassioned speeches at public meetings to rally support for the 381-day boycott, the dominant narrative of the ending of bus segregation and of the civil rights movement more generally has marginalised, misrepresented, obscured, and even erased Black women's integral role. Their activism, McGuire asserts, was

> rooted in African-American women's long struggle against sexual violence […] If we understand the role rape and sexual violence played in African Americans' daily lives and within the larger freedom struggle, we have to reinterpret, if not rewrite, the history of the civil rights movement. (McGuire, 2010, Prologue)

Selective Timeline of Events in the ending of bus segregation
(adapted from Hoose, 2009; McGuire, 2010; Gold, 2016; Kirkland and Andone, 2021; 'Montgomery Bus Boycott', no date; *Montgomery Bus Boycott*, no date)

Jan. 1863 - Emancipation Proclamation issued

July 1868 - Fourteenth Amendment adopted

May 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson - 'Separate but Equal' ruled constitutional

3 September 1944 – Six white men kidnapped and raped Recy Taylor in Abbeville, Alabama who reported the rape

September 1944 - Rosa Parks sent by NAACP to investigate Taylor's rape. Parks joined the Alabama Committee for Equal Justice to seek justice for Taylor

1945 – E.D. Nixon of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Union and the Alabama Voters League was elected president of the Montgomery Branch of the NAACP. Nixon became a key civil rights activist in Montgomery

1946 - A largely middle-class, professional, Black women's organisation, the Women's Political Council, was set up in Montgomery by Mary Fair Burks.

1947 – Nixon elected state president of the NAACP

1949 – Jo Ann Robinson, an English professor at Alabama State, quite unused to taking the bus, was humiliated by being ordered off a nearly empty bus for unthinkingly sitting down in the fifth row

1949 – Two white police officers raped Gertrude Perkins, who reported the rape. A large campaign was set up to secure justice for her

March 1954 - The Women's Political Council (WPC), led by Jo Ann Robinson, met with Montgomery mayor Gayle, requesting better treatment for Black passengers on the buses

March 2, 1955 – 15-year-old Claudette Colvin was arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat. After being taunted, manhandled, and sexually abused by the white police officers summoned to force her off the bus, Colvin was convicted for assault and battery of the officers despite not attacking them at all. Further charges of disorderly conduct and the breaking of a segregation law were dropped, and Colvin was placed on 'indefinite probation' as a 'juvenile delinquent'.

May 17, 1954 - Brown v Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas declared segregated schooling as unconstitutional given the Fourteenth Amendment

May 21, 1954 - Robinson wrote to the mayor four days after the *Brown v Board* ruling explaining that residents were considering a bus boycott, but the city made no changes

June (?) 1954 – Vulnerable following reaction to a guilty verdict and 'indefinite probation' as a 'juvenile delinquent', 15-year-old Colvin became pregnant in an incident with an older Black man whose identity her parents insisted on concealing. Nixon later decided Colvin was unsuitable as a figurehead to launch a bus boycott.

October 21, 1955 - Mary Louise Smith was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white woman. Nixon decided Smith was unsuitable to launch a bus boycott.

December 1, 1955 - Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger. Nixon posted bail for Parks, seeing her as the 'perfect' woman to front a bus boycott.

December 2, 1955 – Jo Ann Robinson called for a one-day bus boycott on December 5. Two students assisted her to mimeograph 52 500 pamphlets overnight. The WPC distributed the pamphlets along pre-planned routes. The initiative was in accordance with the WPC's long-standing plans for such a protest.

December 5, 1955 - An estimated 90% of the Black community in Montgomery participated in the bus boycott.

The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) was formally set up at a meeting addressed by Martin Luther King Jr. King, a newly-arrived Baptist minister. King was nominated by Nixon, and elected as its president. Parks was presented to the audience, but was not granted the opportunity to speak, as the Black ministers assumed control of proceedings.

Jo Ann Robinson ensured Black women took up key staffing positions in the MIA, although her leadership of the bus boycott that she and the WPC had long prepared for and now initiated was supplanted by Black men

The MIA extended the boycott beyond 5 December

December 8, 1955 - The MIA issued a list of demands. The city refused to comply.

December 13, 1955 – The MIA started a carpool system for Black people taking part in the boycott. Black women organised and ran the carpool, while Georgia Gilmore's *Club from Nowhere* and other Black women fundraised to cover the costs

January 30, 1956 - King's home was bombed.

February 1, 1956 - Nixon's home was bombed.

February 1956 – Two white men threw a brick through Jo Ann Robinson's window. Two weeks later, a white policeman poured acid on her car.

February 21, 1956 - Over 80 boycott leaders were indicted by the city under Alabama's anti-conspiracy laws.

March 19, 1956 - King was indicted as a leader of the boycott and ordered to pay $500 or serve 386 days in jail.

March 29, 1956 – Claudette Colvin's son, Raymond, was born

May 11, 1956 – Browder v Gayle case heard in the federal district court.

June 5, 1956 - Court in *Browder v Gayle* ruled in terms of the Fourteenth Amendment that bus segregation was unconstitutional

November 13, 1956 - The Supreme Court upheld the federal district court's ruling in *Browder v Gayle* outlawing segregation on buses

The MIA resolved to call for an end to the boycott only once the order to desegregate was officially implemented in Montgomery

December 20, 1956 - The Supreme Court's ruling against segregation on city buses was served on city authorities at the Montgomery City Hall

December 21, 1956 - Montgomery's buses were officially desegregated. The MIA ended the boycott.

White segregationists reacted violently, for example: A shot was fired into King's home. Thereafter, white men assaulted a Black teenager leaving a bus. Then white snipers shot a pregnant woman in both legs.

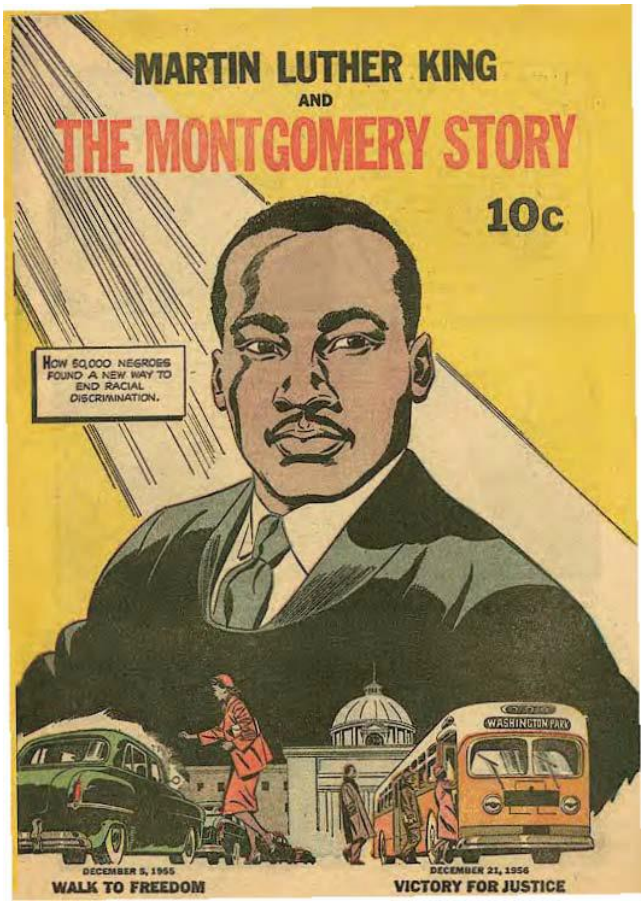
1957 - Nixon left the MIA following dissatisfaction with its perceived domination by middle class leaders and their denial of power to working class Black men and women.

1957 – Parks and her husband were effectively compelled to leave Montgomery. They had lost their jobs, and Parks was vilified and received countless death threats. The couple and her mother eventually moved to Detroit, where Parks continued her radical activism.

24 November 2021 – Montgomery County Judge Calvin Williams ordered that following her appeal, Colvin's records were to be expunged. "He granted Colvin's motion to seal for good cause and fairness for 'what has since been recognized as a courageous act on her behalf and on behalf of a community of affected people,' Williams said." (Kirkland and Andone, 2021)

Appendix B The dominant textbook narrative

EXTRACTS FROM *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* (Hassler, Resnik and Barry, 1957)




BECAUSE SHE WAS TIRED AND HER FEET ACHED, ROSA PARKS REFUSED TO GIVE UP HER SEAT IN THE BUS. ROSA PARKS WAS ARRESTED.
THAT NIGHT I COULDN'T SLEEP. I WAS GETTING SICK AND TIRED OF ALL THIS. I WOKE UP MY WIFE.
SOMETHING OUGHT TO BE DONE. ROSA IS A GOOD WOMAN AND NOT A TROUBLE MAKER. THEY HAD NO RIGHT ARRESTING HER!
BUT WHAT CAN WE DO?
I DECIDED TO TALK TO SOME OF MY FRIENDS, THE VERY NEXT DAY...
THEY MAKE US MOVE IF ANY WHITE PERSON WANTS OUR SEAT. WE OUGHT TO PROTEST-- AND NOT RIDE THE BUSES FOR A DAY.
NOW HERE'S MY PLAN...
WE GOT OUT A MIMEOGRAPHED SHEET PROTESTING WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO ROSA PARKS AND CALLING FOR A ONE-DAY BOYCOTT OF THE BUSES.
THERE ARE 50,000 NEGROES IN MONTGOMERY-- HOW MANY OF THEM CAN WE REACH WITH JUST A FEW HUNDRED COPIES OF THIS LEAFLET?
LET'S JUST HOPE THAT THOSE WHO READ IT SPREAD THE WORD.
THAT NIGHT, WORD WAS FLASHED AROUND TOWN THAT THE PROTEST WAS SET FOR THE NEXT DAY.
YOU HEAR THE NEWS?
SURE DID. NOBODY'S GOING TO RIDE THE BUSES TOMORROW.
THE NEWSPAPERS OF MONTGOMERY HELPED MORE THAN THEY KNEW.
LOOK AT THIS! THEY'VE PRINTED IT UP BIG FOR EVERYONE TO READ.
THAT'S WONDERFUL. WE COULDN'T HAVE REACHED THAT MANY PEOPLE WITH OUR LITTLE SHEET. NOW EVERYONE WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO.
NEGROES PLAN BUS BOYCOTT

TEXTBOOK 1

The educational website, Historical Thinking Matters, provided this compilation by Herbert Kohl (2005b) of the dominant narrative of Rosa Parks's bus action on 1 December, 1955. Kohl constructed this based on over twenty textbooks surveyed by him.

"Rosa was tired: The story of the Montgomery bus boycott

Rosa Parks was a poor seamstress. She lived in Montgomery, Alabama, during the 1950s. [In] those days there was still segregation in parts of the United States. That meant that African Americans and European Americans were not allowed to use the same public facilities such as restaurants or swimming pools. It also meant that whenever it was crowded on the city buses African Americans had to give up seats in front to European Americans and move to the back of the bus.

One day on her way home from work Rosa was tired and sat down in the front of the bus. As the bus got crowded she was asked to give up her seat to a European American man, and she refused. The bus driver told her she had to go to the back of the bus, and she still refused to move. It was a hot day, and she was tired and angry, and became very stubborn.

The driver called a policeman, who arrested Rosa.
When other African Americans in Montgomery heard this they became angry too. So they decided to refuse to ride the buses until everyone was allowed to ride together. They boycotted the buses.

The boycott, which was led by Martin Luther King Jr., succeeded. Now African Americans and European Americans can ride the buses together in Montgomery.

Rosa Parks was a very brave person."

Source: Kohl, H (2005). *She Would Not Be Moved.* New York: The New Press. pp. 7-8.

TEXTBOOK 2

The educational website, Digital Inquiry Group, provided this extract from the US textbook *America! America!* as part of an enquiry into events in Montgomery (*Montgomery Bus Boycott*, no date)

"The Montgomery Bus Boycott
In 1955, just after the school desegregation decision, a black woman helped change American history. Like most southern cities (and many northern ones), Montgomery had a law that blacks had to sit in the back rows of the bus. One day, Rosa Parks boarded a city bus and sat down in the closest seat. It was one of the first rows of the section where blacks were not supposed to sit. The bus filled up and some white people were standing. The bus driver told Rosa Parks that she would have to give up her seat to a white person. She refused and was arrested.

The next evening, black leaders, many of them church ministers, met to decide if they should protest. A young minister who just moved to Montgomery from Atlanta, Martin Luther King Jr., soon became the leader of the group. King and the others called for a black boycott of the Montgomery bus system. The boycott meant blacks refused to ride the buses. For months, the buses were almost empty because most of the riders had been black. Then, the boycott spread to white businesses in downtown Montgomery.
King was arrested and jailed, but he continued to urge his followers to use a path of "non-violent resistance." This meant that they would break laws that discriminated against blacks, but that they would not use violence ...

By 1960, black Americans had made some progress toward equality. The Supreme Court and other government actions had opened the door. But most blacks still were forced to live a second-class type of life."

Source: Buggey J., Danzer, G., Mitsakos, C., & Risinger C. (1984). *America! America!* Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Co., p. 653.

TEXTBOOK 3

This extract comes from my students' South African textbook, *In Search of History Grade 12* (Bottaro, Visser and Worden, 2015)

"The Montgomery Bus Boycott
It was the action of a single woman, Rosa Parks, who moved the battle for equal rights from the law courts to the people in the streets. In 1955, while travelling on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man. This was in open defiance of a law that was in place in the southern states at the time. She was arrested, and convicted breaking the segregation laws.

The black community of Montgomery formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) organised a boycott of the city's bus system. Martin Luther King Jr, then a local minister in Montgomery, was elected as the first president of the MIA. The boycott lasted for a year, with people either walking to work or sharing lifts, and the bus company lost 65% of its profits. White racists tried to crush the boycott by setting churches in black communities on fire, and the police even arrested the black leaders, including King.

Meanwhile civil rights lawyers fought the case of Rosa Parks in court. Eventually, in December 1956, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation on buses was against the Constitution of the USA. The action of Rosa Parks inspired other people to realise that they too could stand up for their rights. Parks spent most of her life fighting against injustice. She died in 2005 at the age of 92."

Source: Bottaro, J., Visser, P., & Worden N. In Search of History Grade 12 Learner's Book (2015) Cape Town: OUP, pp. 133-134

Appendix C Group 1: *Prompted Poem* on Claudette Colvin

"Rebellion was on my mind that day"

Now I was a criminal
guilty of all charges
They pulled me off
because I refused to walk off
No sir
He called me a "thing"
I was too smart to fight back

I cried a lot
and people saw me cry
They kept saying I was emotional
Tell me, sir, who wouldn't cry?

"She had always kept her hair neatly styled
Then came one day with corn rows"
I won't straighten out my hair, sir
Till they straighten out this mess

He was the first person to understand my hair
He was so much older than me
Had so much more experience
I hoped and prayed and pretended it wasn't true
Three strikes against me
An unmarried teenager with a light-skinned baby
They all turned their backs on me
I wasn't ashamed

It was my constitutional right!
Rebellion was on my mind that day
You and the others have changed your ideas since December 5, have you not?
No sir. We haven't changed our ideas. It has been in me ever since I was born.
Did you have a leader?
Did we have a leader? Our leaders is just we, ourselves
Gaze level, voice even, and intense
We were treated wrong, dirty and nasty

Get up
No sir

Appendix D Group 2: *Prompted Poem* on Claudette Colvin

Claudette Colvin
“Have you ever heard the name Claudette Colvin?
Refused to give up her seat
‘feisty' and 'uncontrollable'
This is my constitutional right
‘emotional' and 'profane'
A little girl worthy of ridicule
Ostracised but not worth the movement
‘a thing'
The thing that changed Montgomery”

Appendix E Group 1: *Textbook Entry*

Sexual violence has been wielded as a weapon against women since the dawn of time, an endless cycle and this was no exception for the woman of Montgomery. On the 3rd of September 1944, Recy Taylor was kidnapped by a group of white racists and brutally assaulted. Her case dismissed after no more than a measly five minutes, the Committee for Equal Justice for Mrs Recy Taylor was created, the groundwork laid for the future and a spark lit.

It would be five years later that Gertrude Perkins would use this groundwork to try and defend her case against a group of white police officers who kidnapped and assaulted her, continuing the epidemic of racially motivated sexual violence. Her case was similarly dismissed on the bounds of not wanting to cause "tension between races" not realising that its dismissal would do just that. The accumulation of this violence took place along the Montgomery bus routes.

The "Ordinary" Woman of Montgomery

In 1948 Aurelia Browder stood firm and refused to give up her seat, seven years before the now famous, Rosa Parks. 1955 it was Mary Louise Smith and the forgotten Claudette Colvin. These women, later joined by Susie McDonald, would be the four vital plaintiffs in the drastically undervalued Browder vs Gayle case, which ultimately and conclusively ended bus segregation in Montgomery, declaring it unconstitutional.

The Search for the Perfect Woman

Claudette Colvin was a frequent passenger of the buses, taking them to and from school every day. Then one day the spark ignited. Colvin had been studying black history in class, and rebellion was on her mind. She knew the law of Montgomery, knew that if there were no empty seats left on the bus that she didn't have to get up. That this was her constitutional right.

Colvin refused to give up her seat and was subsequently dragged off the bus, charged with violating the segregation law, disturbing the peace and assaulting a police officer, although all of these claims were later disputed by witnesses. She was taken to a police car screaming "It's my constitutional right," all the while. Sexually harassed throughout the entire legal proceeding, Colvin did not let this phase her.

Colvin continued to loudly protest her rights and continue to fight against her conviction.
Seemingly the perfect candidate for E.D Nixon's "Perfect woman", a figurehead for the bus boycotters to rally behind, her hopes of continuing her activism on a larger scale were dashed when she was dismissed for being too poor, too young, too sexually active and too black[1].

[1] An example of the intersectionality of discrimination faced

Enter Rosa Parks. Described as the "Perfect woman" by E.D Nixon, when he heard of her arrest he instantly phoned a friend of his to proclaim his excitement at this godsend from fate. In his mind, Rosa Parks, despite being working class, embodied the ideals of the middle class that were so highly regarded.

The Activism of Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks is most famously known for refusing to give up her seat on a bus. However, this was not a spontaneous one-time act of protest by Parks as some would like you to believe.
James F Blake, a vicious bigot was a Montgomery bus driver who never faced charges for his racially motivated attacks of black women. In 1943, Rosa Parks who refused to pay at the front of the bus and

then renter through the back, had a violent altercation with the driver who threw her of his bus. Following this, she joined the NAACP.

The NAACP's best investigator, Rosa Parks was a resolute anti-rape activist. It was she, who was sent to record, investigate and document Recy Taylor's savage assault by white racists. It was she who spent hours doing important administrational work for the NAACP. It was she who, after her arrest, went directly to Fred Grey's office to continue her activism. And it was she who decided to allow herself to become E.D Nixon's "Perfect Woman" as a symbol to rally behind in the boycott.

On the 1st of December 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat and was officially arrested charged with violating bus segregation laws.
Her reason for her refusal? Rosa was described as tired by the media whilst being anything but. The only thing Rosa Parks was tired of her was her, and every other black person in Montgomery's oppression.

Jo Anne Robinson and the Roots of the Boycott
Upon the news of Rosa Park's arrest, Jo Anne Robinson did not hesitate before sending out that important call to boycott. Months before Rosa's arrest, the WPC, Woman's Political Council, had been planning, preparing, for a boycott. They planned routes for distribution of leaflets, organised carpools and alternate options for the busses. Personally, more than a year before these events, activist Jo Anne Robinson had sent a letter to the Mayor of Montgomery asking him for small requests to prevent humiliation and discomfort.

These are the black woman who then filled the roles in the Montgomery Improvement Association, after the MIA undermined their efforts and seized control of the boycott and the attention that came with it. Jo Anne Robinson became a chief strategist for the MIA, negotiating with city leaders and bus company officials, edited the MIA newsletter, offering her car up to ferry people to and fro from work all the while she held down a full-time teaching job.

The MIA and the Role They "Played"
The former leader of the NAACP E.D Nixon was the leader of the MIA before he recruited Dr Martin Luther King Jr for his cause.
The MIA, after taking power over the boycott, further perpetuated the ideals they felt Rosa Parks should embody. They changed her from then dogged anti-rape activist to the figure known in media today. At an important MIA meeting, they presented Rosa Parks to the rest of the MIA. When she asked if they wanted her to speak they replied with "You've said enough."

The Boycott
Approximately forty thousand black people, about 90% of black people in Montgomery, took to the streets, walking, and carpooling instead of taking the buses, some people walking as far as twenty miles. The boycott proved in its entirety that active non-violent protest could be an effective tool to challenge racial segregation.

Lasting a year and one month, 1955-1956, the boycott caused the Montgomery buses to lose 65% of profits as most of their passengers were black working-class people, about 75%. The organisation of the boycott was far more intricate and complicated than certain sources would lead one to believe. Black-owned taxis began by charging people the same fare as the buses, essentially acting as a replacement for them before white officials made it illegal for them not to charge prices higher than the

buses. In response, the boycotters formed stronger fronts to battle this. Fleets of “rolling churches,” station wagons donated to the black churches by northern supporters, were used as an elaborate system of carpooling that involved various black farmer associations renting out their land to provide places to park. Private drivers also partook, and even those not actively participating would pick up hitch-hikers along their way.

This complicated arrangement however could not run efficiently without sufficient funds. Woman stepped up to the plate. They donated the money they made from domestic jobs, hosted bake sales and offered up their own cars to help pay for fuel. A specific example of this is Georgia Gilmore and her important “Club from Nowhere.” They were some of the most consistent fundraisers for the boycott. Fired from her job for her activism, she didn’t let this stop her and became a representative symbol of this sort of grassroots support for the boycott. The club from Nowhere sold everything from cakes to pies in an effort to fund the boycott. Her funds went into buying both petrol and actual cars, this being indicative of the amount of money she was able to raise through her work.

The boycott however was not without backlash throughout and after. Several times protestors were arrested and 80 boycott leaders were charged with interfering in lawful business without a just cause, backed by a law created in 1920. Carpooling was declared illegal in June 1956 to force black people to take the busses again. The boycott officially ended on the 20th of December 1956.

Browder v Gayle

On the 1st of February 1956 one of the most important cases in desegregation and peaceful protest action history was filed; Aurelia S. Browder vs William A. Gayle. It was the case to decide the fate of segregation and fought against William A Gayle, the Mayor of Montgomery at the time. The lawyers fighting for Browder, Charles D Langford and Fred Grey, were afraid that it would be held up purposefully in the Alabama state courts and never reach the federal ones, so Fred Grey, one of the leading lawyers on the case, decided to file a federal lawsuit, bypassing the Alabama state completely. He argued it as a constitutional matter and sought out five women to cast as the plaintiffs for the case; Claudette Colvin, Aurelia Browder, the lead plaintiff, Suzie McDonald, Marie-Louise Smith and Jeanette Reese, who later dropped out due to intimidation from white racists. Brown vs Board of Education was the precedent for the ruling to follow.

In June 56 the district court ruled that bus segregation was unconstitutional but the state appealed and it took the Supreme Court also ruled this on the 13th of November 1956 before desegregation was "accepted". The court ordered for desegregation to be undertaken on the 20th of December that year and, at least legally, segregation of buses was over. The MIA called an end to the boycott and officially ended.

Backlash

Two days after the desegregation of the buses, white racists attacked in a bloody and brutal manner, both physically and through the media. This was because whilst legally segregation was now ended, socially it was far from over. A shotgun was fired into Martin Luther King’s house and Rosa Parks and her family were forced to leave the state. On Christmas Eve a teenage black girl was attacked whilst existing a bus by a group of white men. On the 28th of December, a pregnant black woman was shot twice by snipers in the legs whilst riding the busses. Five black churches were burned and bombed and the Kul Klux Klan ran rampant in the state. The hard-won rights of black people in Montgomery were applied in an abstract sense as for all intents and purposes, both mentally and physically, the state remained segregated.

Conclusion

Ultimately the Montgomery bus boycott was an intricately planned and complicated social movement spearheaded by "ordinary" black women in response to their violent and racially motivated sexual abuse and harassment. It was organised by them, funded by them, and ultimately through Rosa Parks, led by them despite the MIA's takeover.

What should also be noted here is that Martin Luther King Jr. is considered important and that his leaving out of this narrative is not accidental but intentional. He is significant but not in the context of the boycott. He did not launch the boycott, the boycott launched him, and this is what is made apparent in the constant emphasising of the black woman's work, rather than his own.

Lastly what should be made evident here is that whilst the Browder v Gayle case was an important step in history, it didn't change the daily lives of black people living in Montgomery and in some cases worsened it by inciting savage attacks by white racists and "giving" those reasons to do so. Desegregation might have been made legal on buses, but it hadn't happened mentally or socially and it would be many years more before steps were taken in pursuing this direction.

Appendix F Group 2: *Textbook Entry*

The Montgomery bus boycott and subsequently the end to bus segregation was not as a result of one singular incident rather the sustained efforts of multiple organizations and people. For decades black women had faced intersectional discrimination and oppression in Montgomery, and this was keenly felt on the buses, where women were objectified and humiliated by bus drivers and other passengers. The horrific sexual assault of both Gertrude Perkins and Recy Taylor by white men illuminate these conditions specifically.

In 1955, at the age of fifteen, Claudette Colvin was arrested for not giving up her seat on a bus, and during her arrest was verbally abused by the officers and afterwards faced humiliation at school and in her community. Many, including Colvin herself, thought that this incident was enough to spark a boycott however, like others before her, Colvin did not end up being the face of the movement due to the politics of respectability. E.D. Nixon, a civil rights activist and State President of the NAACP claimed that Colvin '[was] just not the kind we could win a case with' and was adamant that she could not garner public sympathy as the face of a potential boycott.

Nine months later, Rosa Parks, a longtime activist who had supported Recy Taylor in her sexual assault case, refused to give up her seat on a bus. Jo Ann Robinson, the leader of the WPC (Women's Political Council) called for a one day bus boycott on the night of Parks's arrest. Robinson had sent a letter more than a year before the arrest warning Mayor Gayle of a possible bus boycott. She had a key role in organising the boycott, which Parks became the figurehead of, as desired by E.D. Nixon who viewed Parks 'clean' and appropriate for the cause.

Martin Luther King Jr, the leader of the MIA (Montgomery Improvement Association) used sermons to rally followers and called for non-violent protest. King and the MIA sustained the bus boycott so that it ultimately lasted thirteen months. Thousands of African American Montgomery citizens, most of them women, supported the boycott despite backlash from the Ku Klux Klan and white supremacists. Georgia Gilmore and her Club from Nowhere is an example of the relentless support for the boycott.

The court case that led to the decision by the Supreme Court to end bus segregation in Alabama was Browder v. Gayle. The four plaintiffs were Aurelia Browder, Mary Louise Smith, Claudette Colvin and Susan McDonald. Fred Gray, along with other NAACP attorneys, represented the plaintiffs in the case. The ruling signalled the end of the 'Separate but Equal' doctrine established in the Plessy v. Ferguson case in 1896 and was an affirmation of African American's humanity.

Appendix G Parent and Student Consent Letter

INFORMATION SHEET

Action research in your daughter's History classes as part of M Ed*

Dear Parents

Document-based enquiry into how the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama was secured

As your daughter's History teacher, I would like to request permission to conduct action research in our class on her engagement with and responses to a document-based enquiry into how the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama was secured. This enquiry would potentially enrich her grasp of and proficiency in key historical skills and concepts while exploring documents that aim to 'open up' the textbook on this aspect of the Grade 12 curriculum. Participating actively in the document-based enquiry will further encourage her to actively explore how history is constructed.

Despite academic research that has to date been conducted largely outside South African classrooms, there is a huge gap in our understanding as History teachers about appropriate ways to integrate the teaching of women in history into our practice given that it is currently largely not the focus of our curriculum. Your daughter has previously conducted two novel historical investigations centring women which has greatly enriched our shared understanding of women's history. This has encouraged me to initiate this action research project in order to learn from her and her classmates' thinking, discussing, writing, and constructing about a focused aspect of the prescribed curriculum.

I request permission for the duration of this document-based enquiry only to use audio equipment to track our class discussions ahead of transcription by me, and to use her various contributions – spoken, written, and constructed in various forms in collaboration with her classmates – in my action research project. She will be fully anonymised using a pseudonym of her choosing and only my supervisor, Dr Kate Angier of the School of Education at UCT, will be granted access to the recordings where required. To further safeguard her anonymity, the school too will be given a pseudonym. Dr Angier's […]** supervision of my action research will assist me in ensuring it remains in your daughter's best interests to participate in this project.

You are welcome to ask any questions and raise any concerns about the process at any time, either via email, in a Teams call or in person, and your daughter will be asked throughout the process to raise any concerns she may have, and to re-confirm her consent to being recorded in class. While her various contributions will inform my action research, they will not be assessed in any formal way, and while the document-based enquiry is in part intended to further deepen, extend, and develop her historical understanding, thinking, and skills, it will in no way prejudice her term or year mark in any way.

Please fill in the slip below to indicate your consent for the research.

* *This project began as an MEd and was upgraded to a PhD at the start of 2023*

** *redacted to ensure the school's anonymity*

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:

'Our leaders is just we, ourselves … We all spoke for ourselves.'
- 16-year-old Claudette Colvin, Browder v Gayle, 11 May 1956

A study of student responses to a document-based lesson sequence centring Black women in a historical narrative

Student and Parent/Guardian's Consent form

Student's Name: (Print) …….

I understand

- This enquiry will take place during History classes and is an extension of the Grade 12 curriculum but will not be assessed formally as part of the SBA year mark.

- My / my daughter's name will not be used or inferred in any way in the study

- The school's name will not be used or inferred in any way in the study

- That I / my daughter will be asked throughout the lesson sequence to re-confirm my / her consent for her written, spoken and individually constructed work to be used by Ms Fish in her M.Ed.*

I consent to the following sources of information being collected and used by Ms Fish for her M.Ed.* Research Project:

1. Audio-recording of lesson sequence on the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery - including class, group, and pair work discussion (online and Face-to-Face) Yes/No

2. All written work produced during the lesson sequence on the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery – electronic and hard copies. Yes/No

3. Any physical or electronic constructions created as part of the lesson sequence on the ending of bus segregation in Montgomery (for example any posters, diagrams, card ordering activities) Yes/No

Student's Signature …… Date …….

Parent/guardian's Name (Print) …….

Parent/guardian's signature …… Date: ……

* *This project began as an MEd and was upgraded to a PhD at the start of 2023*

Appendix H UCT Ethical Clearance EDNREC20210905

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Dr. Joanne Hardman

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EDNREC20210905

8 September 2021

R. Fish
FSHROS001

RE: Ethical Clearance Research project

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been granted by the School of Education Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your academic project, Our leaders is just we, ourselves ... We all spoke for ourselves.' - 16-year-old Claudette Colvin, Browder v Gayle, 11 May 1956 A study of student responses to a document-based lesson sequence centring Black women in a historical narrative. We wish you all the best with your research.

Regards

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JOANNE HARDMAN

ETHICS CHAIR