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Lectures in Transition

A study of communicative practices in the humanities in a
South African university

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Abstract

The lecture is usually seen as an anachronism, out of step with contemporary trends in student learning and communication. However it remains a defining space in higher education, particularly in the first year experience. This study is a re-description of the lecture; it explores the tensions and silences that underlie what lectures do and mean in the lives of participants (both students with diverse language and educational histories, and their lecturers) in the humanities in a time of intense sociopolitical transition in a space envisaged as a contact zone, characterized by asymmetrical relations of power. It asks how participants engage with the communicative practices in and around lectures.

Conceptually the study is rooted in the academic literacies field within the New Literacy Studies with its interest in the politics of student access to valued textual practices. The study draws from the following complementary traditions: a) theories of dialogic co-presence (Bakhtin, Goffman) that foreground how all communication is oriented to 'the other'; b) social semiotics (Kress and van Leeuwen) with its emphasis on participants' 'interest' – what social agents do, and how they make do, with available resources for meaning that include image, gaze and gesture, as well as spoken and written language; c) ritualization theory (Bell, McLaren), and how bodies mediate in practices.

The methodology is textually oriented discourse analysis within an ethnographic frame. The analysis draws on both text expanding and text reducing approaches to discourse. The first data chapter explores images to illustrate how the past appears in the present, from the medieval lecture to the South African post-colony. The second chapter focuses on interviews with 17 students early in their first year. The next three chapters look close-up at liminal moments in a series of lectures given by lecturers chosen for their engaging qualities. Data in these three chapters are from video footage in the lectures, focus group interviews with students after the lectures, as well as recontextualisations in student lecture notes, online discussions and a blog site.

The interplay between theory and method has opened the lecture up to new understandings, suggesting a parallel strand of meaning that is out of reach of assessment practices, but is saturated with aesthetic and evaluative meanings. These meanings centre on the modes and media of oral performance, though these are seldom acknowledged in conventional approaches to learning. The historical analysis suggested that the practices of legibility inscribed in lecture note-taking are at odds with oral performance, which has a long history that predates student writing as the norm in lectures, and which may be re-asserting itself in a time of increasing saturation of the written text. In the student interviews the lens of ritualization illuminated how students make distinctions between boring and engaging lecturers, and how these distinctions are hitched to discourses of respect and freedom through which students make (and re-make) visions of the order of power in the world. In the students' descriptions of lectures, in general the interpersonal function figured more prominently than the ideational function, but this changed as students moved beyond the first year. While all students desired engagement, the greater the social distance from the university, the less likely students were to identify with their lecturers.

In the analysis of communicative practices within the lecture, I identified various styles that these engaging lecturers embody as they orchestrate a range of semiotic resources. It is significant that all of the liminal moments of intensity, play and reversal identified in the lecture, turn on the body. This raises questions about our failure to engage with the body as the locus for learning, particularly in the first year in which students are new to university. The study argues that a range of theoretical resources be brought to this task of understanding the different planes on which the body mediates in lectures and other academic practices. The study also identifies a methodological

contradiction. If the lecture amplifies fleeting, live performative meanings, 'capturing' these moments is not possible, or even desirable.

Implications for the field of academic literacies are explored, and they include the following suggestions: the lecture is a productive site for the analysis and critique of academic authority, and the walls that insulate lectures from other sites such as the tutorial need to be more permeable; a more considered approach to the teaching of lecture-note-taking is encouraged, and more research needs to be done on modal specialization and literacy practices related to the lecture.

The study offers a re-imagining of lectures that includes both visual and verbal images of lectures across time and space. I suggest that the performing arts within the humanities have a vital role to play in re-imagining the lecture in the future.

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Contents

Chapter 1: Lectures in the Contact Zone	1
Tensions and silences	1
Questions from the contact zone	4
An exploded view	7
Chapter 2: In search of presence	10
Starting points	11
Literacy as social practice: the New Literacy Studies	11
Academic literacies: writing, access and absences	12
<i>Multimodal literacy</i>	15
<i>Resources in place</i>	15
A social semiotic approach: emphasising agency through 'interest'	17
<i>Discourse(s) as resources for representation</i>	22
The lecture: from skills to performance	24
New directions	26
Theories of co-presence: ideological becoming	26
The body in sign-making	29
Ritualization as an aspect of practice	32
<i>Ritual and change: the limen</i>	33
Performance and performativity	38
<i>McLaren's 'states of interaction' and the feeling body</i>	39
Chapter 3: Methodology: Making the exploded view visible	43
Taking a position	43
Textually oriented discourse analysis	45
' <i>Critique of critique</i> '	46
<i>Three silences: Discourse is more than language</i>	48
<i>Global perspective</i>	48
<i>History collapsed into context</i>	49
A critical ethnographic stance on texts	50
Ethnographic framing	52
Involvement	52
Research ethics: 'the other, the ought, and openness'	53
Reflexivity	56
Research methods and data sources	56
Video recordings of lectures	57
Interviews	58
Textual analysis of students' notes	59
Focus group interviews	59
Field notes	59
Online material	60
Images of lectures	60
A note on transcription	60
Narrative of the research process	60
Preliminaries	61
<i>Pilot study part 1 (September–October 2001)</i>	62
<i>Pilot study 2: Videotape selected lectures (August–September 2002)</i>	62
A year of lectures: data gathering in 2003	63
<i>Making contact with students</i>	63
<i>Individual autobiographical interviews with students</i>	65
<i>Choosing the lecturers and lectures</i>	65
<i>Interviews with lecturers</i>	67
<i>Choosing and attending lectures</i>	67
<i>The focus group discussions</i>	68
<i>Group meetings</i>	68
<i>Keeping in touch with students</i>	68
Limitations of the research	69

Data analysis frameworks	70
Chapter 4: The past in the present	73
Dynamic systems and contradictory functions	74
<i>Lectio</i> and <i>disputatio</i> in the medieval university	75
'The triumph of the eye over the ear': the demise of the disputation	78
Note-taking: a 'striking modern development'	79
Foucault on surveillance	82
The contemporary lecture: 'Everybody is watching everybody all the time'	84
Chapter 5: 'There's just a man dancing down there':	88
How students see lectures	88
Metaphors of engagement: 'A stronger image of knowing'	90
Feeling 'at home'	92
Boredom and alienation	94
Higher learning?	95
Representing social relationships	96
Intertextuality and fan clubs	98
Crossing the line: students talk about walking out of lectures	100
Respect and freedom	103
Role models: 'I'm going to grow up to be that man'	107
A year later	110
'Lectures are less narrowly defined for me'	111
'Lectures sort of binds our day together'	112
Closing comments	114
Chapter 6: Authority fused: '...to the point of combustion'	117
'Who owns this image?' Word, image and authority	119
The liminal moment: multimodal discourse analysis	122
' <i>Abakhwetakhweta</i> ': <i>slippage in meaning</i>	126
<i>Gesture and gaze</i>	127
' <i>The voice of decontextualised reason</i> '	128
The focus groups: 'I'm the man'	129
' <i>I felt misrepresented</i> ': <i>Bongani breaks the silence</i>	134
'Even the stars are human': the liminal moment in the final lecture	135
Focus group discussions: 'Closing the course but opening up the humanities'	142
<i>Lecture as concert: Clapping at the end of the lecture</i>	144
<i>A year later</i>	146
Closing comments: authority fused	146
Chapter 7: 'It becomes like a fairground': authority dispersed	149
Liminal moments in Francois' lecture	152
Sequence A	153
Sequence B	154
Sequence C	156
Sequence D	157
Sequence E	158
Sequence F	160
Sequence G	161
Sequence H	162
'It's all in the book!' Students' views in the focus groups	163
Chapter 8: Authority debated and dispersed	171
'Hectic but comfy': authority debated	172
Rhetorical patterns in Simon's lecturing	176
The focus group discussion: 'Dammit, why didn't I think of that?'	179
<i>Interactional control</i>	179
' <i>The presence of the person</i> '	180
<i>Course design and organization: 'One big logical flow'</i>	181
Lecture notes: private moments of inscription	182

<i>A turn to the visual?</i>	184
Bodies on(the)line: authority distributed	188
‘Analyse me’: the moment in the lecture	190
<i>Sequence A: The lecturer ‘live’</i>	191
<i>Sequence B: Leah’s notes about the lecture (written for researcher)</i>	193
<i>Sequence C: The focus group discussion</i>	194
<i>Sequence D: Isobel’s online posting to students (on the day of the lecture)</i>	195
<i>Sequence E: Ex-students to each other (online blog)</i>	197
Technology, ethos and community	200
Conclusion: Re-imagining the lecture	203
The exploded view: tactics and tools	203
Communicative practices	205
The past in the present: the body becomes invisible	205
Embodied expertise: boring vs engaging	206
Liminal moments: bodies on the line	207
Lectures and community	208
The body in theory: the intersection of ‘three bodies’	209
Lectures and academic literacies	211
Researching performance	213
Re-imagining the lecture	214
Bibliography	217
Appendices	227

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: ‘Listening to the Jammie 101 lecture’	5
Figure 1.2: An exploded view of the lecture	8
Figure 3.1: Sketch of research process and methods	61
Figure 4.1: A lecture hall in 14th century Bologna (c. 1380).....	77
Figure 4.2: A seventeenth-century image of a lecture hall at Leipzig.....	78
Figure 4.3: <i>Theatrum anatomicum</i> in Leiden, circa 1615	81
Figure 4.4: Lecture on the evils of alcoholism in the auditorium at Fresne prison.....	83
Figure 4.5: A wireless classroom in the early 21st century.	85
Figure 6.1: Robert points to the image of the initiates in the rural Eastern Cape.	121
Figure 8.1: Leah’s lecture notes which draw on a shorthand script.....	185
Figure 8.2: Ella’s notes which include a doodle down the left margin.	187

Chapter 1

Lectures in the Contact Zone

Tensions and silences

Lectures are central to academic practice, yet we know very little about what they do and mean in the lives of participants. For both students and lecturers, they structure the academic timetable. If we delve a little below the surface, some interesting tensions begin to appear. When students explain their reluctance to attend lectures, the trope ‘lectures are boring’ is often heard. This is often countered by groans from academics that these days students ‘just want to be entertained’. In addition to tensions such as this, there are also silences. In the words of Wally Morrow in a talk given at the University of the North¹ in 1992:

We are collectively well placed to make a contribution to the future of university education in South Africa, provided, that is, we can overcome our resistance to thinking rigorously about the teaching of large classes (2007, 19).

Morrow, speaking from South Africa in the build up to the first democratic elections, suggests that this resistance to thinking about lectures systematically has both political and conceptual underpinnings. He argues that South Africans tend to think of ‘large classes’ as an Apartheid creation, and a symbol of poorly resourced education. We are held conceptual captives by a particular (colonial) image of quality teaching, based on material conditions that are difficult to reproduce in contexts of mass access to higher education. This inability to recreate these ideal conditions leads to a failure to imagine alternatives. It “holds our thinking fixed in one cramped position – it paralyses our professional intelligence” (19) and the failure to live up to this ideal image results in a pervasive feeling of guilt and demoralization among teachers in higher education. We have tended to turn a blind eye to the lecture, rather than to confront this unease.

The neglect of lectures does not apply only in post-colonial situations. They are widely regarded as important but problematic sites for teaching and learning. While they are economical for delivery of mass higher education in that one expert has face-to-face contact with large numbers of students, they are out of line with contemporary ideas about student learning, which value ‘critical thinking’ and downplay teacher authority. Bligh’s classic study, ‘What’s the use of lectures?’, concluded that “lectures can be used to

¹ The University of the North is now the University of Limpopo, after post-Apartheid restructuring of higher education.

teach information, including the framework of a subject, but an expository approach is unsuitable to stimulate thought or to change attitudes” (1971, 223). And more recently Barnett argues that in the contemporary university the lecture is an anachronism, and “a refuge for the fainthearted, for both lecturers and students. It keeps channels of communication closed, freezes hierarchy between lecturer and student and removes any responsibility on the students to respond” (2000, 159). They write from the heartland of the lecture, in British higher education.

The resistance to looking systematically at the lecture is also fed by recent arguments in favour of the role of the new media (ICTs – information and communication technologies – and virtual learning environments) in higher education. Once again, the lecture becomes a symbol of ossified learning. On the Instructional Technology Forum, an information technology listserve, a contributor dismisses the lecture in strong terms: “Now that the lecture has fallen into disgrace as an instructional art form²...”. A contributor on another chat forum³ asks, “How do we rid ourselves of this catastrophe?” The lecture is seen as a rigid space which fosters demonstrations of single authority, in contrast to potentially more egalitarian learner-centred spaces afforded by online learning. Yellowlees Douglas (2002), for example, asks what is lost by offering a course online, rather than in lecture form: “Absolutely nothing” (128). She argues that lectures have survived from their medieval antecedent because they are “cheap to produce, provide an easy means to control students, supply fodder for tests...and accommodate scores of students to only one faculty member” (128). Whether for their architectural solidity or suitability for mass education, they persist, with raked benches that appear to tie students to fixed positions, subject to the canonical text of the podium speaker. They appear to be in crisis, out of fashion, needed but not wanted, an inherited necessity that is very difficult to fill with contemporary educational meanings.

However, the name ‘lecture *theatre*’ is a clue to another set of meanings that is encoded in these events, which points to their teasing ambiguity. The theatrical and performative strands are also present in the lecture, suggesting the possibility of inverting and transgressing the symbolic order, but this is not generally acknowledged or understood in academic enquiry. There is a struggle between the strong coding of authority, with single expertise and formality on the one hand, and the meanings related to pleasure, entertainment, reversal, and students-as-audience on the other. This tension

² The Instructional Technology Forum URL is <http://it.coe.uga.edu/itforum>

³ The IFETS International Forum of Technology and Society website is at <http://ifets.ieee.org/>

suggests that lectures are a fertile site for exploring meaning that conventional approaches to the examinable curriculum will not bring to the fore.

I return to the tropes referred to at the beginning of this study ('lectures are boring' and 'students just want to be entertained'): they are an index of these tensions and suggest a perceived crisis of meaning and authority. There is a pervasive view that young people, raised on diets of television and ICTs, have no taste for the intellectual life as offered/mediated/authorized by academics in the lecture form. One colleague, exasperated by lack of attention in a lecture, said that she 'felt like a continuity announcer' on television: it is as if the students were not aware that while they could see her, she could also see them. They were not invisible. On the other hand, there is a strong perception among students (captured in the descriptor 'boring') that lectures fail to engage them.

Having introduced some of the tensions and silences that hover over lectures to make the point that they merit fuller attention, I briefly describe the site. The study is set in the humanities in a relatively elite, historically white⁴ English medium university that I will call Entabeni (Xhosa for 'on the mountain') in post-Apartheid South Africa. The higher education landscape in which Entabeni holds an elite position has, in certain respects, changed dramatically in attempting to leave behind its fragmented and discriminatory past. Under Apartheid, racial divisions were entrenched in separate (and by design, unequal) national administrative departments; language planning attempted to carry out the Apartheid logic of 'separate development' with the two official and colonial languages, English and Afrikaans, as media of instruction, forcing most students to study in an alien tongue; class differences were fixed in a sharp division between universities and vocationally-oriented 'technikons'. The most marked change in post-Apartheid universities is a rapid shift in student composition as previously excluded black students have entered the system, a shift that Cooper and Subotsky (2001) call 'the skewed revolution' because it is both profound and uneven across the sector. The overall enrolment of black students in universities rose from 32% in 1990 to 60% in 2000 (Cooper and Subotsky, 2001), but this figure hides complex underlying processes that index class, gender, urban-rural divides and the historical character of different universities. At Entabeni, currently more than half of the students are black, and are

⁴ The ongoing use of the terminology of racialised identity in post-Apartheid South Africa needs some explanation. In this study I use these terms where they seem relevant as indicators of historically invested categories of power and privilege. All of these terms ('black', 'African', 'white', 'coloured' and 'Indian') are problematic and contested, but not using them is an evasion of the way history shapes the present. 'Black' is used inclusively unless otherwise stated.

increasingly middle class. There is an increase in the enrolment of international students (19% in 2005, see the annual Teaching and Learning Report⁵).

Jansen (2004) provides an insightful analysis of both the breaks with the past and the continuities that perpetuate inequality. Some of the breaks noted (a move from collegial governance to managerialism, and an increase in transnational trade in enrolments) are the result of the combined effects of the end of Apartheid and the momentum of a globalizing world. But there are important continuities, with the result that all institutions “still bear the racial birthmarks in terms of dominant traditions, symbols and patterns of behaviour that remain distinctive despite the broader changes sweeping the higher education landscape” (Jansen, 2004, 311). These traces will be present in all aspects of university life. As South Africa continues with its ‘skewed revolution’ there will be struggles over meaning and symbols from which the lecture, with its co-presence of lecturer as authority in the company of large, diverse student communities, will not be exempt⁶.

Questions from the contact zone

Sites are always historically structured, and as has been mentioned earlier, the lecture is an import with a long history. And it exists in this study at a particular historical moment, a decade after the end of Apartheid, as South Africans become increasingly aware of their place in a globalizing world. Thus while site is about the particular, there are always strong signs of the global in the local. A concept that expresses this well is what Mary Louise Pratt (1999, 2) calls ‘contact zones’, “...social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths” that students and lecturers have to negotiate. The contact zone is also a Bakhtinian concept (1981) that refers to the space in which ‘authoritative discourses’ that come to us fused to the authority of the speaker (Bakhtin uses the examples of the father, adult, or teacher) and resist being drawn into dialogue, meet ‘internally persuasive’ discourses, which are more open to critical reaccentuation. Bakhtin calls this process of engaging with, and negotiating between, these two kinds of discourse ‘ideological becoming’ which is realised in the development of ‘voice’. This will be elaborated on in Chapter 2.

⁵ The 2005 report is available at http://www.news.uct.ac.za/downloads/news.uct.ac.za/publications/teaching_learning.pdf

⁶ As this study draws to a close, the so-called ‘race video’ made by white male students at an historically white Afrikaans university provides incendiary images of the importance of the symbolic terrain. The video shows black (mainly women) middle aged cleaning staff who have been tricked into taking part in mock ‘initiation rituals’ that students are using as a protest against an attempt to racially integrate residences.

Pratt (1992, 7) writes that the construct of the contact zone is an “attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect”. The potentials of the contact zone are well expressed in Figure 1.1 below. It is a photograph taken by one of my students as part of a documentary project in which a group of ‘educationally disadvantaged’ students took photographs during their first semester at university. At the time, I was concerned that asking students to write about visual images reinforced the patterns of privilege and disadvantage that the university had inherited. Typically, students who had learnt to analyse images through years of middle class engagement with art classes, galleries and museums have a headstart. The documentary project was intended to give students opportunity to plan and take their own photographs and write commentaries on them. There were several other photographs like this.



Figure 1.1: ‘Listening to the Jammie 101 lecture’. Photograph taken by a first year student in 2001.

This image is a markedly different framing of the lecture. It is parodic, carnivalesque and multimodal, and is a playful counter-reading of one of the central edifices in university life. It is about what happens in-between lectures. The caption on the side of the photograph, ‘Listening to the Jammie 101 lecture’, draws a parallel between the colonial façade and steps of the Jameson Hall (named after the British officer/administrator who led the ill-fated Jameson Raid against the Boers in the South African War) and the colonial structures of the lecture. The photo illustrates that there are other, more

important and vibrant things to be studied at this crucial point in the life of a young person at this university. There is nothing bored about the audience here. At the same time, a closer analysis of the image shows that students are clustered in gendered and racially defined groupings. Black men sit higher up, in jeans, while two white men in shorts (one is bare footed) sit to the right of the group of women claiming their place in the centre of the steps. The space is socially structured along the lines of its past.

This image was what first alerted me to lectures as a potential research area. The students in this study are all first years, who have recently left home and school, or begun their studies after work and travel experiences. They are in a threshold space in their process of ideological becoming, in what Turner refers to as a liminal time when they “elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space” (Turner 1969, 95). They are between the givens of home and schooling and the imagined more open adult world of university, particularly in the humanities, where few students are on a clear career path. While sharing certain similarities, they have also taken widely divergent sociocultural, educational and linguistic routes to university through the unequal terrain of the southern African sub-region. The lecture is a new kind of pedagogical space for first year students, and marks the difference between the classroom (a feature of schooling) and university. Here, they will come together in large numbers, but as strangers. There will be struggles over meaning that, if explored, may open up new ways of understanding lectures.

The combination of image and word in this representation raises another feature of how lectures will be explored in this study. They are intensely multimodal events. Before the lecturer even speaks, students will anticipate authority based on the identity of the person they see on the podium, and the lecturer’s walk, use of gestures and visual aids such as video, PowerPoint, props and overhead slides, are all vital signals to meaning. Work in the multimodal social semiotics tradition of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2001), Jewitt and Kress (eds) (2003) that has been taken up in South Africa by Stein (2004, 2008) and Archer (2006 a and b), has shown that attention to the range of semiotic resources in addition to written language (speech, gesture, movement, image, music etc) liberates and makes visible a variety of meaning-making resources. This work is particularly important in post-colonial situations where predominantly oral communicative practices have been in forced contact with colonising, literate powers over long periods. This study is aligned to this social semiotic research. It recognizes the modal effect in lectures, and how participants in lectures use available communicative

resources to express their ‘interest’ in particular aspects of the wider ‘semiotic landscape’ (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996).

This verbal and visual image of lectures suggests a space in trouble, caught between the old and the new. In order to get underneath these tensions and silences, these broad research questions will guide the study: What do lectures mean and do in the lives of first year students and their lecturers in the humanities? What are the communicative practices in and around lectures in the first year? How do students with different language and educational histories engage with these practices? What frames of reference do they bring to the lecture, and how do these relate to those of their lecturers? How have lectures changed (and stayed the same) over time?

I will reflect on the implications of these questions for the ‘academic literacies’ field in which my research and practice have been located in recent years. Academic literacies signals an approach to research and development work that is concerned with how we induct students into critical engagement with textual practices in higher education. This tradition tends to focus on language-based practices, particularly in the written form (Lea and Street 1998; Angelil-Carter 2000; Lillis 2001; Bangeni and Kapp 2006). This study with its interest in embodied co-presence raises questions about new directions in this field.

An exploded view

In order to hold the study together conceptually and methodologically I use the idea of the exploded view⁷ to consider the lecture from multiple perspectives. An exploded view is a type of technical drawing that allows one to represent the various parts of an object slightly separated by distance as if there had been a small controlled explosion from the centre of the object. The explosion appears to separate all of the components and push them out an equal distance away from their original locations. In other words, an exploded view takes a familiar object, and looks at it not from another angle or perspective, but breaks it down into elements, and separates those out so that one can see both inner workings and outer presentation at the same time. The small controlled explosion is the research process, which dismantles and puts together again in order to understand differently. Figure 1.2 below represents lectures in the visual medium, as a technical drawing that identifies some of the elements that make meaning in this study. Lecturer, audience and props rest on a historical foundation.

⁷ The term ‘exploded view’ was suggested to me by Pippa Stein. It also refers to Ivan Vladislavic’s (2004) novel, *The Exploded View*, about suburban Johannesburg.

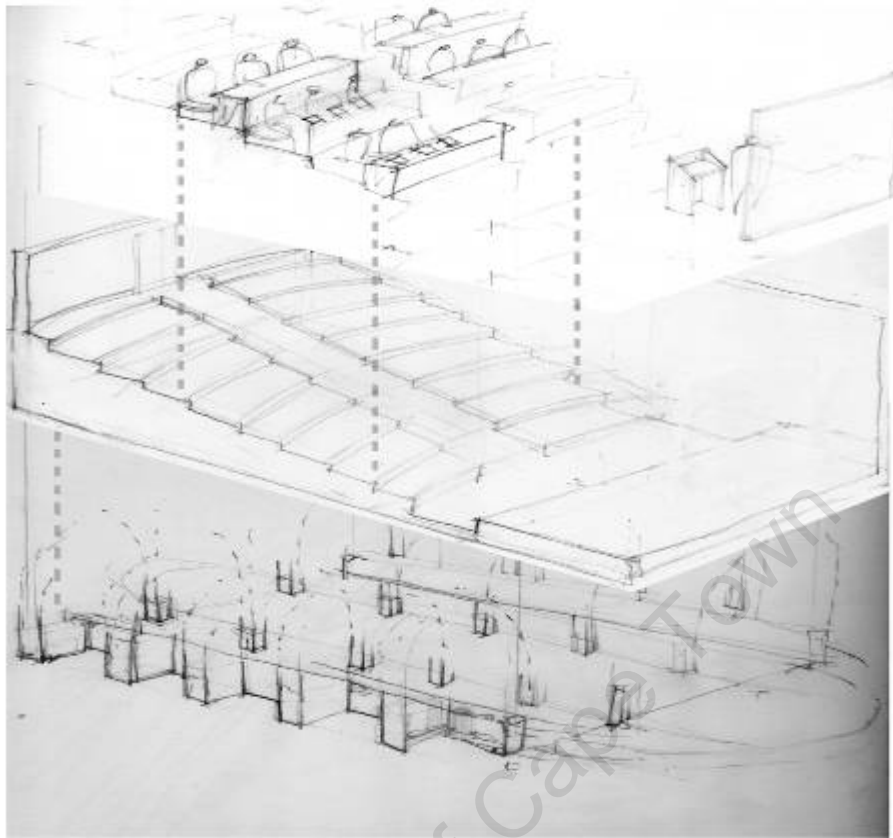


Figure 1.2: An exploded view of the lecture

There are more elements that cannot be shown in a single drawing such as this. However the drawing suggests that one can transcend the limitations of a single point of view, and explore multiple entry points to what lectures do and mean in time and space. In the rest of the study, the elements that have been singled out for representation include the following: frames of reference that various participants in lectures bring with them to these events. The views of the lecturers are held alongside those of a group of first year students who enter the university with very different language and educational histories. Inside the lecture events, I am interested in the communicative practices that centre on the lecturer as the orchestrator of knowledge. This requires representing the lecturer, embodied and dynamic, through engaging with the semiotic modes of speech, gesture, gaze, and movement. There is also the body of the seated ‘audience’, without whom the lecture event would lose all meaning, and who co-construct meaning possibilities within the lecture. The various physical props that attend lectures – ‘literacy objects’ such as overhead projectors, projected images, PowerPoint, notes, notebooks, textbooks – are also important. In addition, the theoretical resources brought to this study contribute to

the exploded view. It was evident early in the study that I would need to look beyond the conventional frames used to research teaching and learning. The traditions of ritual and performance studies described in Chapter 3 have had the effect of producing a small explosion in my own thinking about lectures – a dislodging of commonsense views of what lectures mean. Finally, throughout the research process, it has been important to understand the lecture in its historical contexts and to make links between the lecture in contemporary South Africa at an elite university in a starkly unequal society a decade after democracy, and its antecedents in the ancient and medieval worlds.

This chapter has introduced the lecture as complex and contradictory, in need of concepts and tools that are sensitive to meanings in this contact zone. The next chapter sets up the conceptual frame for how communicative practices will be approached, followed by a methodological opening up of the research process in Chapter 3. Chapter 4, 'The past in the present', sketches a brief (and partial) history of communicative practices in the lecture to account for the teasing juxtaposition of old and new. The first data chapter (Chapter 5) looks at students' frames of reference for lectures, showing the distinctions they draw between 'boring' and 'engaging' lecturers. Chapters 6 to 8 describe practices within particular lectures, chosen for their engaging qualities, and how students have made sense of these. The study concludes by putting the pieces together to offer a fresh look at the meaning potential within lectures.

Chapter 2

In search of presence

This chapter develops the theoretical resources that inform this study. As seen in the Introduction, while everyone has an opinion on lectures, little is known about what lectures do and mean in the lives of first year students and their lecturers. It is clear that there are tensions and silences that need exploration. This chapter traces a shift from literacy practices (the New Literacy Studies) in which reading and writing are foregrounded, via Bakhtin's ideological becoming, to the ritualization aspects of practice, in which embodied practice and the modes and media of co-presence are salient.

The separation of theory and methodology (the next chapter) is in many ways artificial in that the study is informed by the ethnographic tradition, which through its emphasis on involvement does not easily separate the knower from represented 'reality' out there. The choice made to work in a particular way means that I am involved in a dialectic between theory and method, and between subjective and objective, bringing different frames together as an expression of the researcher's 'interest', borrowing a word from social semiotic theory.

The first part of this chapter (Starting points) is concerned with the fields and debates that have informed my work as an academic literacies practitioner. This is the background for the study, the theoretical context from which my questions have emerged. The lens of **communicative practices** is derived from working in the academic literacies field. The second part (New directions) has emerged from this research process, the backwards and forwards between data analysis and theory typical of the ethnographic method. This section begins with the theoretical challenges attendant on a move away from analysis of reading and writing to an interest in co-presence and embodiment. I have had to revise my thinking about language and the body, and to reach to other traditions such as ritual and performance studies, in which co-presence and embodiment are central. The construct of communicative practices is nuanced through the introduction of the Bakhtinian lens of **ideological becoming** to enhance thinking about how participants engage in lectures, in which authority plays an important part. The second import is the productive notion of **ritualization**, situated and strategic action in a symbolically structured environment in which performance is salient. These three lenses enable me to explore what lectures mean and do in a particular setting.

Starting points

My professional background is in the interdisciplinary field broadly referred to as the New Literacy Studies, which provides a general orientation to academic meaning-making through the construct of literacy practices. Within this field is the domain of academic literacies that is interested in a particular site and its politics: access to higher education and its privileged ways of communicating, particularly through written text. Meaning-making in this domain is approached in this study through the lens of social semiotics, which sees the university, or any other setting, as part of the semiotic landscape, a historically and culturally shaped site in which language is just one of the semiotic resources through which we communicate. The focus is on the communicative practices in which these resources are employed. The first section ends with a brief review of research on the lecture.

Literacy as social practice: the New Literacy Studies

This study is broadly located within the New Literacy Studies tradition, viewing all meaning-making as socially situated, multimodal, and the outcome of struggles over meaning. The term New Literacy Studies (NLS) was first coined in the seminal work of Gee (1990) and Street (1984, 1995) and amplified more recently in Prinsloo and Breier (eds) (1996), Barton and Hamilton (eds) (1998), Barton, Hamilton and Ivanic (2000), Baynham and Prinsloo (2001) and Prinsloo and Baynham (eds) (2008). Early writing in this field (for example, Scollon and Scollon 1981 and Heath 1983) set out from different disciplinary backgrounds to challenge the arguments and commonsense views that literacy (defined in terms of reading and writing) seemed to produce certain irreversible psychological transformations, associated with positive traits such as logical thinking and the ability to decontextualise and objectify experience. Gee and Street have referred to these works (most notably Walter Ong 1982) as ‘great divide’ theories of literacy, because they posit a fundamental cognitive gap between literate and non-literate individuals, and by inference, societies. The NLS stands in opposition to the dominance of this binary distinction and its ongoing consequences in policy and popular perception. It argues instead for a view of literacy (or literacies) as “a set of social practices that stand in ideological relationship among themselves” (Scollon 2000, 118). This ‘ideological’ view of literacy as social practice, as Street (1984) calls it to distinguish it from the prevailing view of literacy as ‘autonomous’, argues that becoming literate does produce complex changes in habitus and identity, but the differences between literacy practices and their associated

competencies should be seen in terms of struggles and contradictions, and are best understood in sociopolitical terms, rather than as matters of cognition.

The field has grown substantially, with many researchers responding to its emphasis on the dynamic, multiple and contested nature of literacies associated with a variety of social practices. The difficulty in shifting prevailing views of literacy as decontextualised skill justifies the ongoing use of the term ‘new’ in the NLS. Baynham and Prinsloo, in the introduction to a special journal issue devoted to new directions in literacy research in 2001, referred to the NLS as a

network of inter-related theoretical interests, differently emphasised and inflected in the work of different researchers, but nevertheless permitting the continuation of an ongoing theoretical conversation (2001, 84).

Academic literacies: writing, access and absences

In this broad field of the New Literacy Studies, the specific domain I have taught and researched in is known as ‘academic literacies’. Whereas Baynham and Prinsloo (2001) identified academic literacies as a topic of conversation within the NLS, more recently Lillis and Scott (2007) argue that it is now a field of enquiry in its own right, with a distinct epistemological and ideological angle on writing in particular. The term means different things to different people, and has become problematic. For some, led by Lea and Street’s (1998) influential paper, the term academic literacies signals an NLS-type orientation to research and academic practice that emphasises the contested and power laden nature of the making of academic knowledge. Lea and Street (1998) distinguish among three approaches that have characterised academic literacy work: the ‘skills’ approach, the ‘socialisation’ approach (typical, they argue, of much writing pedagogy) and the ideologically inscribed ‘academic literacies’ approach. The skills approach is underpinned by a notion of student deficit, and is characterized by a ‘fix it’ philosophy. The socialisation model privileges induction into academic practices, in which the primary value is placed on acculturation and adaptation to the dominant conventions. An academic literacies approach acknowledges contestation, history and identities in the ideological construction of practices. Although they say that these are not to be read as mutually exclusive, the weight of argument points to the latter as ‘the answer’ historically and conceptually, for practice and research orientation. Lillis (2001) challenged this view, saying that it is more useful as a research heuristic than for developing pedagogical practice. She argues that for practitioners, particularly those in universities with strong access commitments, hybrid approaches with skills elements are essential. A similar point is made by Janks (2000) who maintains that different theoretical orientations should be

used for their complementary offerings, so that access pedagogies are not seen as incompatible with the critical project in universities. This study is not directly concerned with pedagogy, though I do return to the topic briefly in considering the implications of this study for the academic literacies field.

The debate in the academic literacies field revolves around whether to use the singular 'literacy' or plural 'literacies'. Many practitioners in writing centres and courses that focus on academic discourse, who are committed to providing access to historically excluded students, have adopted the term as a course descriptor or approach, for example, 'Academic literacy in the Humanities'. Now that the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) label has been critiqued¹, it is often used as a new, less controversial descriptor for terms such as 'study skills' and 'EAP' signalling (to some) outdated, deficit approaches in the 'skills' and 'socialisation' mould that Lea and Street (1998) critique. But it is also used to refer to the teaching of writing beyond a skills approach, to one that acknowledges the contested, multiple, ideologically defined nature of essayist literacy practices. In an interesting conversation about academic literacies (Blommaert, Street and Turner 2007) Turner takes issue with Street and challenges the usefulness of the term literacies in the plural, particularly in institutional settings, where administrators already have problems with the term 'academic literacy' (2007). Turner also points out the clumsiness of the plural term, where 'academic' already modifies 'literacy'. The plural term needs much explanation before it can be operationalised. However Street sees this process of explaining the term 'literacies' as an opportunity to engage with common-sense views of writing and language in the academy.

In many academic literacies courses, there is often a brief focus on lecture note-taking early on in the curriculum. The approaches to lectures and note-taking in these courses tend again to reflect uncritical hybrid skills/socialization understandings of literacy. Students are usually taught how to distinguish main from subsidiary points, and take down abbreviations, but they are not alerted to how to read power and authority in lectures, or how to assess their lecturers. As will be shown in this study, there is rich potential for critical reading of expertise and authority in lectures. And underneath the veneer of the decontextualised skills approach, students are reading their lecturers critically anyway, in subtle and important ways. Websites such as RateYourProfessor.com make fascinating reading.

¹ In the 1980s, students on the English for Academic Purposes course (now called Language in the Humanities) at Entabeni, played on the acronym EAP, calling it 'English for African People'. Critiques of the EAP tradition and its focus on accommodation include Angell-Carter and Thesen (1993), Pennycook (1997) and Benesch (2001).

Most of the studies of academic literacies that have influenced me relate to the teaching of writing. Examples are Bartholomae (1985), Ballard and Clanchy (1988), Clark (1992), Ivanic (1998), Jones, Turner and Street (1999), Herrington and Curtis (2000), Lillis (2001) and the recent collection on new directions in academic literacies by Lillis and Scott (2007). Work on the teaching of genre (Bazerman 1988, Cope and Kalantzis 1993 and Luke's 1996 trenchant critique of the genre approach) has also been influential. Local examples are in publications such as Angelil-Carter (ed) (1998), Angelil-Carter (2000), Leibowitz and Mohamed (ed) (2000), as well as my colleagues involved in the 'Languages of Change' research project (eds. Thesen and van Pletzen 2006). My concern with much of this work on writing is that it is perennially in search of absences: absence of student 'voice' in writing, as first generation, historically marginalized students make their way in an alien medium; and absences of addressees, as students are always writing for distant, and judgmental, audiences. I hope that keeping the academic literacies lens, but bringing it to an adjacent site – the lecture – will facilitate seeing academic meaning-making in different ways. This is a point that will be taken up again when the emphasis moves in the second part of this chapter to 'New directions' needed for the particular interests of this research project.

Next I identify two debates within the NLS that are particularly relevant to this research. The first debate regards the necessity to look beyond language, to other semiotic modes, and the multimodal 'ensembles' that social actors engage with to make meaning. This debate about multimodality goes to the heart of what is meant by literacy, and led Halliday, steeped in linguistic analysis, to argue more than a decade ago that the 'frontier' of literacy has shifted:

Being literate means being able to verbalise the texts generated by these [non-linguistic visual semiotic systems]...and exploring the semiotic potential that lies at their intersection (1996, 359).

The second debate is concerned with the need to seek local meanings, and to build theory from the particularity of the local, in dialogue with the global (Blommaert 2005, Kell 2006). Local has a dual meaning: local in the sense of specific event (in this case, the lecture) and also in the geopolitical sense of a particular time-space configuration. As has been established in the Introduction, the reality that this research is located in a South African university a decade after the official end of Apartheid is central to the analysis.

Multimodal literacy

The first debate focuses on multimodality. The traditions that I am most interested in within the ‘network of complementary research and theoretical traditions’ are located at the meeting place between the idea of literacy as social practice, and the topic of multimodality, as exemplified in the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2001), Kress (1997, 2001), Kress et al (2001), van Leeuwen (2005) and locally, Stein (2004, 2008) and Archer (2006 a & b). This intersection is the subject of another recent collection in the NLS tradition, Pahl and Rowsell’s (2006) *Travel Notes from the New Literacy Studies: Instances of Practice*. While previously these approaches were to some degree in tension, with Street (2003) tending to critique the ‘modal determinism’ of the multimodality approach, in this collection they appear as a conversation. As Kress and Street say in the Foreword, their aim is to bring two fields of study together, both concerned with languages of description, the one (multimodality) to “redress the emphasis on writing and speech as the central, salient modes of representation, in favour of a recognition of how other modes – visual, gestural, kinaesthetic, three-dimensional – play a role in communicative practices” and the other (the NLS) for “viewing literacy as a social practice in all its social environments” (2006, vii). While I have found the coming together of these two traditions most productive, there is some tension between the predominantly textual social semiotic tradition of multimodality as defined by Kress, and the more ethnographic practice-oriented work of the non-linguists within the NLS. I intend to move between these two traditions in this study (see Chapter 3 on methodology).

Resources in place

The second debate concerns the meaning of the local (in this case, lectures in the humanities in a post-Apartheid South African university, that calls itself ‘world-class in Africa’) in a field (the NLS) where in spite of its democratic tendencies, most of the theoretical concepts have come from theorists writing in the centre (predominantly English speaking, post-industrial first world contexts). Examples are Street’s autonomous and ideological models (1984), Kress and van Leeuwen’s semiotic landscape (1996) and Gee’s primary and secondary discourses (1990). While there is nothing inherently centrist about any of these constructs, in practice the construct of secondary discourses for example defaults to settings in which schooling takes place in the English language, relatively uncomplicated by recent colonial history in which western conventions of writing which emphasise clarity, brevity and plausibility/simplicity are never really put to the test (see Gough 2000 for a powerful example of this in a South African university).

Here Blommaert's concept of 'placed resources' is productive. He argues for a sociolinguistics of globalization, recognizing that "developments at the 'top' of the world system have effects at the 'bottom' " (2002, 2). He writes that it is important to trace shifts in the valuation of semiotic resources as they translate from context to context. What is 'expensive' in one setting is marked as 'cheap' in another. His project involves paying attention to the points at which a society

comes down on an individual's potential to decide and to act – to produce voice so as to be heard and read. The more we look at this point the more the differences and inequalities will appear, and explanations of these will force sociolinguists to come to terms with theories of society (2002, 6).

Blommaert suggests that we trace these crossings in which there are shifts in valuation by looking at 'orders of indexicality' – the layered simultaneity in which discourses operate. This will be further explored in Chapter 3 in which I outline my methodological approach, and return to the notion of discourse analysis as an important strand in the methodology of this study.

In a recent article (Thesen and van Pletzen, 2006) we have shown how terms with broad acceptance in the 'first' world take on a different inflection in the 'developing' world. English as a second language makes sense for teachers of English to foreigners or recent immigrants in Anglophone first world settings: it starts to fall apart in settings in which children have been raised in homes where there is not an obvious home language, where children use alternate languages and/or mixed codes which function for them as a single language (McCormick 2002). We also ask questions of the concept of multimodality. In much of the research in the mainstream Anglo world, this term is used in association with the 'new communicative landscape' that has come into focus with the rapid development of ICTs (information and communication technologies) which bring screen-based literacy practices to the fore, with their extraordinary global reach, rapidity and flexibility. While there is much research that investigates the consequences of the 'digital divide' (Castells 1998) that ensues from this phenomenon, particularly in education (see Snyder 2002, and Lea and Nicoll 2002), local ethnographies such as Prinsloo (2005) show how shallow a generalization like the digital divide is in poorly resourced schools, where computers are a scarce resource and function as an index of social status. In Prinsloo's study, access to the use of computers is linked to practices of reward and punishment, rather than offering everyone opportunities for enhancing computer literacy, and by implication, access to a global community. I intend to show how some concepts such as Kress and van Leeuwen's 'turn to the visual' in the

multimodal landscape take on a different inflection when carefully situated in their historical and geopolitical context. I have also turned to local researchers and commentators throughout this research.

More important than what the multimodality approach signals, and what it chooses as its objects of study, is the theory of meaning that underpins it, i.e. the social semiotic approach, with its underlying focus on meaning potential.

A social semiotic approach: emphasising agency through ‘interest’

This section makes an argument for a social semiotic approach to meaning, based on the now extensive body of work of writers such as those referred to earlier in the multimodality tradition. The aim of this research is to explore engagement in a site in which I have placed the lecture at the centre, rather than reading and writing, the traditional priority of the academic literacies community. I am not asking what participants *learn* from their contact with lectures. I am asking questions about *how* participants *engage* in order to understand what lectures mean and do in their lives. Engagement is a more open-ended term, less directional and less subject to the narrow definitions of learning in the shadow of assessment that occupy much of the higher education literature where, as Lea and Street (1998) have argued, the skills and socialization approaches still hold sway. In the higher education field, Haggis echoes this point with a compelling analysis of how the main journals in this field are still dominated by approaches to learning that are obsessed with typologies and the need to “shore up certainties in relation to knowledge of students as ‘other’” (2008, 2).

In Kress and van Leeuwen’s important book, *Reading Images: the Grammar of Visual Design* (1996), they use the metaphor of the ‘semiotic landscape’ to argue for a reconceptualisation of contemporary communication in which language is “moving from its former, unchallenged role as *the* medium of communication, to a role as *one* medium of communication” (34). This shift has an important historical dimension, while appearing as natural to those who have been in a university for any length of time, or who are primed to succeed within it. There is nothing natural about the reading and writing practices at Entabeni, as many students arriving there for the first time have described. In the words of one first generation student, “With writing you can never come from your home”². The shape of the landscape is the “result not just of human work, but of the characteristics of the land itself” (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 33–34). They note the parallel between the softening of national, linguistic and cultural

² These words are spoken by a student in Gideon Nomdo’s (2006) research project on the trajectories of successful black students at Entabeni.

boundaries as the movement of people, goods, ideas and capital gathers momentum geared by technology change, and a corresponding softening of semiotic boundaries resulting in the visual turn.

At this point, some definitions are required. A priority for the multimodality project is the establishment of a metalanguage, a mapping out of key terms to replace, or complement, the terminology that has developed in the logocentric world of theory building, dominated by mainstream linguistics. Some concepts in multimodality that inform this study are mode, medium, materiality and affordance. These terms are defined many times over in the literature, and the definitions below are a synthesis from the sources cited previously. *Mode* is a culturally and socially fashioned resource for representation and communication; *medium* can be either the channel (e.g. sound) or the mediating artifact (for example, the book, computer, or screen); *materiality* is the qualities and characteristics of the raw materials that go into making up modes. These materials have physiological qualities that enable and suggest (*affordances*³) and that limit (*constraints*) their semiotic potential. Kress (2003) says that in the high age of the book the relationship between writing (mode) and book (medium) seemed self-evident. The conjunction of artifact and mode has developed through convention and become naturalized. Now, these associations are being prised apart with the rapid advances in digital technologies.

Here Kress (2003) draws an important distinction based on materiality of modes. Time-based modes such as speech, gesture and music have different potentials to space-based modes such as image, sculpture and streetscapes. Time-based logics lend themselves to temporal sequencing (narrative); space-based logics with their simultaneity of elements lend themselves to display. Some modes (such as gesture and writing) are mixed, involving both temporal and spatial reading paths. The new media afford a proliferation of mixed modes, resulting in new possibilities and challenges for what it means to be literate. The whole notion of reading paths as settled and self-evident is up for grabs (see Kress's *Before Writing*, 1997). This is what leads Halliday (1996) to identify the 'new frontier of literacy' referred to earlier.

All of these terms are, however, only of interest in relationship to how they are utilized by social actors within communicative practices. Communicative practices can now be tentatively defined. In a social semiotic approach derived from Halliday (1978,

³ Affordances and constraints are derived from Gibson's work on the study of human interaction, and have since been used by Greeno in education, before they were used by the multimodality school. See <http://ecologylab.cs.tamu.edu/courses/physicalInterfaces/hostedMaterials/gibsonAffordances.pdf> for Greeno's 1994 account of the history of the terms.

1985) there are (at least) three metafunctions that are an integral part of any fully functioning semiotic system:

- the ideational function, representing events and states of affairs in the world, i.e. the *what* of communication
- the interpersonal function which enacts social relations between participants in an interaction, i.e. the *who*
- the textual function, the *how*, concerned with producing ensembles of signs that are cohesive internally as well as coherent to the reader (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996)

Communicative practices, as used in this study, refer to the combination of all three. They simultaneously represent ideas, concerns and action ‘out there’ beyond the text, and at the same time instantiate social relationships. The textual function is interesting, as whether or not practices are experienced as coherent is an empirical question. The term communicative practices is used slightly differently in different sections of this study. In Chapter 4 I explore communicative practices in the history of the lecture. The focus will also shift from reported communicative practices (Chapter 5), when I analyse students’ frames of reference, to actual processes of production and consumption (Chapters 6–8), and also (particularly in Chapter 8) to distribution, when I look at how moments in a lecture are recontextualised across time and space.

An intriguing aspect of Kress and van Leeuwen’s work (also van Leeuwen and Humphrey 1996) is the argument that what is interesting about the turn to the visual is the change in modal distribution across communicative functions. More and more of the ‘what’ of communication (the ideational metafunction) is now carried by the visual mode, while language appears to be pushed aside, becoming a medium of comment. They demonstrate this functional specialization in the analysis of textbooks, as well as the Internet, print media and television. This shift has implications for the subjectivity of participants, with the possible effect of weakening the power relations between authority and learner, and raises questions about the effects of these changes on epistemology. A close look at lectures should shed some light on some of these concerns, with special attention given to changes and continuities in communicative practices. Anyone who has been lecturing for over a decade in well-resourced universities will attest to the movement away from writing notes on the board, and the occasional use of a clunky slide projector, to the use of overhead projectors, photocopied notes and PowerPoint. However, in other less well resourced university settings, I speculate that very little will have changed in the last 50 years or so.

As mentioned in the discussion of resources in place earlier, the ‘turn to the visual’ claim needs much closer examination. Kress and others make this claim against the observation that since the advent of the printing press in the 15th century, the word (language) has been central in both theory and practice, in western theorizing and in the modes that carry the day in powerful modern institutions such as universities. Kress’ elaboration (2003) of a shift from page (and the logics of sequence) to screen (the logic of display) while being broadly compelling, seems to have at least two problems for this study. One is that this sense of history is too short, focusing as it does on recent history, and needs to consider the *longue duree* (Braudel in Wallerstein 2004) to see how pre-modern arrangements impact on the current lecture situation. In Chapter 4, in which I look at the history of communicative practices in the lecture, I will be exploring a different formulation based on William Clark’s (2006) claim that the birth of the early modern research university was achieved through a trumping of the ear (orality) by the eye (legibility), the written word which began to hold academics to bureaucratic account. This leads to a second problem, that the claim fails to make a strong enough distinction between the spoken and the written word, often bracketing them together as ‘language’, and equating the eye with the image. Kress and others always acknowledge that writing is modally organized through both sequential and spatial logics, but there is a need to be very explicit about the channel. For example, the advent of the overhead projector and PowerPoint are read (framed by their projection onto a screen) as visual legible written information. Students tend to write down what is on the screen or the board. The key distinction here is the difference between spoken language and language written down, but framed by the screen. A point that will be made frequently in this thesis is that the lecture remains a space for the spoken word, and the modes and media of orality.

Kress and van Leeuwen argue that the ‘new times’ emblematised by the visual turn require new approaches to meaning. Social semiotics is above all a “form of enquiry” (van Leeuwen 2005, 1) that is derived from the work of Halliday (1978 in particular). It stresses language not as a grammar, or code, but as a ‘resource for meaning’ expressed in the *interest* of social actors. In drawing on the discipline of semiotics, social semiotics also expands the communicative repertoire beyond the verbal (the usual domain of linguistics and the academic literacies tradition), to include other modes such as the visual, gestural and spatial, which work together in ensembles. It seeks lines of enquiry that are located in what people do (and how they make do) with the resources available to them in particular situations.

Central to this theorization is the notion of ‘interest’, and this represents a break with both mainstream linguistics and semiotics, with their emphasis on structural aspects of language as a system (see Kress 2001 for an account of this break). Both disciplines have been strongly influenced by Saussure (1983), who in reaction to the predominantly diachronic focus of historical linguistics, chose to attend to language as system. He saw the making of meaning as resting on the interpretation of signs, but argued that these signs function as a dyad. He offered a two-part model of the sign: the signifier (form) and signified (concept). Although these two elements fit together like two sides of a sheet of paper (1983, 111) there is no necessary, transparent or inevitable link between the two. So there is nothing ‘tree-like’ in the word tree. The signifier (for example, ‘tree’) is not determined by what it signifies. The link is established by convention. It is this characteristic that frees up language to function as a highly flexible system, and to make sense of the reality that the same signifieds may be conveyed entirely differently in different languages. The view that form and meaning are joined by convention was not new (‘a rose by any other name would smell as sweet’, says Shakespeare) but Saussure opened up the possibility of seeing language as a separate system, able to function independently of context. Kress (2001) describes how this dyadic concept of the sign enabled mainstream linguistics to develop correlational views of the linguistic code that enabled structuralism to thrive. The dyad can be extrapolated on both levels so that one can predict that different contexts invoke different codes and forms of appropriacy.

The approach social semioticians posit as an alternative restores the link between signifier and signified via the notion of the motivated sign which emphasizes interest and agency. It owes more to another tradition of semiotics aligned to philosopher Charles Peirce whose three-part sign typology allows for different kinds of relationship between signifier and signified. The social semiotic approach shifts the focus to what people do, and how they make do, with available semiotic resources.

In this approach to meaning the overriding concern is the interest of the maker of a sign: what is it that she or he wishes to represent and communicate, and what is the apt form – the form that already, through its histories of use as much as in its material aspects – suggests itself as the best, the apt means, of being the carrier of that which is to be represented and communicated? This is a social semiotic approach to representation, in which the sign is central, and sign is the result of intent, the sign-maker’s intent to represent meanings in the most plausible, the apt form (Kress 2001, 72).

Social semiotics focuses on the forms of all sign-making as an expression of the sign-maker’s interest, but it is not naïve about the constraints on meaning-making. As already

mentioned, the materiality drawn into modal functional specialisation enables or inhibits the meaning potential. It is also always constrained by available frames for sense making. The concept of discourse needs to enter this discussion at this point. This protean concept has a long history, and needs to be pinned down in relation to social semiotics. It is also further discussed in the next chapter, where I present the methodological approach.

Discourse(s) as resources for representation

Discourse is a key term in this study, yet it is a particularly difficult one to tie down, in part because it has been so widely used in a range of disciplines as the 'linguistic turn' has focused attention on the discursive production of meaning. It is generally held that this concept has emerged from two traditions, linguistics and social theory (see for example, Pennycook 1994, Jaworski and Coupland 1999 and Cameron 2001). The linguistic strand originally conceived of discourse as 'language above the sentence' and focused on linguistic data such as regularities of structure, and genre (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975, Brown and Yule 1983). In the US a similar expansion took place but with an interest in 'language in use' (see Pennycook 1994 for a critique of the narrow view of context in this tradition). For the social theorists, the interest is less in actual interactional data than in discourse as an abstract vehicle for social and political processes, typically organised through institutions (Bourdieu 1977, 1991; Foucault 1977, and Said 1995). Jaworski and Coupland describe these traditions as follows:

Most theorists stress language in use. But there is a large body of opinion that stresses what discourse is beyond language in use. Discourse is language use relative to social, political and cultural formations – it is language reflecting social order, but also shaping social order, and shaping individuals' interaction with society (1999, 3).

The latter formulation takes (socio)linguists to the limits of their expertise. In the extreme version of the latter formulation, discourses are seen to produce the conditions for interaction: there is no meaning outside of them. This position is most strongly aligned with Foucault. Several writers have attempted to bridge the gap between these traditions, most notably Fairclough (particularly 1992) who developed a comprehensive model to be used for discourse analysis to account for both micro and macro applications that has been modified in later work (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, Fairclough 2003). Like the social semioticians, he bases his ideas on the systemic-functional linguistics of Halliday (1978, 1985), seeing meaning as language choice in context. He also incorporates elements of Foucault's thinking in concepts such as 'orders

of discourse' (1971) (the totality of discursive practices of an institution and the relations between them). At this point, I choose to align myself with a particular definition of discourse that is also derived from the Foucauldian social theory view, yet is inflected by Halliday's notion of choice in context. This is best expressed in the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) and van Leeuwen (2005). Kress' earlier view defined discourse as "systematic modes of talking" which "define, describe and delimit what is possible to say (and by extension – what is possible to do or not to do)". In its structuring of communication and action discourse "provides descriptions, rules, permissions and prohibitions of social and individual actions" (1989, 6–7).

More recently Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) and van Leeuwen (2005) have revised this to reflect what I think is a slightly more agentic definition. In van Leeuwen (2005) discourse is defined as follows:

Discourses are resources for representation, knowledges about some aspect of reality, which *can be drawn upon* when that aspect of reality has to be represented. They *do not determine* what can be said about a given aspect of reality, yet we cannot represent anything without them. We need them as frameworks for making sense of things (95) [my emphasis].

Further (drawing on van Leeuwen 2005 and Gee 1990), discourses are always plural: there are different ways of making sense of the same thing, which make visible/invisible different things, and serve different interests. Discourses are in competition over long periods of time, so it is necessary to look at their history in order to see how they have become commonsense. Our evidence for them comes from the wide variety of texts around us – spoken, written, gestural, pictorial etc – and we need to look for patterns of similarity and difference in order to locate them. In the Introduction I suggest that the comments and images available to us on the surface are caught up in discourses of efficiency and student centred learning. There is a tug of war between (at least) these two. So I am using discourse to track the constraints within practices, and interest to follow people's agency within those constraints. Together these discourses and interests constitute the communicative practices that are uncovered in the particular time-space settings of this study.

Up to this point I have emphasized the visual dimensions of the semiotic landscape, as a corrective to the focus on language, as this is where Kress and van Leeuwen's argument originates. Later in this chapter I will turn to the limitations of the focus on modes and insert the figure in the landscape.

The lecture: from skills to performance

In the Introduction, I sketched some of the images that academics have of lectures. In general, these suggest that the lecture is an anachronism, out of touch with contemporary views of learning with their flattened hierarchies and student centredness, with learning rescued by the advent of ICTs and the potentials of online writing. However, most of these images were passing comments, constrained by available discourses, rather than systematic analyses. A more thorough review of what has been written about lectures is required here. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, studies in academic literacies have tended to focus on writing and reading in their contexts of assessment practices. Studies outside of the NLS tradition have often viewed lectures instrumentally, generally falling into the ‘skills’ and ‘socialisation’ patterns that Lea and Street (1998) identified.

There are several texts such as Donald Bligh’s classic *What’s the Use of Lectures?* (1971), Brown’s *Lecturing and Explaining* (1978), Edwards, Smith and Webb’s (2001) case studies on good lecturing practice, and Sutherland and Badger’s (2004) study of lecturers’ perceptions of lectures. These studies are all in the traditions of what Lea and Street (1998) call the ‘skills’ or ‘socialisation’ approaches to academic literacy. They draw on available cognitive learning theory such as information processing, or the deep/surface distinction, and there is little sense of the ideological construction of academic knowledge. Bligh’s classic study referred to in the Introduction, for instance, summarises an impressive range of research (91 studies compare the effectiveness of different teaching techniques including lectures, summarise studies on memory retention, identify different lecture styles etc). He concludes that “lectures can be used to teach information, including the framework of a subject, but an expository approach is unsuitable to stimulate thought or to change attitudes” (1971, 223). Brown points out that in spite of their limitations, lectures are likely to grow in popularity with mass higher education: he emphasises the economy of lectures, and reminds us that they have been around for “some 2500 years” (1978, 41).

Looking more closely at Sutherland and Badger’s (2004) more recent study, some important themes emerge. There are different perceptions across the disciplines, with the English, history, education and religious studies lecturers interviewed showing more awareness of the critical and motivational functions of lectures, in addition to the more common functions such as information transfer and induction. Disciplinary context is an important element in this study, which will be revisited in Chapter 4, in which a link is made between the ‘profane’ origins of the humanities in the classical world and a

particular niche created in the emergence of the early modern university. Their study also explored to what extent lecturers use technologies to enhance their lectures (the Internet, overhead projectors, PowerPoint, video and handouts). While most employed these text types, all perceived the lecture as a one-way transmission exercise, leading the authors to the conclusion that this “represents a lack of change in the basic function of the lecture since medieval times” (287). We need to ask whether this continuity is a constraint or an opportunity, a question more fully debated in Chapter 4.

Another angle on the lecture, also from a perspective that takes the lecture as a given rather than as ideologically charged, comes from the English for Academic Purposes tradition. This research has focused on identifying the communication problems in lectures seen as the result of linguistic (Thompson, 2003; Camiciottoli, 2004) and intercultural (Flowerdew and Miller, 1995) miscommunication between English speaking lecturers and ‘non-native’ students in post-colonial settings. These studies see the problems with lectures in terms of a breakdown in communication, rather than questioning the grounds on which the communication takes place.

Outside of the terrain of literacy and language theory and linked to psychoanalytic theory is an interesting take on the lecture and pedagogic relations as seduction. This is inevitably a much more ‘peopled’ view of lectures. See for example Aoki (2002), and the debate about feminist academic Jane Gallop⁴ and seduction in teacher-student relationships. The psychoanalytic tradition has also offered insights into the phenomenon of boredom, of obvious importance in relation to lectures. For example Adam Phillips’ (1993) work offers the possibility of boredom as marking an opportunity, a developmental achievement when viewed through a processual lens. This will be visited briefly in Chapter 5, when I will explore students’ frames of reference for lectures. The well-known Naftulin et al experiment (1973)⁵ also framed the lecture as seduction, but not in the psychoanalytic tradition. Drawing on Goffman and educational psychologist Carl Rogers, in this experiment a lecturer was “trained to teach charismatically and not substantively” (630) in giving a lecture to a group of experienced educators who were more impressed by presentation than by content.

An example of work that approaches the lecture from a critical perspective is Bourdieu and Passeron’s study (1994) of linguistic misunderstanding in the arts in French universities in the 1960s. Philosophy students were invited to design utopian teaching spaces, but they were bound by the images available from “within the system of actual

⁴ The interview can be read online at <http://www.pre-text.com/ptlist/gallop1.html>

⁵ Online at <http://www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/r30034/PSY4180/Pages/Naftulin.html>.

practices” (25). They present a bleak picture of the combined effects of complicity and rationality. While their research picks up on contradictions, it does not lead to any sense of agency in individuals.

These studies provide some valuable insights, but they take a narrow or limited view of the functions served by lectures. The concerns that underpin this study have led me into other disciplines. An inevitable and glaringly obvious feature of the lecture is the co-presence of students and lecturers, and therefore the co-construction of meaning. One account of lectures that does acknowledge this co-presence is Erving Goffman’s classic paper on the lecture (1981). In general his social analysis shows how all interaction proceeds through rituals in which shared frames are negotiated among participants at different levels, from the small rituals of everyday life to larger institutionally ratified occasions. These frames help orient participants to social action beyond particular events. In this paper, he analyses how “the wider world of structures and positions is bled into” the lecture (193). While the lecture is ostensibly about the text, it “allows a cover for the rituals of performance” (194) in which the lecturer, through shifts in footing, stance, asides, and vocal tinting that are not possible in written texts, anticipates the audience, thus offering a palpable sense of presence to participants. Goffman alerts us to the importance of form, of embodied presence and of the symbolic access to authority offered by the lecture. I will return to Goffman later in this chapter, when I visit his role in performance theory, to see how it relates to ritualization. His interest in the co-construction of meaning provides the bridge into the next section of this chapter.

New directions

In the next part of this chapter, I extend the frameworks developed so far to take into account co-presence and embodiment. The social semiotic notion of interest is given an edge by Bakhtin’s ideological becoming and with it the omnipresence of ‘the other’, and the pliable construct of practice is tied down to focus on the process of ritualization within practice. Both of these concepts (interest and ideological becoming) acknowledge processual approaches to engagement, i.e. that becoming is an essential part of being, and that change is central to human sense-making.

Theories of co-presence: ideological becoming

I have earlier identified social semiotics as foundational in the theory building of this research. Another complementary strand in non-mainstream linguistics offered by the Bakhtin Circle (in particular Bakhtin and Volosinov) also presents difference and

unsettledness in meaning as central. We cannot fix meaning (as is suggested in the Saussurean arbitrariness of the sign), because it is always becoming, in the inevitable and necessary interaction between self and other – the dialogic principle. As Bakhtin so vividly puts it (in Russian but still resonant in English) “The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes ‘one’s own’ only when...the speaker appropriates the word ...Prior to this it exists in other peoples’ mouths, subject to their intentions, serving other peoples’ intentions” (Bakhtin 1981, 293–4). Substituting ‘word’ for ‘sign’, there is a link between this notion of the dialogic word and the social semiotic ‘interest’. Through the struggles over meaning in which prior meanings can be refracted, new meanings are forged. Like Goffman, Bakhtin refutes theories of communication in which speaker and hearer/audience are treated as separate. Both are present in each others’ meaning-making. This dialogic principle is best expressed in the construct of ‘addressivity’:

An essential (constitutive) marker of the utterance is its quality of being directed to someone, its addressivity. As distinct from the signifying units of a language – words and sentences that are impersonal – belonging to nobody and addressed to nobody, the utterance has both an author (and consequently, expression) and therefore an addressee. This addressee can be an immediate participant-interlocutor in an everyday dialogue, a differentiated collection of specialists, a more or less differentiated public, ethnic group, contemporaries, like-minded people, opponents and enemies, a subordinate, a superior, someone who is lower, higher, familiar, foreign and so forth. It can also be an indefinite, unconcretised other [original emphasis] (Bakhtin, 1986,95).

Addressivity signals the ‘other’ as those co-present – the immediate audience – but also as more abstract socially and historically constituted entities of addressee. While Goffman also foregrounds the addressivity of communication, he is less successful than Bakhtin at making a connection between interaction and wider social meaning – Bakhtin’s ‘indefinite unconcretized other’, which has strong echoes of discourse as defined earlier: ‘knowledges about some aspect of reality’ that we need as ‘frameworks for making sense of things’, that both reflect and shape meanings. Addressees index types (‘collections of specialists etc’) which are present in the individual’s utterance through a range of different strata of discourse. This stratification of language is the result of a constant process of struggle and becoming. Meaning is made, and re-made, by the new inflections that emerge from struggles over meaning as words come into contact, through the utterance, with new situations and users. In this study, while the physical setting (the lecture) has remained unchanged over the long term, the participants – particularly the students – have changed significantly in the last two decades, and we

would expect communication in the lecture to be shot through with these struggles over meaning.

The Bakhtinian concept of ideological becoming (1981, 342–345) is of particular interest in this study. Ideological becoming refers to engagement over time through which ideological stance, or world view, develops. We have seen how ‘the other’, or addressee, implies a status or social positionality relative to the speaker. The embodied capital of a confident older white man will speak in different ways to different students before he has opened his mouth. Actual interaction in the lecture theatre would either confirm or challenge this positionality over time. Bakhtin makes a useful distinction between ‘authoritative’ and ‘internally persuasive’ discourse in understanding the dynamic of ideological becoming. When discourse is authoritative, it

comes with its authority fused to it ... from a distanced zone, organically connected to a past which is felt to be hierarchically higher ... it demands our unconditional allegiance, and it allows no play with its borders, no gradual and flexible transition, no spontaneously creative stylizing variants on it (1981, 342).

As examples he cites religious, political and moral texts as well as “the word of the father, adults, of teachers etc” and says that “one cannot divide it up – agree with one part, accept but not completely another, reject utterly a third part” (343). Alternatively, unlike this privileged type, someone else’s word may be experienced as internally persuasive, and much more open to creative re-accentuation and being “drawn into the contact zone”⁶ (345). It is “half ours and half somebody else’s” (345). The dynamic between them shapes the extent to which the interanimation of voices is possible. “The struggle and dialogic interrelationship of these categories of ideological discourse are what usually determine the history of an individual consciousness” (342). They may co-exist in the utterance, though more often people experience a divide between the two, which may be reconciled over time. They are also in different relationships to each other in different historical periods. This is particularly interesting in South Africa at the moment. Giddens points to a dispersal of authority in late modern times, a shift from single authorities to multiple, competing authorities, which he calls an “indefinite pluralism of expertise” (1991, 442). However, as Ramphela (2008) shows in her recent analysis of dilemmas of transformation in contemporary South Africa, there is a strong authoritarian note in our national culture, with the joint legacies of colonialism, Apartheid and patterns of

⁶ Ball and Freedman (2004, 7) make connections between Bakhtin’s and Pratt’s ideas of the contact zone. Pratt’s use of the term is not derived from Bakhtin’s, but from the sociolinguistics of languages in contact, such as pidgins and creoles.

traditional African leadership. This authoritarian strand is often amplified by the pervasiveness of religious belief.

We need to extend Bakhtin's utterance beyond language and link it to multi-semiotic modes acknowledging particularly when these modes give clues to the embodied competence of the authorised, legitimate speaker – the lecturer. These non-linguistic modes may also be a resource for members of a diverse audience who do not own the dominant language. Gesture, for instance, could support a student struggling to make sense of someone's words, but because it is as culturally laden as any other semiotic mode, students may also need to be helped to decode it (see Kendon 1996 on the semiotics of gesture). Multiple modes will also be a necessary element where the subject matter itself is increasingly mediated by visual images and multimedia, as in much of the humanities. In the lecture, semiotic modes such as gesture and gaze potentially play an important role in complementing language in the workings of capital.

The body in sign-making

In the next section, I look at what the social semiotic tradition has to say about the body, and then sketch briefly some of the traditions that are interested in the body, before I commit to a conceptual framework that will inform the methodology and analysis in this study.

As mentioned earlier, Kress and others in social semiotics see the sign-maker as agentic, making use of what is available and apt as resources for sign-making. In some of this work, such as Kress et al's exploration of the rhetorics of the science classroom (2001), the teacher is conceived of as rhetor/orchestrator/framer of meaning, drawing on modal resources. The centrality of the body is recognised in, for example, expressions such as this:

We also suggest that the materiality of the modes is a crucial matter because it is materiality which determines how we as humans with bodies respond to representations...The relation of materiality and bodily sensory apperception is an important consideration in the...design of the multimodal ensemble (2001, 174).

So there is recognition of the link between bodily location, the sense-making habitus, and its relationship to signs, but as mentioned before, the particular project of much of this social semiotic school has been to develop a grammar for describing how modes other than language function. In research in the NLS-multimodality tradition, the body tends to be treated as context, or as text, rather than as mediator or locus of the action. One exception is in the collection 'Multimodal Literacy' (edited by Jewitt and Kress 2003). Here Anton Frank's analysis (2003) of the dramatisation of a Shakespearian play attempts

to engage with the body, rather than the traditional tools of “description, transcription and analysis of verbal exchanges which tend to represent these situations as stripped of physical presence and co-presence” (2003, 156). Franks attempts to analyse the shifts between dramatic and social action with an eye for the “physicalised aspects” of the action in the classroom. Franks has used Goffman’s frame analysis (1974) in combination with a Bourdieu derived focus on ‘cultural capital’ and how that establishes differential points of access for different students. However, his focus is still primarily textual. Another approach is Ruthrof’s (2000) *The Body in Language*, which brings Peircian semiotics and cognitive linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) together to make a compelling case for how language is parasitic on the ability of the sensory body to locate and reconcile the stream of sensory input .

Goffman (1981) alerts us to an uneasiness in the lecture situation about the relationship between body and text. He stresses that much of how authority is conveyed in lectures and other podium events is expressed by the physical presence of the lecturer, although the subject matter is ostensibly the focus of the lecture. This mind-body split creates an awkwardness, in that participants need to show that they are attending to the lecturer and are picking up cues to meaning carried by spatial and gestural modes, but at the same time they must try not to “violate his territoriality... It is as if they were to look into the speaker’s words, which after all, cannot be seen. It is as if they must look at the speaker, but not see him” (140). This hints at a problem with the body in institutional settings, the church, schooling, and certainly the university, where the body is in an institutional blind spot. Acknowledging the body lets in the suppressed strains of seduction, sexuality, taboo and other volatile meanings that turn on gender, race and age.

Although better known for his analysis of language, Bakhtin also stresses the ‘plastic-pictorial’, and therefore embodied, aspects of communication (1990). Bakhtin’s dialogism is a theory of knowledge in which perception is crucial. What the individual sees is unique to her place in the world. There is always a point of view that comes with this place in the world. In his earlier writing, Bakhtin uses the concept of “surplus of seeing”, the “ever-present excess of my seeing, knowing and possessing” (1990, 23) to express the interdependence of people in time and space. He writes, “This other human being whom I am contemplating, I shall always see and know something that he, from his place outside over and against me, cannot see himself...as we gaze at each other, two different worlds are reflected in our eyes ”. In the lecture situation, each participant inhabits a unique time-space, while sharing an immediate context. Each knows that while

they are present, each carries something extra – the ability to see more than the other – “the world behind his back” (23). In general, Bakhtin sees this relationship in benign terms, as a gift of incompleteness, though the phrase ‘over and against’ suggest a more conflictual angle. This reading suggests that ‘surplus of seeing’ is resonant in a society in transition, where ‘difference’ is strongly signaled in the visual mode and embodied identity. Jefferson expresses this well:

One does not see oneself as one is seen by others and this difference in perspective turns on the body. More specifically, since the body is what others see, but what the subject does not, the subject becomes dependent on the other in a way that ultimately makes the body the focus of a power struggle (1989, 153).

In Bakhtin’s later work, the importance of the body in struggles over meaning is expressed in the idea of ‘carnival’ – “the peoples’ ambivalent laughter” (Bakhtin 1965, in Morris 1994, 201). He takes the idea from medieval carnival and uses it to refer to “the inversion of power structures, the parodic debunking of all that a particular society takes seriously, including and in particular all that which it fears” (in Morris 1994, 250). The laughter is ambivalent; it is simultaneously “gay, triumphant, and at the same time, mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives” (200). Importantly, the main resource for this kind of expression is the body, with an exaggerated, positive, “brimming over abundance” (in Morris 1994, 205). McLaren, who is introduced later in the context of ritual theory, writes beautifully of the necessity of laughter to challenge regimes of truth, and as a “means of keeping dialogue open in the inevitable march of time” (1993, 287). I return to these body-centred concepts later in this study, in the analysis of student responses to Robert’s lecture (Chapter 6).

This discussion of debunking, parody and the world upside down is an opportunity to bring back Pratt’s metaphor of the contact zone used in the Introduction. This resonates with Bakhtin. Pratt asks a profound question from the contact zone. She describes a course that set out to challenge received wisdom in an American university. Noting the asymmetries of modes, history and power in this loaded space, she says:

We were struck... at how anomalous the formal lecture became in a contact zone. The lecturer’s traditional (imagined) task – unifying the world in the class’s eyes by means of a monologue that rings equally coherent, revealing and true for all, forging an ad hoc community... This task became not only impossible, but anomalous and unimaginable. Instead one had to work in the knowledge that whatever one said was going to be systematically received in radically heterogeneous ways that we were neither able nor entitled to prescribe (1999, 10).

The students in my study are from very different life-worlds; they are post-Apartheid children; their lecturers are on the whole middle class, middle-aged white English-

speaking academics. When they come together, how will coherence be made? Will it be achieved? Is it reasonable to expect it to be achieved? These questions about coherence point to the textual metafunction in communicative practices.

This chapter moves to the final part of setting up a theoretical frame for this study. I have established the importance of a social semiotic approach to meaning that probes relationships between different modes – verbal and nonverbal – and that looks at both similarity and conflict of signs. But the social semiotic approach does not set out to explain how the body mediates in discourse, or how bodies interact in co-presence. For this we need to return to the notion of practice, with which this chapter started. We move from literacy practices, with a focus on texts, to explore the link between ritualization and practice. Following Bell (1992) ritualization draws attention to an *aspect* of practice.

Ritualization as an aspect of practice

I turn now to a tradition that has offered rich insights for this study, but also raised serious challenges. The challenges must be dealt with at the outset. The first is the potentially problematic link between the lecture and the term ‘ritual’ in its everyday sense. The term ritual connotes formality and empty conformity, as does the mass undergraduate lecture with its fixed positions for participants and lecture hall architecture that is resonant of the past. Recall Barnett’s ‘frozen hierarchies’ in the Introduction. This is elaborated on by Peter McLaren in his application of ritual theory to account for why working class Portuguese speaking students fail in a Catholic school in Canada. In a trenchant analysis of why the term ritual is “unpleasant to more contemporary ears”, and how this attitude places the term in “conceptual shackles” (1993, 17), he cites Douglas (1973), who says that ritual “has become a bad word, signifying empty conformity” (18). Some of the reasons for this general scepticism are: concerns about applying work developed by anthropologists in pre-industrial societies to contemporary settings; an assumption that modern societies are ritually bankrupt; a sense that institutions have taken over the role-defining functions of rituals; and an assumption that society is evolving from a situation in which “old primordial forces (such as blood and land ties) are on the wane and rapidly being replaced by contractual ones” (23). It is clear in the late 2000s that this is not the case, that there is nostalgia about old rituals, that tradition is constantly being re-invented, and that the media plays a major role in fuelling and inventing rituals. These rituals often organise and mobilise people via social categories and structures in intense, unpredictable and powerful ways, often reinforcing, but

sometimes redefining, social faultlines. As I write this chapter I am within earshot of a televised sporting event in which 'Dyembe' drums have been imported en masse, to be used by 40000 people in a stadium to drum up support for the local team. The Dyembe drums are garish, embossed with the South African flag on a metal alloy surface, possibly a by-product of the beer can.

Other problems with ritual theory are raised by writers such as Catherine Bell (1992) who critiques the tendency in the field of ritual studies that focuses on definitional problems, making distinctions between what is, or is not, ritual; between thought and action, or the 'sacred' and the 'profane'. Grimes' (2006) *Rite out of place* bemoans the conservatism in much of contemporary ritual theory. I explain my angle on ritual theory below.

Ritual and change: the *limen*

In a quest for a theoretical lens through which to explore lectures as embodied, multimodal and ambivalent I am indebted to the work of writers such as McLaren (1993) and Quantz (1999) in formal education, Rampton (1997, 1998, 2002) in the sociolinguistics of urban youth identities, and anthropologist Bell (1992). I was drawn to the idea of ritual early on in this study, but rejected it because it did not seem to offer any possibilities for understanding change. However after reading Quantz's article I saw the potential in the term. Quantz tracks the shift in theorisation from Durkheim to anthropologist Victor Turner. As opposed to the tradition of Durkheim, with the emphasis on distinctions between 'sacred' and 'profane' knowledge, and ritual as instantiations of the social order, these writers (following Turner) recognise that ritual provides contradictory moments that reinforce structure while at the same time permitting the possibility of transformation. The construct that opens up the dynamic, transformative potential in ritual is liminality, an important element in the work of Turner. Drawing on van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage* (1960), the *limen* (margin) is the middle stage (between separation and re-aggregation) in a ritualised process in which an individual moves from one status to another. This is a time when the 'normal' anchors of social structure are loosened and at play, a "sort of social limbo" prevails, and "everyday social relations may be discontinued...the social order may seem to have been turned upside down" (Turner 1982, 27). For Turner this threshold, liminal state can be experienced at many different levels, from fleeting moments, to events such as carnival, or what he calls liminoid genres, which are contemporary expressions of liminal forms that have carried over from agrarian societies. Liminoid phenomena, unlike liminal ones,

tend to subvert rather than invert prestigious forms. They include drama, novels and other creative forms, which tend to flourish in nascent social formations, and to develop “apart from central political and economic processes, along the margins, in the interstices...they are plural, fragmentary and often experimental in character” (1979, 492) and they are “bonded more by optation, by choice, than by obligation” (493). There is often also an element of competition as “individuals and schools compete for the recognition of a public” (493). I return to the idea of the liminoid in the conclusion to this study.

The idea of the *limen* resonates strongly with this study in that the students are at a liminal period in their lives, between the givens of home and schooling, and the more open adult world of university, particularly in the humanities, where few students are on a clear career path. To students leaving school and looking ahead, the lecture is often the defining genre of this new educational terrain. There is an interesting tension in lectures between their fixedness (they structure the timetable, and are generally predictable in form) and their more experimental or liminoid potential, particularly visible in the way some lecturers break the frame and compete for recognition, which students respond to in their desire for contact and flow. In the next chapter, I will show how ‘liminal moments’ have been chosen as the unit of analysis in the lectures that I analyse in Chapters 6 to 8.

Rampton (1998, 11), who has used ritual analysis to bring new understanding to the analysis of second language learning, argues that there are a number of general characteristics by which ritual action can be identified. He bases his definition of ritual on Turner:

Perhaps first and foremost, ritual action is inextricably linked to an interruption in the orderly flow of everyday social life and relations. And whether they are designed to create, celebrate, elaborate, mitigate, or repair such breaches in the predictable patterns of ordinary social activities, rituals are also prototypically *oriented to issues of respect and disregard*, they generate an increased feeling of collectivity among (at least some of) the participants, they involve formulaic conduct, they are a salient focus for comment and sanctions, and their mood is what Turner calls ‘subjunctive’ rather than ‘indicative’, characterised by an orientation to feeling, willing, desiring, fantasising and playfulness rather than an interest in applying “reason to human action and systematising the relationship between means and ends (Turner 1987,123), [my emphasis].

Here Rampton is concerned with the definitional problems that irritate Bell as he tries to define what a ritual is or is not. The feature that I have emphasised in the quotation above is ritual’s orientation to ‘issues of respect and disregard’, which appears strongly in

this study. Staying with his attempt to define this slippery term, I apply these characteristics to lectures, and suggest that perhaps the least comfortable fit (at first sight) is in the last category, the subjunctive *as if* quality of lectures. Many of the studies of lectures (for example Bligh 1971) stress the functional aspects of lectures. They are an excellent means for getting information across relatively efficiently, to large groups of students. However I will show in this analysis of students' views that there is a strong subjunctive element in their perception of lectures. As McLaren says, "a 'ritological' approach is vitally important since it attempts to free classroom research from the tyranny of the literal, the obvious and the self-evident" (1993, 11).

In coming to a working definition of ritual I will use the concept of ritual in a loose sense, in what Rampton calls a 'sensitising' rather than a 'definitive' way (1998, 10).

McLaren 1993 (drawing on Geertz 1966) similarly eschews the use of a strong approach which describes a "bounded, circumscribed, somewhat frozen act" (46), and is concerned instead with a 'weak', or 'soft' definition, i.e. one concerned with "process and not pre-specified behaviour or extrinsic outcomes" (50). My interest does not revolve around the whether the lecture is or is not a ritual. It asks instead how I can bring perspectives from the study of ritual to the process of engaging with what lectures mean and do in the lives of participants.

Bell proposes the term **ritualization**, which she defines as a 'strategic *way* of acting' as an entry point:

I will use the term ritualization to draw attention to the way in which certain social actions strategically distinguish themselves in relation to other actions. In a very preliminary sense, ritualization is a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated *to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities*. As such, ritualization is a matter of various culturally specific strategies for setting some activities off from others, for creating and privileging a qualitative distinction between 'sacred' and 'profane' and for ascribing such distinctions to realities thought to transcend the powers of human actors (1992, 74) my emphasis.

In other words, this is *an aspect* of practice in which distinctions, or boundaries, are drawn around different ways of acting, while admitting that there may be other functions, such as getting across large amounts of information. Bell explores practice in a way that is productive for this study, and that unites meaning and doing. Like Rampton (1998) she emphasises the way ritualisation lends itself to the process of making distinctions. (recall that Rampton described this feature as "oriented to issues of respect and disregard").

Unlike Rampton, she sees ritualization as a way of drawing attention to certain aspects of

practice. She identifies four features of practice that can be mapped on to ritualization (Bell 1992, 80–93). Practice is

- situational;
- strategic;
- embedded in misrecognition of what it is in fact doing;
- able to reproduce or reconfigure a vision of the order of power in the world.

Beginning with the last point, Bell's term for vision of the world is "redemptive hegemony" which she acknowledges is awkward, but is nevertheless productive. The redemptive aspect resonates with Rampton's point about ritualization and orientations to respect and disregard. These distinctions reign as common sense to individuals participating in them (hegemony), but also provide a framework and a way forward for individuals to make choices in a way that orients them forward, towards social action, informed by a belief in what one is doing. This redemptive hegemony functions as "a lived system of meanings, a more or less unified moral order, which is confirmed and nuanced in experience to construct a person's sense of identity" (83). A similar view is expressed by McLaren: "Because we are temporal beings, self-identity is impossible. We are always in motion conceptually and affectively – a motion striving towards infinity" (284). We can now return to Bell's first three points identified earlier, to add to this emerging picture.

Bell's view of practice as situational fits well with the social practice emphasis established earlier in this chapter in the work of the New Literacy Studies. The dynamics of a ritualized practice need to be explored afresh in each situation. Context is crucial. The second and third points – that practice is strategic, and that it involves misrecognition of what it is in fact doing – owe much to Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) in which he argues that the logic of practice is elusive, and ducks beneath intellectual logic, acting instead strategically, provisionally and often in contradictory ways depending on the situation. Misrecognition involves a blindness or oversight of constraints and the real relationship between means and ends. Bourdieu's famous example is of gift giving. We misrecognise gift giving as motivated by a generous impulse whereas in fact it is closely tied in to the 'fake circulation of fake coin'. The experience of giving as voluntary hides the objective meaning of a system of symbolic exchange of gifts which have no intrinsic value. Bell says that viewed as practice, ritualization involves "in the very drawing, in and through the activity itself, of a privileged distinction between

ways of acting, specifically between those acts being performed and those being contrasted, mimed, or implicated elsewhere” (90).

This is not a process in which one group ‘has power’ over another, but one that “simultaneously involves both consent and resistance, misunderstanding and appropriation” (Bell 1992, 8). Both Bell and McLaren see ritual processes as intrinsically linked to macro relations of power and privilege and the logic of capital, i.e. they are provisional, contingent and defined by difference. Both link their analysis to body theorists such as Foucault and Bourdieu. In Bell’s words, the blindness of ritualization in practice “...sees the goal of a new person”. It sees the qualities of the new person who should emerge through the process, but it “does not see how it produces that person – how it projects an environment that, re-embodied, produces a re-nuanced person freshly armed with schemes of strategic classification” (1992, 110). Part of this blindness is that ritualization operates underneath discourse through the habits of the body. As Bell says, ...ritualization is a particularly ‘mute’ form of activity. It is designed to do what it does without bringing what it is doing across the threshold of discourse or systematic thinking (93).

This is an important point in contemporary South Africa where public occasions for bringing people from different lifeworlds together play an important role in creating shared symbols when people can work out where they stand in relation to these occasions. This might help to explain why sport features so prominently in national life (and also in this study). For students arriving at university with such different backgrounds, there is some value in being able to observe and receive, as they can in a lecture, rather than having to produce language in spoken or written forms, where accent, handwriting, and control of the English language immediately identify you. While participants may appear to be going along with the performed activity, ritualization affords opportunities for people to hide. While present in body, what one is actually thinking and feeling can be held back in privacy, while you work out how you relate to the scheme of things. As Feldman reminds us (1991, in McLaren 1993, 275) “It is not only a matter of what history does to the body, but what subjects do with what history has done to the body”.

In Chapter 5, I shall look at what students say about lectures, and how these distinctions are made. In discussing the role of tradition in ritualization, Bell writes that “The continuity, innovation, and oppositional contrasts established...are strategies that arise from the ‘sense of ritual’ played out under particular conditions – not in a fixed ritual structure, a closed grammar, or an embalmed historical model” (124). She outlines

how spatial and temporal distinctions function to produce the environment that makes that person.

The internal organization of...a ritual system is usually a complex orchestration of standard binary opposites that generate flexible sets of relationships both differentiating and integrating activities, gods, sacred places, and communities vis-a-vis each other...Three interrelated sets of oppositions in particular reveal the more systematic dimensions of ritualization: (1) the vertical opposition of superior and inferior, which generates hierarchical structures; (2) the horizontal opposition of here and there, or us and them, which generates lateral and egalitarian relationships; and (3) the opposition of central and local, which frequently incorporates and dominates the preceding oppositions (125).

I will map these distinctions drawn by students through critical discourse analysis. After an initial reading of the data relating to my research question about students' frames of reference for lectures, I was struck by the extent to which elements of these three 'sets of oppositions' are present in the students' descriptions of their engagement with lectures. There is a great deal of demarcation at work in their discussion of lectures and lecturers. There is also a very strong focus on the body, and particularly on form. It is this interest in form that makes the link to the next theoretical move.

Performance and performativity

The other tradition that needs to be acknowledged is performance studies. Like ritual studies, it is a complex and contested interdisciplinary field. As Duranti (1997) points out, performance has a long history in linguistic anthropology. It includes Chomsky's concept of performance as 'use of the linguistic system', and J.L. Austin's 'doing of things with words' in which utterances actually perform certain social actions. It has been extended by others such as Goffman, who focused on performance in the micro-rituals (set pieces) of everyday life, and Bateson, and moved on into post-structuralist and postmodernist theorists such as Foucault, Derrida, and feminists like Kristeva and Butler. Judith Butler makes a distinction between performance and performativity: "the former presumes a subject, but the latter contests the very notion of the subject"⁷. Butler draws on Austin's interest in "those speech acts which bring into being that which they name" and from this starting point, defines performativity as "the discursive mode by which ontological effects are installed". This is illustrated in her quotation of Simone de Beauvoir's claim, "One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one". In a preface to a 1991 edition of her classic *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler recalls her early reading of performativity: "The

⁷ Extract from interview with Peter Osborne and Lynne Segal in 'Radical Philosophy' 1994, 32-39, online at www.theory.org.uk/but-int1.htm accessed 24/2/2007). Page numbers are not available.

anticipation of an authoritative disclosure of meaning is the means by which that authority is attributed and installed: the anticipation conjures its object” (2006, xv). She acknowledges that performativity is not a once off act, but is brought about by repetition and ritual, “which achieves its effects by naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained duration” (2006, xv). This is compelling, but like Foucault, is not going to give a nuanced account of how people engage in lectures, though I believe it has rich potential for follow-up work based on this research. The strand of performance theory that I will draw on here can be traced instead through sociolinguists Hymes, Baumann and Blommaert.

Performance and performativity have been used very productively in many disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, from the obvious ‘creative arts’ (dance, music, art and drama are well covered in Schechner 2003) through to anthropology, semiotics and psychology. It is a vivid strand of theory which brings into focus co-presence, flow, affective and aesthetic elements in interaction, as well as certain kinds of transformation (see for example Phelan 1993). However, there is also a problem with the use of the performance metaphor that mirrors the problem with using the term ‘ritual’, as outlined previously. As Bell points out, there are several consequences to the strength of the performance metaphor. The metaphor itself begins to create reality: she notes “how readily performance slips from being a tool for analysis to being a feature of the object, and thereby validates an approach and whole discourse” (1992, 46). This is an important issue that I will discuss further in the next chapter on methodology. I have to acknowledge that choosing to work with ritual and performance theory sets up metaphors which construct the things of which they speak, and theory itself is thus performative.

McLaren’s ‘states of interaction’ and the feeling body

I explore the liminal elements – potential sources of affirmation, renewal, challenge and transformation which reveal the multiple and contradictory aspects of practice – in lectures, by tracing shifts in meanings through what McLaren calls “interactive states” defined as “styles of interaction...[that] consist of organised assemblages of behaviours out of which emerge a central or dominant system of *lived* practices” (83). The emphasis on lived practices places the body at the centre of meaning. McLaren’s ethnography of a working class school in Toronto uses a ritual analysis to identify various “states of interaction” (85) that help to describe and understand the interaction between ‘minority’

and middle class students, with a particular focus on how the working class minority is excluded from the centre. These interactive states are

styles of interacting with the environment and with others...[which are] not simply congeries of abstract events. They consist of organised assemblages of behaviours out of which emerge a central or dominant system of *lived* practices (86).

Styles of interaction, or bodily states, are composed of clusters of attributes which when lumped together constitute a particular *manner* of relating to settings, events and people. It is important to make the point that these are not absolute states; these elements are often co-present, but at certain moments, organise people quite strongly. People also have some choice in moving between them. At times I will refer to styles, rather than states of interaction, as the term 'style' is closer to my poststructuralist theoretical orientation.

The most prevalent states in his study are the first two – 'street-corner' and 'student'. While in the 'thrall' of the **streetcorner** state (86–90), students 'own their time' as a collective, and play out the roles and statuses of their peer relationships and identities. It tends to be cathartic, where they give vent to feelings, often of resistance. It is indulgently physical, with body movements that lack precise articulation; it is more fluid and boisterous, with more merriment than in the student state. The streetcorner state allows sensual pleasure, with consumerism a prevailing theme. Time is relatively unstructured or polychromatic (Hall 1973) with lots of overlap and simultaneity. The mood is subjunctive, with more flow, creating the possibility of confronting emotions directly. The ethos is ludic (play-like) and spontaneous. Importantly, for students it is often a preferred state because it allows for critique.

Next is the **student** state (90–92). McLaren notes how students adjust and realign themselves as they enter the school buildings where they give themselves over to the powerful controls and enforcement procedures available to teachers. They move 'offstage' to the proscenium where they must "write their student roles in conformity to the teacher's master script". The major theme is 'work hard'. The teacher's control constitutes the boundaries between states, and they are compelled to enter through a highly ritualised punishment and reward system. Gesture is systematic, with the emphasis on being quiet, well-mannered, predictable and obedient. The dominant mood is 'indicative'. Time is segmented and monochromatic. Movements are "resolutely routinised and rigidified into gestures". There is little physical movement unless on the cue of the teacher. There is a distinct separation between mind and body, and

communitas – a sense of flow in which mind and body come together, and in which social hierarchies are dissolved – is rare.

The **sanctity** state (obviously important in a Catholic school) is characterised by a sense of the numinous, with reverence and subservience present as strong values.

Finally, the **home** state was not directly present in the school, but was referred to and inferred from conversations and interviews. It refers to particular types of interaction with family members, and is marked by parents partaking of authority roles similar to those of teachers, priests etc.

At first glance, there is an obvious connection between lectures and the student state. There is a high degree of giving over to the ‘teacher’s master script’, with systematic, constrained gesture, and segmented time. Yet there is also an opposite impulse in the event, which evokes entertainment as well as a sense of the sacred. In this study, while the streetcorner, sanctity and home states are all present, I group them together, in contrast to the ‘docile bodies’ of the student state, and label them collectively as the **engaged state**, in which there is mutual recognition, a sense of presence, a sense that attention and actions have consequence in the world, rather than the empty scripts of the student state, of going through the motions. The student state is by default the disengaged or **detached** state where automaticity is prevalent. In some ways McLaren’s conflation of the detached state with the student state is unfortunate, in that it implies that one cannot be mentally engaged while conforming in the body. This has the strange consequence of reinforcing the mind-body split. Being a (well-adjusted, successful, critical) student must involve integration of these feeling-states.

This discussion has shown that ritualization provides insights into both what lectures mean and what they do. Ritualization potentially heals the mind-body split. What mediates between these two is the body. Ritualization draws contrasts between the activity being performed and other forms of activity, but also shows that the body mediates between these distinctions and possibilities for individual action. There is a circular movement between a ritualized body which in turn produces ritualized practices. A student takes part in lectures, observes others, reads how to behave, how and where to sit, when to write, or not write. This participation will orient students to action in the future. But we also know that we can never know exactly what someone is thinking, while appearing to submit to, or collude with the arrangements of a particular time-space configuration. An important affordance of ritualization is that it enables one to take part while remaining mute. In other spaces like the tutorial and online discussions, there is no

place for silence. The student has to make her mark. There is no alibi. When we look at the lecture through the lens of ritualization I believe that this silence becomes an opportunity.

This chapter has outlined the theoretical journey of the research process, in order to get to a point where the reader can see the constructs that lie beneath the main questions that guide this research. What do lectures do and mean for participants in the first year? What are the communicative practices in and around lectures, and how do students and lecturers engage with them? A social semiotic perspective on communicative practices in lectures foregrounds agency within discursive constraints. Ideological becoming and ritualization illuminate the processual aspects of meaning-making. From this chapter a 'toolkit' has been derived that will be used to mediate between theoretical framing and data. These 'tools' are introduced at the end of the next chapter.

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Chapter 3

Methodology: Making the exploded view visible

This chapter develops the methodological stance used to explore how participants engage in the communicative practices in and around the lecture in the first year. The stance taken here (textually oriented discourse analysis within an ethnographic frame) reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the NLS: it is rooted in sociolinguistics and semiotics which orient it to textual analysis, while the influence of anthropology has left its mark in work that draws on the ethnographic method. However the main terms are the subjects of debate, as is the way they are combined in a mixed methodological approach. Discourse is a contested term, and ethnography is a deeply controversial practice. This chapter will account for this stance then describe methods and the data gathering process, before showing how the data will be analysed in subsequent chapters.

Taking a position

At the risk of making a fetish of research approaches, which Brown and Dowling (1998) see as a consequence of 'curricularising' in research methods courses, it is clear that data are only generated out of a social practice that includes the meanings that participants give to the process. All researchers make knowledge claims, and are therefore implicated in epistemological and ontological questions. My training and professional identity incline me to the analysis of texts as instantiations of discursive processes. However, my growing interest in contexts (historical, geographical and interpretive) insists that I look at communicative practices ethnographically as this is the tradition that values contexts most overtly.

Some drawing of distinctions regarding epistemological questions is usually made in the research methodology literature in the education field. The first is the distinction between *qualitative* and *quantitative* approaches. The binary quality of the distinction has been argued against (see Hammersley 1992, Vulliamy 1990, Brown and Dowling 1998) but it is still useful: qualitative is often used as shorthand for approaches that explicitly value the role of interpretation in research processes. However, this does not go far enough. The second distinction – between *positivist* and *post-positivist* epistemologies – comes into play here. Usher (1996) identifies four traditions, rather than two. (See Lather 1991 for a similar classification). The first is the *positivist (empiricist)* approach of

mainstream science. It emphasizes determinacy (that there is a certain truth that can be known); rationality (there is no space for contradictions); impersonality; prediction and most important, it is unreflexive, i.e. it does not ask questions about the research process itself. Moving on to post-positivist research: Usher identifies three categories, the first of which is the *hermeneutic/interpretive* tradition, emerging from Kuhn's (1970) critique of the positivist paradigm, which showed that research was a social rather than a logical process. This approach stresses interpretation, meaning and illumination, but not social change. However, approaches such as Paul Ricoeur's 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (1970, 32–35) emerge from within this tradition, and would have a lot in common with contemporary critical discourse analysis. Social change is the focus of the third approach, the *critical* tradition, which is concerned with questions of democracy and justice. This emancipatory stance involves the critique of ideology, and questions such as: Whose knowledge counts? By what criteria are judgments made? This kind of questioning is seen to result in praxis – informed committed action. Fourth, a *postmodern* approach posits that social reality does not exist outside of discourse, and stresses that reality is always mediated by textual constructions. A primary value is placed on reflexivity and the writing of research. A powerful example is Denzin's *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century* (1997). If the concerns of research in the modernist tradition are to establish reliable, objective (though multi-perspectival 'truth'), the priorities for postmodern research are to acknowledge the "parallax of discourses" (a term borrowed from Bakhtin 1986), which involves a "multiperspectival epistemology that thickens and makes more complex the very processes that qualitative researchers wish to capture and represent in reflective texts" (Denzin 1997, 36).

I see these traditions as resources for creating a research practice. They are not hermetically sealed boxes which require absolute commitment, and are to a certain extent mutually encapsulating. However, movements between them must be acknowledged. This research is a dialogue between the last two approaches: as an educator and researcher, working in a research group whose work is framed by an ethos of social justice, reflexivity is not enough. Having foregrounded engagement in the communicative practices of the contact zone, praxis – informed committed action – is important. So my broad epistemological stance involves a dialogue between the praxis, and the inevitability of reflexivity, once the significance of representation is acknowledged in the research practice.

Textually oriented discourse analysis

In the previous chapter, I defined discourse as both resource and constraint for how participants express their interests in communicative practices. A reminder from Chapter 2 is that following van Leeuwen 2005, discourse has been defined as “resources for representation...that can be drawn upon...but do not determine...yet we cannot represent anything without them. We need them as frameworks for making sense of things” (95). It is this dynamic between constraint and possibility that I am particularly interested in. Discourse analysis as methodology branches in different directions, in line with the distinctions outlined in Chapter 2. I align myself with the approach used in Fairclough’s more recent work (2003, 1–18) which he calls textually oriented discourse analysis, within the broader project of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is at the intersection between the two traditions mentioned in Chapter 2 (linguistics and social theory) and is explicitly transdisciplinary, and interested in social themes such as hybridity and the space-time shifts associated with globalization. In acknowledging the limitations of textual analysis, Fairclough suggests that it is “best framed within ethnography” (15), and “should be seen as an open process which can be enhanced through dialogue across disciplines and theories, rather than a coding in the terms of an autonomous analytical framework or grammar” (16). This recent more open-ended formulation expands the narrower approach to CDA that is usually attributed to him by, amongst others, Pennycook (1994). Titscher et al’s (2000, 146) outline of the general principles of CDA associated with Fairclough, as well as with Wodak’s social-psychological emphasis on text planning (154–163), is summarized below. Critical Discourse Analysis:

1. is concerned with social problems, not language per se.
2. is therefore interdisciplinary
3. makes its interests explicit
4. is interested in how power relations are caught up in discourse
5. acknowledges that every instance of language both reflects and constitutes society and culture, by acting through discourse
6. assumes that discourses are historical and can only be understood in context.

The main difference between Fairclough’s version and other more eclectic methods is probably that the CDA approach is ‘text-reducing’ because of “its concentration on clear formal properties and the associated compression of texts” (Titscher et al 2000, 167), whereas other variations can be considered to be text expanding. I adopt an approach that alternates between text-reducing and text-expanding lenses.

CDA has been critiqued from the outside (most notably by Widdowson 1995) for its ideological circularity: ‘I suspect this abuse of power in this kind of text, so let me see what I can find. Aha, there it is!’ But note the third point above: CDA does make its interests explicit. More interesting are the debates within the broadly progressive community. Some signposts are Pennycook (1994) and Hammersley (1997), for the extent to which approaches with different underlying concepts of power are ‘incommensurable’; Pennycook (2001) and Luke (2002) note CDA’s tendency to privilege language, text and rationality, because of its links to linguistic structuralism. Luke points to its dual heritage, and what its roots in social theory (particularly post-structuralist ideas that include the random, silent, incoherent and idiosyncratic) have to offer in addressing the challenges of economic and cultural globalisation. He favours the analysis of power in Foucault’s knowledge/power work, which looks less at the central and hegemonic production of discourse than at the “unpredictable lateral and recursive traverse of discourse across institutions and social fields” (2002, 7). With this emphasis, we recognize that power is always productive, not necessarily negative. This point is elaborated on below.

‘Critique of critique’

Both Kress (1996) and Martin also note that the critical project and its particular reading of power and agency misses vital energies of contemporary meaning making. Martin advocates *positive* discourse analysis (PDA) and argues for the need to focus on constructive as well as deconstructive analysis, as a complement to CDA, which he says has crippled our sense of possibility.

I am arguing that we need a complementary focus on community, taking into account how people get together and make room for themselves in the world – in ways that redistribute power without necessarily struggling against it (in Martin and Rose 2003, 264) and online at <http://www.wagsoft.com/Systemics/MartinPapers/>).

Martin aligns this position with Kress (1996) and his ‘critique of critique’, in which Kress argues for a move from deconstructive to productive activity (15–16) and for the resources of CDA to be turned around to become “an enterprise focused, engaged on *making*” (19) in addition to critique. In Kress’ assessment, CDA has not “offered (productive) accounts of alternative forms of social organization, nor of social subjects, other than by implication” (16). The link between Kress’s focus on productive activity and ‘interest’, which emphasizes language as resource for meaning, rather than system or code is clear. As Kress (1996), Luke (2002) and others point out, power is not *either*

'good' or 'bad' (as seems to be suggested by Martin) but *both* good *and* bad, depending on contexts/uptake. Power is inevitable, not an optional extra. The problem is more with the kinds of hegemonic texts that many CDA proponents choose as their focus for analysis. Perhaps Martin's contribution is to bring fresh resources, such as the recognition of new genres and concepts that enable us to look at feeling and evaluation as semiotic resources. His work emphasizes the poetic and aesthetic functions of language, which is not a strength of the Hallidayan model. The poetic function emerges as an important element later in this thesis, when ritualization and performance are explored.

I am challenged by Kress and Martin's approaches. In previous research (1994, 1997) I looked at writing through the eyes of students, particularly from the standpoint of historically excluded black students. Once I had recognized that it was necessary to focus on the co-construction of meaning in lectures, involving both students with different language and educational histories and their lecturers, I realized that I would have to negotiate the complex space between multiple 'parties', and that my ongoing relationships to the lecturers (my colleagues) would hobble my instinctive critique. My decision to work with lecturers who students identified as engaging (see 'Choosing the lecturers and lectures' below) is in part a way of getting round the dilemma of critique. But at the same time I believe that it is important to explore instances of strength, creativity, and embodied expertise rather than lack. A second challenge emerged from working with a particularly diverse group of students. Teaching on a course that all first time entering students had to attend led to my concern with how diversity worked as a group of students encountered authority figures in the 'new' South Africa. Working outside of the certainties that standpoint research offers, where one is rescuing, or interpreting for, a marginalized group, has been a particular challenge. This research has taken place at a time when my certainties about power have stalled. This dilemma is common in South African public life, where we no longer make sense within and against the grand narrative of Apartheid. The multiple 'orders of discourse' were always there, but they have come into strong focus in recent years, and there is no settled discourse to lean into. Ndebele (2004) explores the critical stance needed at this time:

There will be times when the battle is not between the new and the new, but between the new and lingering forms of the old that have become embedded not only in others, but also in myself...Declared doubts are always empowering. They create grounds for new opportunities and solutions. They breed critical self-confidence (15).

Fresh resources are also brought to discourse analysis by Blommaert (2005) who warns us that the term CDA should not be conflated with the critical study of language and discourse in general. There are other traditions, particularly American linguistic anthropology and branches of sociolinguistics that contribute to what he calls ‘the critical pool’ (5–13). By bringing concepts from these traditions, as well as others, he offers the most trenchant ‘insider’ critique of CDA. He identifies various kinds of ‘closure’ that operate within CDA. All of these relate to a limited focus on context. Each form of closure is outlined briefly below followed by an account of how my study takes up Blommaert’s challenge.

Three silences: Discourse is more than language

Blommaert’s first criticism of CDA is that there is a strong linguistic bias, based as it is on Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics (SFL). As a result of this bias, the focus is on available discourse at the point of articulation, thus bypassing what is absent, what precedes discourse and what happens to it, and its users, downstream. This study seeks to address this linguistic bias by drawing on multimodal discourse analysis of semiotic material beyond language, including visual, gestural and embodied meaning. Social theories beyond SFL linguistics, in particular ritualization and performance studies, help to inform the interaction between discourse and society. SFL also underpins Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996) grammar of visual design and multimodal discourse, and I have found their approach inadequate for this study in certain respects. The focus is still too textual, and falls short for this study and its interest in the processual aspects of engagement emphasized in the previous chapter.

Global perspective

The second critique is that most of the analysis in CDA has been developed in certain kinds of societies – in the ‘core’ – typically “highly integrated, late Modern, and post-industrial, densely semiotised First-World societies” (35).

The self-evident way in which features of the First World are projected onto the globe is perplexing... We shall look in vain, however, for social theory that addresses north-south relations or the structure and development of the world system (Blommaert 2005, 36).

I have felt the same frustration with the New Literacy Studies, where the easy, almost formulaic, use of the adjective ‘new’ has been contagious: the ‘new’ literacies, ‘new’ identities (referring to the digital revolution) are so unevenly experienced in Southern Africa that the theoretical certainties that accompany this authority to define what is

‘new’ has the effect of reproducing inequalities. One is doomed to follow a target that is always moving. My strategy is to fill in some of the gaps left by analysis from the core.

History collapsed into context

Blommaert’s third critique relates to the absence of a sense of history in CDA, which emerges from the two earlier criticisms. A narrow tracing of ‘the new’ in particular familiar First World contexts, with the historical dimension carried in constructs like ‘intertextuality’ (Fairclough 1992, 1999) does not account for the long histories in which structures of power have come to take particular forms. Blommaert warns that the “critical punch of what we do lies in our capacity to show that what looks new is not new at all, but the outcome of a particular process which is systemic, not accidental” (37). I have gone some way towards addressing this ahistorical tendency in CDA by including the next chapter, ‘The past in the present’, which explores both changes and continuities in the lecture. I also trace historical meanings wherever possible, as in the analysis of the photograph of the Xhosa initiates used in the lecture in Chapter 6. This represents attempts at what Blommaert (127–128, citing Braudel 1981) calls ‘layered simultaneity’ in what appears to be the present (synchronisation) there are traces of different orders of the past. The first of these orders of the past is the *longue duree* (the long term – slow time of invisible transformation, or structural time which is not available to individuals in moments of sense-making). The *longue duree* can only be understood relative to two other time frames. These are *intermediate* time of “long cyclical patterns” (127), of for example, the middle ages, colonialism, capitalism or the enlightenment, which cut across local experiences of time of people in the pre-colony, and thirdly, *event* time. For South Africans, this is most strongly marked by the democratic elections of 1994, which officially ended the Apartheid regime. The interaction between these different orders of the past is experienced in complex and often contradictory ways, depending on an individual’s social positionality.

In addition to these three closures, Blommaert also critiques CDA for its several ‘forgotten contexts’ (56–67) that severely limit the potential for CDA to speak meaningfully to the kind of critical analysis that this study seeks to achieve. He notes how CDA typically treats contexts as unique, one time-and-space specific, rather than seeing their higher-level situatedness. Briefly, the first forgotten contexts is *resources as contexts*. The resources that people bring along with them to social practices are indexes of macro contexts over which they have little control. Resources such as which languages they can speak or write, and at what level of fluency, have major consequences. Blommaert

describes the struggles of asylum seekers in Belgium, and their struggles to express themselves at key moments in the legal process of gaining asylum. Nomdo (2006) tracks the different forms of cultural capital that black students bring on entering different disciplines at Entabeni. The resources that participants draw on in their discourse must not be looked at narrowly, but as dialogically established. The second forgotten context he identifies is that of *text trajectories*. The way texts move between contexts provides crucial clues to shifts in power. I attempt to follow these shifts through focusing on entextualisation (see data analysis for Chapters 6, 7 and 8 below). A third forgotten context is *data histories*, i.e. the history of data within the research process. Why this data now? This kind of reflexivity is best restored by ethnographic framing.

A critical ethnographic stance on texts

In previous work based on a Masters level research project (1994, 1997) I argued strongly for the need for ethnographic counterpoint to discourse analysis. Data must be put back in its rich layers of context if commonsense categories are to be interrogated and shifted. Context can only be read off texts in the most limited way. Two moves are particularly important if texts are to be situated in their practices. One is that it is necessary to seek the meanings of the text-makers and text interpreters. What do participants say about what they do? How do these meanings resonate with the researcher's theories and frameworks? The second important move in this study is that data needs to be handled historically. As Blommaert puts it, "We have to look into the wider social and historical patterns that direct the hands, gaze, mouths, ears of those who communicate" (2005, 123). This point has been discussed in the previous section, as a critique of narrow approaches to CDA.

The history of ethnography is also controversial, caught up as it is in the colonial project as a method for studying 'the other' (Denzin 1997, Blommaert 2005, Gobo 2008). In South Africa this is also strongly the case, as anthropology and ethnography have been implicated in the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and Apartheid. I will touch briefly on two books that point to how deeply implicated the discipline of anthropology is in this country's fraught history. Hammond-Tooke's *Imperfect Interpreters* (1997) gives a historical account of the discipline in this country from its founding at Entabeni in 1922 in the new School of African Life and Languages¹. A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, the British anthropologist considered with Malinowski to be one of the founding fathers of the

¹ The link between anthropology ('African life') and linguistics is interesting in the naming of this department, and raises questions about where anthropology and linguistics have been complicit.

modern discipline, was the first professor of Social Anthropology at Entabeni. Hammond-Tooke cites West's distinction (1979, 134) between *social* anthropology with its interest in social institutions and social relations, and *cultural* anthropology, which in South Africa was concerned with the ahistorical analysis of bounded cultures. The latter found expression in *Volkekunde* (Folk Studies, the version of cultural studies that took root in the Afrikaans language universities) and had close ties to the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism and the Apartheid policy of separate development. It is no wonder that ethnography aroused such suspicion, its interest in 'the other' often feeding directly into white domination. His book attempts to rescue liberal anthropology from the oppressive forces of Apartheid, and also (in his view) Marxism. The second text is *South African Keywords: The Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts* (eds. Boonzaier and Sharp 1988) published at the height of the anti-Apartheid struggle, which looks boldly and historically at how constructs such as culture, tradition, race and ethnicity have shaped the way people see reality, and the dire implications of these distortions. A recent publication (ed. Robins and Shepherd, 2008) provides an updated keywords of terms in contemporary South Africa. It begins with AIDS and ends with xenophobia.

The approach in this study is indebted to Duranti, Canagarajah and most importantly Blommaert, who work in the tradition of linguist Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication. Duranti's stance (1997) is interdisciplinary, straddling the linguistic and anthropological fields, and thus has a long tradition of engaging with embodied meaning and multimodality. He extends Dell Hymes' focus on language in use, to "...language as a set of symbolic resources that enter the constitution of social fabric and the individual representation of actual or possible worlds" (1997, 3). Also of importance is Canagarajah (1999), whose research is located in higher education in a post-colonial Sri Lankan setting, and foregrounds issues of ideology and resistance. While Canagarajah (1999, 47–55) advocates what he calls 'critical ethnography', I prefer to say that my approach is 'ethnographic', but I am not 'doing an ethnography' with its connotations of entering a field as a stranger. Canagarajah identifies the following features of critical ethnography, which make it distinct from traditional, descriptive ethnography. Critical ethnography:

- emphasises ideological and wider political concerns
- develops an interpretive framework that includes historical analysis
- is a personally committed activity
- seeks to identify and explain contradictions

- negotiates the power differences to minimise its effect on findings
- acknowledges that the ethnographic text is a highly reconstructed, discursively mediated product.

Note the overlaps with CDA described earlier in this chapter. I attempt to engage with these contours in this study.

Ethnographic framing

In this section, I look at three aspects of the ethnographic framing of this study: involvement, research ethics and reflexivity. These arise from a central feature of contemporary ethnographic enquiry, i.e. problematising involvement in the field in which one is researching. Scheper-Hughes 2000 (in van Praet 2005) calls this a ‘disciplined subjectivity’.

Involvement

One of the strengths of the ethnographic perspective is that there is a strong tradition of theorizing the role of the participant observer. In this research I am in one sense very close to the research, having been involved with the teaching of academic literacy in the humanities at Entabeni since the mid 1980s. In another sense, I am a stranger to the analysis of the functions of lectures, as my focus has mainly been on writing and reading. I am also a relative stranger to the various disciplines and inter-disciplines in this study. Scott (1996) cites Gold’s (1958) categorization of four role types in ethnographic research: a) complete participant; b) participant-as-observer (open about purposes and have to negotiate at every level); c) observer-as-participant, and d) complete observer. My position moved mainly between b), participant-as-observer, and c), observer-as-participant. Self-consciousness about one’s role is required. Early on I drew up a list of my different roles and levels of engagement with students. They were research ‘subjects’; but I was also introducing them to research. I was also their tutor so they could expect me to help them when they had academic difficulties. I was paying them a small amount of money for participating, so was in a financial relationship to them. I was also in a therapeutic role, listening to their stories, comforting, encouraging, as an older (white) woman, with children of the same age. Duranti (1997) describes this process of being with others and at the same time observing them as a “building stone” of the contribution of anthropology, and describes how at times we need to find the off-centre “blind spot” and assume a position as bystanders or overhearers (101). When van Praet

reflects on her ethnographic study, and her frustration at falling short of some ideal of deep involvement, she cites Scheper-Hughes 2000: we are “always at the mercy of those who let us in” (2005, 241). She concludes that “creativity, flexibility, and ethical adaptation to the field are far more important than compliance to rules produced elsewhere by somebody else at another time and for different purposes” (242). I attempt to write these decisions in to the rest of this chapter, and to the thesis as a whole.

Research ethics: ‘the other, the ought, and openness’

This aspect of ethnographic framing is a crucial part of my study. Put crudely, there are two dominant views of ethics in education and applied linguistics: ethics as truth (associated with the positivist tradition), and ethics as contextual (congruent with a post-positivist epistemic orientation) (Simons and Usher 2000, Cameron et al 1992). My stance in the past has been closest to what Cameron et al call an empowerment stance in which one is researching *on, for* and *with* those who are also involved in the research process. In this approach, they understand power in the Foucauldian sense: it is not something that anyone possesses, but rather, it exists prior to people, and works through them in a ‘net-like organisation’ via systems of knowledge, that circulate through many dimensions simultaneously. They suggest that this approach has three principles that need to be considered. Simply put, these are: a) ‘persons are not objects and should not be treated as objects’ (interaction enhances knowledge); b) ‘subjects have their own agendas and research should try to address them’, and c) ‘if knowledge is worth having, it is worth sharing’ (1992, 23–25). This is a complex issue. It is useful to think about the distinction between what is empowering in interacting with subjects during the research process, and what is empowering/disempowering in representing the research in the textual product. I can think of my research as empowering for students, but it seems presumptuous to say that it is empowering for my colleagues. I am experienced in dealing with ethical considerations in working with students, but am much less experienced in these matters where colleagues are concerned. If anything, I have avoided a close focus on colleagues’ practice in the past. Part of this discomfort is because of my location in an education development unit, whose engagement with the institution has at times been problematic, in particular because of its association with the controversial practice of quality assurance. I have not wanted to take on any position of unsolicited expertise. Negotiating relationships with colleagues, particularly where close-up analysis of their practice is concerned, has been a delicate undertaking. I am strongly aware of the ‘hierarchy of credibility’ (Becker in Vulliamy 1990, 109) that exists in all institutions. The first pilot

study (see research map Figure 3.1 below) raised many issues that remain unresolved. For students too, the issues of power will be loaded as they comment on, and interact with their lecturers. I have found in the past that it is difficult to keep faith with both students and lecturers.

Another formulation that can be used as a reference point for thinking about ethics is Harpham's approach (1995), cited in Figueroa (2000) as revolving around three principles; the *other*, the *ought* and *openness* (82). I find these principles usefully inform my decision-making in walking the complex line of involvement, and they permeate the account that follows. The 'other' and the 'ought' are intertwined, as we saw in Bakhtin's concept of addressivity in the previous chapter. I think of ethics in close relationship to my view of language, as both constraining and enabling. Harpham (1992) cites Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1962, 195): ethics "begins to flourish only when original thinking comes to an end" (1992, 7–8). Ethics issues emerge as incoherence surfaces, in the space between the ideal and interest. This space is often closed down in writing, in our quest for coherence. Ethics is centrally about the 'ought', about not doing harm. An 'ought' always implies its 'other': from the other people involved in the research (students, lecturers) through to other addressees, such as my community of academic literacies researchers, people above or below me, the university, and wider unknown audiences, as well as what Bakhtin calls "the unconcretized other" (1986, 95). Openness is a way of keeping the tension between the 'other' and the 'ought' in play. For Harpham (1992) ethics is a "garden of forked paths" (49) constituted by the "compromised binaries" (48) of is/ought, subjective/objective, integration/permeability, and more.

These are steps I have taken in walking this line.

1. I have complied with the ethics requirements of the department and faculty in which I am registered and the faculty in which I am employed (the bureaucratic aspect of Harpham's 'ought'). This has not been uncomplicated: the department (traditionally working with texts rather than human subjects) had no existing practices, and mine was a test-case. The faculty form I filled in required me to undertake 'not to do any harm to the university', which felt like an unethical question, and underlined all my reservations about doing research with colleagues.
2. All the participants have been engaged in discussions on ethical issues. The students had time to debate and sign an ethics permission form (see Appendix A), and I kept them in touch with the developing research, though most of

them have since completed their studies. Where I have particularly focused on a student (as in Chapter 6, with Bongani) the emerging analysis was shared with the student, and the discussion with him has been written back in to the analysis. After discussion, I settled on different ethical processes for each of the lecturers involved. Their names have been changed, though the video footage presented in Chapters 6 and 7 makes them identifiable. Disciplinary areas of participants have not been changed (with their agreement). The name of the university has been changed, not to protect it, but to help give me critical distance. Opportunities were given to lecturers to read the emerging analysis. For example, see Chapter 7, in which I have included the response of the lecturer, Francois, to an initial reading of the chapter.

3. I have written about many of the ethical issues in the body of this thesis, in this chapter and in the data analysis chapters, where issues have arisen. This is part of the ethnographic process, in which one holds the responsibility of involvement, awareness of data histories and reflexivity with care.
4. Working with video has raised a particular set of issues. Methods that include visual representation are still relatively new territory. See for example Prosser (2000) on the moral gaze of image ethics. Ethical principles have not yet been adequately developed for the visual mode. Two of the issues identified by Prosser are a) that there is no anonymity when visuals are reproduced, and b) that one needs to overcome the impact of peoples' belief in the veracity of the image. Denzin (1997) also makes this point in relation to the 'ocular epistemology' that underpins the modernist belief in truth and objectivity. However, as the visually-based data were gathered in a humanities setting in which textual critique is the central business, and where I have arranged to give feedback as I work, I do not think that there is much chance of an overly 'truthful' reading. The guidelines on visual ethics research in Sarah Pink's *Doing Visual Ethnography* (2001, 36–46) have been useful, and include the following:
 - Arrange for collaborative over covert production of visual material (while acknowledging that even when people collaborate, their meanings may not coincide with those of the researcher). Only one of the lecturers in this study explained to his students that we were in the audience as researchers (see Chapter 7).

- Recognise harm to informants caused by anxiety. Lecturers in this study could choose not to be videotaped.
- Permission to publish needs serious consideration. These images will be/have been shown to participants. However, identities may be easily recognized, when the written text and image are combined.

Reflexivity

The third aspect of ethnographic framing recognizes that research is a representational process. One has to turn an extended process of engagement into a definitive product that appears coherent and enhances one's own career. I have already mentioned image-based ethics in 4) above. An additional and serious concern is how ethnographic accounts create and represent 'the other'. Figueroa (2000) addresses crucial questions on racialisation and 'othering' in research, such as: is it ethical *not* to focus on racial identity? This is an important issue for my research, as I am interested in the way diverse students engage with lectures. I am very conscious of the way students' racial and ethnic identities are represented in the academic literacies field, often 'othering' them as 'disadvantaged', a category that has been mobilized for redress, to create new access routes for historically excluded black students. Neither do I want to 'other' the lecturers I will be working with (another textual tendency of research in academic literacies). In studying engagement as co-constructed in my own institution, I have also had to identify what 'the other' is. Haggis (2008) would say that in higher education, it is the student; in academic literacies work in South Africa and elsewhere, it is often the discipline, or academics who fail to understand their students' paths, or to make explicit the paths they have to travel. For these reasons it has been necessary to write myself and my choices and dilemmas into this research as it has developed.

Research methods and data sources

Methods are not tied to epistemological positions (see for example Hammersley 1992 and Vulliamy 1990). This enables one to look at a range of levels, and shift the focus from texts to interviews to observations, and to respond flexibly to what emerges in the research process. In this section, research methods are described and discussed. This includes references to some of the technical aspects of data analysis that arise from different methods. The sketch of the research process (Figure 3.1) indicates the relationship between the variety of research methods used and the research process over

time, from the early pilot studies to the year of intense data gathering (2003), on to the follow up between 2003 and the present.

Video recordings of lectures

In the lectures that I had permission to videotape, my research assistant did the camera work, while I sat towards the back of the theatre so that I could see the student audience more clearly. I made field notes and attended to what would not be captured in the video (which focused on the lecturer).

Where lecturers agreed to being videotaped, the video material was transcribed, first focusing on the language, and then on the combination of word and image. This was preceded in each case by discussions with my research assistant², reviewing the entire lecture, keeping detailed notes, and comparing what had been noticed about the lecture as a whole. We selected particular sections of the lecture for close analysis, based on our sense of what the ‘critical moments’ were in the lectures, where we felt that students’ energy and attention seemed to cluster. Our judgment of what were the critical moments was also shaped by what the students had said in the focus group discussion after each lecture.

The process of developing a transcription system was time-consuming. At first I used Kress et al’s (2001) method but found that it reinforced the emphasis on verbal modes. Duranti, in his comprehensive discussion of the importance of transcription as a process of inscribing social action, argues that

...by transforming non-talk into talk, verbal descriptions reproduce the dominance of speech over other forms of human expression, before giving us a chance to assess how non-linguistic elements of the context participate in their own unique ways to the constitution of the activity being examined (1997, 144).

I also explored Norris’ (2004) detailed methodological framework for multimodal analysis, which is less language-oriented, but found it too fussy and ‘text-reducing’ for my research interests. In addition, her micro analysis is less able to move between texts and social practices as is suggested in Fairclough’s textually oriented discourse analysis.

Tufte writes eloquently of struggles to render complex human movement such as dance, permanent, through the use of dance notation. The result always fails: it is “so fussy and clumsy and contrary to the wholeness of the substance” (1990, 119).

² My research assistant helped with practical aspects of the research, such as filming lectures while I took field notes, and taking notes in focus group discussions while I chaired the sessions. She also offered an additional point of reference to balance the subjectivity of ethnographic observation.

The method I settled for involves transcribing what is said, with overlays of gesture and other salient features outside of language. Kendon (1996) guided my analysis of gesture, while Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) offered resources for the analysis of gaze. Cut-outs from the video are inserted at the end of the line, and can be read in two ways: in relation to the action described in the lines, from left to right, or from top to bottom, the eye skimming down over the images, ignoring the words, to provide a series of frames like watching a film.

Interviews

Interviews are an important method in the study. I interviewed all seventeen students individually in March of their first semester at university. Each of the four lecturers were also interviewed at least once. I use interviews to access the perspectives of participants, to complement the potentially static analysis of texts.

The contribution of interviews to qualitative research has been extensively written about. See for example Cohen and Manion (1994) for a discussion of the pros and cons, and different approaches in educational settings. The main limitation identified is the socially constructed nature of interviews (what Cohen and Manion refer to as bias, but others – myself included – understand as the inevitable intersubjectivity of all exchanges). There is a substantial literature on the social nature of the interview. For example, Mischler (1986) explores the role of context and narrative in the interview; Paxton, Garraway and Murray (1994) reflect on the power dynamics at work in their interviews with speakers of English as an additional language in South African universities. I see the interview as an interaction sharing many of the features of everyday life (Kitwood 1977 in Cohen and Manion 1994). Cohen and Manion argue that it follows that what is needed is not a way of controlling bias, but a theory of everyday life that takes into account the relevant features of the interview. For example, there are many factors that differ from interview to interview and it is impossible to bring every aspect of the interaction under rational control.

I have used semi-structured interviews (see Chapter 5) in order to cover similar ground with people, but not to foreclose what may emerge by rigidly sticking to an interview schedule. All interviews were tape-recorded, with the exception of those with two of the lecturers (Isobel and Simon, who preferred me to take notes, which were typed up and given to them for comment).

Textual analysis of students' notes

Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) *Reading Images: the grammar of visual design* informs the analysis of students' notes in Simon's lectures. I explore their handwritten notes as multimodal texts with an eye for how students recontextualise the lecture as they express their 'interest' in this activity. Lecture notes are one of the few text types in which handwriting is still predominant, so consideration of the cultural shaping of modes is important in this section.

Focus group interviews

Focus groups were held with small groups of 4–6 students after each lecture. Through them one could see how individual voices and opinions come together into a group reading of an aspect of the world (see Lewis 2000, Kreuger 1988, Denzin and Lincoln 1994). I chaired each session, leading with the question 'What do you recall from the lecture?' I had stressed that I was not evaluating what they had learnt but was interested in their impressions of any aspect of the lecture. In most of the focus groups, my research assistant took handwritten notes, mainly focusing on who said what, but also, where possible, indicating tone or attitude. These notes were mostly too brief for detailed discourse analysis. They were reconstructed soon after each interview, and were later used to identify the liminal moments which became the focus of analysis in data chapters 6 to 8. In some of the focus groups which my research assistant could not attend, I tape recorded the group discussions. As the students got to know each other, these became an interesting space where they could explore topics together outside of the classroom. At times, these focus groups felt like what Canagarajah calls 'pedagogical safe houses' (2004) in which authoritative discourses can be inflected as students try out their voices.

In some of the focus groups, I showed students video clips of moments in the lecture. This was done at the end of meeting, after the general discussion of what students recalled from the lecture. The clips were based on my assessment of what the liminal moments in the lecture were. The logistical challenges such as finding venues with reliable video playback facilities meant that this was not done consistently. I indicate in Chapters 6 and 7 where student discussion was based on the video clips.

Field notes

I have kept field notes, particularly in the lectures, where I have recorded aspects of the bigger picture, or focused on aspects of the lecture that the video camera would not have captured. Brown and Dowling (1998) have useful suggestions for how to keep field

notes, suggesting that the method requires administrative discipline, and that it is important to separate data from emerging interpretation. A series of columns can help to keep the distinction. In my notes for the two lecturers who did not want to be videoed, I wrote down as much as I could of a) what was said by the lecturer, making sure that I captured the kind of rhetorical move; b) what the lecturer did; and c) what the students said and did. These notes are drawn on strongly in Chapter 8, and a sample is provided in Appendix C.

I also kept field notes for other lectures that I attended, but which are not analysed here. For instance, I sat in on all of the lectures in the foundation course I was teaching, although only two were videotaped (see Chapter 6). I also attended lectures in other disciplines such as law and botany (with the permission of the lecturers) to get a comparative perspective on lectures in other disciplines.

Online material

I had not originally intended to analyse online material but Isobel (see Chapter 8) used the online environment extensively as a complement to her lectures. I look briefly at some online material from her course, and then pick up on the liminal moment identified downstream on the blog site of one of her ex students. I acknowledge the affordances of online communication (see the discussion of ICTs in the next chapter) and focus on entextualisation when analyzing online communication.

Images of lectures

In writing the historical chapter (Chapter 4) I drew on images of lectures as anchors and evidence for an argument. These images were tracked in the historical texts I read, as well as image search engines. They are not analysed in the text-intensive ways that are used elsewhere in this thesis; they are read to expand the texts and relate them to particular epistemological patterns that are represented through the images.

A note on transcription

Three different types of transcription are used in the analysis of video- and audio-taped data, depending on purpose. a) When solely interested in content, I punctuate data for ease of reading, using full stops, commas, and capitals. b) When primarily interested in content, but emphasizing features of expression, I underline phrases. This is not done uniformly, as I draw attention to different features in different sections. I indicate in the surrounding text which features I am drawing attention to. c) Detailed representation of speech (including hesitations and pauses), gesture, gaze etc. is used for the multimodal

analysis in Chapters 6 and 7, with some use of full stops and capitals. Some of the symbols (for example for gaze) have been developed specially for this study.

Narrative of the research process

The research design of the main stage of data gathering is shown below in the following representation of the research design. It starts on the left with the two pilot studies conducted before the intensive data gathering in 2003, and progresses to the follow-up work between 2004 and 2007 (on the right). The range of methods described in the previous section is listed on the left, using bullet points.

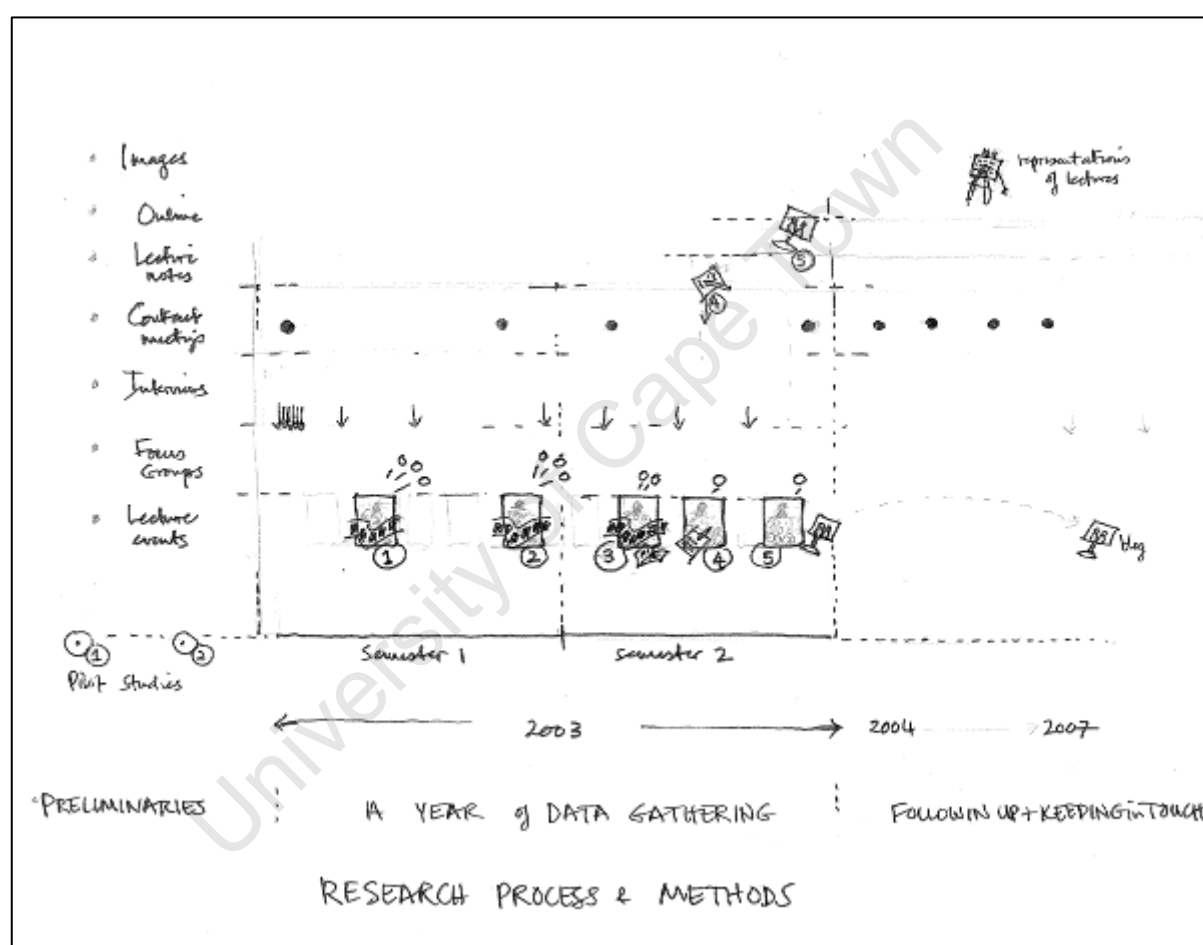


Figure 3.1: Sketch of research process and methods

Preliminaries

Prior to the data gathering in 2003, I had carried out two pilot studies that helped me find focus. This section describes the pilot studies and how they influenced the subsequent research design.

Pilot study part 1 (September–October 2001)

As my early interest in this as a possible topic developed, I interviewed four students from one of my classes in the first year course I was teaching on. I had been intrigued by the way they talked about their lecturers. They identified lecturers they had encountered in their first year in the humanities, whom they described as ‘good’. I approached one lecturer who was very reluctant for me to record his lectures or to be present at all. The main reason given was that he was teaching out of his discipline and did not want to be studied out on a disciplinary limb. He was also anxious about the multimedia equipment he was using, and was concerned that it would break down leaving him stranded, and raised issues about the impact of my presence on his actions. He gave me his lecture notes. I interviewed the students together and separately, and then organised a meeting between the students and lecturer. One interesting thing to emerge from this meeting was the lecturer’s shock at students saying that (in general) they found men more convincing than women, whose voices tended to be softer, and who were often so careful as to lose all spontaneity. The lecturer told the students that Maggie Thatcher had consulted a voice coach to make her sound more persuasive. From this study, several things emerged:

- I discovered the importance of working with lecturers who were willing to put their practice under scrutiny
- I saw clearly that the close focus on lecturers was potentially unsettling
- I also sensed the undercurrents regarding power, seduction and desire. I think that I repressed this insight, other than to decide quite clearly that I was not going to look at learning in the narrow, examinable sense, but much more widely. I began to formulate research questions and areas to probe in the interviews.

Pilot study 2: Videotape selected lectures (August–September 2002)

Having decided that the area was worth exploring, the next challenge was to investigate video analysis of lectures. As mentioned in the Introduction, my background is in teaching and researching writing, and while I had become interested in visual analysis, I was by no means an expert. I approached a colleague, Francois, who later became one of my ‘subjects’. I knew that he had allowed a colleague to video him in the past, and was deeply interested in pedagogy and would therefore get something out of the process. I attended and videoed two of his lectures, and experimented with various forms of transcription, settling on the need to overlay modes to show simultaneity, rather like an opera score, instead of separating them out into different columns. In the end, I

abandoned the elaborate system I had developed for a simpler one (see Chapters 6 and 7). I also learnt about the ethical and invasive issues associated with presenting yourself in a large lecture theatre. The lecturer had explained my presence to the students, reassuring them that the focus was on him, not them, and linking the presence of the camera to a point he was making in his lectures, about Foucault and surveillance. This was the beginning of a process of dialogue with the lecturers, which I saw as most fruitful for my own learning process. They gave me insights into their disciplines and to different degrees shared ideas about teaching that have enriched my insights into teaching in the humanities.

A year of lectures: data gathering in 2003

Data gathering for this project began in earnest at the beginning of 2003. I was a tutor on the textually-focused interdisciplinary 'foundation course' in the humanities, compulsory to all 1100 first-year students in the faculty (see Chapter 6 for a fuller description). After the experience of the first pilot study, in which I encountered the reluctance of the lecturer to be the focus of analysis, and his shock at what students said, I decided to put more of the choice of which lecturers to work with in the students' hands.

Making contact with students

In the third week of the course, I told my tutorial group of 30 students that I was doing a PhD on students' experience of lectures in the first year. I asked whether any students would like to volunteer to work with me on this project, explaining that I was not interested in what they had learnt (in the examinable sense) from the lectures, but was more interested in what they noticed about how lectures worked, what functions they performed, how visual and verbal modes operated together, which lecturers they enjoyed and why. I said that I would be interviewing their lecturers as well. In addition, I told students that they would be paid a small hourly rate for meetings and interviews attended. I am aware that this is a controversial practice, but the small amount (R30) seemed to me to be fair recognition of their time commitment. Payment for research participation is also a well-established practice at Entabeni. A group of 11 students met in a small lecture theatre, where I explained my research interests, asked students to write down the other courses they were registered for, and their contact details. We discussed ethics and I gave them the ethics form (Appendix A) to consider. I made the point that they would not be academically advantaged in the narrow confines of the course I was teaching, but the benefits would be their exposure to the research process and their

insights into the humanities, and conversations with fellow students. I was concerned about the demographics of the volunteers: there were very few black South African students (a reflection of the composition of my tutorial group). I was also teaching a weekly voluntary study group for students for whom English is a second language, and encouraged them to join the research group. This meant that in the end there were 17 students involved, rather more than I had intended, but I thought that some students would drop out of the process. Two did leave the university before the end of the first year.

Below the students are briefly identified. I hesitate to ascribe racial identities, knowing that some of my students would not have described themselves in the way that I have here, and that by using these terms, I help to create and fix a racialised reality. Marianne foregrounds her Zambian identity; Lerato tells me proudly that she is the daughter of subsistence farmers; Sabelo wants to be identified as black, ‘after all it’s a fact’; Amy is most aware of adjusting to what she sees as a ‘clichey’ religious community; for Salama, being Muslim is primary; Lindee talks openly about how she is seen in the ‘coloured’ community. I have also included brief accounts of where they come from, and some detail on their activities between school and university, where appropriate. Kerry and Iain dropped out during the year, Iain with a fractured skull after he was assaulted walking home from a late night party. The students (in alphabetical order) are:

- *Anna* ♀, Milnerton, Cape Town
- *Bongani* ♂, Knysna, rural western Cape, had been an HIV counsellor
- *Ella* ♀, moved to Cape Town from Durban in her last year of schooling
- *Iain* ♂, Rondebosch, Cape Town
- *Kerry* ♀, Fish Hoek, Cape Town
- *Lerato* ♀, rural northern Botswana
- *Lindee* ♀, Bellville, Cape Town, had worked in the UK as an *au pair*
- *Leah* ♀, Strandfontein, Cape Town
- *Mark* ♂, Elsies River, Cape Town
- *Marianne* ♀, Kitwe, Zambia
- *Nomathemba* ♀, Khayelitsha, Cape Town
- *Riaan* ♂, Johannesburg, had spent two years working in the US
- *Amy* ♀, recently moved to Cape Town from Witbank
- *Sabelo* ♂, Gauteng, two years in college

- *Salama* ♀, District Six, Cape Town
- *Taffie* ♀, Chiredze, Zimbabwe.
- *Triya* ♀, recently moved to Cape Town with family, from Durban

Using the language that Entabeni still uses to track patterns of exclusion, with race a proxy for class, Lindee, Leah, Mark and Salama are ‘coloured’, Bongani, Lerato, Nomathemba, Sabelo and Taffie are ‘black’, Triya is ‘Indian’, and Anna, Ella, Iain, Kerry, Marianne, Riaan and Amy are ‘white’. Fuller descriptions of the students, based on what they foregrounded in the interviews, are in Appendix B and also in subsequent chapters.

Individual autobiographical interviews with students

In the next three weeks of the course, I interviewed all of the students individually, using a semi-structured schedule of questions. These interviews were tape-recorded. We also discussed the ethics form, and students signed them after they had got a feel for the interview situation, and had had an opportunity to ask questions about the research process and ethics. I asked my research assistant to listen to a sample of interviews to comment on my questioning style, and anything else she noticed. She is an expert in oral history and gave me useful feedback on my interviewing technique, noticing for example, that I tended to elaborate on my questions, filling the gaps, rather than allowing students to respond in their own ways, with their own understandings.

Later, I wrote a short profile of each student based on these interviews (see Appendix B and discussions under ‘Group meetings’ and ‘Keeping in touch with students’ below, regarding the challenges of writing these profiles so that they would not fix student identities in ways that would make them uncomfortable.)

Choosing the lecturers and lectures

In the interviews, I asked all students which lectures ‘they would not like to miss’, as a way of understanding the distinctions they were drawing regarding their lecturers. This became an ongoing conversation in the meetings, and in informal contact with students. Their singling out of these ‘not-to-be-missed’ lecturers also became a way of choosing which lecturers to work with. It must be acknowledged that this was not a ‘random sample’ of lecturers: there was nothing neutral about the sample. They were largely self-confident, popular or controversial, interested in pedagogy, perhaps easier to approach because they had been positively selected. An obvious choice was the larger-than-life convenor and the main lecturer on the foundation course, Robert. I decided to focus on

him, as all students in my group attended his lectures. My insider status on the course meant that it was easy to approach him. Tutors were also encouraged to attend lectures, so my presence was unmarked. We met before the end of the quarter, to arrange which lectures I would focus on, and for me to interview him about his frames of reference for lecturing.

Four lecturers were identified and approached. One (Francois) had not been singled out by students. All are white, and with one exception in each case, they are all under 40, and men (see discussion of limitations below). Two of the four are featured on a student website of the ‘ten sexiest lecturers’ in the humanities. The same two are recipients of prestigious ‘distinguished teacher’ awards, and the other two have been nominated for these awards. They are:

- *Robert*, ♂ lecturer, course convenor of the common interdisciplinary ‘foundation’ course for which all students were registered. His lectures are analysed in Chapter 6.
- *Francois*, ♂ associate professor, experienced course convenor of introductory course to sociology and development studies. He is the focus of Chapter 7.
- *Isobel*, ♀ senior lecturer, convenor of introduction to media studies course.
- *Simon*, ♂ associate professor, applied ethics lecturer. Isobel and Simon are the subjects of Chapter 8.

They are introduced more fully in the data chapters (6 to 8). With the exception of Robert’s lectures, all were in the second semester, in which students traditionally have more choice about their subjects. One of the challenges was that I needed courses that enough of my research students were registered for to make the focus group discussions after the lectures meaningful.

In summary, the lecturers were chosen because while they were, to varying degrees, successful and highly regarded; they were also open to the invasion of this research project and, for some, to further insights into their practices and they came from a range of disciplines, from the textually oriented media-rich media studies, to the more Socratic dialogic methods of Simon’s ethics course. In addition a large enough group of students in my sample were registered for the course, enabling a focus group discussion to take place. Although I had originally intended to video all lectures, Isobel and Simon’s lectures, which were not filmed, offered opportunities to explore texts one step away from the central performance of the lecture: online chat-room data, and lecture notes.

Interviews with lecturers

In addition to my initial contact discussion with each lecturer, at least one interview was conducted prior to the chosen lecture. In these, I asked the lecturers about their frames of reference for lectures, and in semi-structured interviews, explored whether they thought lectures had changed significantly, how they responded to the common view from students that 'lectures are boring', and from lecturers, that 'students just want to be entertained'. As with their preferences for how they would like data to be gathered in their lectures, Robert and Francois were comfortable with audio recorded interviews, whereas Isobel and Simon preferred me to take notes. The benefit of the latter method was that I could send them my notes electronically, which they then commented on, ironing out any misunderstandings or misrepresentations. Mindful of the invasiveness of my practices, we also had extensive discussions about ethics. It did not seem appropriate to ask lecturers to sign ethics permission forms, as I had done with students. Instead, we left this open-ended, a different process emerging for each person. One read my research proposal, making contributions to some oversimplifications in the ethics discussion and all expressed an interest in reading the findings as they emerged. We agreed that their comments could become part of my text, if they felt this necessary. I had shown a draft analysis of one of his lectures before it went to publication (Thesen 2006). I found the process extremely difficult, as I felt that on the one hand, I was critical of him, and on the other, I could have pushed my analysis further, but was hobbling myself as he is a respected colleague who I would continue to work with after the project. He was very comfortable with my critique, seeing it as a theoretical (and inevitably ideological) process that he welcomed, and felt we needed more of in the university.

Choosing and attending lectures

I attended all of Robert's lectures, but we agreed to focus on two in detail. The first had a strong visual element (the screening of images from a cricket festival in the rural Eastern Cape) and the other a much more traditional final lecture on the course. I observed four of Isobel's lectures, but have only analysed one in detail, one that she chose as potentially most interesting. The choice of lectures was less deliberate for Francois and Simon. Timetabling meant that I observed Francois' lectures soon after he had taken over from another lecturer. For Simon, it did not matter which lecture I attended. They were conducted in the same Socratic way.

The focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were a major element in the research design. After each chosen lecture, I met with a group of students in a focus group discussion as close to the event as possible (a maximum of three days after the event). As mentioned before, I asked students to do what they usually do in lectures (as far as possible), and stressed that I was not interested in ‘testing’ them on their content knowledge, but wanted to know what they noticed, what they felt worked and did not work. For Robert’s lectures, three focus group meetings were held for each of the two lectures, with different students in each group; two were held for Francois’ lecture, and one for each of the other lectures in the second semester. For most of the focus groups, I chaired the discussion, while my research assistant took notes, recording who said what. I asked students what they noticed/recalled from the lecture, with everyone in the group having at least one speaking turn. In general, conversation moved rapidly and easily in the focus groups in the one hour set aside.

Group meetings

Regular group meetings were held throughout the process, beginning in March 2003. In most of these, my research assistant took notes. In the first year of the research, four meetings were held; one at the beginning of the process, one at the end of the first semester, which included a discussion of the pseudonyms that students would like me to use and two in the second semester. The first was to finalise the lectures we would focus on. In these sessions we made practical arrangements, such as updating contact details and courses students were registered for. Where appropriate, I showed students transcripts of data or discussed a particular research challenge.

Keeping in touch with students

My original plan was to focus on the functions of lectures in students’ lives in the crucial first year at university. However, I soon became aware that, although this is not a longitudinal study, I had to have some sense of the extent to which students’ analysis of and reactions to lectures were specific to this point in their lives. So in March 2004 and in March 2005, further meetings with students took place. In 2004, in addition to seeing to practicalities such as contact details, I asked students to do three things:

- illustrate how they saw lectures
- comment on whether they felt anything had changed significantly compared to how they had seen lectures in their first year

- say whether they thought a first year environment *without* lectures would be an overall gain or loss.

I did a similar exercise in the meeting in 2005, but this time asked them to recall lecturing highlights over the three years of the undergraduate degree and to again note any changes in their attitudes to lectures. In addition, we discussed some of the ethical issues I was struggling with at the time in writing a journal article based on this research. I explained my difficulties with how to identify students, especially with decisions about how to describe them, their racial and ethnic identity, gender, age, religion, urban-rural etc. I showed students the typed out profiles that I had written for each person (Appendix B). I gave each student a separate printout, with the names that they had chosen for themselves in the previous year. I asked students to edit and comment on these, noting what needed updating, or changing. At this point, one student elected to have his name changed to make it less recognizable; others chose to have their own names used, rather than the pseudonyms given earlier. One student wanted to be called 'Smiley', a nickname given by her favourite lecturer. I did not make that change.

Limitations of the research

Inevitably in an ethnographic process such as this, there are many gaps and limitations that emerge as the study develops. Four are particularly important. The first a) is that all of the lecturers I worked with are white, and the views of black lecturers are therefore not represented. I see the strong presence of white lecturers in the first year environment as a structural fact, one of what Jansen (2004, 311) calls a 'racial birthmark', and a continuity with the Apartheid and colonial past. On noting how few black lecturers there were in the first year, Leah reflects 'Says something about racial discrimination in our country, doesn't it?' There are different ways of interpreting this silence, apart from the reality that there are so few black lecturers in the first year environment. Were they not visible to students? Might some students have wanted to name black lecturers, but not felt comfortable to do so in the interview situation? Might black students have been protecting them from research scrutiny? I cannot properly answer this question. While no black lecturers were suggested as participants in the study, several students referred to black lecturers, particularly after reaching their third year (Chapter 5). Students seemed to be more comfortable referring to racial identity in the interviews than in the more public focus groups.

Secondly, another gap emerged while reviewing the literature. I found no studies that explore how students in poorly resourced universities elsewhere in southern Africa experience lectures. The unevenness in the research base in this area has led to a comfortably held view that lectures are under threat, as is shown in the Introduction: yes possibly, in a 'new' world where ICTs are reliably available to enhance and substitute for lectures. But we know little about lectures in 'third world' contexts. I asked a colleague who is a specialist in African Literature whether she could think of descriptions of lectures in fictional accounts, and she could not recall any such account.

Thirdly I regret that I did not ask my students in the initial 2003 individual interviews, or in any of the research meetings, where they tended to sit in lectures. The embodied aspects of the study only emerged later, as the theoretical frame of ritualisation took shape.

And the last limitation that I will mention also occurred to me over time. I had begun the research with an interest in how to record multimodal practices in lectures. Video analysis seemed to be the obvious choice for getting as close as possible to communicative practices. While multimodal analysis opens up new meanings, it also closes meaning down by maintaining the fiction that we can capture a fuller reality if we go beyond language. As my theoretical interest in performance and performativity grew, I understood that part of what lectures are about is precisely the performance, and performance is once-off, fresh, original and fugitive. It defies close analysis and holding still. This is discussed in Chapter 9, where I return to Butler's (2006) and Phelan's (1993) concerns with the ontology of performance. I have not resolved the challenge of how to render full but fleeting embodied presence.

Data analysis frameworks

The main tools that provide what Bernstein (2000) calls an external language of description, and which bring data and theory together, are outlined below, in relation to the data gathering map (Figure 3.1).

Chapter 4: This chapter provides historical context to the lecture. Using secondary sources and images, I explore changes and continuities in communicative practices in lectures, with an emphasis on **modes** and the **gaze**. Communicative practices are patterns of communication that involve both interaction and representation. Modes are socially fashioned resources for communication. The gaze provides a way of tracing power effects in visual texts. Power can be read through an analysis of the way the gaze

works in representations of lectures (who looks at whom, or what). Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) use the gaze to analyse power in interaction between viewer and what is represented, as well as between elements that are represented.

Chapter 5: This chapter focuses mainly on the interviews with students in March of their first year at university. I bring together **discourse analysis** and **ritualization** to trace the distinctions that students make among lectures and lecturers. Bell's '**sets of oppositions**' involved in ritualization are linked to McLaren's **interactive states** (or styles), by means of discourse analysis tools such as tracing the **metaphors** through which students frame their descriptions of lectures. For the horizontal distinctions that students draw, I look at **intertextuality** (Fairclough 1992) to see which "specific other texts are drawn on" (117), as well as **pronouns**, which can be used to trace 'us and them' relations. Through this drawing of distinctions, we can see how students are oriented to a **redemptive hegemony** that revolves around respect.

Chapters 6 and 7: Both of these chapters are based on the analysis of video footage from lectures, as well as what students recall of the lectures in focus group discussions. The analysis focuses on selected **liminal moments** where there is some kind of reversal, or intensity, in the interaction in the lectures. Liminal moments indicate instances where the conventional arrangements are breached to reveal inversions in the social structure. These moments are deeply responsive to context, both the immediate context of the speaker-audience relationship, and to the wider socio-political context. They were identified as follows: by experiencing them in the lectures and triangulating my impressions with my research assistant, and by noting what had held students' attention in the focus groups. For example, in Chapter 6 the hush in the lecture theatre when the image of the initiates was analysed by the lecturer (see figure 6.1) constituted a liminal moment. In contrast, the second liminal moment in the chapter (the end of Robert's final lecture) was marked by a clamour and outcry at his early exit from the lecture theatre. Moments such as these are traced through **footing** and **entextualisation**. Footing is Goffman's construct for how alignment between self and other is effected in interaction. Shifts in footing indicate an adjustment of the communicative frame. Entextualisation (Bauman and Briggs 1990, Blommaert 2005) is the process by which discourse is "successively decontextualised and recontextualised, and thus made into a 'new' discourse", with new interpretive frames (Blommaert 2005, 251–2).

Chapter 8: The lectures analysed in this chapter were not videoed, and so I draw on my fieldnotes, as well as students' handwritten notes (in Simon's lecture) and online discussion (after Isobel's lecture). **Liminal moments** and **entextualisation** are once again an important tool for analysis, for studying the recontextualisations that take place within and beyond the lecture.

All of these terms are defined and exemplified more fully in the chapters in which they appear. The next chapter provides historical context for the subsequent data analysis chapters.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 4

The past in the present

This chapter will explore some of the familiar traces from the past that attach to the present. I had originally intended to limit this study to a synchronic analysis, staying with the lecture at a particular time and place. However, as the study progressed, it became clear that I could not ignore the historical dimension. As is apparent in the Introduction, criticisms of the lecture frequently refer to the past, and see it as out of step with notions of student-centred learning. Pratt's (1999) construct of the contact zone also draws attention to the simultaneity of the past in the present. And social semiotic analysis, with its interest in how modes are culturally shaped over long periods of time, also recognizes the importance of historical analysis, as does the methodology chapter with its concern that we do not get caught up in a narrow sense of 'the new'.

However, it was in analyzing the data that it became clear that an explicit focus on communicative practices that draws from the past would contribute to the study. Lecturers often make intertextual links to the past (see for example Robert's references to St Augustin and Sartre in Chapter 6), and their styles also evoked the history of the humanities (Simon's use of the Socratic Method, and Isobel's performance of Marilyn Monroe in Chapter 8). In addition, students (Chapter 5) contrast the engaging lecturers who 'move about' and relate well to students, with those who stand behind 'the podium', and 'the altar', symbols of frozen hierarchy. Having decided to venture into this historical account, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The semiotic history of the lecture is a vast topic, and I am only dipping into it, using selected images to carry my argument about different discursive patterns in which lectures are embedded. Crucial questions about the changing class, race and gender identities of participants in lectures can only be hinted at here. In addition, writing this chapter has made me aware of the investment and interest that inevitably attend historiography. Whose history counts? Does one stress continuity or rupture? Does a painting constitute valid evidence? I draw on secondary sources as well as 'found' images, which I am reading at face value, rather than analyzing as representations that emerge from particular worldviews and representational frames.

This chapter prepares the ground for later analysis of how the communicative practices in lectures have been shaped by the past. The semiotic modes employed in the lecture or any other event are, as Kress et al point out, culturally shaped over time "into

an organized, regular, socially specific means of representation” (2001, 15) which, as elements in modal ensembles, do work in specific time-place settings. While Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2001) have focused on the profound shifts in recent history – the ‘turn to the visual’ – I wish here to draw from a much longer history to illustrate the discursive patterns and practices in which the lecture at Entabeni is situated. This longer history reveals instead a *re*-turn to the visual, or more specifically, a re-turn to the *image*.

In the rest of this chapter, a chronology of the lecture is presented in broad brushstrokes. It begins by establishing a link to the university as a flexible institution that has been responsive to changing contexts and contradictory functions. Emblematic images illustrate how the lecture space has enabled changing literacy practices from the oral and memorial culture of the medieval university, through to the Enlightenment emphasis on legibility, self-regulation and the written word. In the contemporary well resourced university the screen plays an important role, but the strands that favour the modes and media of oral performance that went underground in the birth of the research university in early modern Germany are still present. This helps us to account for the ambiguity in the lecture, the tension between rigidity and strongly coded authority on the one hand, and meanings related to the theatre and performance on the other. The latter meanings are available, but are typically suppressed.

Dynamic systems and contradictory functions

One of the striking things about lectures is that they have remained the defining architectural space in higher education over a very long period. Lecture theatres, along with universities as institutions, appear to be remarkably enduring. It is only in the elite universities with the college system and pedagogy based on individual tutors, the “image that holds us captive” (in Morrow’s words 2007, 19, in the Introduction), that they have not been the dominant pedagogical space. The history of the lecture is inevitably tied to that of the university; while much of the detail has changed, universities have always been what Castells calls “dynamic systems of contradictory functions” (2001, 206) including the generation and transmission of ideology, selection and formation of dominant elites, production and application of knowledge, and training of a skilled labour force (210).

In the western European historiography of what came to be called the university, there is general agreement that what is understood as higher education has its origins in schools in urban communities (Bologna and Paris) where students and teachers were granted certain privileges and liberties in the 12th century. The main sources for this account are Ruegg (1992) and Cobban (1975). Ruegg acknowledges the many influences

that flowed into the medieval university, including Islamic schools of learning, which shaped its organizational arrangements. Cobban however identifies a direct line from Graeco-Roman education. He argues that this inheritance included both the physical arrangements as well as a utilitarian outlook, converted from a focus on the state to the Christian church. From these early *stadia generale*, influenced by traditions in antiquity and the early Christian church of St Augustin as well as Islam, emerged the lecture-based pedagogy that has been central to universities for the past 900 or so years. Perkin's history of universities summarises this process as follows:

Only in Europe from the 12th century onwards did an autonomous, permanent, corporate institution of higher learning emerge and survive, in varying degrees, to the present day [...] In the interstices of power the university could find a modestly secure niche, and play off one authority [e.g. king *vs* archbishop] against another. Unintentionally, it evolved into an immensely flexible institution, able to adapt to almost any political situation and form of society. In this way it was able to migrate, eventually, to every country and continent in the world (1997, 3).

Perkin outlines the striking way in which universities outlived the medieval world that had brought them into being. They helped destroy that world during the Reformation, adjusting later to the priorities of the Industrial Revolution, while at the same time making contributions to successive waves of colonization in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, as well as to the struggles for freedom from colonial rule of many of these colonized countries. Since the Second World War, it has become the “key institution” in the transition from elite to ‘mass’ higher education (4).

***Lectio* and *disputatio* in the medieval university**

Going back to its medieval origins, the inheritance of the early universities involved three defining elements: a disciplinary *classification*, a *hierarchy* among these disciplines and a pervasive *method* (Verger, 1992). The four disciplines established were theology, law, medicine and philosophy; the latter included both the ‘sciences’ and ‘humanities’ (at times called either ‘arts’ or ‘letters’, or both; at other times retaining ‘philosophy’). Wallerstein (2004) notes the early institutionalization of ‘two cultures’, one concerned with empirical truth and the other with hermeneutic insight. Philosophy struggled to establish itself and to compete for resources in a strongly religious milieu, because of its profane origins in antiquity. As regards method, scholastic practices involved Latin as the medium of instruction, with a rigid pattern of delivery, in which there were two basic types of exercise, the lecture (*lectio*) and the disputation (*disputatio*). In the lecture, the master read out of an ascribed canonical text which was explained in sections. The aim

was to acquaint the audience with key texts and make sure they passed down through the generations. In the disputation, material from the key texts introduced in the lecture was applied and refined through oral debate conducted according to Aristotelian logic. With constant references to the ‘authorities’, particular cases or theses were established, defended or refuted in the interests of developing a consistent body of knowledge, a ‘higher truth’ (see Schwinges, 1992, for a general description). In the pedagogy there is thus a dual energy, one (*lectio*) concerned with memory and the other (*disputatio*) with movement, through subjecting knowledge to the examination of pros and cons. Clark (2006) observes that “Ecclesiastical elements inform the lecture, while juridical or judicial etiquettes imbue the disputation” (75-6).

This image below (Figure 4.1), a painting by Laurentinus de Voltolina in the late 14th century, is emblematic of the *lectio* situation. The similarities between this and the contemporary lecture at Entabeni are striking. There is the authoritative chair in the centre front. There are tiered rows, differing levels of attention (with some students on the margins talking or falling asleep). Student boredom, or uneven attention, appears to have a very long history. Those in the front have their texts out, following the lecture, while those behind (presumably poorer) do not have books. To my eyes, there are two marked differences between this representation and the current situation. The first is that the podium is elevated, suggesting an ecclesiastical and legal space. The lecturer is raised above the audience, and his gaze is directed on the level, and slightly upward, heavenwards, in recognition of the higher authority of the church, and the lecturer’s role as mediator of sacred knowledge. From this elevated seat the lecturer could look out of the window on to a view of trees, gardens and meadows, as “viewing nature strengthens memory” (Clark’s paraphrase of an early 13th century description of the ideal lecture hall, 2006, 69).

The general gaze in this space is of ‘many to few’, what Foucault calls *spectacle*, the typical pattern of antiquity, the social arrangement to which “the architecture of temples, theatres and circuses responded” (1977, 216-217). This is discussed later in this chapter, where this concept of spectacle is compared with philosopher Guy Debord’s version of spectacle, used to refer to contemporary media-driven ‘second hand’ views of reality. The second difference is that, on close inspection, the literacy arrangements, while appearing to be similar, also differ from contemporary practices. While some students have books, no-one (apart perhaps from the person in the front, to the lecturer’s left) appears to be taking notes. The next section pauses briefly on each of these differences.



Figure 4.1: A lecture hall in 14th century Bologna (c. 1380). It is emblematic of the early medieval lecture situation. The artist is Laurentinus de Voltolina, and the lecturer is understood to be Heinrich the German.

Reflecting on the marked differences between this representation and the current situation, it is noted that the elevated chair reflects the juridico-ecclesiastical underpinnings of the university in medieval Europe. The seat conveyed the legitimate power of the authorized speaker. Like the bishop who was entitled to occupy this chair in order to produce authority, a lecturer like Heinrich of Germany was qualified to occupy the chair, and to read and interpret (in this case theological) canonical texts. The literacy practices also differ from more recent arrangements. While this pedagogy was strongly book-centred, it was embedded in a predominantly oral culture, in which keeping texts alive depended on oral dissemination beyond the university, through the law and the church. The focus on books was as much to do with their scarcity as their status in the method. In this image, the manuscripts are not printed, but handwritten on paper. Some writers (for example Fischer 2003) see the invention of the printing press in the mid 1400s as a turning point in literacy and consciousness, while others such as Carruthers (1990) point out that while the increase in the availability of books in the late Middle Ages was important, this shift in technology was less significant than the ‘memorial culture’ in which technologies of both parchment and eventually paper were embedded for a very long period of time. By stressing the continuities she questions the distinction

between ‘orality’ and ‘literacy’ that writers such as literacy anthropologist Street (1984) and South African social historian Hofmeyr (1993) have argued strongly against. I will return to Hofmeyr’s work at the end of this chapter, to underline the importance of the need to look closely at the interface between literacy and orality in particular contexts.

‘The triumph of the eye over the ear’: the demise of the disputation

The next image of a lecture hall in Leipzig, Germany (Figure 4.2), is used by Clark to make his compelling argument that in the early modern era (about 1500 to 1800, from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment) there was a gradual but profound shift which saw “the triumph of the eye over the ear” (2006, 13) as material practices that favoured the visible and legible (writing and recording) took over the predominantly oral, memorial ethos of the university. Clark (following Foucault 1977 and others who focus on the relationships between epistemology and material practices) calls these material practices an “arsenal of little tools” such as lists, timetables and graphs, which supplanted the role of oral narrative (19). This hall would have been used for both lectures and disputations, though the image is of a lecture. As with Figure 4.1, the chair is still elevated, and the authorized lecturer still reads from a book. The main difference is that the body language of the students indicates intense focus on lecture note taking.

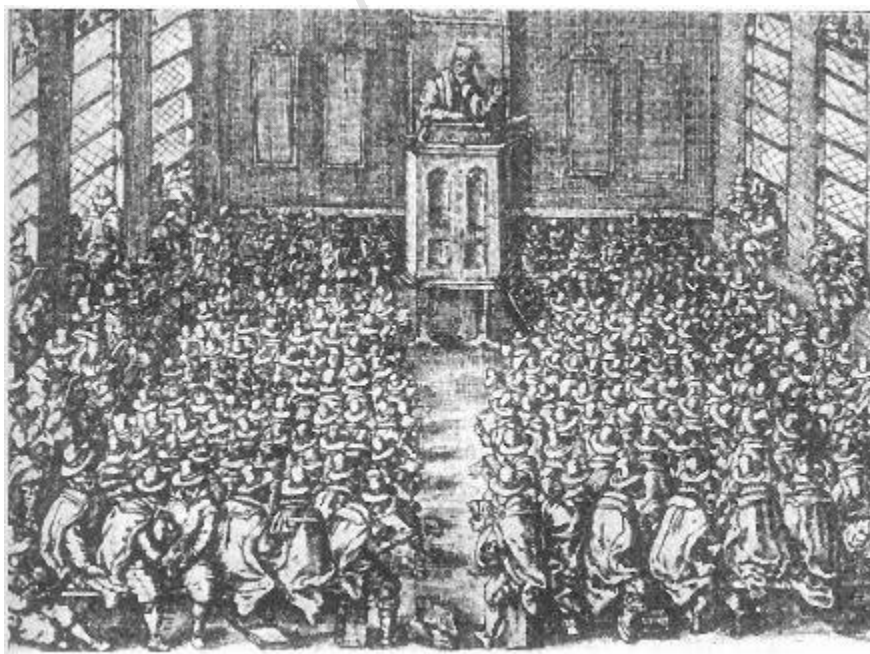


Figure 4.2: A seventeenth-century image of a lecture hall used for both lecture and disputation at Leipzig. This is used by Clark (2006) to represent the birth of the early modern research university in Germany. The student body language, suggestive of deep engagement with lecture note taking, illustrates the birth of a work ethic.

Note-taking: a 'striking modern development'

Clark sees this full, industrious lecture theatre as evidence of the forging of a Protestant work ethic and the pervasiveness of note-taking as a “striking modern development” (87). Poor students in particular became devoted note-takers. In the well-endowed disciplines such as medicine and law, wealthy students paid poor students to take notes for them. Notes were sometimes copied painstakingly at home from borrowed manuscripts.

In the universities of the 12th to 16th centuries, the handwriting of the individual student had not been at the centre of pedagogy. Scholarship was underpinned by memorisation and handwriting had a different significance, as Carruthers (1990) describes. The design of manuscripts with rich visual elements was an aid to memory. These manuscripts were handwritten by scribes who generally could not read themselves. The scribe's function was to copy the authorities as accurately as possible, perpetuating the religious authority through the text, downplaying individual differences. Handwriting became a sign of individually held literacy in the shift illustrated by Figure 4.2. This point is also made by Foucault (1977). For Foucault, the changes that took place in institutions in the 18th century, emblemized by the shifts in penal punishment from the public spectacle of the gallows to the incarceration and minute management of the individual through surveillance, are symbolized by the centrality of the timetable. As universities prepared bureaucrats for the colonies, handwritten documentation backed up by signatures were the main means of legal and institutional control. In medieval universities, examinations were conducted in the oral mode, but this changed in the course of the 18th century, by the end of which individuals were generally tested in written examinations, a shift that allowed a large number of students to sit an examination at the same time. He explores handwriting as an expression of how “anatomy-chronological schema of behavior” defined gestures and action in institutions such that “time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power”:

In the correct use of the body, which makes possible a correct use of time, nothing must remain idle or useless everything must be called upon for the support of the act required. A well-disciplined body forms the operational context of the slightest gesture. Good handwriting, for example, presupposes a gymnastics – a whole routine whose rigorous code invests the body in its entirety, from the points of the feet to the tip of the index finger (1977, 152).

This well disciplined body is strongly present in the lecture room and the examination hall; handwriting becomes the sign of the individual's presence, and therefore compliance with that system. This theme will be explored further in Chapter 5 where the construct of

'bodily states' (McLaren 1993) is used to track students' accounts of lectures, and in Chapter 8 where students' lecture notes are analysed.

What this engraving does not show is that lectures and disputations had been in decline with falling attendances. In the medieval university, a student had to produce proof of having attended lectures in order to complete a degree and this kept the attendance up. In philosophy lectures, attendance became a matter of personal choice, as curricula and assessment practices changed. Attendance at lectures dropped, and for many academics lecturing became a role that one played, going through the motions. One could be rewarded for playing the role badly, by being relieved of lecturing altogether, if the student audiences declined dramatically enough. Differences appeared between Oxbridge and the German universities. At Oxbridge, the lecture method was in trouble. Money for endowed chairs meant that incumbents had tenure for life, often treating their chairs as sinecures requiring little effort, putting lecturers beyond discipline. In Germany however, attendance at lectures was increasingly policed. By means of payment for lectures given, the introduction of a timetable, and stronger control over the curriculum, the lecturer was drawn in to the developing bureaucracy of the state, while the disputation failed to survive as a pedagogic form. Clark 2006, 81–89 provides a description of these processes.

So the lecture survived, but the disputation did not. It had become a farce, with its theatrical ethos out of character with the emerging Protestant moral economy. Clark notes that the main reason for the fall of the disputation is that it had lost all spontaneity (89). Declining spoken Latin skills also meant that rehearsal was necessary. From the medieval trial of courage modeled on the joust, it had descended into a rehearsed, often comical show. The disputation was abolished at Cambridge in 1839 (90). Clark argues that new practices emerged from the decline of the disputation, with an emphasis on the written and the legible. These practices included the written exam, seminar paper, doctoral dissertation and the ethos of publish or perish.

The rationalization of German academia wrought by ministries and markets aimed to substitute writing in place of speaking and hearing. Academic charisma would be manufactured by publications and written expert or peer review, instead of the old-fashioned disputational oral-arts, unsubstantiated rumours, and provincial gossip (2006, 29).

This shift to the dominance of the legible included the ascendancy of "the author and reader over the orator and audience, as well as to the triumph of the academic 'I' as

charismatic individual over the corporate, collegial, collective bodies of academics” (2006, 402).

It is instructive to look at an image from a similar period, which shows a lowered focus of attention, this time on an anatomical lecture taking place in the early 17th century at Leiden university (Figure 4.3). While there are some similarities, there is a marked contrast with the previous illustration (Figure 4.2) in that the focus of attention is lowered. The ‘chair’ (expertise) is lowered to allow an exposition on the dissected body of a woman¹, arranged so that everyone can see what is being demonstrated. Schumacher (2007) uses this image in his description of the changing architecture of the anatomy theatre. There is a companion image of the same space, but empty of people, as it doubled as a museum when not in use as an anatomy theatre. In the same way that lecture theatres doubled as churches and courtrooms, this theatre also has multiple purposes. Valuable public spaces would have been too scarce to be defined by one function only.



Figure 4.3: *Theatrum anatomicum* in Leiden, circa 1615. The image is used in Schumacher’s (2007) history of the architecture of the anatomy theatre.

He also points to a strong link between anatomy and spectacle. Visitors paid to attend public dissections, particularly during carnival time. The image above shows students and the general public clamouring to see the dissected body, in a spirit of carnival. There

¹ It is a woman’s body, and she is the subject of the ‘lesson’, yet women would not have been officially admitted to university. The gaze of the audience is as much on her as it is on the (male) lecturer. This is one of the moments in this chapter where a fuller analysis of the role of women in higher education cries out for analysis.

would have been an urgency about these events, as bodies could not be conserved for more than a few days; there would have been a strong awareness of the connection between life and death. Bakhtin's work on carnival and the importance of the body in struggles over meaning speaks to this image. It was a world in which "the serious and comic aspects of the world and of the deity were equally sacred, equally 'official'" (in Morris 1994, 197). This 'world upside down' merged public and private as two sides of the same coin, as opposed to the modern world in which the body has been "torn away from the direct relation to the life of the society and to the cosmic whole" (in Morris, 236).

While Figure 4.3 suggests spectacle, Clark has used an image from a roughly similar period (Figure 4.2) to show the birth of a work ethic, conveyed by the prevalence of handwriting. This challenges any neat categorization of shifts between different kinds of gaze, and indicates instead that these may exist side by side, or that they may co-exist, as will be suggested later in the contemporary lecture situation.

The lowered chair shown in the anatomy lecture in Figure 4.3 suggests that it is also possible that the development of modern science as discipline and institutionalized practice brought the chair down, as the influence of the church waned. The lowered chair enables a more empirical gaze, so participants could see the evidence used to demonstrate the power of science. It suggests a sharing of knowledge, a more democratic ethos, but also a more benign and subtle form of control over the body through self-regulation achieved through practices of visibility. This self-regulation and its expression in the lecture is explored in the next section.

Foucault on surveillance

The 'triumph of the eye over the ear' that Clark refers to resonates with the great shift that Foucault writes of in *Discipline and Punish* (1977). Between the modern situation and the Middle Ages, lies the growth of 'discipline' in the sense of the myriad technologies of power that turned absolute power into a more dispersed, subtle exercise in control during the Enlightenment. Foucault's argument is made with reference to philosopher Jeremy Bentham's *panopticon*², a design for a prison, in which prisoners could be seen by a single observer, without the prisoners knowing whether they were being watched or not. This

² The title of Bentham's paper is instructive, and gives us a sense of the reach of this design principle. The title is as follows: **panopticon**; or the inspection-house: containing the idea of a new principle of construction applicable to any sort of establishment, in which persons of any description are to be kept under inspection, and in particular to penitentiary-houses, prisons, houses of industry, work-houses, poor-houses, lazarettos, manufactories, hospitals, mad-houses, and schools: with a plan of management adapted to the principle: online at <http://cartome.org/panopticon2.htm>.

produces an environment in which people feel under surveillance, and therefore, it was claimed, they would take responsibility for their own actions, through self-regulation. This shift is represented in this image (Figure 4.4) below.

This image from Foucault (1977) can be contrasted with the image of the note-taking students in Figure 4.2. The caption tells us that it is a lecture on ‘the evils of alcoholism’ in a French prison. Unlike the pulpit-like arrangement in the medieval lecture hall, the lecturer is below, and is able to see everyone at a glance, arrangements that resemble the panopticon. The ‘students’ (prisoners) have an appearance of power, in that they can look down at the lecturer, but they cannot see each other. They are controlled by the panoptic gaze. In education, the disciplinary system has shifted the locus of power from external sources of authority such as corporal punishment, to the individual who through self-regulation takes responsibility for behaving well. This is achieved through the micro politics of ‘technologies’ such as physical arrangements in the classroom, timetabling, ranking of individuals, and the examination.



Figure 4.4: Lecture on the evils of alcoholism in the auditorium at Fresne prison, in the late 19th century. In Foucault (1977), reproduced between pages 169 and 170. This shows how the lecturer's chair has come down, enabling the lecturer to see everyone in the room simultaneously.

Foucault describes this shift from the ancient and medieval worlds, typified by social arrangements of spectacle, to the early modern patterns that favour surveillance:

Antiquity had been a civilization of spectacle. 'To render accessible to a multitude of men the inspection of a small number of objects': this was the problem to which the architecture of temples, theatres and circuses responded. With spectacle there was a predominance of public life, the intensity of festivals, sensual proximity. In these rituals in which blood flowed, society found new vigour and formed for a moment a single great society. The modern age poses the opposite problem: 'To procure for a small number, or even for a single individual, the instantaneous view of a great multitude (216).

Foucault ascribed this change to the growing influence of the state, "to its ever more profound intervention in all details of and all the relations of social life" (217). This distinction between ancient and modern is compelling, but will be challenged later in this chapter.

The contemporary lecture: 'Everybody is watching everybody all the time'

In moving to the modern era, as already mentioned, the lecture has survived remarkably well. This is not just because it is suited to the economics of mass education, but also because it is adaptable as a form that lends itself simultaneously to both spectacle and surveillance. While Foucault seems to present these kinds of relationships as exemplars of a historical shift, others such as Vinson and Ross (2001) see them as co-existing in many contemporary forms such as reality shows on TV, with important implications for education. The anecdote referred to in the Introduction in which a colleague 'felt like a continuity announcer' expresses this simultaneity of spectacle and surveillance. We need to remind ourselves of the point made earlier, that there are multiple and competing ideological and functional currents that run through universities in particular times and places.

This contemporary image of a lecture theatre shows a wireless classroom in an institutional setting of uncertain kind. The image resonates with Figure 4.2, the industrious body language of the digital note-takers reminding us of the forging of a work ethic that Clark refers to in the early modern research universities.



Figure 4.5: A wireless classroom in the early 21st century. Source Google image

The large screen at the front is also remarkably like an authoritative religious text, or textbook, at the centre of pedagogies in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 in this chapter. But there is a difference: all eyes are directed downwards, towards the screen of the individual laptop computers. This suggests the patterns of the gaze in the image of the Fresnes prison in Figure 4.4, as the audience appears to be divided from one another by the control of the individual laptops. The screen is a symbol of commodified culture, suggesting a different use of the term spectacle. Guy Debord uses spectacle³ to express the nature of contemporary capitalist culture and its resulting commercialisation:

The whole of life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*. All that once was directly lived has become mere representation (Debord 1995, 12).

Vinson and Ross suggest that new technologies make possible the ‘absurd’ situation in which ‘everybody is watching everybody all the time’. This is achieved through the combination of the gazes of surveillance and Debordian spectacle. However, resistance to the effects of disciplinary power in education is played out all the time, through scratchings on desks, non-attendance, doodling on note-paper, speaking a language that is not the language of schooling (i.e. not English, in the case of Entabeni University). This takes us back to the student’s image captioned ‘Listening to the Jammie 101 lecture’ in the Introduction. It is a parodic, bottom up comment from the contact zone, in which

³ Foucault put forward his concept of spectacle without any reference to Debord’s version, which had been published in France a decade previously. See for example <http://www.notbored.org/foucault-and-debord.html> for a discussion of this ‘gap’.

the students are in 'streetcorner' state, and thus leaves space for Bakhtin's carnival to be ever-present.

This chapter has approached the lecture by drawing from history, showing somewhat speculatively how it has survived and nurtured different communicative practices. However, we have looked at both continuities and changes. The physical form in which the method was carried, a pulpit-like podium from which a single authority held forth, has proved particularly durable in the context of the growth of mass education, and the need to fit as many students as possible into a space where they can benefit from a single authority. Yet there are also many changes that are apparent, particularly in the lowering of the chair to 'bring knowledge down' to people, but at the same time the 'little tools' of coercion regulate time and space, and produce conditions for surveillance in which the audience is intended to self-regulate, and adopt the docile bodies of the student state. Another change can be seen in the literacy practices. We saw the authoritative book in an oral memorial culture give way to a form of reproduction based on hand-written notes. We also saw the disputation, a twin practice that complemented the lecture, disappear, and migrate into the forms of written research scholarship that we are familiar with today. The oral practices of scholarship on which academic charisma was founded have been supplanted by written ones, but the phantom of the oral is still present. In the contemporary lecture theatre, with its screens, we can also see traces of contemporary media forms, and the 'second-hand' simulated experiences that they evoke. I suggest that one of the reasons why we may be uneasy about lectures is that the sense of theatre that survives in them is an uncomfortable reminder of a premodern integrated self, in which body and cosmos are whole. This is further explored in the analysis of lectures in Chapter 8.

The chapter concludes with a shift in frame, to Hofmeyr's (1993) account of the transformations when an active story telling tradition meets written text-oriented missionary and bureaucratic practices in the rural northern Transvaal (now Limpopo) in South Africa between the late 19th and mid-20th centuries. She explores the orality-literacy interface, and how in the early confrontation between the two, it was orality that transformed literacy, rather than the other way round. She shows that they are interdependent, and must "always be understood as part of a particular set of political and social struggles into which these two cultural resources are subsumed" (14):

Coming from societies dominated by the politics of performance, most people were accustomed to carnivalesque cultural activities in which the body played a central part. Missionaries, by contrast, came from a world where the repression of

this culture of physical carnival was recent enough to have left a climate of distaste and disgust for the things of the body. In Europe this carnival world had been repressed by the forces of the industrial revolution and religious reformation, and, some would argue, by the spread of the printed prose which supplanted carnival as a source of leisure. Hardly surprisingly, then, in their work, missionaries strove to institute the quiet, apparent incorporeality of text above the robust, physical displays of oral performance (1993, 51).

Hofmeyr's account of how orality initially transformed literacy in this colonial encounter reminds us that we are in a contact zone in which similar processes of transformation may be at work, and we may be seeing a preference for the 'robust physical displays of oral performance' above the 'apparent incorporeality' of written text.

The next chapter, 'There's just a man dancing down there', will explore the distinctions that students make when referring to their lecturers. In these we see how versions of the past are filtered through their experiences of lectures, to create a system of distinctions that revolves around the poles of engagement and respect.

Chapter 5

'There's just a man dancing down there': How students see lectures

This chapter establishes the presence of the seventeen students involved in this study. They have taken markedly different routes to Entabeni through the unequal terrain of southern Africa. Their identities are crucial to understanding the communicative practices at a particular time and place because, as established in Chapter 2, lecturers and student audience co-construct each other, and refract their words and actions in anticipation of a response.

Data are from the interviews with students in the early stages of this research process. Data from subsequent years (March of 2004 and 2005) are also referred to, though the main emphasis is on the interviews in the students' first year, as I am particularly interested in their frames of reference for lectures at this point of transition in their lives. The students were briefly introduced in Chapter 3, and more detailed profiles reconstructed from the March interviews can be read in Appendix B. The interviews were guided by the questions below. The questions were not necessarily formulated as written down, or in this order, and students may have experienced them as topic changes rather than questions.

- Tell me about yourself before you came to university. (I tried to pick up as much as I could about the student's biography: their schooling, family, domicile etc, and often asked questions concerning these aspects. I was also interested in seeing what students foregrounded).
- How are you experiencing the transition to university?
- Talk me through the subjects you're doing.
- Are there any lecturers who stand out, whose lectures you would not want to miss?
- Are there any characteristics that you have noted about the lecturers you think are 'good'?
- I often hear lecturers say 'Students just want to be entertained' while students often say 'lectures are boring'. What do you think about these comments? Do you agree?
- Would you ever see a lecturer as a role model?
- If there were no lectures, would this be an overall gain or loss?

The final question, (If there were no lectures, would this be an overall gain or loss?), only came into focus towards the end of the interview process, so most students did not give their views on this. I asked this question again when I met with students in May of their second year (2004), a year after these initial interviews.

The analysis that follows explores the frames of reference through which students see lectures. The main interview question is expressed in the positive, (Which lecturers would you not want to miss?), followed by a probe of the characteristics of these lecturers. The question thus attempts to ask students to articulate their criteria for good lecturing through specific examples and people. The focus is on success rather than failure. It would have been impossible to do this study without this focus on the positive. The negative was never far away though, often referred to in the contrasts that students drew between experiences of engaging and boring lectures.

Analysis involves bringing ritualization (from Chapter 3) and discourse analysis with ethnographic framing (Chapter 4) together to probe the way students make distinctions regarding lectures. These distinctions are always situation specific, and involve interrelated sets of oppositions on the vertical plane (generating hierarchies), as well as on the horizontal plane (oppositions of us and them, and here and there, that generate relationships of solidarity). The lived system of meanings that emerges gives individuals a sense of empowerment and redemption, what Bell (1992) calls 'redemptive hegemony'. This redemptive hegemony or vision of the world holds sway as commonsense but also provides a way forward to orient students to how they will act in a more-or-less ordered morally structured way that enacts their obligations to the communities to which they feel some affiliation. The process of ritualization involves both consent and resistance, misunderstanding and appropriation (Bell 1992, 8). These lived systems of practices that emerge revolve around McLaren's (1993) interactive states, or styles of interacting, which I recast in Chapter 2 as engaged (combinations of streetcorner, sanctity and home states) in contrast with a detached or disengaged (what McLaren calls the student state), in which a sense of boredom prevails. These feeling-body states, as Carpsecken calls them (1993, 293–298), provide possibilities for being, and each has different possibilities for how students feel. In this sense, following Carpsecken, " 'structure' is experienced as a set of felt relations to others, not a set of abstract relations between 'signs' " (295–296). The 'felt relations to others' include a range of possibilities, in the same way that Bakhtin's concept of addressivity anticipates different forms of other. The 'others' range from those one has been with in the past, to those one is with now, as well as more distanced abstract voices.

The next section looks at the framing metaphors that students used, and relates these to McLaren's feeling-body states. It is well-established in discourse analysis that metaphors are more than "just superficial stylistic adornments of discourse" (Fairclough

1992, 194). They shape the way we see and experience reality. Metaphors “structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 3). In this sense they provide a window into the central questions in this study, which revolve around the nature of the communicative practices in lectures, and how participants engage with them in their ideological becoming.

Metaphors of engagement: 'A stronger image of knowing'

Metaphors of engagement saturate many of the interviews. Although the question I posed was about which lectures they would not want to miss, all students identified people – the lecturers – rather than the discipline. Some employ similes to express what the 'good' lectures are like, or what they would want them to be like. For example at the end of her interview Amy sums up her view of a good lecturer concluding that “People at varsity are looking for something like a show, like you're the audience”. At first glance this reinforces the impression that students 'just want to be entertained' but a closer reading reveals more:

I'm actually thinking of the positioning of the lecturer. If they pace up and down [...] and both of them stay by the podium thing and I don't rate them as good at all. Robert, he walks, Madeleine walks around, doesn't use the mike. I think that's a good lecturer if they're able to – I dunno it's so like rigid to stand behind the podium with a piece of paper and go like point by point. I think that's more school. I think people at varsity are looking for something like a show, like you're the audience; you know if you go to a show the focus is shifting all the time and it keeps their interest. (Amy)

She says people are looking for 'something like' a show. The show seems to provide the frame for the polychromatic state of engagement for which she is searching. Linked to this metaphor of the 'show', we can see the contrasts she is drawing, between those who 'walk', like Robert and Madeleine, and those who are 'rigid' and tied to the 'podium' and the microphone. Bodies and props together create hierarchies of interactive styles. These hierarchies are also realised through spatio-temporal distribution. The 'piece of paper' and 'point by point' go with school, whereas 'people at varsity are looking for something like a show'. The rigid body is associated with the bored state, what she thought she was leaving behind when she left school.

Nomathemba contrasts Madeleine and Tom, each one exemplifying a different style. Madeleine is associated with attributes of the engaged state (walking, asking questions, packed lecture theatre) while Tom exemplifies the bored state (standing in front of the altar, falling asleep).

In Psychology, we had a packed lecture last Friday [for Madeleine's lecture]. It was our last chance 'cos Tom's coming back on Monday. The students are 'ahh nooo we need entertainment', somebody who's going to walk up and down and ask us questions, rather than standing in front of the altar. And ja, just speaking so we don't fall asleep. (Nomathemba)

As with Amy's description, there is a spatio-temporal distinction. The lecture was 'packed last Friday' in anticipation of Tom's return on Monday. Interestingly, both Amy and Nomathemba also speak for others in their cohort. Amy refers to what 'people are looking for' and Nomathemba speaks for the collective groan of the study body, 'ahh nooo we need entertainment'. Nomathemba's reference to entertainment echoes the 'just want to be entertained' trope but it is followed immediately by her expression of the desire for engagement in the form of 'somebody who's going to ask us questions'. The reference to entertainment is therefore not a 'lazy' state. At this point, both align themselves with a cohesive student community, invoking others to reinforce their frames of reference. Marianne describes Madeleine in a similar way, again with a comparison between engaged and disengaged states.

She doesn't carry a mike. She'll make the effort, rather than standing there behind blah-blah-blahing. She comes to the front row [...] more interaction, more like the way she presents herself and the information; you feel like she's really making an effort, and not just reading off a bunch of notes. It's more like she's presenting a stronger image of knowing. (Marianne)

A picture of what they mean by the engaged state and the 'stronger image of knowing' starts to emerge. This image of knowing involves movement, effort and dialogue, as opposed to monologic speech, a sterile reading off of prefabricated notes which have no connection to the specific occasion. Technologies like the 'mike' and a 'bunch of notes' become associated with the detached, bored state, and signify emptiness and a lack of soul. Other expressions of the engaged state include the following:

We're going on a vibe in the lecture. We're able to ask questions, get a response. It was so alive. (Sabelo)

He's got this kind of enthusiasm that resonates from him. (Lindee)

They gesticulate, that's good, 'Take it, we'll give it to you'. (Mark)

This section concludes with the metaphor introduced by Lerato. She says that the lecturer's 'job is to tell the story' and on probing she expands:

A story has a beginning and an end and it is something that is good for you to listen to. You expect someone to tell you a story and a good one for that matter. Obviously you are interested in the story. (Lerato)

This analogy of story telling is applied to the lecture. For her, the lecture needs the satisfying affordances of oral story telling. It should be well structured 'with a beginning,

middle and end' and should be 'good' in two senses. It should be well told, implying consideration for the interested listener, who 'obviously' wants and needs to be there. It should also possibly be good in the moral sense, as in 'good *for*' you. For Lerato, the story takes on a special meaning, with its origins in an oral interpretive community. Later in the interview, Lerato elaborates, and draws a comparison between being told stories as a child and being in lectures now:

It's like when I was child my grandmother used to tell me stories. I was just accepting everything she was saying [...] then as I was growing up I remembered some of the stories [laughing] and I was like, ha, how could that happen? You know but that time I couldn't ask her why? how? You know I was just listening accepting everything. But in a lecture, as the lecturer is lecturing there are some kinds of questions that we ask [...] that you feel you have to find out those things. (Lerato)

The comparative frame is interesting here as Lerato contrasts two live audience events that have different contexts and functions. The story-in-the-lecture is constructing a different, questioning audience, an emerging identity as a student of the humanities. I approach Lerato's recontextualisation of this account of being told stories as a child as entextualisation (Blommaert 2005; Bauman and Briggs 1990). She has taken a piece of social action out of its rich and situated setting, and inserted it into a new context, an interview in a research process at university. In this new setting it takes on new metadiscursive meanings, and shows her making connections between then and now, to indicate her ideological becoming. She both claims the experience of story-telling at home, and distances herself from it. While other students such as Amy have referred to school in their contrasts between then and now, Lerato refers to home as a place of learning.

Feeling 'at home'

There were frequent references to metaphors that cluster round home. As in McLaren's study, the home state was not directly present in the university, but it is often referred to in what people say. For example, Nomathemba picks out a lecturer who made her 'feel at home':

OK, one of your most memorable memories of Entabeni was like your first lecture, OK. Chip made us feel at home and relaxed. He didn't actually differentiate the atmosphere of lectures. There was a free flow [...] makes you feel at home, that sense of helping others, not for the money but for the love of it. (Nomathemba)

Nomathemba's reference to feeling at home was made in the context of exploring the idea of lecturers as role models. The role models seem to be in the domestic rather than the public sphere. Chip, an older man with a position of seniority, (but who is still

referred to by his first name) is mentioned as a role model, and seems to have provided a bridge between home and university-based authority. References to home and groundedness are also strong in how Anna and Lindee speak about Madeleine:

Maybe like just being very down to earth like Madeleine – plain and to the point, she doesn't waffle [like] someone like very different; it can be very distracting. Getting to the point, saying what's relevant, not what's just arbitrary facts, not talking about yourself. (Anna)

For Anna, Madeleine's down-to-earth qualities make her a possible role model. She is not impressed by people who 'waffle' or refer to themselves. Lindee also admires these qualities:

She kind of brings everything home, she'll talk about movies, she'll talk about the things that happened in her day, and songs, or lots of examples with all her experiences. She kind of does it in the right way. (Lindee)

She admires the 'right way' in which Madeleine weaves the ordinary into her lectures. For these students, as for the student cited in the Introduction ('With writing you can never come from your home'), to refer to home is to acknowledge being estranged. All of the students quoted above (Lerato, Nomathemba, Anna and Lindee) are women and are probably first generation university students¹. As is apparent in the profiles, they are all aware of the shift in discourse that comes with university. Anna is already alienated and more comfortable with friends outside of university; Lindee notes how since leaving school she has had to 'tone down her vocabulary' to maintain her relationships with her school friends; Nomathemba spends two hours a day commuting between the township of Khayelitsha and the university, and is aware that fellow commuters have 'their own perspective' on students from the university on the slopes of the mountain; Lerato is struggling to keep up, and says that some lectures make her 'feel very bad'. In their descriptions I hear a desire to erase distinctions, to make things level, so that the gradients between contexts are less steep and demanding on their emerging identities. While in McLaren's study there is little evidence of or reference to the home state, in this research it is strongly present in what students say about lectures. The evocation of the home state is a reflection of the liminal character of this period in students' lives, and also of the possible impact of the alienating effects of the combined symbolic meanings associated with the university.

¹ I did not ask students whether they were the first in their family to go to university, so am speculating based on what students said about their class positions and my knowledge of Southern African social geography.

Boredom and alienation

As is clear from many of the comments, a feeling-body state of engagement is contrasted with one of boredom. Images of detachment and boredom are marked in comments such as these below. Leah says that the lecturer seemed bored, 'just reading', which made her 'feel kind of separate':

He was just reading. He seemed kind of bored, you feel kind of separate from him. (Leah)

Mark's comment below will be looked at more closely. He reflects on lectures, and introduces an explicit comparison to movies. While movies suggest entertainment and pleasure, the frame seems to lead him down a path that quickly takes him away from the idea of entertainment, and into a description of a feeling-body state that suggests distance and disappointment:

Being in a lecture's like being in a movie sitting there for 45 minutes mostly taking notes and huge percentage is directed at this person looking way down there speaking. It's weird, talking to us and trying to convey ideas and principles whatever and we're supposed to sit there and listen and absorb [...] and we're giving our time to them. They as well, they have to keep us there, right, so shouldn't they offer us something more than the content? [...] Some find it extremely boring. Others we just sit through and try extremely hard to sit through although it's boring. Sometimes you just [laughs] start dozing off before you can help it. [...] I suppose sitting in the front helps than being at the back. There's just a man dancing down there. (Mark)

The movie image suggests being an onlooker, and is reminiscent of the dual gaze of spectacle and surveillance discussed in the previous chapter. His ambivalence about the value of 'sitting in the front' is possibly that it makes him more visible (surveillance), but at the same time brings him closer to the action (spectacle). Ella expresses a similar alienation.

It's more that very often for me and for a lot of other people I've spoken to, you begin the academic year with lots of enthusiasm and a lot dies away. You don't have that thirst for knowledge any more. Maybe it's a bit of an anti-climax, maybe preconceived ideas, later you say, it's gonna come later, it's gonna come later, and then later you don't care, and then it doesn't ever come and you're just like aaaagh OK, don't care type of thing. You want lecturers to be exciting and as your enthusiasm is waning you expect lecturers to capture your interest. As the year progresses they need to try harder to make you listen. (Ella)

Both Mark and Ella are looking for something extra that will indicate recognition, contact and flow. But the moments are rare. Both of them refer to their expectations of lecturers, that they will 'capture your interest' or offer 'something more than the content'. With hindsight, it comes as no surprise that both Mark and Ella dropped out before completing their degrees. (Both returned recently to finish their final year). The sense of alienation, that this is not a sustainable or viable way of being, is strongly present in the data.

Because students so often say that lectures are boring, it is necessary to pause and consider what 'boring' could mean. Writing on the meaning of emotion in philosophy, Neu (2000) makes important observations about boredom. He notes that it has a history, entering the French language in the mid 18th century. This suggests that like handwriting (Chapter 4) it is a particularly modern phenomenon that accompanies what Foucault calls "the correct use of the body" that comes with the "anatomy-chronological schema of behaviour" in which "time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power" (1977, 152). It is thus the companion of surveillance, and the lowering of the lecturer's chair described in Chapter 4². Neu (2000, 104) quotes Fenichel's (1953) definition of boredom: "It arises when we must not do what we want to do, or we must do what we do not want to do". This suggests that it is a kind of resistance, a response to lack of agency. Phillips (1993) argues that for children boredom can be an element in a necessary liminal period on the way to becoming more self-assured. For Phillips "the capacity to be bored can be a developmental achievement" (69). This very brief exploration points to boredom not as failure to learn, but as a feeling-body state that is part of moving forward in one's emotional and ideological becoming. It is a state to be overcome and left behind.

Higher learning?

In McLaren's study, set in a Catholic school, the sanctity state had a particular place, whereas in a secular institution such as Entabeni, the sanctity state is less common, and is likely to be on the margins, as we shall see later in this analysis. A version of the sanctity state with its characteristic components of reverence and subservience is evident in Riaan's reference to a series of lectures by a young lecturer, Stephan:

Wow this guy is saying the coolest things. It freaks me out how people can just not see it.
(Riaan)

Triya, who is repeating some courses and is in her second year, is now able to judge who the experts are. She singles out two lecturers. One is

Professor Yule, he is very, very clued up. He makes a lot of references to the history of the [anti Apartheid] struggle and can back it up with facts. He doesn't need to look for it. (Triya)

The other person is Isobel, who

...knows what she's talking about and is well established in her field. (Triya)

² I described people sitting at the back of the lecture in the image from the 14th century as looking 'bored': perhaps at the time there was no word for what I have described as boring.

With these comments, the lecturers' knowledge is referred to, and the content of the lecture becomes more important than the 'something more than the content' that Mark speaks of. However, it is still clear that there is a form dimension to their expertise. How the lecturers convey being 'clued up' or 'well established' is expressed in how they project when they are speaking. Professor Yule 'makes a lot of references'. It is a more 'mature' image of knowing that is evoked here, one that sees through the ephemera of style, and also understands that how a lecturer invokes the knowledge base is an important part of expertise. The lecturers she refers to *are* the knowledge base: they embody it. Triya is less likely to be impressed by Madeleine's 'at home' qualities than Amy, Nomathemba and Anna are. Some students like Triya and Riaan (typically older, male or better educated students) are likely to use 'official' criteria to express the distinctions that they draw between lecturers. These official criteria suggest the secular version of the sanctity state in which a sense of reverence is prevalent. So far I have looked for signs of McLaren's interactive states, and identified a complex mix of 'assemblages of behaviours' through which students create a system of distinctions. Next I look more closely at how these systems work through applying some of the tools of discourse analysis.

Representing social relationships

The interpersonal function is an important element in communicative practices. As mentioned previously, our felt relationships to others are central to sense-making. Relationship to others emerges as a crucial element in both asymmetrical hierarchical and horizontal social relationships. The way lecturers are named is an indicator of social positionality, and how hierarchies are constructed. Both Riaan and Triya refer to 'Professor (or Prof) Yule', while the other lecturers they mention are typically given first names. The names used by students in referring to their lecturers range from 'Professor Yule', to 'Prof Martin de Villiers' and 'Robert Ferguson', to first names such as 'Chip', 'Madeleine', 'Isobel', 'Stephan' and 'Gerald'. In one case, the lecturer's name is dredged from the course outline: 'the new English lecturer, M. Wilson'. Some students, like Mark, don't know the names of many of their lecturers. Several students spoke of the lectures given by a young woman, and nobody knew her name. Lindee calls her 'the lady who did the visuals':

In [coursecode] the lady who did the visuals, everybody hated her. What she said and the way [...] was good but she didn't have the confidence. She was there talking to herself, not to us, and that lost a lot of people. (Lindee)

For Lindee this person failed to meet expectations because she seemed to be 'talking to herself'. While in some ways the naming practices reflect expected age and gendered hierarchies (both Profs Yule and de Villers are older white men), there are also some differences. Prof Yule and Chip are about the same age, but project very different personas, the one a serious scholarly self, and the other a transgressive, informal marketplace self. The way lecturers are named is also influenced by the intersubjectivity of the interview situation, in that students must have been aware of how they were representing lecturers, some of whom are my colleagues, in particular ways. I had the impression that they relished using their first names, and in so doing, making them ordinary. Proper ways of addressing authority figures in students' primary discourses would also have had an influence on these naming practices.

In the next section, Riaan muses on his dilemmas about how to address his lecturers, particularly the ones he has singled out – Martin, William and Prof Yule. He wonders how he would address these lecturers at university, as opposed to 'in the street'.

You know I'm really worried, I – 'cos I went to see Prof. Yule – Edward – and I for the whole day before that I was 'What should I call him? Should I go Profess... 'cos I don't feel that I should – I know that there's obviously this thing of, ja this distinguished person or whatever, but I mean I'm not less of a person. I mean, I don't want to call them by their surname or I mean I went and 'Professor Yule, how are you, Professor Yule?' [mimicking a posh accent] But I mean I'd rather just I mean if I saw them in the street, and they said 'I'm William'... I'm sure they don't introduce themselves as 'I'm Professor William, bye' [mimicking again] to every guy or any guy. Well I don't know if they do, so I prefer to call them by their first name but I mean there'll obviously be a lot of conflict in my head if I was presented with a situation where I have to speak to them, but I probably would revert to saying 'Hi Professor'. (Riaan)

This excerpt illustrates how engagement with lecturers and lecturing practices involves developing a lived system of meanings that orients students to the future, and informs how they live out their obligations. I have emphasised the phrases with marked modality, indicating both strong and weak belief. Modality refers to the truth value of representations, and for Kress and van Leeuwen it is most strongly implicated in the interpersonal rather than the ideational metafunction (1996, 160). It does not so much express absolute truths as *produce* shared truths that help align participants to some statements rather than others, and so to create shared meanings in and between affinity groups. Important resources for the expression of truth values are auxiliary verbs such as 'should' and 'may', as well as stative verbs such as 'know', 'feel' and 'believe', that indicate truth value. The dilemmas are reflected in the see-saw between different modalities, from 'should I' ending up with 'I probably would revert to Hi Professor'. He verbalises an inner dialogue that shows how complex the addressivity is for a young man who feels he

is 'not less of a person' and wants to be taken seriously. Streetcorner, student and sanctity styles collide and resolve in a hybrid 'Hi Professor' as he projects himself into the future, into another space (the street) in which there will be different conventions. There are titles, first names and surnames to contend with, and an anxiety about how 'every guy or any guy' would be greeted; underlying this is a concern that he may not be recognised, and may just be 'any guy' in the lecturer's eyes. This reference to other students is typical of a pattern that emerged strongly in the data. This pattern will be explored next.

Intertextuality and fan clubs

An unexpected element in the interviews is the extent to which students take positions with reference to the views of others, particularly other students, who have something to say about lectures. These references are powerful indicators of how the horizontal axis of meaning works in their accounts of lectures. I have already referred to how Amy and Nomathemba, the first students quoted in this chapter, suggest a unified community of students in describing the lectures they value. In this section, I use the broad construct of intertextuality (attributed to Bakhtin and developed by Fairclough 1992, 2003 for detailed analysis of the history of discourse in texts) to explore this further. For Bakhtin, the word is always "half ours and somebody else's" (1981, 345). In the context of performance theory, Bauman and Briggs use the term entextualisation to refer to the disembedding and re-embedding of text, which is similar to what Fairclough (1992, 117) calls manifest intertextuality (how specific other texts are overtly drawn upon as opposed to interdiscursivity (what discourse types are drawn upon in the sample under analysis). This analysis will focus mainly on the manifest references to the views of others. Tracing the patterns gives insights into

sensitive barometers of social processes, movement and diversity [...] processes such as the redefinition of social relationships between professionals and publics, the reconstitution of social identities and forms of self, or the reconstitution of knowledge and ideology (Fairclough, 1999, 204).

The analysis of entextualisation through references to unnamed others is closely linked to comparative structures such as 'some of us' or 'whereas a friend of mine' through which insiders and outsiders are constituted. These patterns are useful for tracking the constitution of horizontal ('here and there' or 'us and them') relationships (Bell 1992). In the interview with Salama, she criticises one of her lectures who 'just gave us the story':

It's a bit boring, it drags. He tells us the story before we read. The stuff in the front of the book. Most of us know about Dickens. People started falling asleep. (Salama)

With the phrase 'most of us' she signals solidarity with other students. She also establishes herself within a reading group that has the cultural capital to 'know about Dickens', though 'about Dickens' is very vague. A similar pattern is evident in the following quotes:

And Madeleine – most people say she was saying what's in the textbook but she has this way of turning it around. (Amy)

Cos I was interested in [the critique of] capitalism I was paying more attention to the lecturer. I was more awake whereas a friend of mine found the lecturer very boring. (Leah)

I mean even Robert Ferguson everyone is so scared of him but I think that in a way he's so nervous to stand up there 'cos otherwise he wouldn't have those nervous twitches and stuff. (Lindee)

I want to go [to speak to the lecturer afterwards] but I have a lot of issues [...] a lot of people do go and they want to – he controls you. He has an arrogance. People can just not see it. (Riaan)

These relations of solidarity were also explicitly signalled by Ella (quoted earlier in this chapter) when describing her growing alienation:

It's more that very often for me and for a lot of other people I've spoken to, when you begin the academic year with lots of enthusiasm and a lot dies away. (Ella)

These references to the views of others are reminders of the strategic character of ritualization, Bell's second point in explaining ritual practice (see Chapter 2, 'Ritualization as an aspect of practice'). In creating distinctions through practice, we aim to maximise social advantage. On the interdiscursive level, the discourse type that these references of solidarity and individuality seem to suggest is a sort of informal chat, verging on gossip. There is obviously an ongoing conversation about freedom and responsibility, and going to lectures is clearly an important topic within this conversation.

The interdiscursivity is also reminiscent of talk associated with fandom. Features of this discourse are strong identification with individuals, and competition among followers of the different contenders for 'celebrity' status. Affiliations are upheld by informal talk, and there is a general awareness of boundaries between groupings, as well as of how style is communicated. Fiske (2001) and Jensen (2001) raise important questions about the underlying construct of 'lack' in the way fandom is regarded in/by academia. As Jensen says:

Fandom is what 'they' do; 'we' on the other hand, have tastes and preferences, and select worthy people, beliefs or activities for our admiration and esteem (2001, 19).

She argues that fandom should be explored in relation to “the larger question of what it means to desire, cherish, seek, long, admire, envy, celebrate, protect, ally with others” (27), values that are often bracketed off from the more austere domain of the intellect that the university is perceived to be. Fiske’s analysis (2001) draws on Bourdieu to see how fandom works at the nexus of culture and education. He describes fan culture as a “kind of moonlighting” (33) in the cultural rather than economic domain, filling the gap left by the official culture, creating space for social prestige and self-esteem in the style of the street.

The shadow economy of fan culture in many ways parallels the workings of the official culture, but it adapts them to the habitus of the subordinate (45).

With Mark’s ‘there’s just a man dancing down there’ this is possibly what we are seeing, a refracting of the lecture situation through ordinary language and criteria (‘just a man’ and ‘like being in a movie’) that allows him to critique the situation and suggest how it feels ‘weird’. This fan-like behaviour with its strong affinities and identification is couched in the unofficial language of the streetcorner, and contributed to the impression that students ‘just want to be entertained’. I suggest that this perceived desire for entertainment is more accurately understood as a desire for engagement, but in a context in which most students are social misfits, unable to access the official discourse, their needs will manifest in an unofficial form.

Riaan’s dilemma about how to greet lecturers in the street raises the issue of how lectures demarcate spaces in which one behaves in a particular way. When one moves outside of these spaces, one’s way of acting is called into question, and a strategic choice must be made about how to do things. At this point, the analysis turns away from the lecturers they would not like to miss, and how they stand out from those who maintain a boredom state, to their own behaviour in lectures. In the next section, we get insights into how students see lectures as mediating between themselves and a wider belief system in which they live out moral codes involving freedom and responsibility.

Crossing the line: students talk about walking out of lectures

I have selected references to walking out of lectures for closer analysis. These accounts were not solicited, but appeared embedded in responses to some of the interview questions. I see these accounts as indicative of how students are positioning themselves relative to “issues of respect or disregard” (Rampton 1998, 8). Walking out is a form of protest in which bodily removal makes statements such as ‘I have better things to do’, ‘This is a waste of time’, ‘I reject the authority imposed on me by being present here’.

Students may be physically present in a lecture, but their mere presence may not signal their attitudes. They may appear to be 'docile bodies' listening or taking notes, but may in reality be daydreaming, critiquing, fighting boredom, or engaged in an intense inner dialogue with the lecturer. But walking out leaves little doubt as to the student's assessment of the value of being there, and interrupts the audience element of the lecture entirely. It is in these embedded narratives about walking out of the lectures that the 'redemptive hegemony' aspect of ritualization is most strongly present. The students live out their obligations in different ways. All of these stories about walking out can be seen through the lens of entextualisation. Students are taking the moments from their prior contexts, and reinserting them into the interview, where they take on a new meaning, and students indicate the different and sometimes conflicting ways in which they want to be seen in relation to their obligations to both new and old communities of identification.

Salama says with great certainty that she will never miss a lecture:

I will never bunk a lecture. I'm paying. I need knowledge, and it's morally wrong. People might think that it's freedom and that, but I still believe there's a boundary and you have to attend.

She gives three reasons for her clarity on this point. She is the client, she wants the knowledge, and there is a moral code about this matter. Amy distinguishes between what she would *like* to do (walk out) and what she *actually* does in practice – not walk out as that would be 'disrespectful'. Like Salama, there is strong moral tone here, with repetitions ('I wouldn't, I wouldn't' and 'disrespectful') and again, as we have seen in earlier data analysis, the drawing of contrasts with what 'other people' do.

Sometimes I would want to walk out. For example, for example Tom, I find I would quite easily walk out, but I find it disrespectful to walk out. So I wouldn't personally. It's how I've been brought up – I wouldn't walk out. I may not attend. If I decide not to attend – that's fine – I would do that. But to actually walk out during a lecture, I wouldn't do even if I really wanted to. I'd rather just draw or sleep or not pay attention or whatever, but I wouldn't. I wouldn't. But a lot of people do. I don't know how the people do it but I find it very disrespectful. I know from school the teacher would – you wouldn't even think about it. You need permission. You need a reason you know. If you didn't do it at school, then why do it here? It's a little different but still. Though it's disrespectful wherever it is varsity or school. (Amy)

At this point in their lives, Salama and Amy are unequivocal about not walking out, both invoking a moral certitude, in strong modality. At the end of this quote, a doubt creeps in ('I know it's a little different') but the same rules apply. There is a transfer of teacher authority from the school situation to the lecture, regardless of the difference in place. Below Sabelo contrasts a 'vibey' lecture with the only occasion in which he 'just walked out' – something he says he will never do again.

...and the new guy Gerald, I mean we're going on a vibe during the lecture. We are able to ask questions, get a response. It was so alive – Tom did that once, but when he's gonna go on [...] minds are lost on notes [...] during [the module on] Research, most of the students fall asleep. I remember once I just walked out cos I felt like I was doing him a favour. 'But I'm not getting anything [I might as well] just go to the library and borrow the book and use it on my notes, and actually I must leave'. [...] Bongani closed his book [laughs]. It was wrong. It was bad. I apologised to the guy sitting next to me. I'm never gonna do that again. You don't do that cos you don't feel like it. (Sabelo)

Again note the emphatics ('It was wrong, it was bad'), and the contrasts. The world of freedom, 'feeling like it' is contrasted with that of obligation. But there are interesting shifts in his evaluation of the situation. The co-presence offered by the lecture space (as opposed to the library) was not delivering what it promised, and he felt as if he were 'doing him a favour', occupying a seat for the sake of it, rather than for the lived co-presence of the lecture as he had experienced with Gerald. It is interesting that he uses the present tense in describing Gerald's lecture ('We're going on a vibe' and 'able to ask questions') as he relives the energy of that moment. In re-telling this incident to me there is something of the confession as he ends up making a commitment never to walk out again.

Mark recalls a moment when he was about to walk out, but because the unknown young lecturer was compelling and had a 'believable sincerity', he 'almost stayed to complete' the lecture:

Chip is very, very good, extremely good. Even if I'm tired I sit up and try to follow his argument. I'm not sure – I think it's Robert – he's very verbose. I take an effort to follow oooh the ins and outs he throws at us. He moves too much, not physically but with his words. The other lecturer on Wednesday, he's a young guy, almost sincere guy. At first I thought this guy is playing – 'But where are you going, I've got work to do' – with a believable sincerity and I was like, sheeem, almost made me stay to complete the lecture. (Mark)

This young unknown lecturer's sincerity is what almost keeps Mark there, in contrast to Robert's verbosity, which for him is a sign of insincerity. Both Sabelo and Mark feel that they have been let down by the lecturer at the point of walking out, that the contact, recognition, engagement, respect is not there.

These stories about walking out revolve around students' concepts of respect. The two women, Amy and Salama, profess to be clear that it is wrong to walk out. Sabelo discovers after walking out that it *feels* wrong, mainly because he disrupts others. Mark recounts how the 'young guy' with his 'believable sincerity' almost made him stay to complete the lecture. Their stories represent a continuum of positions. The two male students seem more comfortable to assess the situation on its merits, whereas the women tell me that they will never miss lectures. Further analysis could explore the possibility

that there is a gendered component to how students report on their experience of their roles as students: women students at times appear to be more conscious of the rules and to feel more responsible for upholding them, whereas men's self-representations are more agentive.

In the section that follows I look more closely at the recurrent motifs of respect and freedom that appear in the interviews

Respect and freedom

Respect is invoked when it is perceived to be under threat, and this typically occurs when there are changes in social arrangements. In the interviews so far, hierarchies revolve around respect, from Prof Yule to the unnamed woman whom 'everyone hated'. We have seen Riaan's dilemmas about how to greet lecturers, especially the ones he respects. The students' stories about walking out revolve around respect. In these formulations respect is located in a context in which students are perceived to have more freedom. As Salama says, 'People might think that it's freedom and that', and Sabelo also refers to this freedom in the description below, introducing the *sjambok* as a symbol of heavy handed discipline:

Yes, like I mean in university most of us as students we know we are free. Nobody is standing with a sjambok [laughs] in front of us like at primary school. (Sabelo)

The *sjambok* is a heavy leather or plastic whip taken up by the South African police under Apartheid as a weapon. Here it refers to an experience of cruelty in schooling, but it is also a potent political symbol. Returning to the idea of 'layered simultaneity' introduced in Chapter 3, and how in the present there are traces of different orders of the past, freedom seems to index a range of different spatial and historical contexts – the 'here and there' aspect of the distinctions that students make on the horizontal plane. The first and most immediate is the freedom from schooling. For many students, this is freedom from uniforms, class registers and often public punishment, as well as the parental constraints they have left behind. Linked to this freedom beyond schooling and home, is a generational shift that ties in with the historical watershed of the end of Apartheid. The students would have been completing primary school about the time of the 1994 elections, and this creates an additional context. The significance of this generational shift can be seen in some of the following interview material.

The next section focuses on interviews with Sabelo. In the interview with Sabelo below, he is no longer only speaking about other lecturers 'out there' but is also

addressing me as a lecturer, using me as a foil for his emerging ideas. In the transcript below, I interrupt him when he is talking about generational shifts in authority:

Sabelo: We actually want to design you lecturers, how you must be. [...] You have to be our equals [...] we want to feel casual about it. [...] but also I think authority plays a role. You guys grew up under so much authority in post-

Researcher: [interrupting] As in Apartheid?

Sabelo: Not all on Apartheid but in a way you didn't have much rights as students as we do now. You know so you assumed your role of being a student whether you liked it or not. When I got to university it's for me to study, it's for me to impress my lecturers, you know by being a good student that attends well that does you know his homeworks and whatever needs to be done. And we believe of this freedom that we have that we can challenge you now. We cannot just accept everything that you give us.

A feature of this part of the interview is the pronoun structure. Here 'we' refers to contemporary students in general, and possibly to black students, 'you' as in 'you guys' referring to both lecturers in general, to our differences in age, and possibly to the structural reality that most lecturers in a university like Entabeni would have been white. There is a clear obligation on us lecturers: 'you *must* be'; 'you *have to* be' whereas 'we *want to* design you' and 'we *want to* feel casual about it', informing me of their desire, and of our obligation. After my interruption, in which I completed his sentence by inserting 'Apartheid', he explains that it is not 'all on Apartheid'. There is a bigger shift in authority, in which they (students) have more rights, but there are also complex responsibilities that come with this new freedom. In the extract below, the pronoun structure becomes much more complex than in the earlier quote, in which there was a 'we/you' pattern, with clear allocation of role and responsibility.

I can make an example. During Apartheid you know people knew what they wanted but they couldn't like just go ahead and [clicks fingers] took it as they wanted. But when they realise OK now we are free to do A B C D I'm free to go and do that to behave this way – has been removed. It's like one thing thirsting for water but being denied water. Once you get an opportunity to go and drink water he abuses it. It's sort of like abuse of that freedom now after Apartheid that's what made Joburg now to be so deteriorated, so down, like so falling from grace. (Sabelo)

There is a shift here from the 'we – you' structures of the previous extract in which he said 'we want to design you lecturers' to a within group distinction. In telling his story he moves from 'they realise', to 'now *we* are free' to a personalised '*I'm* free to go'. The pronoun slippage personalises the issue of not abusing the hard fought freedom, of which behaving responsibly by not walking out of a lecture is emblematic. The slippage also possibly indicates a level of discomfort, and difficulty with allocating responsibility. It is interesting how religious discourse emerges in this part of the interview. The political

discourse of post-Apartheid South Africa with its resonance of freedom and responsibility is layered with the introduction of the metaphor 'thirsting for water'. This inserts a religious discourse in which the abuse of freedom involves a 'fall from grace', evidenced by the decline he perceives in the city of Johannesburg, his home, and icon of modern South Africa. This brief exploration gives some insight into the complex discursive structures of post-Apartheid sense-making, where although we know it was an iniquitous system, Apartheid gets drawn into a nostalgia about the past in which there appears to have been no possibility for 'abuse' at the level of the individual, particularly if one was a victim of the system. Everything is remembered as morally cut and dried, carried by a grand narrative of good and evil.

The next transcripts from interviews with Nomathemba, Leah and Riaan are chosen because they examine their changing notions of respect in a context of greater freedom. I have selected sections in which students explicitly 'entextualise' voices to explore the relationship between authoritative voices from the past and relocate them in the present. Nomathemba expresses a similar feeling to Sabelo about the possibility of 'abusing' new freedoms. I had been asking her about whether she thought there was a generational shift in that young people tend to expect to be entertained (as alleged by many of my colleagues). She makes a connection to Chip, who 'uses the f-word' and quotes him as having said in a lecture that he 'feels like an entertainer'. Like Sabelo, Nomathemba also addresses me, referring to 'this thing of having more rights':

Can I say in your period [laughs] it was more of like – straightforward. I think in my I won't say research but my understanding of the older generation, when they were in school, it was like OK, passive, you just get on with it, you're not allowed to interact with the lecturer. Now with this thing of having more rights to, you know, exercise your rights and do this and do that, ja, I think it has changed. We're more outspoken than the older generation [...] So I think that here, [in South Africa] here OK, ja, we are kind of like breaking through it now, and we tend to abuse it sometimes. [...] In my junior years at high school I couldn't exactly say 'Well that's against my belief' or whatever, whereas here you can tell, 'Well, I don't believe this, OK, I respect your beliefs but this is what I believe now. I think you should respect my beliefs'. So I think it's a whole new thing in South Africa. (Nomathemba)

Both Sabelo and Nomathemba identify a shift in authority in which young South Africans have greater rights, and see this as something new, not part of school. Both students have referred to the abuse of this freedom. This desire for reciprocity is also expressed by Leah who refers to Martin's lectures as:

[His lectures are] pretty good it's kind of conversational. People often put up hands to give their opinions and ideas so if you're like you're on the same level with the lecturer. You're not like 'he's the teacher and you're the student', 'he

knows things and you don't'. You're kind of conversing and exchanging ideas.
(Leah)

And Riaan, who has been saying that his impressions of lecturers have changed with the two months of engagement at university, says:

You know if I'm in [course name] I want you to know everything that I want to ask you. But at the same time I want in a way that same kind of value system reversed 'cos you may learn a lot from me. [...] whereas with some people you know I if you're asking a question or say commenting on the lecture, the way they incorporate that like 'Ah yes that's a good idea, I didn't think of that' and then you feel like wow you've said this to this person who's been doing this subject for years. It's really cool.

Researcher: It sounds very old-fashioned [the importance of respect as emerging in the interviews].

Riaan: It does but I mean it's an ingrown thing, look, how you view people around you is your level of respect.

For Riaan, respect is a dialogic entity. It is not uni-directional, from subordinate to superior; for it to be live it needs to 'have that value system reversed'. But he also acknowledges that it is an 'ingrown thing', and that he still wants his lecturers to 'know everything'. Respect is an 'ingrown thing'. Looking closely at the data I also notice how both Riaan and Leah use 'like' as an informal inquit phrase (verb of saying) functioning as 'I said' or '(s)he said'. These 'like' constructions give us insights into ideological becoming, how students are trying out the voices of others. The tone and interdiscursive style are again reminiscent of fan clubs.

In these accounts respect refers to different discursive settings. There are strong references to respect established at home ('an ingrown thing', related to caring and families, the 'home state'). It is also invoked with regard to schooling, where children are often represented as lacking respect for their elders and school rules, and where discipline is seen as in decline in the changed constitutional order in which corporal punishment is against the law. The importance of respect as an overarching value is seen in the university's recently launched 'Respect Campaign' aimed at promoting tolerance and respect for people and opinions, in a context in which there are ongoing challenges such as racism, classism, sexual harassment and xenophobia. The senior administrator responsible for the campaign says that 'Without respect for one another transformation cannot happen'. Respect is yoked to the bigger value of institutional post-Apartheid transformation and the creation of social cohesion. It also links South Africa to a symptom of globalization – a sense that codes of conduct have broken down as communities change. It is also an important part of African 'traditional' cultural values, though as Ramphela says, it must be interrogated in our young democracy. She argues

that there is a “need for a deliberate reframing of respect so that it does not exclude critical comment’ (2008, 139). So while it is raised as a unifying idea, it is also potentially divisive unless it is carefully defined. The next section focuses on the issue of role models, and sheds further light on respect and institutions.

Role models: ‘I’m going to grow up to be that man’

I asked all students whether they would regard any of their lecturers as role models. Behind this question is an exploration of authority and aspiration that may illuminate aspects of students’ ideological becoming. Bourdieu states: “In order for the teacher’s ordinary discourse, uttered and received as self-evident, to function, there has to be relationship of authority and belief ... and it is not the pedagogic situation that produces this” (1993, 64). It is also an economic relation “in which the speaker’s value is at stake: did he speak well or poorly? Is he brilliant or not? Could I marry him?”(63). The role model question taps into this aspect of communication: Do I want to be like this person? Am I *allowed* to be like this person? I focus on this question specifically, because it evoked responses that point to classed, raced and gendered identities most strongly.

The only unequivocal positive response was from Iain who went to a privileged school in the vicinity of the university. He immediately identified Robert as a role model:

Robert – straightaway I just loved his sense of humour. He’s got a cynicism about him that I absolutely identify with and I just love it. Straightaway I just walked out of that lecture and I thought I’m going to grow up to be that man. Definitely. [...] But that that cynical sense of humour, almost I wouldn’t say embittered, but I just love the way it comes out. It’s brilliant.
(Iain)

Iain attended a prestigious ‘Model C’ school in Cape Town’s southern suburbs in which the university is situated, and he says critique comes naturally as his single parent mother ‘broke all the rules and made sure that I know how to break them as well’. Several other students mentioned that they would ‘automatically’ respect a lecturer because lecturers have worked to attain a position of authority. For example Marianne says:

I think so, ja, in so much as they’re like – they are the learned ones, who know what they’re talking about so in that way you have to respect them. (Marianne)

Her comment underlines the authority of the format of the lecture: the arrangements are set up to construct authority before it is even enacted by the lecturer’s appearance on the podium. In this sense students misrecognise expertise, assuming it to be there, even if they fail to make a meaningful connection to it. Amy makes a similar statement:

Ja maybe not ‘I want to be like him’ but like someone who knows what we need to know, they are like in an authoritative position [...] we do respect them because they have the knowledge that we need. (Amy)

For these students, as for Salama, who has said that she will never miss lectures because she is paying and needs the knowledge, the authority of the lecturer is accepted as self-evident. A different pattern emerges with several black students in this study. Lerato is more tentative about lecturers as role models, for different reasons to those given by students above:

Ja, sometimes I tend to admire some of the lecturers [...] if they're really caring about their students, like always aware that this one has got that problem. (Lerato)

Lerato's response invokes aspects of the home state, with the emphasis on caring. I spoke to Lerato in her third year, on the day that she graduated. She came to say goodbye, still wearing her graduation gown. I asked her how she looked back on the lecturers who had stood out. Her response shows continuity with the view given in her first year, and still emphasises the importance of lecturers who were caring:

There were some brilliant lecturers, but I remember those who took the extra step to help me. (Lerato)

There is an added critique that enters her account at this point. Looking back from the point of graduation she can now critique the university's 'value system':

When people stand in front of you, they have so much power and authority and you'll think I'm underprepared and you feel that they'll think you are stupid. With Entabeni's value system, the only excuse [for not understanding] is being sick. (Lerato)

This critique of the authority in the lecture situation did not emerge in her interview in the first year. At that time, she had referred to difficulties with lecturers' accents, and I offered to assist her in my pastoral role as her tutor. This comment is a stark reminder of Blommaert's 'forgotten contexts' (2005, 56–57, referred to in Chapter 3): the resources individuals bring to research situations, and the history of data within the research process will profoundly affect meaning. By the time she had successfully completed her degree, she could both admit to and articulate this critique. What strikes me now is her sharp expression of a feeling-body state: the only route to follow in the face of this alienation is to 'be sick'. I did not pursue this with her in our discussion, but with hindsight, I interpret this as alienation that is likely to be experienced if students can't meaningfully locate themselves in available affirming feeling-body states.

A definite 'No' to the role model question came from Mark, who comments on the artificiality of the lecture situation:

You only see them in the confines [...] they put on a show [...] not that they would change my way of speaking. (Mark)

When I ask him who or what would change his way of speaking, he says that a parable like the story of the Good Samaritan heard in church would have that influence on him. Mark grew up in a predominantly 'coloured' working class suburb of Cape Town, where his father is a priest in the Anglican church. For him, as for Sabelo and Taffie, it is religion that holds them, offering a sponsoring discourse³ in which to locate themselves, at least at this early stage of their student lives. As Bangeni and Kapp's (2005) longitudinal study at Entabeni shows, many students turn to the church in the limbo between 'home' and the alien discourses of the university, particularly early on in their lives as students.

Nomathemba, Sabelo and Taffie all say they would not think of a lecturer as a role model, because they don't know them well enough. All three also single out their mothers as inspirational figures:

My mother worked hard to make something out of herself. (Nomathemba)

Her strength, her courage, her love and determination. Her passion. She's kind of impacted my life so that I have faith in God, you know. She has taught me to love. (Sabelo)

I've never met anyone as tough and as strong. (Taffie)

Taffie says that her role model is a woman 'in fulltime ministry'.

A pattern emerges in which the greater the social distance between a student's habitus and the university, the less likely they are to see lecturers as role models. For some students, role models are people you know, those in your primary discourse which is peopled by intimates. They have provided the encouragement and inspiration, and are typically women. For some, the role models from 'home' are also closely linked to the church, which offers a transitional sponsoring discourse. For some students, such as Amy and Marianne, there was an automatic acknowledgment of the lecturer because of their achievements and ability to give them what they need. In Bourdieu's terms, the pedagogic and economic relations collocate. Lerato on the other hand could see some of her lecturers as role models, not because of their authority and expertise, but because of their caring attitudes towards her when she experienced difficulties. These comments also index changes in family structures. Greater mobility (for some) associated with globalization collides with the effects of Apartheid's fundamental disruption of family life through the migrant labour system, and the more recent HIV/AIDS pandemic. Lerato

³ I heard this term in a workshop offered by Anne Herrington at Entabeni many years ago. She was referring to student identities in the study that became her co-authored book *Persons in process: four stories of writing and personal development*, Herrington and Curtis 2000.

managed to bring home and the academy together, but many students do not achieve this, and fail to find a viable state that will sustain them through the student experience.

There were signs that some students had found lecturers they could identify with as role models to help them reconcile this split. Like Lerato, their reasons for identifying lecturers had changed by the third year. For example, Salama identified three women in response to my question about which lecturers 'stood out' for them at that point. One, a young black woman, was explicitly named as a role model. She admired another (white) woman because she spoke Xhosa. Bongani identified two lecturers who were, in his words, "interestingly enough" both black. Mark mentioned three lecturers, all of whom were black, including a young woman who engaged students in debating "the validity of certain claims/practices promoted" in the Psychology course they were studying. This silence in the first year is probably due to range of factors. Amongst these reasons are: the low number of black lecturers in the first year; the desire not to name race in public as students steer through the fraught but for most students new and exciting "cosmopolitan" and "international" (their words) environment at the university, as well as a difficulty with finding the 'right' language for talking about race in the contact zone.

A year later

As mentioned in Chapter 4, I had originally intended to focus only on the first year, but later decided to keep in touch with students beyond this year, in order to better understand the particularity of the first year experience. In 2004, early in the students' second year, we met for a general catch-up meeting, in which I described progress on the study, checked on students' contact details, and made arrangements for the rest of the year. I followed up with an email with these questions:

1. Has anything changed in the way you see lectures now, as a second year student, as compared to this time last year?
2. Can you think of a specific moment/event that illustrates this?
3. If there were no lectures, do you think there would be an overall loss or gain in how you experience university?

Responses to the first and third questions are looked at in the sections that follow.

'Lectures are less narrowly defined for me'

In their email⁴ response to the first question, 'Has anything changed since last year?' all students reported a change. For some, such as Nomathemba and Sabelo, the change was about the discipline. Both were training to be social workers and they found lectures in this discipline highly interactive, with smaller classes. Several students noted that they were less reliant on 'frantically getting the notes down' (Taffie), and were therefore less anxious about them. In Taffie's words:

the lectures are not as anxiety provoking as they used to be. i have become more relaxed and i am not so nervous about people watching my every move. so its more like I belong. (Taffie)

The comparative framing of my question leads her to mention that she had not paid attention to lectures in her first year. There were more important things to do:

[...] for me this year varsity is about lectures and last year varsity was about the jammie stairs. (Taffie)

These comments are interesting in the light of the interview with Taffie in the first year. At the time, she had not intimated that she missed many lectures and was more interested in the identity theatre of the Jameson Hall steps. (See the image in the Introduction). Most students reported being much more discriminating about lectures now that they were in their second year. There was a marked shift for Amy:

Now I feel less formal about it, if I miss a lecture its not the end of the world (I get the notes and catch up) and also I tend to want to enjoy the lectures instead of just sitting and writing etc. I think this year our faculty have allowed this by putting most of their overheads on the web so you can just sit and listen [...] at the beginning of the yr everything is so overwhelming that lecturers come across as 'above' you and distant whereas now they come across more like "people" [...] So overall the biggest difference is that tuts used to be that kind of "home" feeling [...] but now lectures are more enjoyable because u can sit and "enjoy" the lecture without caring whether u are listening or not etc. [...] Ive also bunked a few lectures?! (Amy)

For Amy, lectures now afford the 'home' feeling, and she admits that she bunks some lectures (having said emphatically that she would never do this). Several students noted a change in emphasis, a shift away from the lecture as authority to the readings and the library. For example, Mark, Bongani and Riaan responded:

Back then I regarded lectures as the most important source (if not the only source) of my University education. I regarded it somewhat like the class experiences of school, only difference is that it is attended in greater volume (well mostly). The layout of my timetable extended this perception [...] I now place much more emphasis and time on the readings. (Mark)

⁴ I have used a different font for email interaction, and have not changed students' original wording.

[...] things have changed this year coz I only go to lectures when I feel that I'm not grasping enough from the course readers/textbooks. (Bongani)

look, I mean, its not really heavy duty stuff - but I was suddenly thinking how I could maybe benefit more from just doing correspondence...I think one of my major loves of the university is the library, and that is what keeps me grooving. (Riaan)

Leah's response also indicates a shift in perceptions. She notes that her lectures are less 'intimidating':

I have a stronger realization of their fallibility - they are human and their word is not truth. (Leah)

This is a similar observation to Amy's quoted earlier, but Amy says that in first year they 'came across as above' whereas now they are more like 'people'. Leah's language is much more complex and erudite than Amy's. Leah also notes that she has expanded her definition of lectures:

[...] this year, I have interesting lectures, boring ones and boring but informative and useful ones. Lectures are less narrowly defined for me now. (Leah)

In her comment above, we see a much more nuanced picture, in which boring is not contrasted in the same binary way with engaging lectures. She can now identify the 'boring but informative and useful ones' and separate them from the plain boring ones. If the interpersonal metafunction was predominant in the first year, the ideational meanings are now coming into focus more strongly in the second year.

'Lectures sort of binds our day together'

The students' responses to the third question, 'What if there were no lectures?' suggest that there is a shift from the first year data, where the 'walking out' stories indicate that engagement with lectures is shaped by external factors such as codes of behaviour that indicate respect, and personal assessment of the value of the individual lecturers' style, passion and engagement – whether they are offering something extra, which students interpret as mutual respect. A year later, all students felt that there would be an overall loss if there were no lectures, and there was a recurrent reference to the way lectures 'bind our day' (in Mark's words). The focus seems to have shifted to themselves, and their monitoring of time management, and also their need for community. I quote from Mark's email response to the 'What if there were no lectures?' question:

I think a lectureless university would most probably not offer as many experiences as one with lectures. Lectures sort of

binds our day together, offering us the opportunity to go through our day in some sort of order, in albeit a loosely ordered way depending on your requirement at a lecture and your will to attend. Lectures also offer us the opportunity to come in contact with many other students who we most probably would not have come in contact with outside of lectures. SO, without lectures I think (though I am not certain) that there would be an overall loss in our university experience. (Mark)

Marianne begins to respond to this question with the by now familiar reference to other students, and comparison with distance learning:

I couldn't answer this question for all, because I know many people who simply just don't go to lectures, but I feel it would be a huge loss. Without lectures there might as well not be a University, we could simply study by correspondence. (Marianne)

She goes on to add a point similar to Mark's, about how lectures provide the metronome beat that keeps one moving.

I also find that lectures provide the simple structure for my daily life, giving me plans for how and when I am going to do and get everything done. (Marianne)

Both Salama and Riaan refer to their problems with time management, and a world without lectures seems to suggest too much unstructured time. Salama writes:

It [no lectures] would just mean more free time which is definitely a bad thing. The more time I have the more I procrastinate because I work best under pressure. (Salama)

I think the good thing about having to come to lectures, is the fact that it takes away my procrastinating nature - I am not sure whether I would have the self-managed discipline that is necessary if they weren't there. (Riaan)

The different questions asked evoke different responses, but perhaps the extra year has also given them further perspective, or the email form affords a different opportunity. It may have been easier to admit to this reason in an email, than in a face-to-face interview. Perhaps the research process itself had enabled them to reflect over time. Whereas in the first-year interviews, attending lectures was linked to issues of respect for what it means to be at university, for the lecturer, and for those around you, here the redemptive element seems to have more to do with self-regulation - the management of time and space. In this sense, we see a shift in the way lectures play a part in ritualization. There seems to be much more of a sense of routine institutional behaviour. The energy and vividness of their strong impressions of lectures in the beginning, and their desire for movement, flow and recognition seems to have died away, as they become focused on being a student in the conventional sense. The intensity of the liminal period of the first

few months has settled into a resigned predictability, a sort of moulding to acceptable dispositions of the tertiary student.

Closing comments

In this chapter I have used ritualization to illuminate students' frames of reference for lectures, paying particular attention to the liminal period of the early months of being a student in the humanities. The lens of ritualization foregrounds how engaging with the mesh offered by lectures involves the formation of distinctions that orient students to issues of respect and disregard. These systems of meanings are always situation specific and index wider time-space contexts, with references to home, school, generational differences and political settings. We see the ghosts of much longer histories, with students' references to the altar and podium, from a time when the chair was still raised. These systems are also strongly located in embodied feeling-states, particularly in the first year, where students draw sharp contrasts between these feeling-body states. A close analysis reveals how these states are constituted. The vertical oppositions revolve around respect, the horizontal oppositions revolve around freedom, and in the centre is engagement in which students desire flow and recognition – anything other than the bored, disengaged state. The vertical opposition distinguishes good lecturers (who move, engage, make one feel at home) from poor ones, who are boring, disinterested, static and offer nothing extra. The ones that students respect enable them to feel at home, or to have fun in the student state, or to feel witness to something special. On the horizontal plane, students develop oppositions between here (at university, in South Africa, at this point in our history) and there (at school, home, in the street, in a previous historical period), and us (students who feel the same way) and them (younger naïve students, the older generation).

Distinctions also appear at the level of social class and gender, and to a lesser extent, race. Some students – particularly women – are driven by a strong sense of what they 'should' do: they must attend their lectures, it's 'disrespectful' not to, and the lecturer is expected to 'have' the knowledge that they 'need'. However, there are exceptions, as we saw with Ella's growing disappointment with lectures. And these 'shoulds' soften over time as they admit to bunking lectures. Men appeared to be more agentic and willing to report that they would assess the lecture situation on its merits. Class differences are strongly evident in how students make connections between their lecturers and role models. For working class and black students (race is still often a proxy for class), role models are in the domestic and religious sphere, often supporting them to

move beyond the boundaries of primary discourses into alien secondary discourses of institutions such as the university, and Entabeni in particular, with its colonial and liberal history. However, power can not be read off these accounts in any simple way. While ritualization is linked to macro socio-political processes, it is also always contingent, provisional and defined by difference. Iain, whose cultural capital most closely resembles what Entabeni rewards, and who has a strong critical stance on authority, lets his guard slip to admit that he wants to 'grow up to be that man'. He drops out after failing to keep up with his work after his skull was fractured in a late night street mugging. Lerato, who is perhaps least likely to be comfortable at Entabeni, manages to reconcile home and student states and to complete her degree in three years. In a sense, all of the students in this study are misfits. All have some distance to travel, and there is no easy comfort zone.

This chapter has also explored the layers underneath the 'lectures are boring' – 'students just want to be entertained' tropes. Boredom can be seen as a stage in a process of ideological becoming. It can be viewed as an achievement, a recognition of a mismatch between desire and obligation. Entertainment is recast as engagement, a feeling-body state in which, as opposed to the frozen disengaged state, students have a right to expect 'something more'. When we lecturers bemoan students' desire for 'entertainment', we are misrecognising their desire to experience a more 'live' feeling-body state than they are being allowed to experience, and naming it in the terms of the unofficial, the lesser, the language of fandom, as opposed to more worthy pursuits. We feel we have achieved something when students turn their focus to knowledge, the library, the readings, the commodities and symbols of literate achievement. Perhaps what emerges most strongly from this chapter is a question about the losses that are incurred in this process. As McLaren notes at the end of his study of ritualization and school life,

It was as though saturating the senses was equivalent to alienating the intellect. [school research] has, throughout history, overlooked the fact that the body plays an important part in the acquisition of knowledge. [...] Not only was the body ignored as a vehicle for acquiring knowledge, but it also became a matrix for reflecting and sustaining hegemonic relationships (1993, 221).

A similar observation is made from this study. In their first year, students wrestle with the boring/engaging dichotomy, and then routine takes over, providing some security, for some students. However, we are left with a question about the cost of what it means to value knowing above being. What would happen if we thought of learning instead as 'feeling-knowing'?

In the next three chapters we move away from what students *say* about lectures in general to focus on liminal moments within actual lecture events. The lectures focussed on in the next chapter are given by Robert, whom several of the students have referred to in this chapter, and who all students in the study encountered in the early stages of their first year.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 6

Authority fused: ‘...to the point of combustion’

The next three chapters follow students through their engagement with a series of lecturers between March (after the interviews with individual students) in the first semester, through to late in the second semester (October). This chapter shows how they engaged with Robert, who convened and lectured frequently on Texts in Context, a foundation course compulsory to all first year students in the Humanities faculty.

Robert is widely recognised as charismatic and deeply engaged. Students react to him strongly, as is shown in the discussion later in this chapter. They are seldom neutral about him. A student in the pilot study once said that when she thought of Robert, she ‘saw a library’. As a white male, private school and Oxford-educated, he exudes a strong sense of the establishment. There is a marked rhetorical quality in his lecturing which is resonant and poetic; his articulate, upper-class accented, wide-ranging display of different modes and registers of knowing both intrigues and vexes students. Young, informally dressed and in touch with the complex contours of South African meanings, he can be transgressive, playing with these meanings to nudge students out of their comfort zones. Alongside this display of expertise is a vulnerable quality, most visible in a marked facial tic.

In his opening lecture on the introductory course he had urged students to ‘see the lecture as a concert’, not to be passive receivers of knowledge, or to accept the ‘kragdadige’¹ orientations of school and old Apartheid versions of single authority. When I interviewed him, he described himself as a ‘fox not a hedgehog’². Hedgehogs seek single systems ‘which carry us back to the Dark Ages – they’re theocratic really’ and his ‘foxy’ stance ‘cuts [him] out from a lineage of authority’. He states that he resists the authority of lectures, yet he says in the interview:

It’s obviously very difficult to stand there and say ‘I resist the authority of this lecture’. You borrow the authority you claim to resist. (Robert)

This contradiction – a stance that claims to undercut authority while using the institutional speaking position as a platform – is a feature of his lectures. In an effort to

¹ An Afrikaans word meaning ‘powerful’, now used ironically to signal a particular, unitary concept of power and authority, with connotations of the Apartheid state.

² This is a reference to Isaiah Berlin’s distinction between different kinds of thinkers, in *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy’s View of History* 1953/1992, London: Phoenix.

engage students, he often provokes a crisis, adopting and shifting speaking positions with and against the grain of prevailing public meanings. In his acknowledgment of the university's distinguished teachers award he received recently, he said:

I always hope simply to raise minds (my own included) to a point of combustion, at which insight and creativity happen freely. Then there's no need for a teacher. Also, at some point, despite the numbers, you've got to see those you teach as individuals; if not, you might as well teach on TV. (Robert, in an interview for the university's newspaper, my emphasis)

He had not used the phrase 'to the point of combustion' when I interviewed him for the purposes of this study. With hindsight it applies well to the way he provokes liminal moments in his lectures by means of a fusion of voices and rapid shifts in footing that suggest a very complex addressivity. He sees the need for students to be recognized as individuals in spite of their different experiences and expectations. He foregrounds the interpersonal element in teaching, and says without this ability to see the other, one 'might as well teach on TV'. There are echoes of the phrases that students used in the previous chapter, for example, 'I might as well read the textbook/go to the library'. Without engagement, one is just entertaining. In this sense Robert seems to distance himself from the lecturer's 'students just want to be entertained' refrain, and to locate responsibility for quality communication with the lecturer. Thus we can think of lecturers and *their* ideological becoming as they participate in the same processes of ritualization in which students are involved. As student demographics change, these processes of ideological becoming are likely to be felt more sharply, particularly amongst an aging still predominantly white and male cohort of lecturers.

Before going into liminal moments in Robert's lectures, the foundation course will be briefly described. All students (over a thousand) in the Humanities faculty were compelled to register for the course at the time of the research. It was intended to provide an orientation to the textually oriented disciplines, and offered a framework for the critical analysis of texts. The course was controversial. One of the reasons is its interdisciplinarity which created problems for both students and staff. Students wanted to do 'real' work in the disciplines denied them at school. Some also found the emphasis on skills a slap in the face for their views of themselves as successful school-leavers and budding intellectuals. Senior staff, having been enthusiastic in the initial planning of the course, abandoned it over time to junior lecturers and tutors. In some ways the course surpassed the other courses students were registered for in their first year in that it refused comfortable formulae and asked them to look deep into themselves as text makers. At the same time, it offered intensive tutorial support. Robert was convenor at

the time, a task he took on with energy and commitment. He was strongly identified with the course, having given the introductory lecture in the official orientation week, as well as the majority of the lectures. His presence was crucial, providing a strong, dynamic stitching, against which students could test and express themselves.

The selections from the dense stream of semiotic material in the communicative practices are chosen and animated through selected liminal moments, moments of breach in the 'normal' procedures in the lecture, in which there is a collective quickening, an overturning of the status quo. Fine-grained accounts of these moments are approached by means of various tools. Goffman's (1981) 'footing' traces the complex addressivity in lectures. Concepts from social semiotic analysis ('vectors' for the analysis of agency in the lecture and 'direct address' for how a relationship is established between viewers and what is represented) add a visual dimension to the analysis of footing. 'Entextualisation' enables the analysis of the relocation of texts within a frame of performance. Because entextualisation draws attention to the reflexivity of language users, it also points to the interest and ideological dimensions of how meaning-makers select semiotic resources for communication and how they intend their meanings to be taken up.

'Who owns this image?'³ Word, image and authority

The lecture revolves around a series of photographs of a cricket competition in Kentani in the rural Eastern Cape, one of the poorest parts of the country. The area has also been the setting for some of the fiercest resistance to both British colonial and Apartheid oppression. The photographs were taken by journalist Mike Hutchings and exhibited in Cape Town at the time⁴. The participants in the competition are black South Africans, many of whom are migrant workers home from the cities for Christmas and New Year. They embody the colonial game in their skills, dress, stance and other details, but have made the game their own so that it serves particular social functions on the margins of South African society, where the game of cricket has had a long but neglected history (Odendaal 2003). The event is strikingly different from the cricket matches beamed to us courtesy of the media, which had currency at the time. The setting is a far cry from the colonial pavilions, where as Robert says in his lecture, 'the old farts club at Lords [cricket ground], sip tea from flasks' and 'the ubiquitous green of the pitch under lights' dominates and frames the event.

³ Elements of this section of the chapter appear in Thesen (2006) 'Who owns this image? Word, image and authority in the lecture', in (eds) Thesen and van Pletzen 2006.

⁴ South Africa was host to the International Cricket Council's World Cup competition in 2003. The event was an important part of the national 'coming out' to join the international sports community after decades of Apartheid rule.

Robert has gone to some lengths to respond to an opportunity presented by Hutchings' exhibition, and has projected some of the images as the basis for a lecture on the skills of critical analysis. In the lecture, the images are glossy and potent, projected high up on the screen in a darkened, steeply raked, wood paneled lecture theatre. In addition to its strongly theatrical elements, the event is also special because the photographer Mike Hutchings is present. Robert introduces him, but then tells students that 'Shakespeare is dead', a chant that he uses in his tutorials groups to encourage students to trust their ability to analyse texts. He reminds them that they have the power to impose their own meanings on these images regardless of the photographer's presence. Students are urged to 'own the image', and much of Robert's authority in the event stems from claiming the right to do so himself, in the presence of the photographer. He has been discussing a series of images. Some images focus on the central drama and athleticism of the game, others show the unconventional spectators (groups of clapping women, children applauding from nearby trees), and a few show groups of children imitating the colonial sport, and making it their own.

The image under discussion (as seen in the still from the video recording in Figure 6.1 below) depicts two young men – Xhosa initiates – sitting on the grass. They are dressed in the traditional attire of the ritual of initiation into manhood, wearing blankets, with white clay on their faces. They are the focus of the image, but they are in the background. In the foreground is the blurred shape of a cricket bat, with a red ball inches away from impact with the bat. The photograph has been recontextualised by means of video footage that now locates it in the lecture situation in the presence of students and Robert, who is seen pointing to the image. Robert is saying: 'They own this image', and we can see a student turn away from the image to catch the eye of the person sitting next to him.

The gaze of the young men in the image works on multiple levels in each of its recontextualisations. Their gaze was originally directed at the game of cricket and the (white) photographer; then at everyone in the lecture theatre, and now they gaze at the reader in the context of this research, in which they are once again subject to academic analysis. As they face the viewer, the gaze appears as 'direct address' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). This creates a relationship of involvement between represented participants and viewers of the image. But it is an uneasy spectatorship, as initiates are generally separated from strangers in the period of initiation.



Figure 6.1: Robert points to the image of the initiates watching a cricket game in the rural Eastern Cape.

Mager (1999) alerts us to the ongoing role of initiation in the construction of male identity in the part of the country previously known as the Ciskei, an Apartheid creation for political control of Xhosa resistance to colonial presence in this fiercely contested 'border' area of the Eastern Cape. It became a site of political awakening and resistance. She explains:

Initiation, with circumcision as its key element, remained the touchstone of Xhosa masculinities. It signaled changes in personality, manliness, and identity. A circumcised body signaled masculine identity and male power, over and against boys and women...the experience of initiation enabled a shared sense of a common Xhosa nation. Identification with this "imagined community" of AmaXhosa was critical for young men constructing ideas about themselves in the world (1999, 133).

Ngwane's study (2002) shows how dynamic and resilient this practice is. He gives an account of how initiation practices intersect with shifting power and roles linked to schooling and the economy. His study shows young men taking control to produce a different male subjectivity that values rhetorical skills, with all the connotations of agency and self-presentation, rather than the approach favoured by the older generation, with an

emphasis on bodily discipline. These tensions between local and national interests were not spoken about in the lecture.

I have chosen this image, Robert's mediation of it, and students' responses in the focus group for analysis, because the semiotic chain is emblematic of the struggles over meaning in contemporary South Africa. There was a deep hush in the lecture theatre when the image appeared on the screen. As Hall writes, a representation such as this that deals with 'difference' from mainstream codes of understanding, "engages feelings, attitudes and emotions, and it mobilizes fears and anxieties in the viewer, at deeper levels than we can explain in a simple, commonsense way" (1997, 226). While definitions of 'mainstream' are also contentious in South Africa where demographics and history change the codes of recognition, the image does appear to have unsettled students. In a tutorial before this lecture, I had made copies of the series of images available to students as resources for narrative constructions. They were asked to select at least three, and sequence them to tell a story. We then compared similarities and differences in narrative constructions. This was the only image that was not chosen at all. At one level, it is a stereotype of 'traditional' cultural practices, and stereotypes work to close down unsettling ambivalence, and maintain the wall between self and 'the other', where 'other' is seen as outside of history, as the object of the gaze. Interestingly, this picture reinserts the stereotypical image into history, by juxtaposing initiates with the colonial game of cricket, making them spectators. In 'strong' versions of initiation practice, initiates are excluded from the public gaze, and reject colonial institutions and artefacts. So the stereotypical frame has been broken, and categories merge, and create ambivalence. It would take insider knowledge to recognise that both initiation and cricket festivals such as this are part of the ongoing struggles of marginalised rural people to assert their identity. The display of this image can also be seen as a symptom of the complex struggles over identity and representation in which we as South Africans "strive to appropriate symbols that define our cohesion" (Langa 2004). A volatile image that fuses 'race', ethnicity and gender is entextualised in a performance for an audience in a lecture theatre. The image is thus a vital element in the chain of meaning here.

The liminal moment: multimodal discourse analysis

To capture the multi-layered semiotics of the event, the transcription has been arranged to show the co-occurrence of modalities. I have tried to achieve layering of modes as one would find in an opera score. In the interests of readability, I layered only the speaker's gaze and gestures on to the words he uses, as they seem salient in this analysis. The small

images on the right are micro moments selected from the semiotic flow, and are intended to be read either in conjunction with the text on the left or separately from it, the eye running rapidly down the column of images as if watching a film. They catch the key shifts in Robert's bodily movements. From these the viewer can see the extent to which Robert is in motion, walking, pointing and gesturing as he imposes a rhetorical reading pattern on the image.

A multimodal transcription of the section of the lecture devoted to discussion of this image follows, using the following transcription conventions:

: = moment at which the still image to right of transcript was captured

(.) = pauses one second, (..) two seconds

They = word/syllable stressed

descriptions in this font = bodily gestures

<<s = gaze directed to students (audience)

>>i = gaze directed to image

<< s

moves to left, to settled position

1. Perhaps this photograph – an anthropological classic – a tour de force

>> i

2. emblemizes that best of all (...)

:

points to image, arm circling

3. You have two bakhwetakhweta sitting here in the (.) grass.

<<s

>>i

4. On the right hand side, out of focus, a (.) a immaculate forward defensive stroke being played

<< s

:

>> i

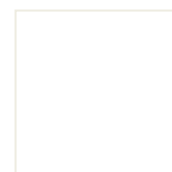
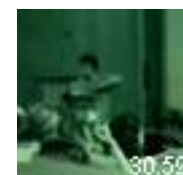
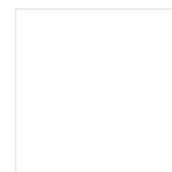
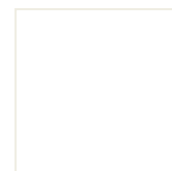
mimes a skilled cricket stroke

5. caught by Hutchings at the moment of contact.

cupped hand, ball-like

<< s

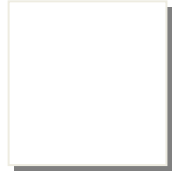
6. Again somewhat blurred but right in the centre of it, that red ball (.)



:
draws hand in, retaining cupped hand
 7. Now in any cricketing (.) photograph of this nature (.) the red ball (.) is the focus (.)



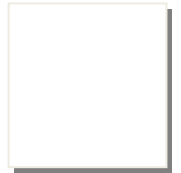
>> i << s
 8. In Hutchings’ photograph, the red ball (.) is signally out of focus.



:
 >> i << s
points to picture *brings hand in, ball-like*
 9. It is not the centre of the photograph. It is not (.) the point of focus of the photograph (. . .)



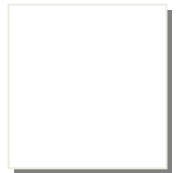
10. Who owns this image? Not the purpose and project of cricket



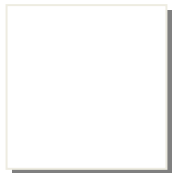
:
 >> i *points to picture*
 11. though it’s a photograph of cricket (..) but the spectators.



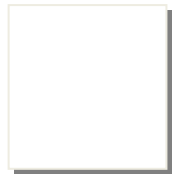
<< s
 12. And the spectators, of course, disrupt absolutely (.) any conventional expectation of cricketing audience.



13. How far removed from the M.C.C. are these two young initiates?



>> i
 14. Got up as much in a uniform of their context as any cricket goer. (. . .)



:
 >> s *flat open hand, top to bottom*
 15. Wearing their blankets (.) clayed in the white clay of initiation and regeneration.



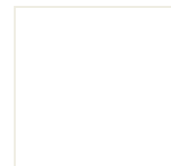
>> i : << s
 16. They (...) own the image.



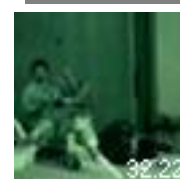
:
dragging gesture, steps back
 17. They drag the subject of the photograph out of (...) the province of cricket



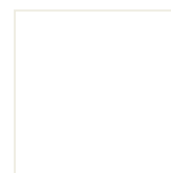
>> i
 18. disrupting its (.) prerogative and focus.



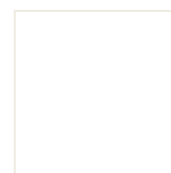
:
 << s
lowered arm point to image *right arm rotating*
 19. They're interested all of a sudden their gaze looking at the ball



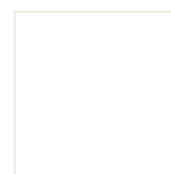
20. becomes not only (.) the gaze of the spectator, admiring (.) the athleticism of cricket



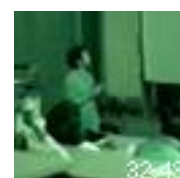
lifts cupped right hand
 21. but also the gaze (.) which seeks to recover (.) on its own terms



22. the significance of the act that they are looking at.



:
 >> i
 23. What sense (.) does this make (.) to them. (.....)



Robert's commentary begins with a brief description of the image, then he offsets it from others in the same genre, before asking a question, 'Who owns this image?' which he answers with 'They own this image'. The last line hands the floor back to the initiates, asking what sense this makes to them. The utterance is shot through with different social

languages, indicating shifts in footing, showing changes “in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present” (Goffman 1981, 128). These shifts in footing indicate an alteration of the frame of reference for the interaction. Bakhtin’s notion of addressivity (1986, 95) also speaks to co-presence, but gives it a more explicitly ideological component. The role shifts that Robert performs involve a complex lamination of different forms of expertise. I shall briefly summarise the main discourses present, before examining some moments more closely.

The discourses are not clearly demarcated, often overlapping in the same word. There is a discourse with its provenance in anthropology, with its present tense, static structures, as in ‘you have two abakhwetakhweta sitting here in the grass’ (line 3), overlaid with the lofty literary ‘classic’, ‘tour de force’ and ‘emblematises’. There is also a discourse related to sports photography, which merges with and puns on a more subversive post-colonial literary discourse, in words like ‘subject’, ‘gaze’, ‘disrupt’ and ‘recover’. It appears strongly in phrases like ‘On the right hand side, out of focus’ (line 4), ‘somewhat blurred’ (line 6), and several references to the structure and composition of the image (‘focus’ appears three times, as does ‘red ball’). The photographic discourse is perhaps heightened by the presence of the photographer in the lecture theatre. This co-exists with a discourse of the game of cricket (for example, ‘caught by [photographer] Hutchings at the moment of contact’, with a pun on ‘caught’; ‘immaculate forward defensive shot’ (line 4), ‘how far removed from the MCC [cricket club in London]...?’ (line 13). The initiates are only referred to briefly, in the slightly mocking ‘got up as much in a uniform of their context’ which shifts dramatically to a reverential ‘wearing their blankets, clayed in the white clay of initiation and regeneration’ in line 15. The 23 lines are held together by the teacherly, didactic discourse carried in the rhetorical markers of ‘Perhaps’ (line 1), ‘Now’, and in the rhetorical questions: ‘Who owns this image?’, ‘How far removed...?’ and ‘What sense does this make to them?’. These structures serve to introduce new topics and move the class along and keep the pedagogy focused on the future. They also appear to invite a response, but in this lecture situation no public dialogue is possible because of the unequal power relations, and the sanctity state suggested by the darkened lecture theatre and the complex subject matter.

‘Abakhwetakhweta’: slippage in meaning

Next, I focus on a moment in the commentary where there is some slippage in meaning. In line 3, Robert says, ‘You have two abakhwetakhweta sitting here in the grass’. He prefaces this image as an ‘anthropological classic’, and the French ‘tour de force’, in an

elevated, formal register, establishing the gaze of ‘the other’. The Xhosa term is seamlessly woven into the utterance, while the anthropological present tense ‘you have here’ seems to fix the initiates in time and place, and at the same time, lowers the register to the ordinary ‘sitting here in the grass’. The addressivity has shifted here. The word ‘abakhwetakhweta’ resonates with different meanings. No explanation or translation is given for the Xhosa word for initiates, so the addressivity assumes an audience that will understand. He uses the Xhosa term to signal familiarity with a cultural practice and a national language other than English. However, while it sounds seamless, in fact there is a slip in meaning: ‘abakhweta’, rather than ‘abakhwetakhweta’, is the correct form. The doubling of the *-khweta* echoes the current South African practice of naming sports teams after the national soccer team ‘bafana bafana’ meaning ‘men of men’. Since then a slew of terms like *amabokoboko* (rugby) and *banyana banyana* (women’s soccer) have become part of the post-Apartheid lexicon⁵. The Xhosa word is pulled in two directions at the moment of utterance, indexing both traditional ritualized practice and a contemporary post-Apartheid search for catchy and unifying names for sports teams. These struggles over meaning are echoed in the adverb of place, ‘here’, which has several referents. One is to the place where the photograph was taken, in the long grass on the edge of the rough cricket field in Kentane, which is already recontextualised from its origins in the colonial game. It also refers to the new place – the lecture theatre – where the image is shown and somehow returned to a colonial setting, through the context of the architecture of the lecture theatre. The moment is highly charged as the local, complex meanings are subjected to the dominant discourses of the academy and the documentary and are rendered ‘other’.

Gesture and gaze

I look briefly at two elements in this moment that are realised visually: gesture and gaze. Gesture works powerfully to underline Robert’s authority, serving several semiotic functions. In the image (Figure 6.1) we see what most of the students in the lecture theatre would have seen. Robert’s arm acts as vector pointing to the image in a left-to-right narrative structure. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 61) argue that such a vector is the verbal equivalent of a proposition, with the “actor” (Robert) directing something at the “goal” (initiates) who are seen as having something *done to* them. Through much of this excerpt he is pointing at them, sometimes with arm extended, and at other times

⁵ In the interview with Robert, we spoke about this slip. He gave an alternative explanation for the slip, located in a poem about a young man arrested and taken away in a police van (*kwelakwela*) to the initiation lodge.

with a shortened arm that appears to hold the cricket ball. This gesture seems to contradict his words, 'They own the image'. It is the authoritative commentary that owns the image. Another gestural pattern is indicated in Robert's speech which is accompanied by gestures that give a visual rhythmic character to his words as he emphasises the strong rhetorical quality in his lecturing. This is particularly marked in lines 6–9, where the cupped hand gesture reinforces the high modality of his analytical claims: the words 'red ball', 'focus', and the emphatic 'not' are all repeated and emphasized through gestural beats.

The iconic function of gestures is also telling in this analysis. Gestures may contribute to the ideational aspect of communicative practices by representing aspects of content, serving as metaphors at different levels of abstraction (Kendon 1996). Robert mimes a skilled cricket shot (line 5) and makes the vertical chest-covering gesture (line 15) to indicate covering with a blanket, and with 'the white clay of initiation and regeneration'. These gestures respectively represent the practices of the game of cricket, and of initiation, to which Robert appears to belong by applying the gesture to himself. While both practices have strong elements of 'the Empire strikes back', and have been appropriated into discourses of resistance, both cricket and initiation are deeply embedded in practices and discourses in which male voices are authoritative. Robert revivifies these gendered practices.

His gaze pattern is also interesting here. It serves as a vector to draw students' attention to the image. The eyeline thus makes a narrative proposition, like the pointing gesture, where the person who does the looking is the "reactor", and the entity looked at is the "phenomenon" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, 64). Like the gestures, I argue that this increases the sense of social distance in the relationship between the lecturer and the initiates who become 'the other'. So in line 10 when Robert asks, 'Who owns the image?', he glances only briefly at the spectators when he mentions them. There is also a brief glance before saying 'wearing their blankets' (line 15); briefly at the beginning of line 16 ('they'), with the word 'disrupting' (line 18) and then a glance right at the end, at the point when he walks back to the right hand side, after he has asked, 'What sense does this make to them?' The gaze not only functions to link Robert to the image, but it serves a crucial function in stitching the audience to the presence of the cricket-watching initiates.

'The voice of decontextualised reason'

There is a hierarchy of discourses (resources for representation) in the complex addressivity here. Some of these discourses are authoritative, though there are only traces

of them. There is an academic/anthropological discourse, a technical discourse of photojournalism and the discourse of the classroom. Then there is the discourse of cricket – just a game, but a formerly colonial game. These, with provenance in elite practices, combine in what Wertsch (1990, 120) calls “the voice of decontextualised rationality”. This is a privileged social speech type or perspective, a composite discourse that usually incorporates several strata (e.g. generic, professional, etc.). Wertsch writes that its defining characteristic is that “it represents objects and events ... in terms of formal, logical, and if possible quantifiable categories”. Meanings are established through abstract, generalisable theories, rather than through local, contextualised forms in which the listener may need “information from the unique context” to understand its reference. In general, when the voice of decontextualised rationality is strong, it will tend to background aspects of the unique situation, and make them seem irrelevant. While the cricket expertise and knowledge of initiation appear to rupture the rationality as they unfold specific details from the particular context, in effect, they add to it. The initiation is discussed with religious imagery (‘regeneration’) rather than specific historical information that Robert is very familiar with, but has failed to mention. Both cricket and initiation are also deeply gendered practices. The gendered and religious strata are incorporated into the voice of decontextualised rationality where they fuse with cricket expertise and initiation, which are both local and specific to this image; but where these local voices break through, as in the gestures and use of the Xhosa language (abakhwetakhweta), they are weak, and subject to the stronger voice of rationality. So the answer to Robert’s question, ‘Who owns this image?’, is not the initiates, but the voice of decontextualised rationality. The initiates remain silent. They are incorporated into a hegemonic discourse with a long history of othering.

Robert, who boldly asserts that ‘they’ own this image, yet does so in a style that denies this, has precipitated a liminal moment. What do students make of this lecture in the focus groups?

The focus groups: ‘I’m the man’

This section explores the audience side of participation in the lecture. When I had asked students to identify lecturers who they thought were ‘good’ and whom ‘they would not want to miss’, Robert’s name came up frequently. He had made a deep impression on students. In response to my opening question in the focus groups (‘What do you recall from the lecture?’), the discussions in all three groups began with some reference to what they had picked up from Robert about critical analysis, and the ‘freedom’ the analyst has

to interpret texts. In focus group 1, Bongani and Salama recalled Robert's reference to the chant he shares with his students – 'Shakespeare is dead' – particularly potent when the author/photographer is there in the room, while Robert assertively develops his analysis of the images. In all groups, students commented on what they had realised about the importance of context, noting the shift from cricket at Newlands (cricket ground in Cape Town) to the Eastern Cape. There were also comments on Robert's 'brilliance':

He kind of opened my eyes to things I'd never seen before. It's hard to get into the academic world, and he helps us to get used to it. (Lindee)

In all groups, students recalled the way Robert had stood in front of the images: 'The way he expresses himself is very powerful' (Lerato, as she imitates his gesture with arm outstretched). Some comments are more speculative, and hint at what may be unsayable, as in Kerry's comment, 'You'd make a lot of money selling daytrips in his mind', and Sabelo's 'He's too much into things'. These comments are responses to the dense, ambivalent layering of discourses in his lectures – the laminations that bring them 'to the point of combustion'.

This is an extract of conversation from focus group 2 where students get caught up in a playful mockery of his style:

He moves from play to seriousness. Like he's saying 'I don't care but you have to listen'. He kind of commands that respect. (Sabelo)

Not in a bossy way. (Kerry)

That's nice. (Sabelo)

I've got something to say'. (Lindee, mimicking Robert)

I know I'm good'. (Mark)

I'm the man'. (Lindee)

It's very exposing. (Riaan)

A closer analysis using entextualisation traces the refraction of Robert's lecture in the students' utterances. Sabelo's words, "It's as if he's saying, 'I don't care but you have to listen'" opens up the space for parody. It is an example of what Volosinov/Bakhtin (1973 in Morris, 1994) call pictorial style of reported speech, in which "language devises means for infiltrating reported speech with authorial retort and commentary in deft and subtle ways"(65). Pictorial style is contrasted with linear style, in which the author tries to retain the originality and boundaries of the reported speech. A lack of infiltration

suggests greater distance, a need to keep the words intact. The use of pictorial style suggests agency and a strong process of ideological becoming as they play with the authoritative character of Robert's lecture. Students have pulled the authoritative voice downwards into an internally persuasive space. Other students in the group pick up from Sabelo, and carry the parody and quotation through their bodies, in accent, body language and facial expression, rather than through the inquit phrase, 'he says'. It has a centrifugal energy as a group of young people 'rip off' an authority. It expresses the Bakhtinian carnival aspects of discourse. The contradiction in Robert's lectures (the voice of decontextualised rationality with the undercurrent of foxiness and subversion) is played with in the students' reconstruction. There is also a sense of solidarity amongst them, as they parody his authority, confidence and gendered presence. By ventriloquising in this way, they do not have to commit to using possibly dangerous adjectives like 'seductive' or 'arrogant', but can playfully try out the distance they want to take up. Riaan, who often separated himself from other students in the interviews, sounds a warning note, and breaks the string of parody with, 'It's very exposing'. He is referring to Robert's self-exposure in his lectures, but also possibly to the way his fellow students are taken in by Robert's performance. For Riaan, there is no room to make light of such a crucial matter. He thus establishes his disapproval, and signals a different orientation to Robert, which separates him from the others. He also made several references to his need to be separate from Robert:

It's as if we've got Robert in our heads. (Riaan)

and

I'm concerned that we're looking through Robert's eyes. (Riaan)

Lindee shared this concern, arguing that Robert 'wants us to analyse him as well, otherwise you have his ideas in your head, not your own'.

In the same group as Lindee and Riaan (focus group 2), Sabelo did the most talking, and his contributions give a clear sense of his ideological becoming and awareness that he will 'sooner or later' separate himself from the authoritative voice. He said that the landscape and images discussed were 'kind of familiar' to him:

I kept looking at the pictures, not concentrating on what Robert was saying, but having my own interpretation. (Sabelo)

The images evoked another world of working class rural life that he identified with. This enabled him to put Robert's commentary aside, possibly because of the power of the images, or a deliberate resistance to the official commentary. There is a strong critical

vein as he recounts his response to the lecture. With reference to the opening photograph that was screened in the lecture, a depiction of a boy bowling with extravagant energy, against a backdrop of a wire mesh fence, Sabelo said:

I expected Robert to say that the boy was copying a culture, not his own – that it was borrowed from TV. (Sabelo)

Later he referred to a picture in which Robert interpreted a group of laughing children watching cricket from a treetop as taking pleasure in play, whereas for Sabelo, there was a different, less innocent interpretation of the image:

His [Robert's] mind sometimes clashes with mine. The kids could have been smiling because the photographer was white. (Sabelo)

Sabelo's sense that there was no limit to Robert's imagination 'makes it difficult to challenge him. I keep quiet because I won't be able to answer him'. He referred to difficulties he experienced with being a Christian and wanting to use the Bible as an authority, but that the Bible was not a recognised form of capital in this context. He says that he 'wants to have words to challenge him', but says that in the meanwhile, he'll 'stay as a student until I have something to say'. This can be read as an account of an ideological struggle between authoritative and internally persuasive voices. As Sabelo takes moments from the lecture and recasts them in the focus group, they come alive as instances of his interest in engaging with expertise. At some point, he feels that he will have the words to challenge the experts, but in the meanwhile, he is practicing. Given the space to reflect on the lecture, it is clear that there is fertile material in the lectures for critical reflection.

Resistance to Robert's authority was most strongly expressed in focus group 3, all the members of which were women. The strongest voice in this group was Triya, who said she found aspects of Robert's analysis 'offensive' – the most overtly negative value judgment to be expressed in the groups. Triya was repeating the course, and so had worked out where she stood in relation to Robert. The comments gathered momentum, from Ella's, 'He over analysed the pictures. I just wanted to sit back and enjoy', back to Triya: 'He's like throwing his weight around'; 'Lecturers need to be more interactive – one view sort of stunts your analysis'; 'He should teach the skills we need, not just demonstration' and 'I felt like I wanted to put up my hand and make a comment'. Anna responds: 'The impression I get from Robert I don't think he'd want to have an interactive lecture. He's the type who doesn't want to be argued wrong'. I am interested

in the silences here. Anna's 'he's the type' enables her to avoid any mention of gender, race or class.

In focus group 1, students discussed power and Robert's ideological positioning. Marianne hesitantly gave a reading of Robert's intentions in this lecture:

It's just an assumption – he doesn't really like the old form, where cricket came from – posh people hanging around, very boring. (Marianne)

He is encouraging how cricket has transformed. (Bongani)

Both Marianne and Bongani picked up on Robert's stance regarding post-colonial South Africa, and in his celebration of taking back meaning from the 'old forms'. Marianne tentatively recasts, using her own terms – 'the old form', 'posh people' and 'boring'. Bongani puts things more abstractly, referring to post-Apartheid transformation. Lerato leads this interchange, saying that she has learnt from him about 'who you are with other people':

*It [analysis] exposes who I am because he [Robert] exposes who he is. (Lerato)
The way he analyses says something about who you are. Not in an us/them way, but in an international way – not South African or African way. (Taffie)*

'You live in a mud hut'. (Marianne, parodying the colonial perspective)

At this point in the focus group discussion, I asked student whether they thought that Robert was supporting the colonial perspective. Lerato responds in the negative, referring to the image of the initiates to back up her opinion, followed by Bongani who has a strikingly different take on the image, saying that it seemed 'made up' and fake:

No. In the initiation image with the young boys with blankets – he used that as an example of not reinforcing the international person's perspective. (Lerato)

That picture of the initiation – it was like made up. They're not supposed to sit amongst people. They're supposed to sit in the bush. (Bongani)

This interchange is interesting in the hints it gives of how different students take him up in their own ideological becoming, and indicate their 'struggles with another's discourse'. Lerato expresses a strong affinity and identification. Her gift is her self-exposure, which liberates her to do the same. Taffie picks up on this, and introduces the category of the 'international person' and struggles to express herself without falling into us/them discourse. The category of 'international person' is safe, and provides a way forward for a hesitant exploration.

Lerato is the first person in the focus groups to mention the image of the initiates. It invokes different meanings for different students. Lerato uses it as an illustration of

positive, inclusive meaning (a shared sense of African identity, what Bongani refers to as 'encouraging how things have transformed'), but for Bongani, it signals fraud, unwanted exposure, and misrepresentation: 'It was like made up'. While earlier on he has noticed and affirmed Robert's alignment with 'the new South Africa', here he feels the need to intervene and challenge the veracity of the image. He draws attention to the photograph, not the commentary, so this is not a direct criticism of Robert. On the one hand he says the image was 'made up'. Yet he also says 'they are not supposed to...' and thus distances himself from both the representation and the boys in it, who are doing the wrong thing by watching cricket, instead of observing the isolation required of them by the initiation process.

'I felt misrepresented': Bongani breaks the silence

Later outside of the focus group discussion, I asked Bongani why he had said that the image was 'made up', and what he had meant by this. He explained that having been through the initiation process, he felt a strong need to negate an impression that he thought had been created by the image of the initiates, and to insert local, experiential meaning.

There were quite a lot of us [in the focus group] and I was the only Xhosa guy so I didn't really want to say a lot [...] There are people of different cultures and I didn't want to expose my culture as not so respectable. I didn't want to leave people with the impression that's what we do – we watch cricket you might as well go to Mauritius and go to the beach.

It was obvious in the discussion that the initiation process was deeply meaningful to him: 'I can't remember any stage in my life where I felt more confident'. It is also interesting that he raised his Xhosa male identity as marking him in the group, though he could not mention this in the focus group. Ethnicity is referred to as 'different cultures' and 'my culture' when we talked after the focus group, but it remained a silence in the focus group. He pointed out that Robert's discussion of the image is

a bit offensive. The initiation ceremony is controversial. There are lots of people who fight over this stuff. Like that picture was showing the bad side of what's supposed to be done – showing people not respecting their culture, but we claim that we do.

It is clearly the sort of topic that starts to show the cracks in the pan African solidarity that students showed in the focus group talk where they distanced themselves, so carefully, and with due respect, from the 'international perspective' that tends to stereotype. When he read my emerging analysis of Robert's discussion of the image, he said in reference to the transcript:

It looks like there was a battle about who owns the image – a huge battle. How it's said doesn't look like they own the image [...] When I see arguments like that I usually take the underdog's side [...] I felt misrepresented. I'm not saying that a Xhosa person would have done it better, but the chances are that a Xhosa person could have said it better.

Bongani told me that he had put a photocopy of the image in Figure 6.1 up on the notice board in his room in residence, but specified that he would not put a treasured photograph taken during his own initiation up on his notice board for others to scrutinise. A week later he brought the photograph to show me, and explained the codes governing representation of initiation.

Both Bongani and Robert have the right to comment on this image, but their grounds are fundamentally different. Robert is an outsider, but has gathered the academic authority to comment, and has created his body of knowledge from this academic authority, as well as from growing up in the Eastern Cape. Bongani is an insider to initiation practices but his body of knowledge has to stay silent. Even (or particularly) with his peer group, he 'didn't want to say a lot' and chose to play it safe.

In the focus group discussions, students respond to the lecture in a wide variety of ways. Wry amusement, skepticism and parody abound, while some are also deeply moved and enabled by this encounter. For individuals such as Sabelo and Bongani there are contradictions, as they are simultaneously drawn to and pushed away by Robert's performance. They express various degrees of what Bakhtin calls voices that are 'half ours and half somebody else's' (1981, 345).

'Even the stars are human': the liminal moment in the final lecture

The second of Robert's lectures to be video recorded took place seven weeks later at the end of the first semester, and was the final one for the Texts in Context course. We discussed which lecture I would video, and in choosing this lecture, Robert spoke of it as 'more sermon than lecture'. This signalled a shift in his frame of reference, from concert to a more morally weighty genre with sacred content and restrained body language. The 'Who owns this image?' lecture took place half way through the course; the second one was at the end, marking the end of a relationship with Robert, and with the course, an initiation into the meaning of the humanities. The juxtaposition of these two moments also expresses his range as a performer.

In keeping with the shift in footing from concert to sermon, Robert's body language was very different. He walked into the lecture theatre with a sheaf of lecture notes, and stood firmly behind the podium. He reached for a pair of gold-rimmed

spectacles, which he put on and took off for effect before the lecture began. It was clear that there had been a shift in his relationship with the students. There were points in this lecture where he seemed tired, and appeared to rush his words. He moved very little during the lecture, even less so in the liminal moment that is analysed in detail below.

He begins with an attempt to get students' attention ('Please...thank you...Shhhhhh'). Then he apologises for the late start of a film screening the previous day. What follows is an acknowledgment that this is his last lecture: 'How nice for me and for you, that you won't have to listen to me lecture any more' (laughter and titters in the audience):

As a lecturer something in me rebels against your attention
because I feel that all too often, I secure it
out of your sycophancy or my authority
rather than because you are genuinely interested [...]
I rebel against lectures because they fall half-way
between a sermon and what we call transmission teaching.
I love delivering sermons
but I don't think they're particularly good things.
I think that they sponsor the worst forms of ego
especially in the demos – democratic city –
that a university should be.
I hope that you are realizing
and realizing very deeply that you are not simply your teachers
but your best teachers

He goes on to say that (contrary to what some students think) he doesn't hate them, though he strongly dislikes the word 'text' (a reference to the title of the course). This is also followed by a ripple of comment from the students. They are told that they can't go out into world unless they are prepared to be scholarly, critical and estranged in understanding themselves. Next he reads some of the things that students have said about the course in the past, a mixture of positive and damning comments, to much laughter. Then he moves into the main part of his lecture, an extraordinary exposition that links the sciences and the humanities:

Every element in you heavier than hydrogen
was made in a star.
You are stars
star dust
quite literally.

But we cannot know stars
We project onto them
We arrange them in texts.

As in the previous moment described, he shifts rapidly in reference, making the point that 'all processes of knowledge are processes of representation'. Then he leaps to Jean-Paul Sartre, and the notion of the palimpsest: 'What we experience as reality is in fact the text of the world' and so 'we had better understand how the texts work' for (quoting Sartre), 'if we turn away from this landscape, it will sink back into its dark permanence'. He reads from St Augustin and Sartre, eyes down, voice relatively monotonous. In the video footage, I see some students squirming in their seats, or sinking down lower. One person grasps her bag, as if getting ready to walk out. The woman in the front row has her head down on the desk, and is doodling.

The liminal moment transcribed below occurs in the final minutes of the course. The transcription draws attention to the following:

: = moment at which the still image in the transcript was captured

^ = gaze directed upwards to the students in the lecture theatre

v = gaze directed downwards, to Robert's notes on the lectern.

(.) = pause, one second (.), two seconds (..)

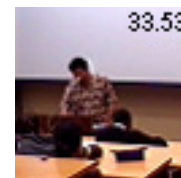
Palimpsest = word or syllable stressed

descriptions in this font = bodily gestures

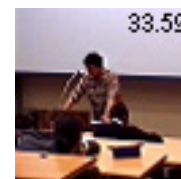
1. For Sartre, as for Augustin (.)



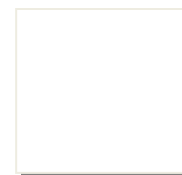
2. as for the premise on which this course is essentially founded



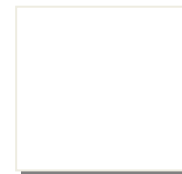
3. The stars, the universe, the greatest compass of our reality



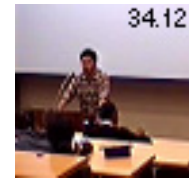
4. are all (.) a palimpsest (..)



5. the re-inscriptions of human consciousness



6. making a text (.) a landscape (.) of space

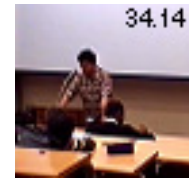


(a)

: a)

v : b) looks down at notes

7. making a text (.) a narrative (.) of time (...)



(b)

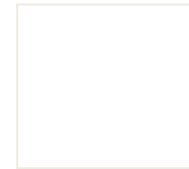
8. In that sense (.) there is no existence for us outside of (.) our community (..)



9. That ceaseless to and fro of texts,



10. that pliable microwave hum (.) of texts,



: hands together, urgency in voice

11. That warp and woof, that woven fabric of texts

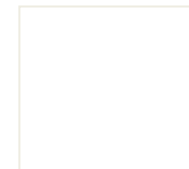


: head lowered, gaze held

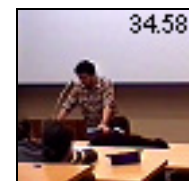
12. each strand (.) a projected (.) shuttle



13. of one consciousness, acting in common with others (...)



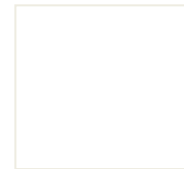
14. We are *homo narrans*, the story telling (.) being (.....)



15. And that's (.) perhaps (.) why (.)



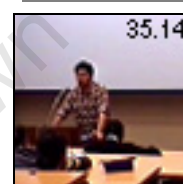
16. the African proverb (.) that makes (.) such a central (.) stand



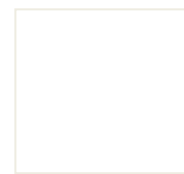
17. in the political rhetoric of the African Renaissance



18. that 'Motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe'



19. 'People are people because of other people'



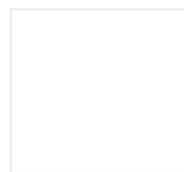
20. is probably actually true (.....)



21. Even (.) the stars that lie so far away



22. so beyond (.)



23. so cold (.)



24. and apparently ^voutside of us



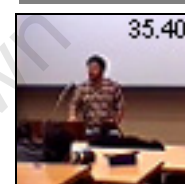
25. even the [^]stars (.) are texts. v : drops voice, and head



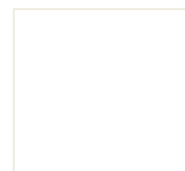
26. Being texts, even the stars are human [^](.....) v head down



27. and I [^]hope (.) : raises head



28. that is why (.)

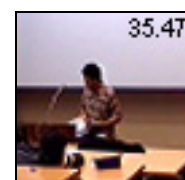


29. you are ^vstudying (.) the humanities : head down



Gathers notes together, stacking them noisily.

30.



Students start to clap and shout, and he shouts back:

31.



32. YOU CAN [:]GO!



Student in the front lifts her head

33.

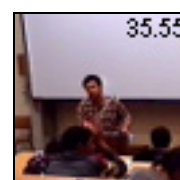


34.

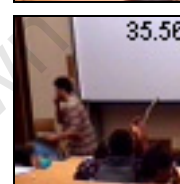


Robert turns to face students, disappointed

35.

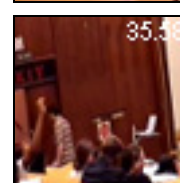


36.



Student on the left has hand raised. Others turn to talk to each other.

37.



38.



Robert has broken the frame of the lecture, leaving almost ten minutes before the end of the period. In the last few images shown above, we see him leave the lecture theatre for the last time with this group. Some students have their hands up, as if to call him back, or be seen, or perhaps in boisterous celebration.

This text from the lecture is rich in attribution, unlike the previous lecture analysed. This one begins with references to Sartre and to Augustin (not *Saint* Augustin, as he was referred to earlier in the lecture). He links these philosophers to 'the premises on which this course is essentially founded': all have in common a view of the universe as a palimpsest. This is not a new idea to the students. The first reading they encounter in the course is an elegiac piece on reading which is written by Robert and entitled 'Between the lines: a palimpsest, by way of introduction to Texts in Context'. Thus Robert establishes a line of thought linking him to Sartre and Augustin (in spite of having said that his 'foxy'

stance excludes him ‘from a lineage of authority’). The ideas about space and narrative in lines 6 and 7 are also not new to the students, but are very densely contracted here.

The juxtaposition of modern and ancient (‘that pliable microwave hum’ and ‘that warp and woof’ in lines 10 and 11, the weaving metaphor lending a sense of a biblical moral tale), the repetition of ‘that’, and the alliteration of the ‘w’ sounds, also sound less like fresh talk than the previous extract analysed, and add to the sermon-like nature of this lecture. A similar leap takes place in putting ‘*homo narrans*, the story telling being’ (line 14) alongside the fluently uttered words that define the philosophy of ‘ubuntu’, which means common humanity, or ability to care, in the Nguni languages, Xhosa and Zulu. It is a core element in the African value system at the root of the concept of the ‘African Renaissance’ which was popularized by President Thabo Mbeki after the 1994 elections. Robert demonstrates his range by saying ‘Motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe’, this time spoken in Sesotho rather than in isiXhosa, the language used in the analysis of the image of the cricket-watching initiates. His translation into English is rushed and spoken in a lowered tone, in parentheses, for those who do not recognize the saying. Robert’s shift in footing indicates that he can switch codes at will, and suggests that this is done in response to the diversity in the student audience. In the video recording we see the student in the front right lift her head briefly in response as she hears the Sesotho words.

In the next section, students’ interest expressed in the focus group discussion is explored. All three focus groups⁶ noted that there was shift in style in the final lecture.

Focus group discussions: ‘Closing the course but opening up the humanities’

Across all three groups, students concurred that there was a sense of ‘closure’.

A nice lecture, like he was doing a closure, wrapping up though I didn’t really catch the main point. (Bongani, group 1)

I definitely got the sense of closure, like the box closed. You can visualize it [mimes closing movement with hands]. (Riaan, group 2)

It wasn’t like other lectures – more academic. As if he was closing the course but also opening up the humanities. (Lerato, group 3)

The use of the term closure indexes a therapeutic discourse from psychology now used frequently in everyday non-specialist communication to suggest the release of tension at the end of a difficult relationship or narrative. It is also very common in post-Apartheid South Africa, and is associated with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and

⁶ The composition of the focus groups changed with each lecture analysed. Students attended when they were free.

attempts to heal the wounds of the past. Much of the discussion in the groups is framed around the relationship between Robert and the students, rather than the content of the lecture. There is consensus that their relationship with him has changed in the course of the semester. Lindee says:

I was very excited after his first lecture, but he seems to have lost faith in us. You can see when someone doesn't want to be there. (Lindee)

In two of the groups, they identify a point at which the relationship changed, when he had intervened in a visiting academic's lecture, to tell students to behave themselves. Bongani says: 'His authority dropped [lowering his arm]. He couldn't tell us to shut up' as he had done in previous lectures. They mimic how he had engaged with him previously: 'The woman at the back with the purple top!' 'Please, I've seen in your essays...'. Now he is no longer interested in directing their learning. I ask the students how they reacted to this lowering of authority: 'It didn't really matter how we judge [because it's] the end of the semester'. The students talk about Robert's perceived dislike of them, the discussions they have amongst themselves about whether he should be teaching first year students, and their attempts to repair a deteriorating relationship. Lindee refers to an incident when students started to walk out early, and Robert had 'switched off'. She went up to him afterwards, to reassure him that 'some people were really trying to work'.

The changing and now ending relationship is very visible to students in his body language: the lecture is more formal and 'centred', with Robert referring to his notes, and not moving as much as he usually does. Students commented on this at length when I showed them a video clip at the end of the focus group meeting. Riaan notes a shift in tone and voice, and mimics him 'when I was on my way to Varsity', said with an upper class English accent. They note his restraint, and tightly folded arms, 'as if he were trying to control himself'; he doesn't 'shout' at people but simply stares at people, as if not wanting to lose the flow of his message. Even Iain, who has been to very few lectures, notes that the lecture was unusual: 'It's almost turned down, less forceful – more like a prepared speech'. In the same group (group 3), Sabelo says that this is more like what he expected from university, where the lecturer will 'just stand there and convince you, like a sermon'. He says:

In a way he put himself in this '60 year old person' state of mind, like this old man, trying to deliver his last words. (Sabelo)

Sabelo had been a student in one of Robert’s tutorial groups, and so had more contact with him than most of the other students. He identifies the emotion in this lecture, in spite of its formality:

If students allowed him to cry, I think he was going to cry, but he was distracted because people were disturbing him. (Sabelo)

Salama in group 1 also commented on the emotion, noting that he had ‘tears in his eyes’.

There is some discussion of the meaning of the lecture. As usual, and as we expect with the ritualization framework, students have reacted very differently to Robert’s lecture, although they all agree on the style, with its dominant note of giving up authority. Riaan leads his focus group (group 2) with ‘I love this lecture’ and wonders why others sleep or walk out. Later in the focus group, he tells us that he wanted to talk to Robert after the lecture, but couldn’t, as Robert had left early. So he has emailed him, to debate the pros and cons of deconstruction. In the previous lecture, Riaan had been very skeptical about Robert’s influence, but he has changed his mind:

The star stuff is really cool. It’s like seeing history. You have to work it out for yourself, sit down and think about it. (Riaan)

In focus group 1, Salama describes a friend who said it was ‘a cool lecture’ and students had run out laughing, but she doesn’t commit herself to what she made of it. Lerato and Bongani are clear though: Lerato in particular speaks of how the lecture ‘encourages me to study the humanities’. She cites the example of the ‘Motho ke motho’ proverb, and how that has made her realize that the humanities is ‘about relationships – me and him’. She notes that the lecture was different, more motivational, closing the course but also ‘opening up the whole of humanities’. For Bongani, it was a ‘nice lecture’ but complex and going round in circles. In focus group 2, Marianne begins by saying that she’d ‘switched off’ and found the lecture ‘pretty boring’; the lecture ‘went over peoples’ heads’ and should have come the day before, and not been on the last day of the course. Other students nod their agreement. (Later in this chapter we see how Marianne looks back on this moment a year later). Sabelo, however, passionately defends the lecture for its inspiration and plea to students to ‘discover ourselves’. As the discussion continues, he seems to win them over.

Lecture as concert: Clapping at the end of the lecture

The critical moment analysed here concludes with Robert saying, ‘And I hope that is why you are studying the humanities’ (lines 27–29) followed by a noisy gathering and stacking of his notes, and the shout ‘YOU CAN GO!’ In all three groups, students commented

on this moment, and interpreted it differently. Salama says, 'He ran out before we could get out'. In group 2, Marianne says that his leaving early is 'so sad' as he is resigned to the fact that students are not responsive. She makes the point again that she feels 'bad' about the outcome, responsible for the failed communication. Riaan is frustrated as he can't talk to him afterwards, because he has walked out. We talk about the clapping, and whether it has happened before. Students refer to one other lecturer in English who received a 'standing ovation'. They discuss clapping and when I asked in group 1 why they clapped, Salama said:

It's about saying thank you, showing gratitude and manners. I was brought up like that.
(Salama)

This echoes what Salama had said earlier in the semester about walking out of lectures: 'I will never walk out' (in the 'Walking out' anecdotes in Chapter 5) and how the frame of ritualization draws our attention to issues of respect and disregard. In group 3, it is Sabelo who asks, 'Why the clapping?'. Ella says she clapped because Robert is

very different. He's got this energy. It's a sign of respect, a thank you to him for being our lecturer for the past six months. (Ella)

Sabelo picks up the theme of respect:

That respect, for me, Robert has earned that respect [The other students agree, 'Ja', nods] The way he thinks, the way he listens, you can never catch him out [laughs, and mimics Robert] 'I know, listen to me, I know'. He absorbs you, he puts you to his thinking and then you just sit there and submit to him [...] He stood out, someone you can think of. So I'm just here [indicating a low level], like aiming, sort of like taking two steps closer to him and maybe exceed him if I can. (Sabelo)

It is a sparring, challenging, competitive relationship, one which is temporarily authoritative in Bakhtin's terms, against which the individual consciousness will struggle to separate and free itself.

A closer look at the transcript of the end of the lecture shows many of the facets of the lecture that the students have drawn attention to. The motivation that inspires Lerato, the compacted references that give Riaan a sense of 'seeing history', but alienate Ella, are there in the verbal strand of meaning. The sense of defeat and closure are most strongly evident in more subtle features of the discourse, such as intonation, phrasing and timing, and body language. The constrained gestures (hands in pockets, leaning backwards and forward, silent gaze of rebuke) are picked up by all the students, but felt most strongly by Marianne, who empathizes with how 'horrible' it must be to lecture. In this transcript, as with the transcript of the discussion of the image of the initiates earlier in this chapter, the lecturer's gaze is crucial. The sense of defeat, of 'authority dropping',

is most strongly carried in the contradiction between the words (which on paper appear to be elegiac, inspiring and sermon-like) and their intonation, sharpened by Robert's downward gaze, often at the end of the sentence, on key words in his lecture. The dropped eyes, lowered voice on strong words such as 'community', 'being', 'reality', 'true', 'us', 'texts' and 'human' that fall at the end of the phrase, when one would normally expect eye contact with the audience, cut across what he saying, and introduce a note at odds with the words.

A year later

The following year I asked students to email me responses to questions about whether anything had changed in the way they viewed lectures, and whether they could identify a moment that expressed this change. Marianne responded that her attitude had changed; she felt more confident and less likely to judge hastily in a 'belligerent' way. She identified Robert's last lecture and the focus group discussion after it as key to this change:

During the lecture I was quite dumbfounded and lost. I couldn't understand how what Robert was saying would relate to our course and help us with the exams. Only in the small group discussion, after discussing it through with some people who I feel have an amazing understanding and intelligence, did I understand that what Robert had been saying was really inspirational. (Marianne)

She ascribes the shift from 'dumbfounded and lost' to 'amazing' and 'inspirational' to the opportunity afforded by the focus group discussion. Robert refuses to comply with student expectations of what the last lecture should be, and forces another frame that some resist. It is the focus group that changes her mind, or opens her eyes, giving her a sense of the human drama that was not visible to her at the time. She had been in group 3, and was the first person to respond when I asked what students recalled from the lecture. Her response had been 'I switched off. It was pretty boring'. During this focus group, students (led by Sabelo's intense engagement with Robert) came round to a very different evaluation of the lecture, of Robert and of the course, seeing the symmetry in the course design, recalling how Robert had introduced the idea of the palimpsest in his first lecture. A year later she is embarrassed by this response. This suggests the importance of a safe space (in this case provided by the research process and the focus groups) where students can debate the embodiment of knowing that the lecture offers.

Closing comments: authority fused

In the previous chapter the focus was on insights into communicative practices gleaned from the individual interviews with students. In this chapter the actual lectures given by a

lecturer all students engaged with are the focus. Liminal moments were identified and closely analysed to trace the addressivity that made these moments potent. Robert's metaphor of teaching 'to the point of combustion' frames lecturing as explosive rather than safe, involving a change of form in the production of something new. The liminal moments chosen give us some insight into how what I call 'authority fused' works in his lectures. Most striking is that both of these moments revolve around bodies. For the 'Who owns this image?' moment, it is the combination of the entextualisation of the image of the bodies of the initiates in the lecture theatre, with Robert's energetic overlay, part body, part word, that is superimposed on this image. The initiates and Robert are involved in a struggle over meaning that is not resolved in the lecture theatre. The second moment, 'Even the stars are human', that took place in the final moments of the final lecture on the course, also centers on embodiment. This time what is salient is the contrast between the energetic Robert that the students are familiar with, and the closed, centred body of the man who gives up on them by walking out early. From students' accounts in Chapter 5, we know that students feel that it is their prerogative to walk out. Robert breaks the frame by walking out before they can. This chapter also points to the importance of symbolic meanings in university settings. Both liminal moments analysed index a complex nexus of meanings realized in multiple modes.

The tightly compacted layering of discourses in the verbal strand of communication plays a vital role in both ideational and interpersonal meanings in the lecture. The complex addressivity in Robert's language anticipates the student audience but also more abstract 'others', resulting in dense code switching that resolves as the voice of decontextualised reason and heightens the liminal moment. The focus groups give some insight into how students have engaged with him. The focus groups offer a relatively low-stakes 'safe house' where there is no formal assessment and they can bring their views on lecturers into a common space, refracting the voice of authority with new meanings. Some of the stances taken up by students in the individual interviews analysed in Chapter 5 sound again in the focus groups. For example Riaan is sceptical (but after the final lecture he talks about 'seeing history' in the lecture); Marianne is hesitant; Salama is dutiful; Sabelo, perhaps because Robert is his tutor, has lots to say. But there are also silences. Bongani suggests that the image that Robert analyses was 'made up' but only feels comfortable to say more about this in a separate discussion with me, when I asked him directly what he had meant in the focus group. Ethnicity, race and gender are

performed through embodiment and realized visually, yet they are for the most part absent in the verbal channel.

This chapter has focused on a charismatic lecturer with whom all students in this study engaged over the course of a semester. The next chapter takes these concerns with addressivity and entextualisation further in the analysis of a lecture that is differently realized.

Chapter 7

'It becomes like a fairground': authority dispersed

This chapter focuses on communicative practices in a lecture given by Francois. While Robert's lecture was a taut and laminated display of authority, Francois' lecture is tentative and exploratory and comes at a time when he is re-thinking his ideas about teaching. In his own words, his lectures sometimes feel 'like a fairground'. I describe practices in this lecture as 'authority dispersed' as Francois juggles a range of texts in an attempt to engage with a changing student audience that seeks 'colour' and 'excitement'.

There are several important differences between this lecture event and the others in this study. The first difference is that while Francois is authoritative and experienced, he was not 'chosen' by the students in this study. He was approached as a participant for several reasons, driven more by my interests than by those of the students. I had worked with him the previous year in the pilot study that informed this research, and regarded him as emblematic of an older generation of lecturers. He has been teaching first year Sociology at Entabeni since 1989, and has lectured through the profound changes in the South African political landscape. I also know him to be deeply interested in pedagogy. At the time of the pilot project, he had given me an article written by a colleague of his – an Academic Development lecturer – who had videoed one of Francois' sessions to understand what students valued about his lectures (Carneson 1995). The article is testimony to Francois' openness in understanding his own practice, and in it we see the esteem in which students held his "lively and stimulating" (209) lectures at the time. Francois is unusual in that despite his seniority (he had been head of department for three years during a time of intense policy change) he enjoyed teaching the first year cohort, providing them with their first encounter with the discipline¹. Another difference is that unlike the other lecturers, who did most or all of the lecturing in their courses, he shared the course with a colleague – a younger woman – who lectured for the first few weeks, after which he took over.

Perhaps the most significant difference is that Francois agreed to work with us at a difficult point in his own teaching. When I approached him, he said that there had been a problem in his course, and he wanted some insight into what was happening. Initially the

¹ He has also recently elected to teach and research in a part time capacity, to enable him to explore his growing interest in Jungian psychology.

problem was identified in relation to how his lecturing complemented a recently published textbook (written by Francois) that had been introduced into the course in that year. He commented:

The book is in the background. I don't want to just repeat what's there [in the lectures]. I'm trying to colour it in, tell stories, point to debates, create some kind of energy and tension around a textbook that students could find a little grey.

He referred to 'colour' again when he said that the textbook used in the Psychology course that many of the students were taking concurrently was very different, 'full of colour, pictures, diagrams and cartoons' whereas his textbook was 'done a little on the cheap'. The book, entitled 'Poverty and Development', is the first in a series edited by Francois aimed at introducing the discipline. He writes in the series introduction: "This small book forms part of a series of small books. The series aims to present basic sociology in a somewhat different way" (2003, vii). It is slim, 72 pages (including exercises and a glossary), designed to be accessible in price and style, including Southern African examples in its exploration of "how some peoples' wealth is connected to other peoples' poverty" (p 1). The textbook is probably a response to the need for a homegrown reference, with local examples, that takes the demographics of the 'new' South Africa into account, aiming to make the text accessible, while keeping it suitably complex. While Francois is concerned with how the presence of this text will alter his spoken authoritative text in the lecture, we know from the students that they are also critical of lectures that duplicate the textbook, seeing them as a waste of time. Phrases like 'we might as well just read the textbook' are common in this study and have already been referred to in Chapter 5. Bongani for example had said that as a second year student he only goes to lectures if he feels he isn't getting enough from the course readers and textbooks: 'Some lecturers are just a repeat of exactly what is on the text'.

When I first interviewed Francois, he foregrounded the need to understand the impact of the textbook. Later, when I interviewed him again after the focus group discussions after his lecture, he raised some other concerns, and introduced the parallel between the lecture and the fairground, and says that he may be 'trying too hard' to hold their attention.

[This year] I'm very aware of a different kind of student presence. I've never known this level of restlessness. There's a continuous buzz – I've been able to control it in the past, to tone it down. I've tried stuff like putting notes on the web if you don't want to be here. I get the notion that for some, lectures are a social event, see your friends, chat, send sms'es up and down the row. It becomes like a fairground! Someone performing down there, up there someone's telling jokes, you turn around, someone's juggling on the periphery. Meanwhile there's a small engaged group of

usually conscientious students round the front. I'm very conscious that I'm trying very hard to get hold of students, perhaps in some cases I'm trying too hard to capture their attention.

Francois says that he has spoken to colleagues at other universities about this change, the 'level of restlessness' he perceives. On a colleague's advice, he has gone through his course evaluations from the past, and found that while he perceives this intense restlessness and high level of distraction in his current lectures, in fact his lecture evaluations are more positive now than they were in the past, where students had been 'totally kind of silent'. He spoke about how the colleague who preceded him had struggled with a student who took a petition about the course to the Student Representative Council (SRC). He quotes the student: 'This lecturer won't allow us to debate and discuss', and another student walked out of a lecture. He describes the student who walked out to me: 'She stands up and explodes, 'I can't understand!'. Lecturers also have their 'walking out' stories which are entextualised in the research process. The students appear to be demanding and desperate, though their marks tell a different story. He speculates about the reasons for this 'excess':

It's possible that there's more pressure from the job market [than when the university] operated in a very liberal educational environment. People came for the enriching experience. Now they don't want to mess around, they're headed somewhere, more competitive, no time to waste.

It is apparent that Francois' frames for the lecture are changing, and that he feels as if he has less authority than he had in the past. The presence of his textbook may displace this authority, leaving him with 'colouring in' to do in the lectures, but beyond that, there is a sense that student presence has also changed. In Carneson's (1995) paper, it is clear that Francois was in tune with the changing demographics of the students in his course, and knew how to find examples that would speak to, for instance, rural black students whose cultural capital was seldom validated in the curriculum. I recall an introductory lecture that he gave us permission to videotape to be used later to teach students in our academic literacies course how to take lecture notes. He began with a compelling story about the multiple identities of an ex-MK (Umkhonto we Sizwe²) soldier who had 'turned' and worked as an Apartheid operative, the details of which became public at the time of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings. The story was used to engage a diverse student body with the multiple identities possible in a dynamic conception of the relationship between the individual and society.

The liminal character of this time in Francois' teaching life is given further substance by his response to reading an earlier version of this chapter, in compliance

² Umkhonto we Sizwe (meaning 'spear of the nation') was the armed wing of the African National Congress when it was a liberation movement.

with our ethics arrangements. He wrote in an email that he was 'forcibly reminded of a clumsy and difficult time, and how much I have shifted since then', and attributes how he was teaching to a different discursive context, in which a discourse of 'academic development' (keep it simple for historically disadvantaged students) prevailed. This is his comment:

It echoed into an old and quite uncomfortable space, dealing with the fall-out of the 'earlier lecturer', and of my puzzlement (and probably clumsiness) in dealing with a new 'generation' of students [...] I was struck by how much I was then operating in the Academic Development mode - making things simple, being painfully explicit. From where I am now, in 2007, I think I lecture to this 'adult' mode much more than I did in the past.

This underlines the importance of the lecturers' ideological becoming and its responsiveness to student presence as well as the discursive and policy environments that prevail.

Liminal moments in Francois' lecture

In the next section, I look closely at his lecture, and choose segments that are salient as liminal moments for detailed multimodal analysis. These moments are mainly taken from early on in the lecture, where there are several shifts in footing. As Goffman writes,

the interesting and analytically relevant point about the lecture as a performance is not the textual stance [...] but the additional footings that can be managed at the same time, footings whose whole point is the contrast they provide to what the text itself might otherwise generate (1981, 174).

These "distance altering alignments" indicate alternatives to the "vaunted self" (175) projected in formal lectures, and mediate between the text and the actual audience on a particular occasion. These changes in footing typically take place in the opening stages of the lecture, where in spoken performance the lecturer (and other social actors) tend to shift footing to establish rapport with the audience. In choosing the images – frames from the video of the lecture – I have selected moments where we see these shifts in footing and the audience response, which is at times intense. As in the previous chapter, I am interested in the interplay between word and gesture. In the pilot study data the previous year Francois had played the role of rhetor much more strongly. In this lecture, the rhetorical stitching is weakened and dispersed as he responds to this challenging cohort of students. The camera did not set out to record student response, but its location in the lecture theatre captures some of the audience dynamics that create the sense of the fairground. The images have been enlarged to render visible the role of the

audience. I also track the moments when we see the dispersal of authority in his references to other texts – the 'documents' that circulate in the class – and his textbook. There is a contrast between the 'exciting' moments and the 'boring' ones that involve the mundane management of text. Francois seems to be well aware of the 'boring vs. entertaining' trope as he shifts footing in the opening stages of his lecture in his efforts to maintain coherence across a complex set of needs.

Francois' lecture proceeds through a series of stages. First is the circulation of two 'documents', a tutorial exercise and the next essay assignment. By calling these texts documents, he elevates them from mere handouts to more authoritative texts. The opening of the lecture is not clearly framed but is blurred by the handing out of these papers, and the way students are trying to get Francois' attention. This sense of dispersal can be seen in the data Sequence below.

: = moment at which the image was captured.

(.) = pauses one second, (..) two seconds

yet = word/syllable stressed

descriptions in this font = lecturer's gestures

descriptions in this font = audience response

Sequence A

1. Some of you have already collected those

2. from the (.) reception.

3. Um there are (.) extra ones (.) circulating.

4. If you don't have them yet

:

points to left and right

5. There are some (.) at the end of the rows here (.)

:

student in front checks her cellphone. Another walks in late behind Francois, collects papers.

6. Um for you to pick up.



His wide open arms point to where the 'documents' are. The lit up screen for the overhead projector provides a backdrop for the shadow play as his pointing hand flickers on the screen. A student arrives late, walks across (also briefly casting a shadow) to collect his papers, and then settles in the front row, alongside his friend, the woman with

the cellphone. The two students are part of the 'small engaged group at the front who are usually conscientious'.

Next, Francois does what none of the other lecturers do: he draws attention to us as researchers, and says, looking directly at Sofie who is holding the camera:

Sequence B

- looks at camera
1. We have (.) if you if you are observant
:
 - points to student on left, as he addresses her
 2. I'll be with you now
 3. If you are observant we have a (.)
:
 - points to Sofie with camera.
 4. a cameraperson in our midst (.)
 - student in front turns round to look at camera, smiling*
 5. Just roundabout there
:
 - students on extreme left and right swivel round to look at camera*
 6. Um she is involved with a research project from (.) CHED
 7. Centre for Higher Education
 8. Um and they're doing a project
 9. looking at (.) teaching at university.
 10. So (..)
 11. if you appear on national television tomorrow evening
 12. you'll know where it comes from.



There are several shifts in footing in this sample. In line 1. ('We have (.) if you are observant') there is a shift in solidarity, from 'we' to 'you', possibly indicating ambivalence about the presence of the researchers at a delicate point in his course. It also turns the students into observers (counter-researchers?). In line 2 he attends to someone with a hand up, 'I'll be with you now', pointing at her, his pointing hand then swivels and picks up the camera 'just roundabout there'. In the image at line 6, we see two students swivel round, one on the extreme left, and the other on our right. In lines 6 to 9, he explains about the research project, elaborating on the acronym 'CHED' for those who don't know. Signaled by 'So' and a pause, he shifts footing again, from ethically responsible explainer, to evaluator of our presence: if they appear on TV, they will 'know

where it comes from'. This helps him create a distance between himself and us as researchers in the audience through ironic humour, but the effect is also to create a general uneasiness. The 'so' in line 10 is also unexpected. The audience may have expected him to align himself with the researchers in some kind of official voice, but he does not do this. This vocal footwork, what Goffman calls "text brackets"(175), serves to put what is about to be said, or has just been said, into perspective, and to indicate that the speaker has a range of personae beyond the official one³. In this case, he asks not to be fully identified with this invasion of observers/researchers.

There is laughter, restlessness, and a current of irritation in the student responses. Murmurs and a rumble of discontent and suspicion ripple through the lecture theatre.

The next image (opposite, 01:34) shows the pair at the front in conversation. The student on the right of the picture talks to his neighbour, speaking behind his hand, as if in secrecy. Watching the film footage again, I feel discomfort with the stares and the audible reaction. They force me to confront the metapragmatic frame of the research process itself. It feels invasive and out of place.



There is a lengthy pause while he waits for the students to settle down. Having negotiated this tricky topic, he now moves on to another difficult one, the results of the evaluation questionnaire that students had filled in the previous week in response to the anger that had arisen with the previous lecturer. He reads some of the comments back to students, handling the comments with self-deprecating humour. Included in this part of the lecture is a shift in footing where, like Robert in the 'Even the stars are human' lecture, he expresses his sympathy with the students for having to sit through lectures.

In the course of the next Sequence the mood changes completely as he gives himself over to the students, performing to them, turning the 'pointed' comments about his 'boring' delivery against himself, and winning their sympathy in the process. This is an extended liminal moment when the prevailing social order seems to be turned upside down. The moment is reinforced by the way Sofie takes the camera focus close-up, emphasizing Francois' response. In line 3, he employs the same strategy as he used before, creating tension by drawing out and pausing on the word 'are', followed by another pause, and then making a statement of the unexpected – that quite a few people are 'happy'. The video shows a student in front squirming, and unsettled at this stage.

³ Carneson alerts us to this as a feature of Francois' lectures. In addition to the use of 'stories', he also strives to create 'tension' between his authority as lecturer, and where the students are. This is a kind of uneasy connection, a 'vibe'. This tension is also used to challenge students, and reveal 'hidden social processes' (212). This is still a strong feature of Francois' philosophy of education.

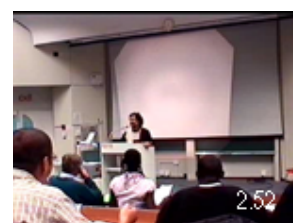
The tension is maintained through several lines, with a similar strategy employed with the word 'suggested' (line 8), drawn out through lines 9, 10 and 11, before he finally breaks the tension with the 'keying' ("words from another's mouth" which as Goffman 174–5 says give the listeners the impression that they have preferential access).

Sequence C

1. Umm it seems that
2. from the comments
3. quite a few people a-a-re (.)
4. happy
5. or certainly less unhappy than they were (.)
6. and there were some other more (.)
7. pointed comments (.)
8. um that uh suggested (.)
9. well there were suggestions for improvements
10. and they went along the lines o-o-f
11. um (.)
12. 'could you get more excited' : smiling
students laughing 12 sec
13. I I've been practicing my Jim Carrey role
students laughing
14. and my Eddie Murphy role

students laughing, some saying aahhhhh in sympathy
15. I'm not sure how far I'll get with that.
16. Other people had noted that
17. um 'this man's voice is completely monotonous'.

 : drops head : head drops further in response
students laughing and more saying aaaohhh 10 sec
18. Um somebody else



laughs

19. Somebody else wanted a Marxist revolutionary lecturer

students laughing 5 sec

20. and somebody else wan/

21. somebody else wanted 'more colour' (.)

22. more colour in the overheads and so on.

students talking

We can look more closely at lines 11–22 to see how he responds to the audience. The keying in 'could you please get more excited' is followed by references to him practicing his Jim Carrey and Eddie Murphy roles. After line 14 (the reference to Eddie Murphy) the tone of the laughter changes to one of sympathy as calls of 'aahhh' are heard, showing compassion for his struggle or humiliation. He has warmed up his audience, and so continues, to the longest bout of laughter, 'this man's voice is completely monotonous'. Students laugh, and he drops his head. As more shouts of 'aahh' join the laughter, he drops his head further (images at lines 17 and 18), smiling, bashful, and at their mercy. The students also laugh at length (but not as much) after line 19 (the 'Marxist revolutionary lecturer') and after the reference to some requests for 'more colour' in the overheads, the intense laughter and sympathy have settled down to low-energy talk. He has used their critique to his own ends.

Francois' use of symbols (Jim Carrey, Eddie Murphy and a Marxist revolutionary lecturer) is interesting and suggests that he does have other 'roles' to play, and that he can consider these edgy options, without necessarily going there himself. He also plays to different groupings within the class, showing an awareness of how the range of symbols may create different sub-groups within this class of first year students. In the next Sequence, he changes footing again, having won them over, he attempts to speak with sincerity, but the pronouns show a more uncertain footing.

Sequence D

1. Um (.)
2. OK I have (.)
3. I just wanted to say that I
4. that I truly have sympathy with people who find

isolated snorts, comments from students

5. voices of lecturers
 6. monotonous
 7. and tedious
 8. and boring.
 9. Um I (.) really
 10. I mean I my own experience
 11. of sitting through other peoples' lectures
 12. is (.) excruciating
 13. so you have my full sympathy.
 14. I will
 15. I will
 16. I hope I will
 17. I will do what I can um
 18. I won't be Jim Carrey
 19. and I won't be Eddie Murphy
- students saying aaaaoh*
20. but I'll see what I can do (.)

In lines 2 to 4, he uses 'I' four times. 'Truly', 'really', 'I mean' and 'I hope' in this context are signifiers of vulnerable good intentions and sincerity. The repetition of 'I will' (four times in lines 14 to 17) promises the students his best intentions.

Sequence E

1. Um I also had a notion that (.)
 2. at least I suspect
 3. that I've spoken a little softly
 4. because I've had the notion that if I speak too LOUD speaking into microphone
- students laughing*
5. I will blow your ears out.
- laughter*
6. Um but if you tell me I'm talking too loud

drops voice, drops head shyly :
7. I'll (.) I might just get excited.

laughter
8. All right what I wanna do next (.)

9. is talk a little bit about the (..)

10. essay topic.



Lines 1 to 7 are still strongly in the personal vulnerable 'I' rather than the authoritative 'I'. He warms students up with laughter again, but says in lines 6 and 7 that if people give him feedback that his voice is too loud, he 'might just get excited'. The image at line 7 shows the two 'diligent' older students in the front exchange glances and some words. Francois' head drops again at the laughter. So having changed footing several times, he finally moves on to discuss the essay topic. But he does not get very far.

Immediately the anxiety about all the textual manoeuvring sets in, and a student's hand goes up, interrupting Francois. He says, pointing to her, 'Yes sorry I forgot [your name?]' and walks into the audience, four or five rows back, to listen to her question. He tells the class about the question, that it related to confusion about the due date for the essay: there are different dates on different papers. 'We'll make it the 9th' he says, to cheers from the students. 'OK anything else?'. There is no response so the class settles down, and the talk seems to subside. He uses a pointer to guide students through a copy of their essay topic, projected on the screen. This is the longest section of the lecture (23 minutes). The essay involves a critical discussion of a statement from Francois' textbook. The statement is 'Neo-Marxist theories, in particular, have struggled to understand what was happening in the East Asian tigers'. On the handout they have received in the lecture, students are pointed to other readings, including an article written by Francois called 'Why does everybody hate theory?' which is available on the web. Three other readings are also recommended.

Francois talks the students through the assignment, demonstrating what he means by 'critical discussion', giving students suggestions as to various options for tackling the question. He has placed the assignment sheet on the overhead projector, and moves a pointer placed on the overhead, from time to time, to highlight certain phrases in the assignment. As can be seen in the image opposite, students' attention is now fully on the texts handed out. There is a lot of



writing activity. He frequently uses phrases with low modality, such as 'What you might well do is...', 'Another way is to...' and 'I'll make a couple of suggestions [...] and you can pick up the ones that you might think will be worth looking at...?.'

In the next Sequence, he outlines another option for how to approach the essay question, the option that will really make him 'excited'. The two moments of inversion that evoke laughter in McLaren's 'streetcorner' sense, are 'wrong orifice' (line 6) and 'I would get excited' (line 16).

Sequence F

1. But another way (.)
2. much more radical and creative, courageous way (.)
3. would be to take on (.) this statement that
4. that (.) Neo-Marxist theories struggle
5. and say actually, they don't struggle (...)
6. Actually this man Roux is talking out of his wrong orifice
7. and (.) there's a whole lot of Neo Marxist theory
laughter
8. that (.) is really valuable (..)
9. OK can anybody who can actually (.)
10. I mean that would be (.) truly first prize.
11. If you can show that this man Roux is completely up the wall
12. A-a-n-d
13. that would be
14. that would be really
15. then I really would get excited
16. I truly would get excited.
drops head :
17. How would you do that?
laughter
: students in front turn to each other



In the image opposite we see Francois take a book from the student in the front row (who has asked several questions in the course of the lecture), in order to give the page references for one of the texts he has referred to. The disposition of students beyond the front row indicates that they are writing. Students are trying to get everything down.



In the next Sequence, he refers to his book, 'Poverty and Development'.

Sequence G

1. And we (.) discuss some of that (.)
2. in the final chapter of Poverty and Development
3. So the final chapter (.)
4. in the book Poverty and Development
5. has a discussion around some of the stuff (.)
6. that he said about Africa (.)
7. um (.) and that's quite interesting (.)
8. um (.) that's a possibility.

In line 1, he refers to himself (the author) as 'we', and then to the 'final chapter' which discusses 'this stuff'. Again, he holds back. It is only 'quite interesting' and 'a possibility'.

After taking some questions from the class, Francois returns to the point where they were in the previous lecture, returning to 'our story of organizations' to 'build up a vocabulary' on the topic. This metaphor of the story underlies an approach to teaching that he has honed over the years, in which Francois uses layers of stories to explore society. Carneson (1995) identifies 'concept stories', 'main theme stories' and 'illustrations and asides'. Using an overhead of the five theories of organizations, he runs through them quickly, saying that he won't go into them in detail, as he does not want to repeat what is in 'the book'.

Sequence H

1. Because I think I think quite a lot of that is (.)
2. explained fairly (.)
3. fairly clearly (.) in the book (.)
4. and it's not (.) doesn't help (.)
: drops head
5. just to repeat that stuff (.)



Whereas before the book had been written, Francois would have emphasized the importance of the overheads, here he asks them not to spend too much time on them, because it's in the book, however, they must not 'just repeat' what is in the book. Carneson's article refers to how valuable students had found his overheads. However, in a different context ten years later, with the surplus of information circulating, the students may feel insecure, hence all the writing activity and the procedural questions. In the Sequence above, the pauses are significant, as are the qualifications: 'fairly (.) fairly clearly' and 'it's not (.) doesn't help' to repeat what's there. In the image at line 4 we see him drop his head shyly, a common gesture in this lecture.

In the rest of the lecture, using overheads with abstract diagrams, he explains how Weber's approach to organizations starts with individual meanings, while functionalists start their analysis with the system. He concludes the lecture with an example from his own experience, which helps to show the difference between organizations. In illustrating what Weber means by organizational culture, he tells a story that illustrates the very different culture of the neighbouring university he went to as an undergraduate. As with what we have seen elsewhere in this analysis, he is self-deprecating, and tells the story against himself. A feature of the story is a tongue in cheek account of the institution's obsession with rugby and religion. The story ends with an account of how he took part in a rugby match, and ended up tackling a spectator rather than an opposition player, by mistake.

To summarise the analysis up to this point, we have looked closely at some liminal moments that illustrate the interplay between 'boring' and 'exciting' interactive states. Francois 'colours' his references to texts (feedback on a course evaluation at a critical time in a course, or discussion of an essay topic, or references to the lecturer's textbook) with verbal and gestural elements that engage the body. There are complex entextualisation processes here. The spoken authoritative word has migrated to the

textbook, and to the web, where he has made his notes available. Written student evaluations re-enter the lecture as inflected quotes. The overhead projector has lost its central place. Francois has handled these texts with humour or lowered modality, and performed some 'fancy footwork' to achieve some kind of coherent holding of the students, as is required of him by the lecture situation.

Francois has alerted me to the crisis in authority, and his control of the resources is not seamless. At some points his control appears about to unravel as he gently, tentatively, encourages the students to read his lectures in particular ways. His knowledge horizontally arranged, while Robert's is vertically stacked. While Robert boldly asserted *his* reading of the images of the cricketers, over and above the intentions of the actual photographer who is also present at the lecture, here Francois is tentatively suggesting what students 'might well do...'. Another difference is the dense crisscrossing of texts that creates the textual swirl in Francois' lectures. This isn't a 'colourful' swirl though. The references to documents, short loan, articles on the web, readings, course evaluations and the textbook seem to create anxiety, and are mainly procedural in their function. So there are crucial differences. However, there are also marked similarities that begin to help us delineate a stock or archive of resources that lecturers access in their attempts to hold students' attention. Both lecturers encourage students to find their own lines of enquiry, and stress the importance of critical analysis. Both refer to course evaluations and use these textual moments somewhat ironically, and both distance themselves from lectures. They also refer to sporting events and use sporting metaphors but subvert them. They are also transgressive, Robert in his over-riding of the meanings of the initiates, and Francois in his seductive play with the word 'excited', and inversion of his own authority.

In the next section, we turn to students' view of Francois' lecture, remembering that Francois' dominant metaphor in reflecting on lectures is the fairground, with lots of distracting sideshows.

'It's all in the book!' Students' views in the focus groups

As with Robert's lectures, focus groups were held soon after the lecture. This lecture took place at the end of September, well into the second semester. Nine of the students in my research group were registered for Sociology and attended the focus group meetings on consecutive days, 4 in the first and 5 in the second meeting. Most of the students were registered for a suite of courses (Sociology, Psychology and Social Work) as requirements in the Social Development major for which they were registered. While

Robert's course was compulsory to all first years in the humanities, there is restricted choice about registration for this course.

In the opening comments in both focus groups, students foregrounded the fact that this lecture is different: In group 1, Lindee said, 'It's hard [to comment on] cos this isn't exactly a lecture', a reference to the atypical straddling procedural nature of the lecture, with its focus on evaluation feedback and the upcoming assignment, as opposed to the usual content textual focus. In group 2, Marianne makes the opening comment, noting that his lecture is different in that Francois was informing them that 'somebody is watching'. She says that this is 'different compared to other lectures' and that it 'made everyone aware'. Watching the video footage again, and experiencing students' gaze directed at the camera, and therefore at me now as analyst, is disconcerting. In Goffman's terms, we had entered the lecture theatre as 'ratified participants' (1981, 131–132), yet his change in footing had rendered us 'eavesdroppers', and Marianne picks this up. The eavesdroppers are discovered and pointed out.

It is significant that both students begin with ways in which this lecture is different. They are making distinctions about what lectures are and should be. By this stage in their first year they are well aware of what the norm is for lectures. Much of their engagement with Francois is framed comparatively. In the focus group, I explained to students that while he might not have been someone they would have singled out as 'not to be missed', he is a colleague very interested in issues of authority and changing engagement. Students in the Group 1 made it clear they thought well of him:

He's nice – just not that dynamic. (Lindee)

A traditional lecturer. (Leah)

He knows his stuff. (Lindee)

Tries to get excitement in. (Mark)

He likes to bring theory home. (Lindee)

Mark's comment that he tries to 'get excitement in' is made in recognition of his jokes at the beginning of the lecture, and the story he told at the end. Perhaps he is also using Francois' language, as in Sequence F, lines 15 and 16 ('I'm sure I'd get excited'). Students also note that he is a good tutor.

The comparative frame is continued when both groups contrast him with the woman who lectured them before he took over. Leah compares him with the previous lecturer, saying that there were complaints about her. Lindee tells me that the SRC has

taken action, and 'someone came to ask us about her'. They disagree on who was more interactive, but agree that Francois was 'more interactive at the beginning' of his lecture stint. Lindee feels that 'being compared is not nice', though she says confidently, 'we didn't enjoy her so it's difficult to take things from her'. As in Chapter 5, the grammar of distinctions is interesting. 'We' have consensus that she was a problem. Leah wonders what would happen if there were no readings, and all one's information came from the actual lecture situation. In group 2, there is also a comparative discussion in which Francois is contrasted with the woman who preceded him. They warm to the opportunity to critique their lecturer:

He's too knowledgeable about theories. (Amy)

There are debates and discrepancies but he talks as if it's certain. (Marianne)

You become sort of passive in the lecture listening to this knowledgeable stuff. You're stuck with his view. Questioning theories is the goal of Sociology, to be engaging. But if you have someone who says 'this is definite' there is no space. (Sabelo)

No creativity, no discussion. (Amy)

She [previous lecturer] wants us to think. But people got irritated with her. He (Francois) tells you how to think. (Taffie)

It's all in the book'. (Bongani, double-voicing Francois)

[students all laugh]

Except for the examples [that Francois gives in the lecture]. It's easier to read than to listen. (Nomathemba)

Sabelo then elaborates on the previous lecturer's approach and continues with references to the views of others:

The other students prefer him because he tells you how to think. He asks you a question about bureaucracy and you say 'bla bla bla'. (Sabelo)

[students all laugh]

It's like high school. (Marianne)

Lerato separates herself from this discussion, saying that she prefers Francois, in comparison to the previous lecturer:

I didn't know what she wanted, especially in the case study. I didn't know what AA [affirmative action] is. (Lerato)

As researcher, I intervene at this point and ask whether they had expectations of how Sociology would be taught, and if this might impact on their experience of the lectures.

Sabelo jumps in, and talks about how he had read books about students in Sociology, and formed images of students openly debating, and actively engaged.

This is what I'd expected! I'm back with my Grade 8 teacher. That's why I sleep. I'm disappointed! (Sabelo)

[laughter]

I intervene:

It's ironic that this is what you feel, because Francois really wants to get you thinking. (Researcher)

We're sort of lazy to use our minds. (Sabelo)

I wonder whether its laziness or not knowing. (Marianne)

These extracts from the focus groups show several things. They show how the comparative discussion builds: 'he does', 'she does'; 'they think', 'I expected' as comparisons take place on the horizontal plane. The points of laughter also become visible, which, as we saw in the focus groups with Robert, indicate points at which some collective truth or point of discomfort seems to have been identified. They laugh at Bongani's 'It's all in the book', and Sabelo's 'bla bla bla', and his 'I'm back with my Grade 8 teacher'. All these suggest a collective and rehearsed dissing of authority expressed in the 'boring' state. This gives substance to Francois' experience of the lecture as a fairground. However, after my intervention, they turn the focus on to themselves: perhaps we are not good at thinking for ourselves. Bongani's 'It's all in the book' comment that causes laughter resonates with what Francois said in Sequence H ('It's explained fairly clearly in the book') and gives some indication as to the possible flattening effect of the book on his pedagogy.

In both focus groups, I had shown a video clip from the lecture towards the end of the focus group discussion. The clip I had chosen was from the opening minutes of the lecture, in which Francois had done the 'fancy footwork', pointed out the researchers and played with the students' evaluations. I had chosen this clip because of the marked student reaction at this point in the lecture. The first response in group 1 is from Lindee:

I like his openness about being criticized. (Lindee)

It sounded more exciting yesterday than it does on the tape. (Mark)

He's so cute, he's just standing there! (Lindee)

How do you [others in the group] feel about his pauses? (Mark)

Too long! (Lindee)

This sequence of comments shows that students are taking more control of the focus group as Mark directs a question to others in the group. In the second group, they start with a similar point, but take it in a different direction, with Sabelo's critique:

It's interesting what he's admitting, talking about students' reactions and joking about it.
(Sabelo)

We show sympathy, so he makes himself more vulnerable. I feel a bit bad, but not a lot.
(Marianne)

I feel a bit manipulated. He wants to see what students really want. (Sabelo)

Francois' interaction with the woman student in the front draws comment from both groups. In group 1, they refer to the woman in the front who always asks questions. Lindee says that other people have asked her to stop asking questions. Mark describes an encounter with her that was 'very bad', and Lindee notes that 'she knows what she wants'. The distinctions they are drawing are strongly related to the behaviour of their fellow students. In group 2, they also comment on the student audience:

People kept on talking or being busy with papers, especially the older man and woman in the front. (Nomathemba)

It's annoying when somebody like that sits next to you. (Marianne)

They stay on the topic of student behaviour in lectures, and Marianne says that it is 'bad' and 'rude' if people keep on talking in lectures. Amy asks her whether she thinks this is 'disrespectful':

Yes, sort of. (Marianne)

We can walk out or talk, so we're independent. But he can also kick me out, so you're careful. It's the lecturer's job to stand there, even if students are not listening. (Sabelo)

Sabelo had expressed a similar point in the interview in Chapter 5 when he had talked extensively about the delicate balance that goes into respect.

Now the comparison shifts and the name of the new lecturer in Psychology comes up: he is 'brilliant', 'enthusiastic', 'excited about his work', 'charismatic'. They say that the Psychology lecturer should run a talk show. Sabelo tells us about an invitation to attend the Psychology lecture, and Nomathemba asks him:

Did you go? (Nomathemba)

Yes! Otherwise I'd have felt left out! (Sabelo)

This interchange is a reminder of how important the building of these personal distinctions is, and how we can see responses that are typical of fanclubs, with strong

affect, aesthetic judgment and identity-building group behaviour, rather than more measured, rational, content-focused pedagogic responses that are typically rewarded in an academic setting.

I intervene again: 'Are you saying that if someone is not charismatic it's a waste of time?' They distance themselves from this challenge: a lot is about the subject, and charisma is just an 'extra thing' and so it all adds up. Two of the students (Lerato and Bongani) want to make it clear that they don't buy into the charisma factor. In praise of Francois' lectures, Bongani says:

I listen because of his examples. They capture my attention and are highlights of the lecture.
(Bongani)

I feel the same. He's also very knowledgeable about the history of those theories, and I'm very interested in that. (Lerato)

I find these two responses interesting. Both are older students, Bongani having worked as an HIV/AIDS counselor and Lerato having done community service in Botswana. Bongani recalls his first year lectures in the interview towards the end of his third year. While he respected Robert, and another first year lecturer who was an 'entertainer', the one who 'stood out' was Francois.

He fitted the description of a lecturer that I had before I came here. I used to see all these educated guys who never shaved, who talked casually [...] You know he knew his thing and he knew what he had to offer, and take it or leave it. I like the whole beard thing. It means you're busy, you have things to do, and shaving is not really your priority!

In response to my question in the interview about some lecturers' comments that students 'just want to be entertained' while students say 'lectures are boring', he remembers that while some students said that Francois was boring

I found him very exciting. I do enjoy it when they are entertaining, but the more they entertain the less of the real work they do, I think. (Bongani)

What we see in these quotations is a consistency from the two of them. Both have steadily held to their views against strong opinions expressed in the group. They seem to find the less tightly held, tenuous, distributed control that Francois exerts, enabling in their intellectual projects. They know what they want, assume Francois' competence and sincerity and that is enough.

There is a brief discussion about the circulation of paper, prompted by my observation that there seemed to be a lot of concern about the paper in the course. They explain the practices in the class. Lindee laughs:

We can't manage our lives, but we can manage paper! (Lindee)

She refers to how things have changed from the beginning of the year, when they were less stressed. Now everybody wants notes. Earlier on, and in seeming contradiction to this statement and to what I have seen in the lecture theatre, Lindee had commented that 'you don't really have to concentrate because everything is on the web and in the textbook. He said that explicitly at the beginning of the course'. Francois' comments in the interview are relevant here: students are more anxious and competitive.

In summing up the focus groups, it can be seen that Francois' concerns about the lecture feeling like a fairground are partly echoed in students' responses. There is irritation with the demanding student in the front and with those who walk out; there are concerns about sources and text. There is also a difference between how they appeared to respond in the lecture and how they talk about it afterwards. In the lecture, they ask procedural questions in response to Francois' attempts to open up the essay question for critical analysis; there is a great deal of writing. Yet in the focus group, they say they feel as if they are back at school, and tied in to a pedagogy of mimicry: 'It's in the book'; 'bla bla bla', in response to predictable questions. They seem to enjoy the space to be critical of the actual person, the authoritative lecturer. But as we have seen with the ritualization framing, students also react differently. An affordance of ritualization is that people can be present at the same event, and to appear to conform for the sake of the performance, but to be in very different places in their heads. The ritual elements in lectures allow one to be present, to endorse the prevailing orthodoxy, but to make of it what you will. Bongani and Lerato, for instance, find his lectures rich and clear, while others find them too predictable. The focus group space gives us some insight into what they seem to have said amongst their peers: 'we' did not like the previous lecturer; feeling 'left out' if missing the next lecturer's performance. These comments bring to light the distinctions in the field. Like fanclubs and other kinds of performance-related behaviours, the lecturers (whether they like it or not) are competing for a following, and the students create systems of distinction that cluster around various lecturers. This competitive, consumer element echoes Francois' use of the 'fairground' metaphor. In a fairground, different shows compete for how you will spend your money.

Finally in stepping back from these moments in Francois' lecture, a link is made to Chapter 4 and the echoes of the past that are in the present. The familiar traces of both spectacle and surveillance are discernible here, and play out in Francois' management of a complex communicative situation. The lecturer has reproduced himself in the textbook; 'documents' created at the push a button circulate freely. The notes are available on the

web, in an attempt to create a climate of choice regarding the lecture. As Lindee says, 'We don't really have to concentrate because everything is on the web and in the textbook'. Francois has cleared the space for 'colour', for engagement and interaction, but in this lecture, it is not delivered. There is a lot of redundancy. What worked very well ten years ago, when Carneson observed his lectures, appears to need rethinking.

In the research process as a whole this chapter is important in that it enables me to make a case that includes the exceptional, the lectures 'not to be missed', as well as the ordinary, the more ragged moments when complex shifts in footing are required. Francois' struggles at this point in his life to bring the fairground under some kind of control resonate with the experiences of many teachers at some point in their lives. The students' responses also indicate their process of becoming, as their responses show a challenging mix of expectations about engagement and expertise, the need to feel safe in a sea of texts, and awareness of their responsibilities to themselves and each other.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 8

Authority debated and dispersed

This chapter focuses on lectures from two different disciplines: Simon's lecture in philosophy and Isobel's in media studies. As in previous chapters, I am not evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. The focus is on the social semiotic choices that students and lecturers make as they engage in the communicative practices in and around lectures. I have brought these two lectures together in this chapter for several reasons. The first relates to methodology. Both Simon and Isobel chose not to be filmed in the lecture theatre and, given my ethnographic approach, I respected this decision. My record is in the form of handwritten notes made in the course of the lectures. They enable me to identify typical communicative practices and to analyse details of some moments. The analysis of each lecture event is complemented by a section in which related communicative practices are examined. In Simon's lecture, I pay attention to the students' note-taking. He is the only lecturer in this study to place a high value on his students' note-taking, yet little of the rich debate of the lectures appears in their notes. In Isobel's lecture, I look at meaning distributed beyond the walls of the lecture theatre, including the online chat forum for the course, and on a blog site years after the lecture where ex-students recall the liminal moment analysed in this chapter.

Another reason for bringing the two together is that both lecturers manage to engage students in dialogue in spite of the large size of their lectures. As mentioned in the Introduction, the digital online learning community tends to build its arguments against traditional teacher-centred learning by using the lecture as a foil, a caricature of frozen authority (Barnett, 2000; Yellowlees Douglas, 2002). What I explore in this chapter is the failure of these generalisations to recognise that the lecture can be successfully used to engage students in dialogue that invites critical development and so does not necessarily freeze authority. This chapter invites analysis of what kind of 'community' these two lecturers achieve in their lectures.

Lastly both Simon's and Isobel's lectures are regarded by students as excellent because of their interactive qualities, yet their lectures refer to different aspects of the semiotic history of the lecture outlined in Chapter 4, one ancient and the other contemporary. Simon uses lectures for 'presenting a coherent outline of/or approach to

philosophy' (course guide, p 2), employing a method that is reminiscent of Socratic dialogue, thus indexing the ancient classical roots of the humanities and the long history of philosophy. This spirit of debate was also present in the *disputatio* in the medieval university, where it complemented the exposition of canonical texts in the lecture alongside it. Isobel, on the other hand, uses the affordances of digital media to distribute authority beyond the lecture theatre to an asynchronous online chat forum on which she continues with topics begun in her lectures, and where students initiate their own topics. This distribution away from the centre enables her to open up the lecture space for performances of various kinds, including 'dressing up' in the guise of media figures, and asking students to analyse *ber* as embodied signifier, as she does in the analysis below. Her dressing up is a kind of academic 'drag', asking questions of what forms of authority students expect in the lecture format. As with Robert's and Francois' lectures, both exhibit complex politics of the gaze in the interplay between spectacle and surveillance. Arrangements in Simon's lecture suggest Foucault's spectacle where official and unofficial are experienced as an integrated whole, while Isobel's plays with Debordian spectacle and the relationship between representation and reality, which is central to media studies. Both lectures are also inevitably influenced by the gaze of surveillance. Students draw on these complex lecture experiences as resources for their emerging identities as tertiary students.

'Hectic but comfy': authority debated

In this section, Simon's lectures are introduced. I attended two of his lectures, repeats on the same morning, an hour apart and met five of the six students registered for his course in a focus group discussion on the day of the lectures. The students gave me their lecture notes which were photocopied and returned to them. I interviewed Simon twice, a week apart, after attending his lectures. He commented on students' lecture notes in the second interview.

Simon's course is an introduction to moral philosophy. It begins with various theories that address the question, 'What makes an action morally right?', and then applies these theories to a case study on the question 'Is abortion morally permissible?'. The lectures I attended took place near the end of the second semester. As with Francois in the previous chapter, the lectures were chosen on the basis of timetabling convenience rather than any special features of a particular lecture. Because of the high registration for his course (about 500 students), his lectures are offered in repeat sessions in different lecture theatres. Like Robert, Simon is a recipient of the prestigious distinguished teacher

award and his course draws students from beyond the humanities who are looking for satisfying 'filler' options. Simon has also established a reputation for taking on controversial issues. For example, he has openly challenged the university's racially defined equity employment policy and its effects, using tools of logic to expose aspects of the institutional policy. In a recent public lecture on the subject, he spoke to a packed audience, most of whom were white, with many of his students crowding the open space between the podium and the audience, some sitting behind him, as if in support of him. He has also been outspoken about plagiarism and continues to seek ways to inform students about citation practices and hold them accountable for failure to attribute sources faithfully.

While we have seen Robert and Francois tell students in their lectures that they commiserate with them because they are forced to sit through 'boring' lectures, Simon, like the students quoted in Chapter 5, says the university without lectures would 'definitely be a loss'. He sees the lecture as essential for the provision of an overview or students 'wouldn't see the woods for the trees'. It is also important for the induction of new tutors, who attend the lectures if they have not done his course before. In addition lectures serve a 'philosophical purpose' because participants are accountable for their views in the moment. Simon explains that with a written paper, students can 'push it into shape' and the teacher does not 'see the whole process' whereas in a lecture, one can 'raise the challenge and see how they respond'.

In attending his course lectures and public debates in the university, I am reminded of the Socratic method which is underpinned by rigorous dialogue that can be seen as a form of truthfulness in which rationality may bring order to the flux and unruliness of the contact zone. Participation is crucial. Student contributions are essential to test and refresh new ethical dilemmas. The ghost of Socrates is seen in the deep structure of all pedagogic dialogue in which, through a process of question and answer, the knower inducts students into a disciplinary language. Cross-cultural research shows the IRE (initiation-response-evaluation) structure of classroom discourse to be a pervasive point of reference wherever western schooling has found a foothold (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975, Mercer 1995). Simon adapts the IRE pattern to allow for multiple responses from the students, and sometimes he delays the evaluation move, or gets students to take on the role of evaluators, thus shifting the standard IRE communicative pattern in a much more critical and dynamic direction that resembles Socratic dialogue.

This dialogue is not natural or innocent. It wasn't for Socrates, and neither is it for students, particularly not for diverse students in a large lecture theatre. There are codes of access and participation that are deeply culturally shaped.

In the first interview with Simon, I read Riaan's words from the focus group meeting to him as I was trying to understand what students found compelling about his lectures. Riaan's words in the focus group meeting were:

It's incredibly casual but it works. It's as if you're hanging out in a room, learning, but it's also so hectic, sorted out, so like 'in this package' but so kind of comfy.

I ask Simon how this 'hectic but comfy' atmosphere is achieved. He says that he wants to create a space where 'they can say what they want' and can 'raise outlandish views [...] That's what philosophy does. It's not about the peddling of PC [political correctness]' of which he feels there is too much in the university. He stresses that he will not affirm everything: he is 'always demanding of the quality of justification'. The interaction and openness help to explain the 'comfy' atmosphere that Riaan identifies, but the 'hectic' aspect comes from Simon's insistence on quality in an exacting environment where logic and citation matter deeply, and on his ability to know every student by name. He says that knowing everyone's name helps him to 'control' students as he can 'pick on' individuals (though this is becoming more of a challenge with his large classes) but it also helps him to discuss their progress with tutors, as he can note for example that a student speaks with confidence, but does not write well. What the control gives it also takes away in that it is not possible to be anonymous.

My notes from the lectures I attended give some insight into how this community is achieved. In both lectures he arrives five minutes early, talks to students and passes the register around for students to sign. In the first lecture, the unknown student I am sitting next to is aware that I am a visitor, and I explain my purpose. He says, 'It's very interactive'. At the end of the lecture, he informs me: 'He's phenomenal – such a sharp mind. He manipulates us, but we can never be angry'. The repeat lecture is in a gloomy raked lecture theatre with a chart of the Periodic Table on the walls and, as Riaan notes, the 'smell of gas' from the chemistry experiment in the previous lecture. Unlike the first lecture, Simon enters from the back of the lecture theatre, as if to introduce an element of surprise.

Required reading for the lecture is philosopher Judith Thomson's paper 'A Defence of Abortion' (1971) which they are engaging with to complicate the pro-life *vs* pro-choice arguments in the abortion debate. Thomson's article defends abortion rights

by employing an analogy. The analogy involves the ‘famous violinist’ case. You have been kidnapped to save the life of a famous violinist. You have been hooked up to him so that your kidneys will provide life support, for nine months. Thomson asks: Does his right to life include the right to use another’s body? Her view is that it does not. After some ‘housekeeping’ announcements (which include observations about students’ attendance: ‘Lindsay is here’), he says, ‘Right, well let me resume...settle down so I can hear myself think’. He introduces Thomson’s analogy of the violinist, and asks the class, ‘Is disconnection [of the link between his circulatory system and yours] wrong? Not that we settle moral issues by democracy’. I sketch his gesture, with open hands balanced a chest-width apart, an iconic gesture signifying equivalence and analogy. He returns to it frequently. It is his default setting. From my written notes in the lectures I have been able to reconstruct the rhetorical moves that he makes, and give some indication of student response. I have not tried to capture everything that was said, but have focused on the opening phrases of his utterances. Following Kress et al (2001) the focus is thus on how the pedagogic interaction is organised, attending to both the social semiotic choices made, and the broader rhetorical framing of meaning, where in general what is foregrounded indicates what people should attend to in interaction. Through a series of moves, Simon manages to maintain the Socratic dialogue, to help students feel that they belong, but also to unsettle them. The description of the moves made is derived from my notes (see Appendix C). This is an actual sequence of moves from the repeat lecture. The students’ responses are indented and italicised. The main business of the day begins with the ‘control question’:

Would you violate his right to life if you disconnected yourself? Would you be doing wrong?

[Tim, Faith and Ivor respond. As Tim talks, hands are shooting up]

Let me address the Tim and Faith view.

Mashudu?

[inaudible]

We have two kidneys, as far as I know (wryly).

[laughter]

Kate?

Surely the biggest thing is [...]

Brendan?

I was just wondering [...]

He listens to five more contributions from students without evaluating their contributions other than to offer wry asides as in his response to Mashudu above. Kate and Brendan's contributions are significant in that they are not 'responding' in the narrow version of the IRE sequence, and are instead extending meanings, by challenging and speculating. These contributions are typical. Then Simon selects Kate's contribution for further thought, and proceeds:

Now let's look at Kate's point. I want to throw some doubt [...]

He introduces another analogy that raises issues about the right to life, the log cabin scenario, in which you head for the mountains to stay alone in an isolated log cabin. On arrival, you find an abandoned baby lying on the doorstep in the snow. Do you a) let the baby freeze, or b) take it in for the duration of your visit (...nine months)?

Students introduce their own examples to explore the analogy. In the discussion, we hear from students about adoption, rape, failed contraception, homeless children, human potential, bonds that develop over time. They throw everything at him. Then he returns to the control question.

Rhetorical patterns in Simon's lecturing

In the first lecture, there are 33 student 'turns', 15 of which are from women; there are 27 in the repeat lecture, with 8 contributions from women. First are the **initiation moves** in Simon's version of the IRE discourse structure which are mainly achieved through a range of questions.

There are **general questions** to the class:

Would you violate his right to life if you disconnected yourself?

There are also **invitations** to students:

Open invitations:

How many of you think that [...] ?

Anyone want to comment?

Singling out:

Emily what do you have to say?

Is that Elias?

Mashudu, turn slightly and bellow.

Ewan, you look desperate.

Your name? *[said to a visitor to the class, whose name he did not know]*

These invitations are often taken up by students as open-ended opportunities for critical engagement and the raising of questions. He responds to the students' contributions with a range of **evaluative comments**. These are rich in appraisal of students' contributions.

Some are generic, such as:

OK, good.

Excellent.

More typically, they are appraisals in the Socratic method that induct them into a particular mode of enquiry:

I grant your point.

Careful where you go.

Ah yes maybe, but on the other hand [...]

That's an interesting argument, but what do you mean by family?

I see some confusion, so I'll re-ask the violin question again.

Your point does speak to the objection raised by Tim.

This plays into my point.

Is this crucial Aileen?

Is this relevant? I'll put you on hold.

These appraisals do more than the standard bland teacher evaluation that takes place in classrooms. They induct students into a mode of enquiry that is, in Simon's words in the interview, 'demanding of the quality of justification' and is not formulaic, giving students the feeling that they are makers of knowledge, and are thus involved in a relationship of mutual respect, as they have described in Chapter 5.

His default gesture (hands open signalling equivalence and analogy), an embodiment of the **disciplinary identity**, is complemented linguistically in phrases such as:

Just imagine

Notice the extended analogy.

Find a true analogy.

[...] seduced by the particularities of the violin case.

[...] rests on a seductive analogy.

We can make analogous arguments for those who don't believe in abortion.

Harness an intuition and apply it.

Disciplinary work is also done in making conceptual distinctions:

That's a legal not a moral argument.

Embedded in the IRE exchanges are many examples of **humorous shifts in footing**, usually to elaborate on a story. The famous violinist analogy includes these footings:

[...] fortunately not in the same bed [...]

[...] a little inebriated lying face down in the puddle, would you walk on by?

The music is gonna stop (if the violinist dies).

Evidently your classmates are not as fascinated.

When he is setting the context for the log cabin analogy, his footings are slightly different in the two classes, depending on the direction of the students' contributions. He says that the baby in the log cabin 'cries a lot and makes a whole lot of mess' in the first lecture, whereas in the repeat lecture it is 'a real cutie, it's going to go down well'. This indicates his responsiveness to audience.

I am struck by the wide range of functions served here. His talk does the ideational work of inducting students into the discipline. This ideational work is closely tied to the interpersonal function. His ability to name every student in both lecture theatres reinforces this induction. It has the dual effect of creating community, and at the same time achieving interactional control. A feature of this control is the way he builds sub-communities within the lecture theatre. We see this in moves such as the establishing of 'the Tim and Kate view' or asking 'how many of you agree?'. The changes in footing that suggest a more informal, humorous persona add a different note that complements the seriousness of the disciplinary work. The overall effect is an authoritative orchestration that stretches the communicative patterns of the Socratic method that are best suited to small group teaching to a much larger canvas. The next section gives the floor to the students, as their contributions in the focus groups are explored.

The focus group discussion: ‘Dammit, why didn’t I think of that?’

The focus group meeting was tape recorded following the lecture. As with focus groups analysed in previous chapters, I noted which students said what, and identified general themes that relate to what they noticed. When I opened the focus group in the usual way, asking students what they recall, Leah began by mentioning a specific moment (the amusing mental image of walking down the street, with the famous violinist attached and in tow). Otherwise, students tended to talk more generally about Simon’s lectures. The level of generality in students’ comments means that I cannot identify liminal moments as I have done previously, and as I will do for Isobel’s lecture. As a participant in the lectures, I could not identify a marked moment or series of moments in which the inversions that typically make up the ritualization patterns I have analysed elsewhere were evident. Briefly, the following themes emerged in the focus group discussion.

Interactional control

Students discussed interactional control more than any other aspect of Simon’s lecturing. Kerry notes that it was ‘irritating and very useful’ that he always had an answer to every question you posed, leaving you feeling, ‘Dammit, why didn’t I think of that?’ Ella feels reassured that she knows he can provide the right answer whereas Riaan observes that he sometimes sacrificed the ‘right answer’, for the ‘sake of the flow of the course’. In characterising his style, students often quote him directly. Ella notes how diplomatic he is: ‘We must move on’ rather than ‘Sorry you’re wrong’; or ‘Sorry I’ve given you more attention than most of the class’, or ‘I’ll get back to that next time’ (but he never does, says Riaan laughing). These phrases are entextualisations from the lecture theatre to the focus group that indicate students’ engagement with the voice of authority in the Bakhtinian process of ideological becoming, and will I imagine be taken away from the lectures as a means for conducting a philosophical argument beyond the lecture theatre.

They discuss their feelings about the way he knows them all by name, adding detail to Riaan’s observation about his lectures as ‘hectic [...] but comfy’. They are generally positive and impressed by this, and as Triya says, it ‘makes a bond and you feel more comfortable’ and this ‘close relationship makes the class more interactive’. Riaan says he’d ‘rather go to him with a question than to my tutor’, and Triya says she ‘feels safer with him’. But they acknowledge the control that knowing their names gives: it hovers between fear and respect. Anna admits that she’s ‘more scared to talk’ to her friends in the lecture as she knows he can pick her out by name. It ‘forms a relationship’ says Ella, and you ‘owe it to him not to talk’ (i.e. to cross-talk to friends, rather than to engage in

the official class dialogue); Kerry adds, 'because he's taken the time to know our names'. I asked the students whether they ask questions in his lectures. Only Riaan says that he does. Kerry tells us that she doesn't like speaking in lectures, 'so I didn't want him to know my name. I sat at the top at the back, so he sort of walked past and said 'What's your name?' Ella and Leah say that they would rather contribute in the tutorial, and for Ella, 'I'd rather sit back and take it all in' in the lecture. None of the women in the focus group has contributed in the lecture, yet they all report that they are positive about the control and accountability that he achieves.

Control is also achieved by what Triya calls the 'mixing in' of humour, 'If you can call it humour!'. At this point in the interview it is hard to follow what they say, as there is an excited rush, and students are on a roll and volunteer examples of his humour. In listening to the tape, I think I hear 'gladiators', 'chopping up people', 'sheep' and 'lions', biblical images that suggest a risky humour that was not present, and was possibly withheld, in the lectures I attended. It is a space with complex layers of humour and seriousness that cannot move forward without their participation.

'The presence of the person'

In some of the other focus groups, I had shown students a video extract from the lecture. I told students that Simon didn't want to be videoed, and ask them to picture him, 'the presence of the person'. All say that the most striking thing was the way he holds eye contact, as he 'knows exactly who you are'. This combination of naming and gaze contributes to the 'hectic but comfy' atmosphere that Riaan identified and emphasises the way that Simon can exploit the potentials of both spectacle and surveillance. Then follows an exploration, led by Riaan, as he pictures him, 'socks and sandals – he always dresses the same'. There is an intense discussion about the meaning of the blue peaked cap that he always wears:

Someone told me that he wears that cap 'cos he's actually Jewish and wears a little [gestures to her head, showing a yarmulke] underneath, 'cos he doesn't want people to think he's biased. Maybe it's an urban legend. [Riaan]

I heard that he has a scar underneath. [Leah]

I wouldn't imagine that he'd be Jewish. [Riaan]

How do you know? [Kerry, sharply, to Riaan]

I don't think he believes in anything. [Riaan]

He's a vegetarian. [Anna]

I went to two of his Philosophy Society talks, and he's certainly not practising religious. [Riaan]

Riaan's 'someone told me' and Leah's 'I heard' are by now familiar notes in the focus groups and interviews with students. These intertextual references suggest the pervasiveness of rumour and the undertow of the way fan clubs are constructed as students make distinctions as they talk about the lectures once the lecture is over. When I tell students I'd noticed his gesture of analogy and equivalence ('It's a very opening up kind of gesture' says Kerry), Riaan recalls the way he holds his piece of chalk 'like he doesn't want to get his hands dirty' (others laugh) and 'he's got his lazer' (for pointing to the overhead – more laughter). He asks the group, 'Don't you think he's quite a rigid character, his steps are very low to the ground, like a Lego man' (laughter). The others don't push this any further, and Riaan comes back to say that he thinks he is 'supervaluable' and 'immaculate' as a lecturer, not only at the first year level. Students' observations from the lectures are entextualised in the focus groups, where the experience of the lecture becomes raw material for their emerging identities as tertiary students.

Course design and organization: 'One big logical flow'

In addition to this interactional control, students note that Simon's course is extremely well organized. 'It is quite dense'; 'one big logical flow'; 'everything is connected'. These comments reinforce my impression that there was no liminal moment to mark the boundary between 'boring' and 'engaging' ways of being in the lecture. The co-occurrence of 'logical' and 'flow' suggest an experience of wholeness, a satisfying blend of interactive feeling-states. They appreciate the overheads, which locate them in the structure of the course and give them all something to do at the same time, and 'keep us together'. They also have to sign the register in each lecture, and are 'compelled to go'. Ella says: 'This whole register thing is quite amusing. It's not about what you feel like. You chose to do the course so you owe it to the lecturer'. The use of the register is 'amusing' for Ella (rather than 'school', a term they have used in a disparaging way elsewhere. Riaan compares him with Robert:

It's odd when I compare him to Robert. If people talk in the lecture he [Robert] tells them to go away, 'I don't care about you guys'. This guy makes us sign a form that we'll attend lectures and if we get DPR¹ed we won't appeal. At first I was offended by that, but now I see it's a very different thing. He wants you there, he wants you to pass.

¹ The DP (duly performed) is achieved if students have participated in the course in the expected way, i.e. completed assignments and attended classes, and is a statement of eligibility to write the final exam. The DPR is the refusal of this permission to write the exam.

Another aspect of his tight course design and organisation is that he ‘advocated that we take notes right from the beginning [...] Go home, and rewrite them while they are still fresh in your minds’, says Riaan, quoting him again. Earlier on in the focus group discussion, they had spoken about how they appreciate the overheads, the notes that he writes on the board and the clear explanations. I had expected something more substantial than the notes that are analysed below.

Lecture notes: private moments of inscription

In the next section of the analysis, I shift the focus to the semiotic activity of note-making. Simon made it clear to me that he expects the students to take notes as an *aide memoire* of the lecture, and he appeared to be disappointed when I showed him the students’ notes in the second interview. The notes of two students (Leah and Ella) are reproduced in this chapter. The other three sets are in Appendix D.

As noted in Chapter 4, both Foucault and Clark point out the role of writing in the lecture theatre and in the university more generally. Since the birth of the early modern university and the demise of the disputation, the forging of a work ethic has been accompanied by the writing of notes in lectures. The notes are regarded as evidence of a serious economy of ideas. The lecturer mediates a canonical text, and the students’ role is to ‘get this down’ in some form. In this section, I look at students’ interest in the production of these notes. The lecture notes are part of the practices, but they are subordinate to the spoken text, the dialogue that Simon conducts.

There is an interesting modal inversion in lectures. In the default authoritative texts associated with academic literacies – books and essays – the written overrides the spoken. In lectures, the embodied spoken is dominant, and the visual and spatial channels are vital. The lecturer’s spoken word has always been complemented by an array of changing written texts, ranging from the canonical texts of the medieval university to the chalkboard, overhead projector and most recently the PowerPoint slide show. Notes taken by students in lectures are not official texts in the event, and as the Internet becomes more pervasive, they are falling away in importance, as students regard downloadable PowerPoint slides as the authoritative record of the lecture event. Looking at the notes can give some insight into individual student’s interest as they make choices about which semiotic resources to draw on as they recontextualise the spoken performed word in this written text type that is fading in use. These are private texts, written for oneself, or possibly (if good notes have some currency) for other students to read. They are not written to be perused by an authority. So the written notes are beyond overt

scrutiny, yet they are not beyond discipline, as they leave a material trace of the person's presence in the lecture theatre.

The most striking feature for all of the students' notes studied here is that they are handwritten in a semiotic landscape where the digital printed word is increasingly prominent. Lecturers I have talked to informally recall how they have had to change their teaching with the availability of the overhead projector and PowerPoint. Students seldom see handwritten authoritative texts under construction, where the lecturer pauses, hesitates, writes on the board with back turned on students. In the lectures I observed, Simon used overhead transparencies sparingly for announcements at the beginning of the lecture, and to locate students in the lecture sequence. He turned to the chalkboard occasionally to develop a table summarising confounding variables in the 'famous musician' and 'log cabin' scenarios. With the advent of PowerPoint², the emphasis is increasingly on 'prefabricated' text that comes connected to bullets, and does not evolve in the immediacy of the response of the student audience. The other activity which is still dominated by the handwritten is the examination. These two activities, lecture note-taking and exam writing, are extremes. One is a private moment relatively early in the cycle of producing meaning, the other – the handwritten examination – is public proof of the extent to which one has seamlessly absorbed a series of authoritative texts. It is a culminating text that is heavily evaluated. The handwritten exam script is also proof of presence, an academic 'signature' of individual integrity. These handwritten practices may die out in well resourced institutions where students now take lecture notes and produce their exams on their laptops (see Figure 4.5).

So there is something startling for me in the handwritten notes, and a reminder of how rapidly the academic literacies landscape is changing. When I started working here in the mid 1980s, all the first year essays I marked were handwritten. I can still recall the handwriting of individual students. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) are interested in the way that different forms of inscription are related to discourses associated with different technologies; as these forms of inscription get drawn into semiosis, they will have different potentials for meaning making. The inscriptions of the hand, as opposed to the technologies of recording or synthesis (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 233–235), have the aura of authenticity, of the individual mark. I had stressed that I wanted students to do what they normally do with notes, and not perform for me or each other. I think that

² PowerPoint is the subject of strong opinion and some scholarship, a topic that is beyond the scope of this study. See Kjeldsen (2006) for a useful survey from a rhetoric perspective.

they had forgotten to do anything special for my appraisal, and did not attempt to present their notes in a favourable light.

Handwriting is like accent, a sign of long slow habitus and disposition. Looking at the five sets of notes³ there are some general patterns. Leah's notes (Figure 8.1) are markedly different from the other four texts in that they are written in a hybrid shorthand, a sort of codeswitching of the script. It appears to be an adaptation of elements of Pitman's shorthand, in which she retains lexically dense content words in English, but uses shorthand characters to substitute many of the prepositions, modals and conditionals that Simon uses in his lectures. Common to all students (including Leah) is the use of a script that is on the whole not 'joined up', as they would have learnt at school. In the teaching of writing in schools, students graduate to cursive writing when they are seen to be ready to move on from more childlike use of separate letters, yet all students here have separated their letters and characters. I speculate that this may be an unconscious imitation of the digital typed script that they are increasingly exposed to.

A turn to the visual?

Kress et al (2001) and others have argued that a major shift in modal affordance which they have called a 'turn to the visual' has been taking place since the 1950s (see Chapters 2 and 4). It is a shift from the logic of language (both spoken and written), which is a logic of succession in time – the sequential unfolding of events – to a logic of the visual, characterised by display in space. Only Leah's notes strongly employ the logic of sequence in time. Using her hybrid shorthand script, she gets down much of what Simon has said, including the subtleties of his voice, with modals and conditionals such as 'of course', 'what if', small elements that indicate the flow of his arguments and emphasis on analogies. She has included prepositions and logical connectors as if she is hanging on to his every word. Whereas all the other students have tended to take down what is on the board or the overhead, she has focused instead on what Simon *said* about what was on the board, recontextualising his written text (the visual authoritative table on the chalkboard that classifies the confounding variables as they emerge in the class discussion) in her own script. She has to draw some arrows to help create the spatial logic of the table Simon has developed in stages in the course of the lecture (see her second page of notes in Appendix C).

³ There were six students in the focus groups, and one (Triya) did not bring her notes to the focus group meeting.

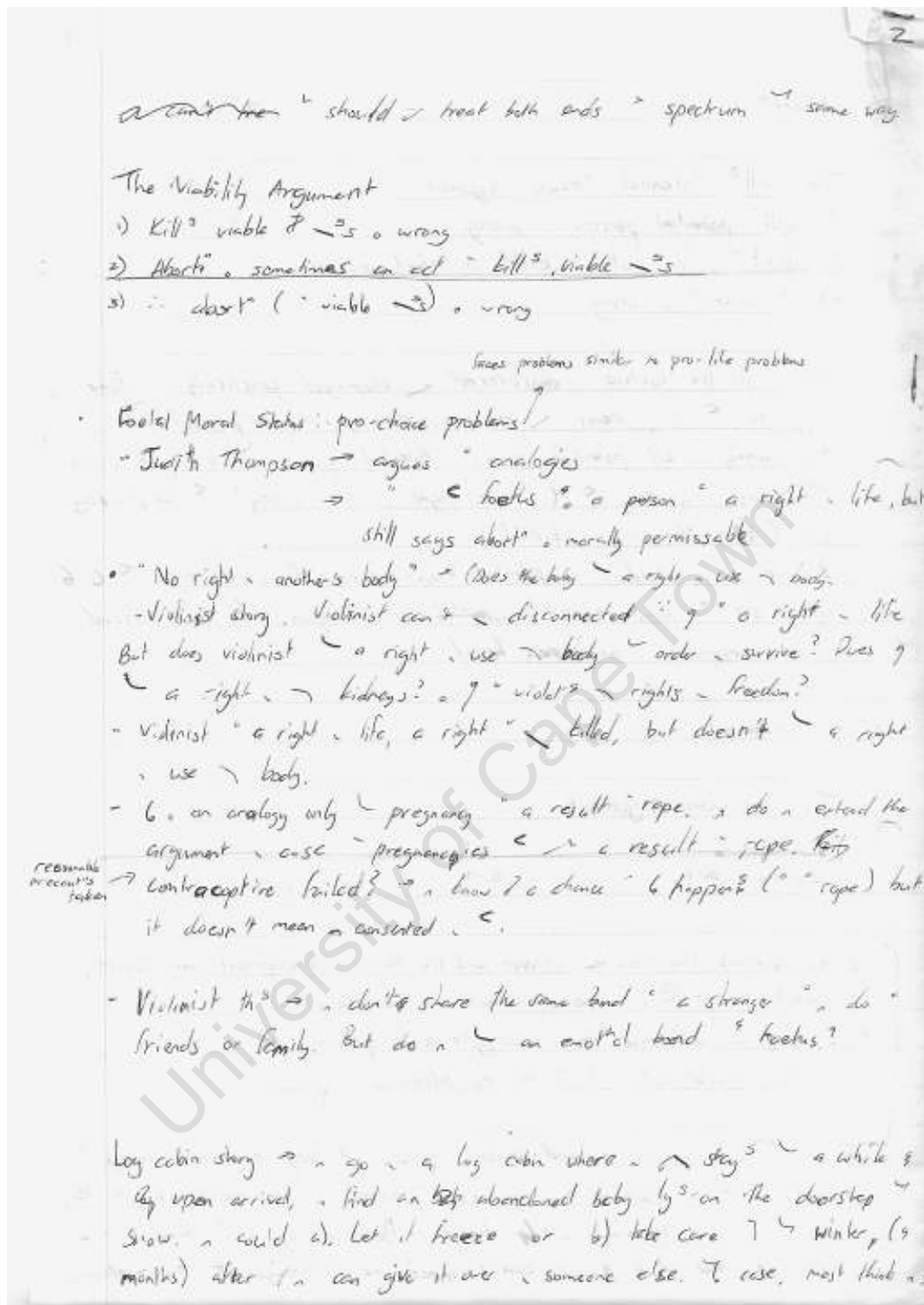


Figure 8.1: Leah's lecture notes which draw on a shorthand script. The notes continue for a few lines on the next page.

Her notes are an attempt to capture the sequential logic of speech. She has had to choose as it is difficult to follow the detailed flow of words and display of tables at the same time.

This is in marked contrast to the notes taken by the other students. While they all *appear* to favour the logic of speech, with the unfolding of sequence over time, there are signs that in their notes the logic of display is penetrating the logic of sequence. We can see the flattening effects of the logic of display in all the texts. For example, few students seem to give dates to their notes. Their notes appear as a continuous flow of undemarcated episodes that would be very difficult for a student to reconstruct as a coherent whole later when required to do so. When Simon looked at Kerry's notes (Appendix D), he immediately saw that she had missed a class but she had not noted this in her lecture notes. Leah drew a line to show me where her notes for that day began. No-one uses the conventions that signal written hierarchy (a,b,c or 1,2,3) unless they are directly copying what their lecturer has said, or what has been written on an overhead. Instead there are the flatter non-sequential symbols of the bullet aesthetic, so common in the new digital literacies propelled by Microsoft. New patterns are developing for how to indicate hierarchy, and these are spatial rather than alphabetical or numerical. All students use bullets to mark headings of different levels. There are other signs of this new textual aesthetic: the horizontal arrow pointing to the right (\rightarrow) to indicate a new topic, and the stars used by Kerry. She seems to have devised her own way of signalling hierarchy, with the star used to indicate main headings, and the bullet to show subordinate points.

This trend is clearly evident in contrasting Leah's and Ella's notes. The only 'content' that Ella has written down is taken from an overhead that Simon used at the start of the class, and the tabular comparison between the violinist and log cabin scenarios that Simon had developed on the chalk board. Like Leah, she uses a bullet to mark off the new topic. She has not differentiated between this lecture and the previous one. Leah has, by means of an arrow and a note ('faces problems similar to pro-life argument') contextualised this lecture in the overall flow. Both represent the phrase "no right to use another's body" in double quotes (possibly as it had appeared on the overhead). In Ella's notes, Judith Thompson's name does not appear anywhere in association with this argument. The author they have been reading has been left out, and Simon's table has become the authority.

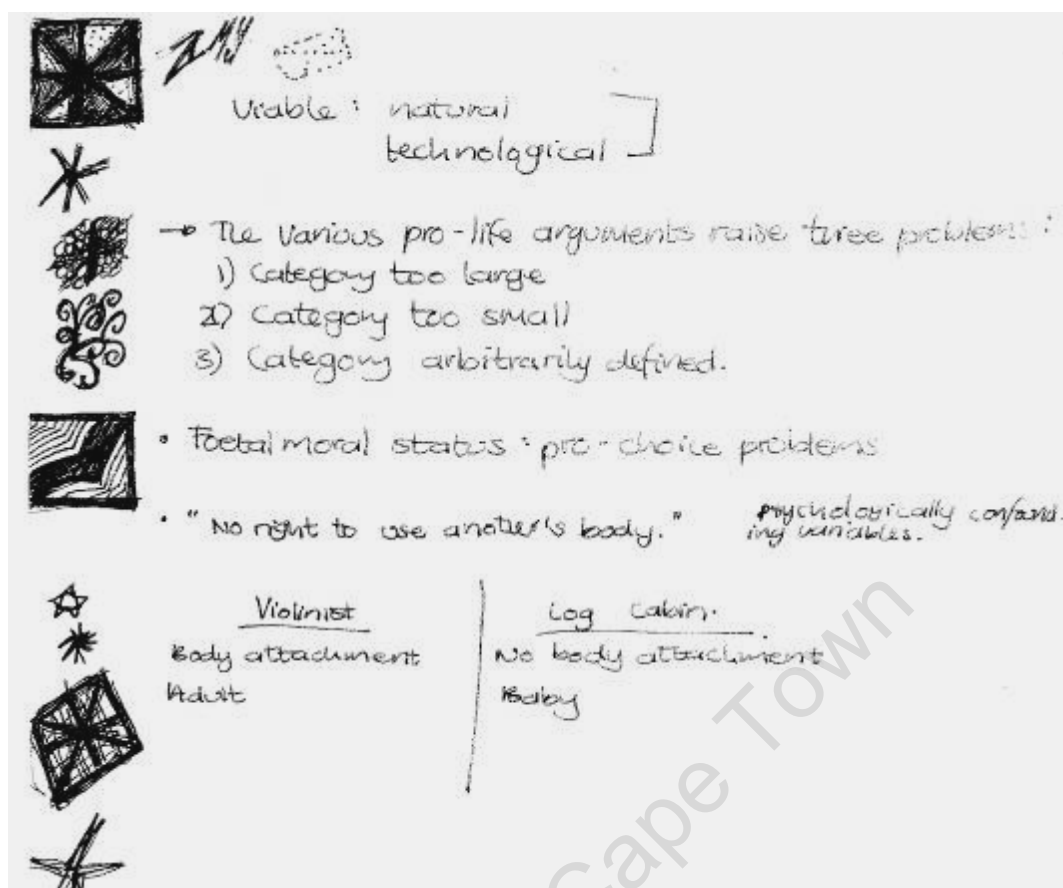


Figure 8.2: Ella's notes which include a doodle down the left margin.

The most striking thing about Ella's notes is the extensive doodling down the left hand margin and to a lesser extent across the top of the page. As I am following student interest here, I am forced to make sense of these marks on paper, and take them seriously. Writing is certainly part of the package of what one is expected to do in lectures (though the lecturers in this study disagree about its importance). It is part of the ritual of the 'student state' with its codes of discipline and conformity. However, it is known from using the ritualization frame in this study that while the appearance of conformity is what enables the practices to continue, people will work out their ideological positioning within these practices over time. As this is the only sample of notes I have from Ella, I can only speculate about whether she does this regularly. The doodle, with its dominant position on the left and across the top provides a rhetorical frame for how the notes will be read; the mix of resources (drawing and handwriting) indicates a separation of function, in which the overt pedagogical function is secondary to the doodles. Since the notes consist of Simon's tables on the overhead and the chalkboard, the doodles are the only way (apart from the handwriting) that these notes are made personal. It is beyond the scope of this study to speculate about what the

doodles mean beyond seeing them as a sign of split attention. It is interesting though that there is evidence that doodling is being drawn into semiosis⁴ and it may thus be interesting to keep an eye on doodling as a practice. Returning to what Ella has said about her behaviour in Simon's lectures I suggest that the doodles are less a sign of boredom, than of her inclination to 'sit back and take it all in', rather than engaging actively and visibly in lectures. By appearing to write, she is also possibly shielding herself from being 'picked on' in the lecture.

In this section I have not assessed the notes in the way that Simon had done in the second interview. He commented that Ella's were 'sparse', while Leah's were 'pretty good'. I have instead looked at how two women have created hybrid texts to express their interests. Their handwritten notes are like accent, a sign of long slow habitus and disposition. They were at the same event, but have come away with very different versions in their notes. Leah draws on shorthand script that she told me she had learnt from her mother, now most likely to be taught in secretarial colleges where students are most likely to be women. Ella's combination of doodles and prefabricated tables suggest split attention that is common in lectures. Neither takes down any of the debate in the lectures, nor do they make verbal contributions in Simon's lectures.

This section has explored lectures in which I characterise the style as authority *debated*, as Simon achieves a particular form of community and dialogue in his lectures. It is a reminder that debate is a highly visible practice that exerts control over the lecture. Who debates, and how they debate, is crucial. The potentials of the ethnographic method enabled me to study students' lecture notes, which point to a split between the fugitive dynamic spoken word and the static written word that appears on the board or overhead screen as display. With the exception of Leah, students privilege the written display rather than the spoken word. None of the students record the debate. In the next section, I analyse Isobel's lectures and how they spill over into adjacent sites.

Bodies on(the)line: authority distributed

The next lecturer, Isobel, exploits the affordances of online learning to distribute meaning across sites. Like Francois, she had also been nominated for a distinguished teacher award, and her co-authored textbook was prescribed reading for the course. In this section, I have identified a liminal moment in one of the three lectures I attended and focus on how this fleeting moment is entextualised in a range of different settings.

⁴ There is a website that teaches doodling (see http://drawsketch.about.com/cs/tipsandideas/p/doodle_place.htm)

There were several brief meetings with Isobel while we negotiated access and made arrangements for which lectures I would attend. I attended three lectures, two in the first year cohort (one of which is analysed more closely in this chapter) and another in the second year. A feature of the lecture with second years is that she shared the podium with a young female colleague, evidence of her approach to using the lecture as a platform for distributing learning. After discussion with Isobel about how she uses electronic resources to complement what she does in her lectures, I decided to track my students' contributions in the online chat forum parallel to the lectures. We talked about the ethics of accessing the online discussion. In practice, it was not easy to distinguish between safe ethical spaces and risky ones (such as the blog site described later in this chapter). I had intended to follow students' contributions on the chat forum, but problems with data storage intervened. The postings were archived by the unit that provided the technical back-up for the website. When I went back to the archive some time later, the stored data had been corrupted, and I was not able to get access to the conversations I was interested in. However, I had taken some screen shots while the site was 'live', and decided to use these to trace a series of recontextualisations that took place downstream from a liminal moment in Isobel's lecture.

In my interview with Isobel after the lectures in which I asked her about her frames of reference for lectures, she mentioned four elements that sound like a responsible contemporary educator who has absorbed current progressive educational discourse. She sees the lecture as the space to:

- mediate complex material
- 'solicit students' input' and to make links to 'their own prior experience'
- communicate her own 'enthusiasm and interest' to 'inspire' students
- 'try to get students to think critically' about their engagement

Only the first function matches Bligh's conclusion that lectures are good for exposition, but are "unsuitable to stimulate thought or to change attitudes" (1971, 223). The remaining points indicate her ability (shared with Simon) to create a small group atmosphere in the large format of the lecture theatre. For students, what stands out is her enjoyment and ability to inspire. Students had suggested that we focus on her lectures because she often 'dresses up'. In the interview she says:

I really believe that people learn better if they're having fun [...] the fact that I'm having fun playing with costumes and clips and images and music that I enjoy makes it easier for me to bring the material to life for the students, and to maintain my own interest.

It also sustains her in the face of the constraints of being a woman in the academy, in which she often feels like a ‘marking machine’. Women academics are often seen as ‘dowds’ and dressing up is a counter to the ‘many worthy causes’ that Isobel feels she is engaged in: feminism, looking after children, making sure her notes are clear. What she says recognises references to shifts between boring and entertaining feeling-states. Her decisions about how to approach lectures mirror those of students and indicate her desire to distinguish between the monochromatic and polychromatic in academia. Performing in lectures is about imagination and engagement, while being a marking machine exemplifies the bored state of captured time and closely aligned means and ends.

‘Analyse me’: the moment in the lecture

Isobel is lecturing on an introductory course in Media Studies, a relatively new discipline. The course is offered in the second semester. This lecture is the second in a series on celebrity and the media, with the title *Celebrity: Making a Spectacle of Oneself*. She is exploring how media stars typify and individuate dominant ideologies that shift over time. Students have seen screenings of Marilyn Monroe in the film *Diamonds are a Girl’s Best Friend*, and a re-working of the meaning of stardom in Madonna’s more recent film, *Material Girl*.

The lecture starts fairly conventionally⁵. There is an overhead projector slide on the screen announcing the showings of ‘Shotties’ (student-made films). Isobel, in a thick black coat, writes some notices on the board, and chats to students at the front of the lecture theatre. Then she makes some announcements, including a tribute to students’ creativity in the short films: ‘I take some credit, but they arrived with creativity in their blood’. She unpacks a bag, sheds her coat, to reveal a slinky red dress. She dons a blonde wig, and asks how many have seen ‘Diamonds are a Girl’s Best Friend’. In my notes, I sketch her default gesture: her left hand (to our right) is raised (and for this performance, gloved), and her head is tilted to one side. She asks what Marilyn Monroe typifies. She gives the students a few moments to ‘buzz’ their ideas, and then takes their contributions. They respond with ‘beautiful’; ‘sexy’; ‘ditsy’, (which gets a playful ‘no-no’ from Isobel); ‘materialism’ and ‘heterosexuality’. Then she shows them a clip from Madonna’s film ‘Material Girl’ and asks, ‘How have dominant ideologies changed over time?’. Next, she

⁵ In a previous published account of this lecture (Thesen 2007) I described (with the best of intentions) how Isobel had started the lecture, recalling the lights coming on in the lecture theatre to reveal her in her red dress and blonde wig. I wrote of this as a breaking of the frame. In fact, in revisiting my notes, she started the lecture as described in the section above. It is as if in writing about this moment, I framed this lecture as performance, and this frame over-rode the actual events, tinting my recall with the sense of transformation and delight that I had experienced in the lecture. As researcher, it is sobering to be reminded of the power of framing to shape memory.

says, 'OK, analyse me'. What follows this instruction to 'analyse me' is the liminal moment in the lecture that I will focus on.

Sequence A: The lecturer 'live'

Just before she says 'analyse me', Isobel has been doing conventional lecture work. She has put up an overhead transparency with main points on the topic of this lecture, and I hear pens scratching. She covers the lower part of the transparency, old-style. The part she has covered up includes suggestions for what Marilyn Monroe represents in 'Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend'. Then there is a dramatic shift in attention from the overhead projector, and in turn 1, she asks students to analyse her. Turns 1, 8 and 12 stand out. (In the reconstruction from my notes below, students' contributions are indented. The original notes are in Appendix D). Isobel says:

1. OK, analyse me: what tells you that I'm not a star? I've adopted the signifiers of stardom. Now go one step further, what sort of identity norms are being celebrated?
2. *Your intelligence [a student flirts].*
3. Oh thank you!
4. *Not dressed for the times.*
5. Perhaps it's retro.
6. Be bold, be brave [after a silence].
7. *The way you carry yourself.*
8. Invite the gaze! Mere mortals slouch. What about my breasts? Don't they sag a bit?
9. *Cute [after silence]*
10. *Crazy [inaudible]*
11. You *can* be rude! [mock outrage]
12. I haven't shaved my armpits.
[long pause, awkward giggles]
13. Do you think that's funny? What does it signify?
14. *French*
15. *Feminism*
16. Good!
I've seen Madonna with unshaven armpits.
17. Masculinity. Am I a bit butch?
18. Any other group?

19. *Lesbians*
20. *Germans*
21. I am part German!
22. *Fake hair*
23. *Cheap dress*
24. Hang on! Bought second-hand at Mothballs. This is a huge improvement girls. What does it signify?

Turns 8 (Invite the gaze! Mere mortals slouch. What about my breasts? Don't they sag a bit?) and 12 ('I haven't shaved my armpits') are the moments that are picked up later by students. The addressivity is interesting, particularly in turn 24, where she points out that her dress was bought at Mothballs, a second hand clothing shop, and says, 'This is a huge improvement *girls*'. In my notes I did not pay attention to gender as students responded, so I am not sure whether the respondents were women, or whether she was using the term as collective addressee. Isobel has turned the tables on students and asked them to analyse *her* rather than a text or idea 'out there'. The title of her lecture is 'Making a spectacle of oneself' and she embodies the title by turning the analytical gaze on herself as lecturer. She engages in flirtatious trading of insults. The students are (legitimately) in what McLaren (1993) calls 'streetcorner' mode, as Isobel has invited them to engage in this way, and they give outrageous responses to her questions. But Isobel quickly changes the terms again, and several times in the lecture, reads aloud from emphasised 'main points' on the overhead. These notes are also made available on the comprehensive and well-used course website⁶.

In the next section, a chain of meaning is traced away from this liminal moment in one of her lectures, reverberating from the injunction to 'analyse me!'. Responses to this moment are traced through several discursive spaces with different metapragmatic framing in each case. I move from the lecture to spaces created by the research process, in a student's written response to my research questions, as well as in the focus group discussion. Then the analysis shifts to an online discussion forum parallel to the lectures, where Isobel picks up on their lack of response to her instruction to analyse her in the lecture. Traces of this liminal moment surface years later downstream, when a group of young adult bloggers – ex students of Isobel's – discover common experiences as they create an imagined community, in which they recall Isobel's performance and the

⁶ Staff in the unit that designed this website recall the success of this website under Isobel's management. They single out the impressive volume of traffic and high quality of interaction on the online discussion forum.

exposure of her unshaven armpits. In tracing the entextualisations there are times when the moment in the lecture surfaces and others where it goes underground.

Sequence B: Leah's notes about the lecture (written for researcher)

This is an extract from the handwritten notes that Leah gave me the day after the lecture, as she could not attend the focus group meeting. She follows the established pattern in these groups, and foregrounds what she recalled from the lecture.

Isobel's dressing up.
I really loved this. [...] She's so into it, that you are happy to dive right in too. I admire the way Isobel put herself at the mercy of her audience and asked us to deconstruct her image to explain why she didn't look like a star. She took all the blows about unshaved armpits and slouching [...] When she mentioned her "sagging boobs and pot belly" you realize how comfortable she is with herself. She's not just a lecturer who presents you with material, she integrates herself into her subject so she too can be studied.

The point in the lecture that I had identified as a liminal moment, when Isobel asks the students to analyse her, and in particular her 'saggy boobs'⁷, is also picked up on by Leah in this handwritten note to me (though Leah says 'sagging' rather than 'saggy'). She notes how Isobel is not separate from the subject matter, but is an integral part of it. The most striking thing about this description is the intensely positive evaluation of Isobel. Leah's usually cautious, slightly sceptical angle on the world seems to have disappeared. This can be seen in phrases like 'really loved', 'happy to dive right in', and 'I admire the way'. Leah has put 'sagging boobs and pot belly' in inverted commas, offsetting the phrase from her own speech, retaining the boundaries of the original speech and indicating a conscious refraction of her lecturer's words in her ideological becoming. Her phrase 'took all the blows' gives students an interesting agency, as if their role is to evaluate the lecturer, rather than the other way round. She has written about this performance, particularly the 'saggy boobs and pot belly' moment, in this relatively low-stakes space offered by the ethnographic research process, whereas students in the face-to-face focus group do not mention these moments. She demarcates those words by means of quotation. In spite of the informality of her written text, there is a polish to the text, as if she is supporting her observations with evidence, and is aware of my evaluation. She has taken control of the making of the new text, but is careful to indicate the source of the words.

⁷ My notes taken at the lecture do not record 'saggy boobs' and 'pot belly', though both Leah's notes to me, and Isobel's online entry (sequence 4), use versions of these terms. It is possible that Leah read Isobel's online posting before writing her notes for me.

Sequence C: The focus group discussion

In the focus group however, a different dynamic develops. Instead of the wholly positive position that Leah adopts in her notes to me, a more critical discussion takes place. After asking the students what they recall, Sumaya leads, referring to Isobel's dressing up:

Dressing up – she always does. (Sumaya)

It's as if she would do anything for us. (Marianne)

I don't like her lectures at all [...] She gives us her analysis of things. Saying things like 'when we see these things, how celebrities are'. These are her ideas. It's very patronizing filling in the question. It doesn't work for me, this kind of approach. (Riaan)

Unlike the sustained positive note of Leah's notes, the focus group quickly moves into critique, as Riaan picks up on Marianne's observation that 'she would do anything for us'. Marianne meant this positively, as an extension of the home state that was often referred to (see Chapter 5), but Riaan is determined to express his critique. When Marianne and Sumaya refer to feeling at home in her lectures, with the sense of safety they experienced at school, Riaan interjects: 'We're not at school anymore', and describes the way she places her finger on her mouth to indicate silence 'as if she were speaking to four year olds', and sets up and answers her own questions, 'positioning' the students. He is carving out a critical space, an identity that questions everything, perhaps working against the stereotype of the white Afrikaner male raised to be obedient to authority, but also showing that he is older and more experienced than the students in the focus group. The other students (all women) defend Isobel, noting the levels of interaction in her classes, the lengths she will go to in engaging them, and challenging Riaan to acknowledge that perhaps he prefers male lecturers: 'Maybe you listen better to male lecturers!' says Sumaya. They compare Robert and Isobel, and disagree on how much space each person allows them. For Sumaya, Robert didn't 'allow a lot of space for us'; for Riaan however, he doesn't 'close the space up, he opens it so wide, you can fill it in'. He reflects on 'how powerful the installation of power is behind the lecturer' that silences students. Marianne 'envies' Riaan that he can be so critical. 'I still have that thing of taking things that people say at face value'. The struggles with another's voice are played out here in the focus group, with Riaan challenging the women. They air their disagreements with more confidence than in the focus groups in the first semester.

I mention Goffman's (1981) observation that in lectures one is meant to pay attention to the 'content' in the spoken text, not the person who embodies and animates

the ideas being put across. The students are a step ahead of me and have thought about this before. Sumaya leads:

It's not really her, it's her character. (Sumaya)

I couldn't do that [comment on her] even if she asks us to. I'm brought up like that.
(Marianne)

It's embodiment of content, not herself. We analyse her AS embodiment, not her as person.
(Riaan)

Again Riaan is speaking more to his co-students in the group (and to me) using the lectures as raw material for making strategic distinctions. They discuss the way she gets them to analyse her, but the liminal moment in which she refers to her saggy boobs and pot belly is not referred to in the focus group. The awkwardness and embarrassment that were apparent in the lecture theatre when she asked students to analyse her, particularly when she drew attention to her unshaven armpits, is perpetuated in the focus group. Isobel has also noted some silences in the lecture, and follows these up in an online posting.

Sequence D: Isobel's online posting to students (on the day of the lecture)

This online posting was made on the same day of the lecture, and in it Isobel shows her responsiveness to students, and also provokes an answer to the question on which they were silent in the lecture. Isobel sets up a reading frame by calling her entry 'celebrity-me', underscoring her integration with the subject matter. Students are informally greeted (hi), thanked and praised for their analytical skills. Two silences are mentioned: one on the part of students ('nobody pointed out [...] that my pot belly and saggy boobs are signifiers of [...] motherhood' and 'it's a shame' that it is not celebrated in 'our' culture). The second silence is 'we didn't discuss race'. The responsibility for this silence on race is jointly owned, an omission that 'we' were responsible for. Then in teacherly discourse, she alerts them to additional images of celebrity included in her email, and invites their analyses.

Celebrity-me hits:225

Hi everyone, thanks for being so responsive today. You are excellent analysts! One thing that nobody pointed out is that my pot belly and saggy boobs are signifiers of non-stardom. They are signifiers of motherhood and I think it's a shame it isn't something that our culture celebrates more.

Another thing we didn't discuss was race. It is an important aspect of identity, and therefore race is important in ideological terms.

The blue text below will take you to some images of celebrities. I'm interested to hear what you think they represent, what values and ideologies these star-texts embody.

Xxx
isobel

The performance in the lecture has been relocated to an online discussion forum that affords a different kind of entextualisation. Her contribution appears to have the same weight as the students' offerings, and she seems to be part of a much more symmetrical conversation than the one in the lecture theatre. We see how Isobel is tuned to her students, keeping the dialogue she is building up with her students going. The 'hi', reference to 'our culture', lower case 'isobel' and the kisses indicate a flattening of hierarchy, and a desire to be read as buddy. However, this informal contribution is embedded in an educational discourse in which she is authorised to move knowledge forward from the known to the unknown. This posting begins with praise and then notes absences, in the same way that lecturers typically give students written feedback on their work. The online discussion is also gently policed and drawn into assessment practices. The website includes an instruction, 'You must contribute to the online discussion at least five times over the semester. Ideally you should initiate a new thread in the online discussion at least once'. Her identification of silences is significant. In the humanities at Entabeni many courses cover gender and theories of socialization; very few deal systematically with race. I was not able to see students' responses to Isobel's injunction to comment on her embodied signifiers of 'non-stardom' or to see whether students took her up on the interplay between gender and racial stereotyping, or whether they commented on her whiteness as a signifier. Perhaps some students wrote that they were not comfortable with Isobel's play with the roles of teacher, seductress and mother, as is suggested in Marianne's statement in the focus group that she couldn't comment on her even if she wanted to, because that's how she was 'brought up'.

The next sequence takes place a long way downstream on a blog site far away from the university.

Sequence E: Ex-students to each other (online blog)

This sequence relates to a blog site that I came across while searching for the email address of Isobel, who had left the university to return to Canada. My search for her name led to the site of 'madamm', an ex-Entabeni student, who was in limbo, waiting for her emigration papers to the USA, where she was planning to join her fiancé. The blog took her through this liminal period in her life. She closed the blog forum down a year later when her plans fall through as her relationship falters and her emigration plans came to nothing.

Earlier I referred to ethical challenges in this part of the research process. There were two problems that I encountered. One was that I did not have enough context to write about the identity of madamm and her blog site. The other was that I felt like a voyeur able to eavesdrop on the conversations of others, and felt that she should know what my intentions were, although her blog name lent her substantial anonymity. When I came across the website, it was clear from her entries that madamm was writing a Masters thesis on blogging. After she closed the site down I needed to know whether the blog site had been set up as part of her research, so I wrote to her to establish the status of the site, and also to get her permission to refer to it in my own study. We had an email exchange in which she said that the blog had been authentic and her relationships with her fellow bloggers had sustained her through a miserable time in her life. In her second email to me she wrote, 'My blog was an outlet. I'm a journalist and aside from smoking my lungs black, I have to write about things to make sense of it'. I explained my research interests, and she said that she would be pleased if it were of some 'positive use' in her life.

The thread in which participants refer to the liminal moment in the lecture analysed earlier is titled 'I'm brave but I'm chiggen shit' and covers various topics such as visits to restaurants, what she is reading, and current events such as South Africa's performance in the rugby 'World Cup'. The topic that leads to Isobel is madamm's mention of a book by author Susan Mann, who was a lecturer at Entabeni. A discussion about the identities of their lecturers follows, as some bloggers realise that they may have been in the same classes. Three participants take part in the discussion: madamm, The Divine Miss M, and Toby. Toby says:

1. Susan Mann was one of my lecturers at Entabeni. Do you remember her? Maybe she was just one of mine. I think she did Soapies. Did she?

Madamm quickly corrects 'him' saying that the Soapies lecturer was Isobel:

2. no, no, that was Isobel Stanford [...]
But I remember Susan Mann...long flowing hair...gypsy outfits. (I think)

Toby is a little irritated and responds the next morning from work:

3. No man. Isobel did fearful fantasy – horror and science fiction films. She did a lot more feminist stuff and psychoanalysis. Can't picture her doing soapies!

The Divine Miss M joins in, agreeing that Isobel 'did' the 'horror lectures', and then identifies Isobel by referring to the 'analyse me' moment analyzed in this lecture. The shared recall leads her to say 'I still figure we know each other'.

4. No Isobel was from Canada and did the horror lectures etc. The woman who'd dress up but didn't shave her arm pits, it was distressing!
I remember Susan Mann but I can't place her.
I still figure we all know each other...

Then Toby joins in, agreeing with The Divine Miss M and also recalling the 'pit hair'.

5. Must be. I'm pretty sure Susan Mann did soapies. I think Geneve was in her class. I did Fearful Fantasies with Isobel Stanford, that's why I know she didn't do soaps. And I remember that pit hair!!! She's back in Canada now. She was actually very, very cool.
Andre Whatshername was weird though. The features writing dude. Do you remember the whole "fake it feature" debacle?

This extract gives us some insight into the resonance of this liminal moment in the meaning-making of ex-students downstream, a few years after leaving Entabeni. In the blog discussion, the lecturers are remembered by the subjects they lecture on, and by what they look like ('long flowing hair' and 'gypsy outfits'), underscoring the importance of embodied expertise in how students picture their lecturers. The lecturers have strong agency. Throughout, Susan Mann and Isobel are referred to as 'doers', like actors or producers. Toby tries to identify Susan Mann by the course that she 'did', or maybe a little possessively, she was one of 'mine'. Madamm disagrees about who did what, and recalls what Susan Mann looked like; her hair and 'gypsy like outfits' have stayed with her. The agency given to lecturers is expressed in the repetition of what they 'did': 'I think she *did* Soapies'; 'She *did* fearful fantasy'. There are no inverted commas to mark off the course names. 'Can't picture her *doing* soapies!'. Similarly, the students 'did' courses (like Fearful Fantasies). It is the person who animates the topic. A system of contrasts is built up. These contrasts involve actors (or enactors) and their associated texts, and areas of expertise (soapies, horror). For the Divine Miss M, she is 'The woman who'd dress up *but* didn't shave her arm pits, it was *distressing!*' However, Toby refers to the shared experience in a different way: '*...actually* very, very cool'. What they recall are the embodiments and styles of the lecturers, and the moments of controversy. Their lecturers and the distinctions and identifications associated with them become resources

for the students' self-representations. They are like accessories for how they will present their styles. We see here in the students' postings how they "actively examine the discourse as it is emerging" and position themselves in the discussion (Bauman and Briggs 1990, 69).

The fan club-type behaviour, with its drawing of distinctions, is taking place in a different discourse to the note that Leah wrote to me in which she was so positive about Isobel. Here, they are engaged in the peer activity of blogging, whereas Leah was writing for her lecturer/researcher. Judging by some of the posts (many begin with the banalities of finding parking at work, what they did in their lunch breaks, how the day started) and by the times at which the postings are made, the bloggers seem to be multitasking, doing this at work, going under the radar, as an antidote to routine activities like work and thesis writing. But there are other metapragmatic functions too. They are constructing a different sort of imagined community⁸ that both engages with and transcends the local. The design of the blog space is telling: It is framed by an image taken from the window of an aircraft, looking back across the wing of a South African Airways plane. There are lots of references to moving between London, the US and South Africa, nostalgia and parting: 'Am I the last person here?'. Snatches of the Afrikaans language are included in posts on topics showing support for the national rugby team, complaints about immigration, the South African government's Department of Home Affairs, George Bush, familiarity with Harry Potter and news stories covered on CNN and SkyNews such as the disappearance of Madeline McCann. These form a cluster of local and global symbols that help bind together, but also provide material for people to identify and refine their positions within this community. Their lecturers become symbolic resources for these discussions. This community is typically middle class, and the bloggers are racially diverse, not unlike the community that would have been in the lecture theatre. The blog also has some status, as there are contributions from a well-known black journalist in a debate about the virtues of blogging. The moment has been recontextualised from the performance of the lecture, with its modes of co-presence, to the scattered space of the blog, where a sense of community is invented, perhaps more markedly than in the lecture itself, because the blog community is made up of those who open their mouths.

In this section I have used entextualisation as a tool for tracking meaning from its 'original' complex context in a large lecture theatre with a charismatic lecturer. A liminal

⁸ The term 'imagined communities' was given impetus by Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983).

moment is evoked, in which a taboo is broken and students are asked to analyse their lecturer, not as ‘content’ or mind, but as embodiment. This moment within its frame of performance has a life downstream, and in several sequences analysed, the life history of the moment is traced away from the lecture, to a blog site where its symbols are resources for identity work in the construction of an online community.

Technology, ethos and community

Isobel’s approach to lectures, which I have characterised as authority *distributed*, makes extensive use of available electronic resources and thus brief reference needs to be made to the ‘digital literacies’ topic within the New Literacy Studies. Isobel refers explicitly to Debordian spectacle in her teaching on celebrity. The topic for the lecture analysed is ‘Celebrity: Making a Spectacle of Oneself’. The image of the digital lecture theatre at the end of Chapter 4 (The past in the present) touched on the presence of screens and the gloomy possibility that ‘everybody is watching everybody all the time’. Yet Isobel manages to breach this tense watchfulness and to foster play, inversion and pleasure in her lectures by breaking down the walls of the lecture theatre to turn it into a movie theatre, and to encourage conversations outside of it. She has used the affordances of digital technologies for what Lankshear and Knobel call “the fracturing of space”, a possibility when “new ‘technical stuff’ and new ‘ethos stuff’” come together and “mobilise very different kinds of values and priorities and sensibilities than the literacies we are familiar with” (2007, 9). In order to describe this ‘new ethos’ Lankshear and Knobel distinguish between different kinds of ‘mindset’ (though I prefer the word ‘ethos’). For the new literacies to take hold in the way they do with Isobel’s lecture, the ethos needs to precede the technology. The mindsets they identify are summarised as follows, with Isobel showing the characteristics of the second frame. Mindset 1 sees value as a function of scarcity. Among its features is the enclosure of space, with specific purposes attributed. The authoritative social relations of ‘bookspace’ hold sway in an attempt to produce a stable textual order. Mindset 2, on the other hand, values dispersion; experts are distributed and hybrid; space is open, continuous and fluid, and emerging social relations are increasingly visible, while hybrid texts are valued and seen as part of a process of change. Lankshear and Knobel’s argument suggests that Isobel’s predisposition to distributed learning precedes her harnessing of new technologies. The way she imagines alternative ways of doing things animates the technology, rather than the technologies being causal. She taps into fan club and street corner behaviours that

have always been there. She and the students find that their frames are receptive to one another.

The danger with this sort of classification is that the category on the right, the new, is inevitably better and more desirable. Like Blommaert (2005), Lankshear and Knobel are at pains to argue that the 'new' is always historical and "lasts as 'long' as the 'moment' of their juxtaposition with 'conventional' literacies may last" (20). It is not my intention to argue that what she does is 'better' than what Simon achieves in his lectures, which are, I suggest, embedded in a 'bookspace' ethos as expressed in the 'hectic' nature of his insistence on quality of argument and attribution, and his overt policing of the lecture space. Isobel, in contrast, uses more seductive methods based on explicit exploration of celebrity, desire and sensuality.

This chapter ends with some thoughts on 'community' and lectures. Whether the space they create prioritises debate or distribution, both lecturers are central to the orchestration that fosters this space. Both achieve impressive levels of participation which imply a degree of safety within the lecture space. This is what students say they desire in Chapter 5 – the engaged state in which they have the feeling of being respected for their contribution to the learning process. Not everyone has to talk. There is room for passengers who like Ella sit back and absorb. The collective experience provides opportunities for recontextualisation. The recontextualisation in the students' lecture notes in Simon's lecture indicates difficulty with (and possibly some resistance to) merging the spoken debated word with the authoritative tables on display on the board or OHP. The entextualisations in the research process, and for Isobel's lecture, what I have seen of the online discussions and the blog site, suggest that there is fertile material within these different communities for students to use as resources for their ideological becoming. As in the previous chapters, these resources are used in largely symbolic ways that index interaction and process, rather than 'content'.

The idea of community has hovered at the edges of this chapter, and needs to be explicitly addressed. Simon creates a space in which students explore the 'hectic but comfy' circle of becoming philosophy students. Isobel has also created a community where dialogue creates a 'cool' space where everybody reads the signs of popular culture and has 'creativity in their blood', to quote Isobel. As Burbules and Callister (2000) point out (borrowing from Williams 1983) the problem with 'community' is that "nobody has anything bad to say" about its value. In Williams' terms it is always "warmly persuasive". I have rescued lectures, referred to in the introductory chapter as 'in disgrace', and ended

up thinking about the sense of community afforded by lectures that are ‘engaging’, and how enduring images of expertise are created and perpetuated across sites. It is necessary to step back from this warm feeling and acknowledge the contact zone. That is the task of the final chapter, in which I put the elements of the exploded view back together to draw some tentative conclusions about what lectures do and mean in the lives of participants in a particular time and place.

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Conclusion: Re-imagining the lecture

This study has re-described lectures through an analysis of what they mean and do in the lives of students and their lecturers in a particular time and place, the humanities in the first year at a South African university. As established in the Introduction, there are tensions and silences associated with lectures. They are central to academic experience, particularly in the first year, yet we have turned a blind eye to communication within lectures, referring to them only in well worn clichés: students frequently say they are ‘boring’ while lecturers rejoin that students ‘just want to be entertained’; they are mentioned (usually in the negative) as a foil for ‘the new’, for ICT-based modes of learning and for student-centred notions of pedagogy. But lectures are not going to go away. This chapter explores how this study may contribute to a re-imagining of the lecture to enhance the potentials of the lecture in the contact zone in a time of sharp transition. It reviews the research and highlights the main themes that emerge with regard to communicative practices in and around the lecture, reflecting on theory and methodology, and implications for the academic literacies field, before offering some ideas for re-imagining this complex space.

The exploded view: tactics and tools

I have used the idea of the exploded view as a strategy to deconstruct the lecture, and in the conclusion focus on fitting the elements together, having attempted to walk a difficult line between student and lecturer, between text expansion and text reduction, word and image, and constraint and possibility. Briefly, the exploded view was a device to open up the lecture to which we have turned a blind eye. This view enables us to explore the components of an object from multiple perspectives in order to look at inner workings and outer presentation. In this way I have used it to imagine the lecture differently, taking up Morrow’s (2007) challenge to confront our unease about large classes. I have made it clear that I am interested in meaning and engagement rather than learning. ‘Learning’ usually suggests neat alignment between means and ends, and in higher education refers only to student experiences within testable boundaries, rather than to the co-construction of meaning through engagement between students and lecturers. I am aware that words like ‘co-construction’ and ‘engagement’ suggest a benign relationship which belies the contestation, unevenness and silences that are part of the

lecture. For this reason, the exploded view is conceived of within the contact zone which acknowledges the asymmetries that contribute to the lecture space.

The exploded view emanates from a centre and in this study the centre is the concept of communicative practices. However, taking my lead from Blommaert (2005), I have drawn on a cluster of theoretical resources from a range of complementary traditions to do justice to the complexity of these communicative practices. Together the theoretical resources index processual aspects of meaning in which change and becoming are central. Within a broad orientation to practice offered by the New Literacy Studies, I chose to look at the co-construction of meaning, and how meaning is never settled, but is always in a process of becoming in dialogue between self and other (what Bakhtin calls ideological becoming). Instead of separating students' and lecturers' meanings, I have deliberately kept them connected, showing their mutual responsiveness. This emphasis on co-construction was complemented by Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) social semiotic approach to meaning which attends to what social agents do (and how they make do) with available semiotic resources in the moment of making, to express an 'interest'. This interest is always an act of becoming, a movement forward, however it is received by others. In seeking a theory of practice that includes the body I adapted facets of ritual theory. I drew on those theorists who stress the dynamic potentials within ritualization. These theorists emphasise how through engagement with practices in symbolically structured environments, people develop resources for strategic action through a process of making distinctions that turn on the body. These processes are never settled and are always contingent and provisional; through them we reproduce or reconfigure a vision of the order of power in the world.

The methodology I drew on to approach communicative practices is textually oriented discourse analysis within an ethnographic frame. My approach to discourse was sometimes text-expanding (as in the broad brushstrokes of Chapter 4, which draw from history to look at how the past appears in the present), and at other times text reducing (as in the close analysis of student interviews and in the liminal moments of flux identified in Chapters 6, 7 and 8). The ethnographic framing allowed me to be responsive to context on various levels, from the macro historical plane, to the immediate context of the process of data collection. Theory and method are intertwined in that at times responsiveness to context led me to explore new theoretical resources as suggested by the data. For example, the cadences of the fan club in the student interviews in Chapter 5

suggested the field of cultural studies. There were multiple frames at work, and I have tried to make these discernible to the reader.

In addition to the liminal moments analysed in the lecture, I have also looked at recontextualisations in students' lecture notes, and in web-based forums such as an online chat forum alongside a course, and a blog site years after a particularly memorable lecture. These recontextualisations have mainly been explored through the construct of entextualisation (Bauman and Briggs 1990; Blommaert 2005) which has highlighted the performative and aesthetic aspects of communicative practices.

Communicative practices

The next section re-visits the four data chapters focusing on communicative practices and how participants in the lecture engage within them.

The past in the present: the body becomes invisible

Once the theoretical and methodological frames had been set up, Chapter 4 drew from history to explore the traces of the past that attach to the present. This chapter explored images of lectures through the ages, noting similarities and changes over time. The focus was mainly on the gaze, and on the changing nature of literacy objects in the lecture. All images show a single authority that prevails against a changing audience and transformations in the deep structure of the discursive arrangements in which the lecture is embedded. The gazes of spectacle and surveillance provided the frames for analysis of changes and continuities in the lecture, showing how the current interplay between surveillance and spectacle contributes to the tension and ambiguity in lectures.

Research into the lecture in the medieval university also revealed that a crucial modal shift took place in the early modern university, in which the disputation fell away from its place alongside the lecture. The debating ethos of the disputation migrated to the written mode in the birth of the research university, thus leaving a void in pedagogical practices. The new practices that emerged from the demise of the disputation emphasized the written and legible, and as Clark (2006) argues, the 'eye triumphed over the ear'. The multiple authorities necessary to the disputation were closed down and captured instead in the writing of research, where they emerge in disembodied and what appear to students to be insipid practices of citation. Thus we have come to think of the lecture as a forum for a single authority and have failed to imagine it as a space for multiple forms of expertise. Lecture note-taking was shown to be a product of this modal shift, and of the growth of a work ethic in the early research

university. This contributed to the current situation in which the “apparent incorporeality” of written text appears preferable to the “robust physical displays of oral performance” (Hofmeyr 1993, 51) in educational institutions.

Embodied expertise: boring vs engaging

Chapter 5, ‘There’s just a man dancing down there’, explored students’ constructions of lectures and lecturers gleaned from interviews early in their first year. Using the concept of ritualization, which draws attention to aspects of practices through which actors make strategic distinctions among ways of acting, I showed how students make distinctions between ‘boring’ and ‘engaging’ lecturers and draw on these distinctions as a resource for their ideological becoming. These interviews pointed overwhelmingly to students’ interest in embodied expertise, and to their desire for engagement and flow in lectures at this stage of their journey as university students. They constructed a ‘stronger image of knowing’ in which the person rather than the content or discipline is at the centre. The interactive rather than the ideational metafunction of lectures is primary for students at this stage. While the desire for engagement was apparent for all seventeen students interviewed, there were also important differences. For example, when asked whether they would ever think of lecturers as role models, class differences were significant. The greater the social distance between a student’s habitus and the university, the less likely they were to see lecturers as role models. For rural or working class black students who are the first in their communities to access tertiary education, role models were generally identified as being in the home sphere, typically women with ‘mother’ qualities of strength and nurturing. Another difference was the change apparent when students were interviewed in subsequent years. In their second year, they showed more discrimination between content and delivery. The ideational metafunction of communicative practices emerged more strongly at this stage. But at the same time, it was apparent that many students had lost some of their enthusiasm and had resigned themselves to institutional routines as exemplified in a student’s comment that life without lectures would be a loss as the lecture ‘sort of binds our day’. The study raises questions about the consequences of ignoring students’ desire for engagement as they commence their first year.

A related feature of the interviews that was brought into focus by the ritualization frame is the way students invoked ‘respect’ in their commentaries on lectures and lecturers. This can be read as what Bell (1992) calls ‘redemptive hegemony’ within the ritualization function of communicative practices. In the making of distinctions that orient one to action, a ‘higher cause’ is invoked beyond the action itself. ‘Respect’ is a

contested term and is not the preserve of any particular domain. It is referred to in home, streetcorner and student states, as well as by officials at Entabeni attempting to bring order to the contact zone. Another discursive pattern was evident in the way that the students' accounts of lectures showed intertextual links to fan club talk, with strong affiliation and identification for some lecturers rather than others. Intense discussions about lecturers and their attributes were clearly taking place outside of the lectures. I suggest that one of the tensions evident around lectures – the boring-entertaining tug-of-war that is often invoked – can best be re-framed as a struggle between boring and *engaging* feeling-states. The fan club discourse in which students' talk is embedded at this stage of their emerging identities as tertiary students casts their discussion of lectures in ordinary language, such as in the student's words quoted above, 'There's just a man dancing down there'. This ordinary language reinforces the impression that students 'just want to be entertained'.

Liminal moments: bodies on the line

At the core of this study are the communicative practices in the actual lectures, rather than students' representations of them in the interviews. In Chapters 6, 7 and 8 we went close-up into particular sessions given by lecturers who were (with one exception) singled out by the students for their engaging lectures. I identified an authoritative 'style' for each lecturer. These styles were characterized as authority *fused* (Robert in Chapter 6), authority *dispersed* (Francois in Chapter 7) and authority *debated* and *distributed* (Simon and Isobel respectively in Chapter 8) based on how communicative practices were orchestrated in each lecture. I took the analysis of boring/engaging distinctions further by identifying liminal moments where there was a charge of intensity, a shift from the more mundane proceedings of the lecture to moments of identification, play and inversion, the social order upside down.

In three of the lectures, these moments revolved around the body. In Robert's lectures ('authority fused'), there were two moments that stood out. In the first lecture analysed, the moment involved the analysis of a complex image of young Xhosa initiates watching a game of cricket in rural South Africa. In Robert's entextualisation of this image, meanings were amplified in the interplay between the image, his words, and his pointing gestures. The hush in the lecture theatre at the time was tentatively broached later in the focus group discussion by a student who has gone through the Xhosa ritual of initiation into manhood. I trace references to this image, and speculate about the silences that were also evident. The next liminal moment analysed took place in Robert's

final lecture, in which he broke the lecture frame by abruptly walking out of the lecture before the designated time, to an uproar from students. The second lecturer, Francois, who I characterize as ‘authority dispersed’, was struggling to achieve coherence and control in his lectures, which he described as ‘like a fairground’. The liminal moments analysed again revolved around bodies, for example, a moment when he read back to students the critical comments they had made about him, asking him to ‘get more excited’ in his lecturing. In Isobel’s lecture, the liminal moment occurred when she dressed up as a celebrity, and then asked students to analyse *her*, including her unshaved armpits. The clash of frames involved in this moment – teacher, mother, celebrity – galvanised the student audience, but also challenged a taboo about the way one should behave in particular institutional settings. What Isobel did was exploit the performativity offered by the lecture space, ‘queering’ the space so that participants reassess their frames of reference for lectures. In various situations downstream from the lecture, this moment is either avoided or referred to in strong terms as students take positions for and against her. The lecturer I describe as ‘authority debated’ (Simon) created lecture events that were so integrated, such a seamless blend of ‘hectic’ and ‘comfy’ interactive feeling-states, that the lecture itself was an extended liminal moment. Here the body appeared in different ways, in his iconic gesture, hands apart to indicate equivalence, and in his powerful gaze, as he sought out students and named each one of them in conducting a Socratic debate.

The focus group meetings held straight after the lectures reinforced the centrality of embodied expertise. Students were generally more aware of their lecturers’ styles of interaction than their subject matter. The discussions illustrated how students draw on material in the lectures as resources for entextualisation in the focus group. Distinctions are made in which students indicate their ideological becoming through struggles with their lecturers’ as well as their fellow students’ voices. The lecturer’s voice is relocated in the focus group which functions as a ‘pedagogical safe house’ (Canagarajah 2004) for students to try out their critical readings of their lecturers.

Lectures and community

These three chapters also raised questions about ‘community’: in what ways can we think of lectures as community, defined by either similarity or difference, or more fittingly *both* similarity *and* difference. One of the affordances of lectures is the co-presence of large numbers of diverse people, not all of whom are required to make their mark in language for the occasion to be more-or-less coherent. In some ways, lectures provide an analogy

for thinking about nation and the function and communicative patterns of imagined communities. This was particularly evident in Chapter 5, in which students located their discussion of how to behave in lectures in discourses of freedom and respect, and in how lecturers who foster dialogue suggest a wider community in the public sphere. It was also apparent in the liminal moment that revolved around the image of initiates (Chapter 6). I also explored the idea of community briefly in Chapter 8, where it emerged in relation to the differences between lectures and online communities. Burbules and Callister (2000) ask whether some communities on or off the Internet function more as ‘gated communities’ (2000, 35 and 165) than viable open spaces. This study has scratched the surface of these questions, but suggests this as a productive frame for further study.

The body in theory: the intersection of ‘three bodies’

The centrality of embodiment in this study needs to be explored further. There are at least three levels at which the body has emerged as central. The first is as sense-maker. Not only is the body the locus of our sense-making, but also how the body *feels* in its sense-making is crucial. In Carpecken’s words, “‘structure’ is experienced as a set of felt relations to others, not a set of abstract relations between signs” (1993, 295–6). Students’ references to feeling engaged, inspired, ‘comfy’ or at home, as opposed to feeling bored, tired, or asleep, saturate this study. This sense-making is not necessarily or only a logical or rational process but is something less mediated, tied to emotion and sense of belonging. On another plane, the body is important as a symbol in meaning-making in which it is read as text. The initiates in the room, Robert’s gestures, Francois’ ‘shyness’, Isobel’s academic ‘drag’, Simon’s gaze, are all read by students in complex ways. We have also seen the interplay between the symbols of spiritual death (boredom) and life (engagement) that is not stable, but is constantly renewed through action and re-action in the form of entextualisation. At a third level, the body emerges as a site of the social, as mediator of the interplay between the individual and society. This is seen most strongly in students’ accounts in their second year of how the lecture ‘binds our day’ creating a disposition to practices, in the students’ descriptions of walking out of the lecture theatre, and also in the role of handwriting in lecture note-taking. A practice that seems so obvious – note-taking notes in lectures – has a long history that reflects the fundamental way in which, quoting Foucault, “time penetrates the body” (1995, 152).

This centrality of the body was only partly anticipated by my theoretical framework. Ritual studies, McLaren in particular, builds on the intelligence of ‘feeling states’, Bell, with her emphasis on action in practices, recognizes that practice turns on

the body. So arguably do Bakhtin and Goffman with their stress on positionality and being-for-others, although their primary interests have been in communication. Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework enables us to read the body within/as text. Rather than reaching for another single theory, I believe that it is helpful to follow Scheper-Hughes and Lock's (1987) example and consider the intersection of different conceptions of the body, in order to address the Cartesian dualism that permeates western thinking, in which mind is separate from body, spirit from matter, and visible from invisible. Their project addresses medical anthropology, which has over-emphasised a particular conception of the body from the biomedical perspective. In education, particularly in higher education, the body has not received the attention it deserves. Notions of meaning are over-determined by a focus on mind, as if it were entirely separate from the body. The 'three bodies' they identify resonate with this study and index different theoretical positions, suggesting a complex theoretical lens or series of lenses. The 'three bodies' can be summarized as a) the *individual* body in the phenomenological sense of the body as the locus for individual experience; b) the *social* body as symbol (drawing on Douglas 1970). The body provides a rich supply of metaphors for thinking about the interplay between the 'natural' and the 'social; and c) the *body politic* referring to the "regulation, surveillance and control of bodies (individual and collective) in reproduction [...]" (1987, 7). Foucault's work (already referred to here, particularly in the discourse expanding chapter on the past in the present) is exemplary here. Scheper-Hughes and Lock conclude that "the individual body [...] should be seen as the proximate terrain where social truths and social contradictions are played out, *as well as* a locus of personal and social resistance, creativity and struggle" (1987, 31, my emphasis). This requires a complex theoretical lens, or combination of lenses. Scheper-Hughes and Lock argue for an emphasis on emotion as the "mediatrix" of the three bodies. The emotions are "the catalyst that transforms knowledge into human understanding and brings intensity and commitment to human action" (1987, 29). We have seen signs of all three 'bodies' in this study, and the pulse of belonging and community (albeit a strange one that in ways echoes the broader national imagined community of the 'rainbow nation') particularly in Simon's and Isobel's lectures. Francois' lectures remind us just how tenuous this community is as he (like most other lecturers) struggles to bring coherence to the 'fairground', while Robert's virtuoso lectures bring meaning 'to the point of combustion' as he deliberately pushes the boundaries.

Having focused on the centrality of the body in communicative practices in the lecture, I now consider the implications of these arguments for the academic literacies field.

Lectures and academic literacies

This study is situated in the academic literacies tradition, drawing on its social practices approach to academic meaning-making. It is distinct from other work in this tradition in that it attempts to track co-presence in academic meaning-making in the neglected site of the lecture theatre, as opposed to the usual emphasis on writing. One of the consequences of a focus on writing is that one is always working in the shadow of assessment, as writing is still the dominant mode in assessment practices in most disciplines in the humanities. This study explores the interstices of modes and practices in a neglected site. One of its contributions is an historical review of literacy arrangements in the lecture, suggesting how these play out in the contemporary situation, illustrating how the lecture theatre amplifies some meanings more than others due to the layered simultaneity of multiple time frames. The meanings that are amplified favour the modes and media of orality: gesture, performance, image, rhetoric, symbol and community. The ritualization frame brings out what Rampton (citing Turner) calls the subjunctive meanings, the 'as if' qualities rather than the indicative potentials (1998, 8). If orality was suppressed in the fall of the disputation resulting in the migration of research to the written mode, it appears to be trying to break through in the contemporary lecture. With this oral presence, embodied charisma still has a place. In holding its place, charisma plays in to the boring/engaged distinctions that permeate discourse about lectures. As a performative space in which the lecturer is rhetor and chooses her props and tools, these props and tools are read as symbols. So technology too becomes visible and read as a symbol. The microphone is a technical intrusion, a sign that the lecturer is tethered rather than free to respond. The use of screens is expected by participants, but Francois' overhead slides look 'old', while Robert's and Isobel's use of the screen is contemporary. It doesn't matter with Simon as he re-creates what feels like an unashamedly pre-modern space. As suggested in the previous chapter, the technology is secondary to the ethos established.

Student handwritten notes in one of the lectures give us some insight into modal shifts in the lecture since lecture note taking has been a central activity since the inception of the early modern research universities. What we see in the notes in Simon's lectures is that most students pay attention to the written words that are framed on the

board or screen rather than the dynamic spoken word. They do not blend the framed written words with the spoken ones. It is as if they are being kept separate. Anecdotally colleagues at Entabeni and at other South African universities say that they struggle to get students to take lecture notes. This suggests a different student habitus, less willing to simply receive and regurgitate, and more open to 'going on a vibe', in the words of one of the students in this study. The availability of notes in downloadable PowerPoint also makes handwritten notes redundant, and redefines the lecture space for the fleeting and the performative.

I suggest that we re-think approaches to lecture note-taking in academic literacies courses. The lecture note-taking skills that are taught on these courses should reflect a much more complex situation in which there are multiple sources of authority, as we have seen in the 'dispersed' lectures that Francois gave, and in Isobel's 'distributed' style. Social semiotic studies in various disciplines will give a fuller picture of what students are actually doing, how they create their hybrid texts, how they knit their lecture notes to other texts to make a coherent whole, or to see where coherence breaks down.

The different styles of lecture-based authority identified in this study – authority fused, dispersed, debated and distributed – all imply different approaches to the relationship between different forms of text and authority, and thus together present a major challenge to any accepted notions of how meaning is made in the lecture theatre. There is nothing here to suggest frozen authority. Everything points instead to vulnerability, seduction, vividness and struggle. Isobel understands this, and knows that celebrity is not going to go away, and that in fact it is closer to academic practice than most of us are bold enough to recognize. We are not equipped to deal with these qualities, in part because academic literacy has been over-defined by what Lea and Street (1998) call the 'skills' and 'socialisation' models, and because it has focused primarily on (written) language.

Another insight from the study is that we need a more distributed view of academic literacies. We tend to shore up what happens in the lecture, and divide it off from other forms of academic engagement. All the lecturers in this study blend practices and create hybrid spaces in their lectures. We have seen lecturers respond to student evaluations, introduce essay assignments, dress up and extend conversations beyond the walls of the lecture theatre in online chats. Most importantly, through the focus group discussions, we have some insight into the telling ways in which students read their lectures and lecturers.

I suggest that the relationship between lectures and other sites of academic meaning-making, particularly the tutorial, be re-thought. Tutorials could function more like focus groups, or focus groups could penetrate the lecture space in innovative ways, so that the single authority sponsored by the lecture space is inflected and interrupted. In my study these focus groups became quasi-pedagogical ‘safe houses’ where students could experiment with their ideological becoming and various forms of identification. My role became less and less important in them as students started to address each other directly, rather than wait for a prompt, or for their ‘turn’ in the circle.

Researching performance

I found the overall methodological approach – textually oriented discourse analysis within an ethnographic frame – flexible and productive. However the use of my version of multimodal analysis of image and word in the liminal moments points to a contradiction. Liminal moments are fleeting, filled with fugitive qualities that are difficult to pin down, yet that is precisely what I tried to do in the detailed analysis that I attempted. These moments are often politically charged in that they point to the politics of the raced, gendered, classed and aged body. I started in a critical realist frame, but as the meanings I explored opened out, I became more and more aware of the performative qualities within lectures. Performance is once-off, and alive. Its power is in the now, and yet I have tried to capture and represent this live quality. This tension is sharply expressed in Phelan’s essay on the ontology of performance:

Performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance (1993, 146).

Once captured, it is possible that its power is either broken or reproduced and amplified in a manner that does harm. It becomes part of the legibility that Clark (2006) has written about. The discomfort that I felt in Francois’ lecture when he pointed out the presence of the researching camera in the lecture theatre is indicative of this unease. As I wrote in Chapter 7, students were also uncomfortable with this invasion.

This raises a challenge for the multimodality conversation within the New Literacy Studies. In starting this research, I was strongly informed by an awareness of the limits of language and the arguments that Kress, van Leeuwen, Stein and others have made about needing to expand our study of communication to include multiple modes beyond language. Kress and van Leeuwen in particular have focused on the role of the image in recent communicative practices (1996). In aligning co-presence with liminality, I have

confronted a problem that raises questions about representation, politics and ethics that should be inserted more firmly in the multimodal research agenda. Having said that, I also see this insight as an opportunity for re-imagining the lecture.

Re-imagining the lecture

I return to Judith Butler's notion of performativity (1999), referred to in Chapter 2, in thinking about how the conclusions of this research project may inform future activity in the academic literacies field. I have already written about her observation that authority and identity are not inherent: instead, it is the *anticipation* of authority and identity that "conjures its object" (1999, xv). However creative individual lecturers and students may be, the underlying structure of lectures is that people expect a single authority to point to some aspect of reality and frame it coherently. We saw how Isobel in particular understood this, and played with the anticipation of this single expertise. She altered the space and performed an academic drag show in which she doubled up as a celebrity, and then turned the gaze back on herself, thus asking questions about the function of lectures and lecturing. But, as Pratt (1999) reminds us, it becomes increasingly difficult to achieve coherence in a lecture in a contact zone. Only the most creative, confident and charismatic lecturers can pull this off over an extended period of time. I suggest that in contemplating the future of the lecture, we need to turn back to the humanities and to the cluster of disciplines known as the performing arts: visual arts, drama and dance. These disciplines understand the centrality of the body, imagination and emotion in re-imagining the social. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Turner wrote in his later work of a more contemporary notion of the limen, or margin, to include what he calls 'liminoid' forms such as drama, novels and other creative works that tend to thrive in nascent situations that are ever present but not necessarily acknowledged in the contact zone. There are elements of the liminoid in the lectures in this study. Perhaps alongside (and perhaps even replacing) the traditional lecture with its single authority, we need to imagine different versions of the lecture that intensify the meanings and styles of engagement associated with the creative arts. Relatively new endeavours such as performance art attempt to re-define the frames and notions of what constitutes the subject or object in different contexts. It pushes people to confront the act itself. This is precisely what my student did in her photograph of students sitting on Jameson Hall steps, with the caption 'Listening to the Jammie 101 lecture'. What would happen if there was a cast of people on the 'stage' rather than just one? Who might make up the cast?

Which languages would they speak? What would the audience need to know to make sense of the 'plot'?



This study has made visible a variety of images of the lecture. These images range from visual representations of lectures in the past (for example the medieval lecture theatre) to unofficial home-made images such as the one above. It has also presented verbal images of different kinds of lectures (boring and engaging), as well as different styles of lecturing as embodied by the four lecturers in this study. These images are offered as resources for both students and lecturers to explore what lectures mean and do in the contact zone.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics permission form

University of Cape Town

Appendix B: Student profiles

The profiles are arranged in alphabetical order. See Chapter 3, 'Keeping in touch with students' for a description of how the profiles were read by students in their third year. The star (*) denotes a profile that has not been edited by the student.

Amy

Amy contrasts the cosy atmosphere of her schooling at a small convent school in a mining town in the Free State, to living and studying in Cape Town. The recent move to Cape Town has been more difficult because of the adjustment involved in living between her divorced parents, and adjusting to a 'cliché' community, unlike the more 'open-minded and down to earth' atmosphere of her home town. Much of the first part of the interview is about the difficulties with this adjustment. There is 'not one thing that is left – everything has changed'. Having initially wanted to study Occupational Therapy, she has ended up planning to major in Psychology. She describes herself as 'very average and not way up there with distinctions galore' and does not regret her change in plan. Her reasons for doing Psychology relate to her having had personal experience with a psychologist when she was younger to help her get through 'the whole divorce type thing' and she 'knows what it's like to be on the other side of the table'. She is able to 'see the other person's point of view and help them'.

Anna*

Anna starts by saying that she 'did not take a gap year' (a common practice, particularly among middle class white school leavers) and worked as a waitress after school – 'nothing of great importance'. When I ask her about school in Milnerton, a rapidly growing suburb to the north of Cape Town, she says it is 'best forgotten'. She was 'very naïve', and now sees her old friendships in a different light. The theme of trust comes up in the interview. She originally wanted to do Medicine but has chosen to major in Psychology as she is interested in people, 'what made them think that? The way people behave... I don't want to be manipulated'. Her parents got divorced when she was very young, and she feels that this has had an effect on how she relates to authority, particularly in her discomfort with male authority figures. She notes that she spends a lot of time with friends who are not at university and 'they don't have essays to hand in so it becomes less and less important whether you work or not'. Most of what is important to her is increasingly outside of the university.

Bongani

Bongani talked at length about his schooling experience in a small town on the touristy 'Garden Route' on the south coast. He moved several times between township and historically white 'Model C' state schooling. In the second interview (in his third year, after I had erased the first one in error), he vividly recalls the ups and downs of these migrations between schools, and the fitting in strategies that he learnt along the way. He notes that in his last two years at township high school, he underachieved to fit in with his peers, and to avoid his teacher's 'over respect' for his years of privileged schooling. At that age, all he wanted was to 'be happy'. After leaving school, he did voluntary work with a family counselling organisation and was recruited to work as a counsellor on a local HIV/AIDS project. He mentions the difficulty of being a '19-year-old counselling a 40-year-old' and says that this made him 'mature before time'. Bongani started out registered for a Social Work degree, but has moved to studying Human Resources. We talk about how this shift may indicate a change of values. He recalls that initially he had

this ‘thing against being rich’ but now feels that ‘when you are rich you have the power to help others’.

Ella

For Ella, university was ‘the light at the end of the tunnel’ after hating her last years of high school, which included a move from a relaxed co-ed school in Durban to a ‘snobby’ girls-only government school in Cape Town when her father was transferred. Her plans to go overseas – ‘not just wanting to travel, it was an escape mechanism. Get away from life, school, family, all my problems’ did not work out. She feels so much easier in the less structured environment at Entabeni. School was ‘mostly white, wealthy’ whereas what she loves about university is ‘such a mixture of different types, races, personality’. Ella is happy with her combination of subjects, leading to a Bachelor of Social Science, eventually working as an educational psychologist with children with learning disabilities. She identifies a growing disappointment having begun the academic year with enthusiasm, ‘a lot dies away’ and like other students she knows, ‘you don’t have that thirst for knowledge any more’. She did not complete her third year, but returned a few years later.

Iain*

Since leaving school two years previously, he has spent most of his time in the advertising field, which Iain says is ‘all very hit and miss...you’re encouraged to break the rules but nobody tells you what they are’. He is now interested in getting a broader education, but remains interested in advertising. He speaks at length about the advertising world and its values, and identifies himself as ‘a cynic by nature and a pessimist’. He was brought up by a single parent (his mother) ‘trying to go against the norms...she broke all the rules and made sure that I know how to break them as well’. Later in the semester, he missed a month of classes after he fractured his skull when he was robbed late at night while walking home alone. His experience of both work and study has been very uneven. For example, he talks about the influence of his Art teacher at a prestigious state high school for boys: he changed his ‘perception of art and how I could deal with it in the future’, but Iain had done badly in the final examination: ‘I don’t know what happened but it’s fine’. He did not complete his first semester.

Kerry

Kerry came to some of the focus group meetings, but was never formally interviewed.

Leah

Leah has lived in Cape Town all her life. She recounts how she ‘jumped’ from a Catholic primary school to a school where most students were Muslim and where her (Anglican) religion was ‘in the minority’. At the time she had ‘scorn’ for aspects of Islam but writes in her third year that she is now in a ‘longterm relationship’ with a Muslim boyfriend who has taught her to ‘respect’ his religion. She explains that as an ‘academic’ student, it was expected that she would study professions like Engineering or Medicine, but instead she has chosen to major in English and Psychology and to study ‘social and intellectual things’. She enjoys the ‘open’ atmosphere of university after the ‘set social structures’ of school, though she is struggling to adapt to the lack of academic routines, but it is good ‘not having people to prompt you all the time’. Leah distinguishes between students who are ‘just coasting’ and those who are passionate about their learning, and talks about how certain lectures have captivated her attention because she is interested in the subject whereas other students may have found these topics ‘boring’. She expresses a deep interest in media and refers to herself as one of ‘the MTV generation’ (but three years later says that she ‘has a great deal of scorn for such mainstream things nowadays’.

Lerato

Early in the interview Lerato takes my unfamiliarity with Botswana into account, as she describes her movements up to this point in her life. She comes from ‘a village 1000kms from the capital Gaborone. My parents are farmers, not for commercial purposes, but to feed the family’. Farming is ‘obviously the only thing we’ve been exposed to’. After finishing her high schooling, she did national service for a year, working as a secretary on a Christian mission, where she ‘learnt to be independent’. She has spent a year at a South African college where she matriculated, but she struggled with the English medium, as there was no recourse to Setswana. She is majoring in history, which has always been her favourite subject. She is struggling with some of her subjects, particularly in lectures where she cannot follow lecturers’ accents. She talks about how some lecturers ‘reach you’, whereas with others ‘you can feel very bad’. She feels that good lecturers are like storytellers, where they ‘expect the audience to understand’ and makes comparisons with her grandmother. In reviewing this account in her third year, she explains that she is no longer majoring in history (though it is still a ‘store’ for her); she has become interested in social development. She is now familiar with accents and finds Entabeni a ‘cosmopolitan’ environment where she is ‘happy’ with all the accents.

Lindee*

Lindee foregrounds that she comes from a stable family (‘My parents are still together – that grounds me’) and she does not usually have ‘big issues’. She has blocked out parts of her schooling and recalls the misery of having had bad skin problems, and the harsh judgements that went with that. After school she started to come into her own. She worked in clothing stores, and started her own jewellery business selling at craft markets, then did an *au pair* course and went to Holland to look after three children. Lindee exudes confidence: ‘I am actually loving being here. I’m sort of on my way to my dream’ but ‘wouldn’t change the past’. ‘Would I give up these scars? There’s a time when I would have taken sandpaper to my face if it made a difference...I love where I am now’. She notes that since leaving school, her ‘whole vocabulary has changed’ and she has to ‘tone it down. You know, ‘money is religion’ or ‘fundamental aspects of’ and they’re like oh we’re on a hill here’ when she’s with her friends who are not at Entabeni. But those friendships are important to her: ‘it’s more me – my coloured roots’. She is registered for a Social Work major.

Mark

His father is an Anglican priest in the ‘coloured’ working class suburb of Elsie’s River in Cape Town. He went to Rhodes High School, a historically white state school, while his siblings have been at a homely private school right next door. He talks about the ‘thin line of trees’ between the schools, and how ‘nobody transgressed that border’. His perspective on the spatial politics of post-Apartheid schooling is conveyed with insight and humour, and includes an introduction to how race, class and gender work in the clothes that people wear. He talks about how ‘big’ Entabeni was as a topic of conversation at school: ‘We’re going there, the university on the mountain, we’re going there, families will be proud whatever’. He has made friends (‘The number of black friends I have here not just South African but from Africa’) mainly through clubs and other activities (gym, Habitat for Humanity, the university radio station, Pistol Club). He jokes about his parents’ attitude to his membership of the pistol club: ‘They’re from (the NGO) a Gun Free South Africa. I wanted to try it out’. He is thinking of joining the army, for the formality and discipline, which he perceives to be lacking in himself, and then plans to start a group for homeless people, after his Social Work degree. Mark left half way through his third year, and returned later to complete his studies.

Marianne

She foregrounds her age (18) and the fact that she was born and still lives in Kitwe, Zambia, and ‘wouldn’t ever move’. Three years later, reading this again, she says that she now questions this statement, as there’s ‘no [work] future there’ but it will ‘always be home’. People often assume that she’s South African, and ‘in a way, that’s nice’. She notes that she is still hesitant with the use of local slang, in spite of having been exposed to different social registers as a post-matriculation (A level) student at a well known private school in Johannesburg, where ‘we were diverse - people from Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe’. Her transition to university in a foreign country has been eased by her A level experience, knowing South Africans working on the mines in Zambia, and her experience of boarding school. The unexpected highlight in her studies has been Classics: a course called ‘The World of Odysseus’ is making her rethink her career interests, having originally applied to study a BA Law. She is softly spoken, reticent, often qualifying her comments with ‘it’s just my perception’, or ‘I’m not sure how to express it’. Three years later, she draws a cartoon face next to this statement and writes: ‘Still like this!’.

Nomathemba

In the interview, Nomathemba refers several times to how different school and university are. At Entabeni there is ‘freedom and you can do whatever you want to’, but nobody ‘tells you specifically’, so you have to ‘lay your own groundrules’. She set out to ‘work 24 hours 7 days a week and associate with those who work well under pressure’ (later she writes a quizzical ‘hmmm?’ next to this assertion) but she is struggling, and finds the new work life ‘hectic’. She also notes that this freedom is also part of a generational shift, where her peers want to ‘exercise their rights’ but often ‘abuse’ the freedom. One of her difficulties is spending two hours a day commuting between the university and Khayelitsha, the township where she lives. It’s impossible to work on the bus, and ‘they’ve got their own perspective of Entabeni students, the boffins, kind of ‘oh ja, she’s from Entabeni’. Nomathemba went to a girls’ school in the city, where she stayed in the hostel, before coming to the university. Her parents wanted her to live at home, though she would have preferred to go to Wits University in Johannesburg. On reading this account three years later, she says that ‘nothing has changed’ and she does not regret having stayed in Cape Town.

Riaan

It is clear that the fact that he took three years off between his schooling in Johannesburg and university is an important part of who Riaan is. Two years of this time was spent in the UK and USA. His exposure to diverse people in this period has changed him. He has a ‘different mindset to a lot of the people here’. His dress (trademark hat and studded lip) also set him apart. Riaan came to Entabeni knowing exactly what he wanted to do, and he sees himself apart from other students who ‘want a degree’ where what matters for him is education. It is ‘unfathomable’ that so many people ‘are here just to get through it’. He loves all his courses, and speaks of learning with intensity, using words like ‘passion’ and ‘powerful’. His subject choices reflect a desire not to follow the herd. He notes that it is ‘ridiculous that so many people don’t speak African languages (Zulu is one of his subjects)’ and avoids Psychology because ‘everybody wants to do it’. In reading this in his third year he notes that it is a little ‘intense’ but the ‘fundamental ideas I held appear to remain in me now’.

Sabelo

Sabelo is an older student who has been at technical college near Johannesburg for three years and has ‘sacrificed a lot’ to come to university. We talk about his financial difficulties and he explains in detail how his mother has sacrificed for him, and how his father has only recently come into his life, and ‘does not contribute’. His religious faith underpins everything he does, including shaping his need to accept his father. Sabelo speaks of his strength, and how people see him: ‘He can make it – he’s too strong’ but he does need help. He identifies that he is the first person in his family to ‘go to tertiary’ and that ‘God will make a plan - my desire is to push myself to the limit no matter what’. I ask him whether the university is what he expected, and he says ‘Academically yes, but the social life, like going to church, meeting as young people, going to camps’ is very different. Most of his friends are ‘international students’ and he communicates in English all the time. The ‘good thing about Gauteng’ was ‘you speak every language’. He is majoring in Social Work. Reading this account after three years ‘feels like a secret diary ... I like it’.

Salama

After my opening question in the interview, Salama talks about her interest in athletics, where she followed a family tradition in participating in a range of provincial sporting codes. One of the striking things about the interview is how Salama speaks about her decision-making about career and studying in media studies. Her mother passed away when she was fourteen, and her life is strongly embedded in the community of District Six. She regularly ‘eats at the neighbours’ and one of the neighbours has paid for her first two years at university. Her father wanted her to do Business Science, but in making her decision, she went to each neighbour for advice. Most told her to ‘go with what you want’. She jokes, ‘they want me to get an Oscar!’ She has strong family connections in the film industry, and has done a job shadow on a film about a Muslim community, centring on someone who went on pilgrimage (Hajj) with her late mother. She loves the way her life has expanded at Entabeni, whereas previously at school people ‘look at you and judge, what you wear, who you are’. In reading this account in her third year, she asks me to change a detail relating to something she had done to please her father. She asks me to mention instead her admission to a highly sought-after course in media studies, as she feels that she had done this for herself.

Taffie

Taffie begins by telling me that she has ‘moved around Zimbabwe a lot’ since leaving Chiredze, the place that gives her ‘a sense of being home’. Being at Entabeni is like starting all over again. On the one hand she enjoyed the experience of ‘just being anyone and no-one cares’ but often felt like an outsider ‘because of the language’. She notes how shared history creates bonds among her South African friends: ‘I guess it’s because of Apartheid’. Later in the interview, while discussing role models, she says that she ‘felt more at home in church than on campus’. Through church, she has made friends, and mentions Sabelo in particular. Her talk is informed by pride in being the oldest girl in a large family, and her national identity: ‘I’m proud to be Zimbabwean and wouldn’t change it for the world’. She has ended up in South Africa which was her ‘Plan C’. What she really wanted to do was to go to America to experience the diversity denied you when you live in a ‘Third World country’. Taffie speaks of first needing to ‘deal with her desires’ before engaging fully as a student. In looking back over the three years, she says ‘more Zimbabweans’ at the university means that ‘more know you and you’re no longer just anyone but someone’.

Triya

Her certainty about following a career in the media came through clearly in the interview: 'I have a direct vision of what I want to do'. She wants to work as a copywriter in an advertising agency, and is fully aware of how cut-throat this work is. She has strong family links in the media and Arts (her grandfather was a well-known playwright linked to the anti-Apartheid struggle). While doing a job-shadow with a prestigious advertising agency, she was told to 'think very carefully especially being younger...my brother has found that they sort of milk the ideas from you'. There are several references in the interview that show her comfort with a broadly 'critical' take on South African life. She was born in Durban, attended an all girls 'previously known Model C school' in Durban, and has moved between Durban and Cape Town since then, living with family members in both towns. Triya is in her second academic year, and talks about graduating the following year. She says that 'to feel economically safe all starts with getting my degree'. Later, she writes that this perception about economic safety has 'changed dramatically!': she has observed that 'most graduates seem to be unemployed'.

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Appendix C: Researcher's notes from Simon's and Isobel's lectures

Simon's lecture

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Appendix D

Appendix C

Isobel's lecture

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Appendix D: Students' lecture notes for Simon's lecture

Page 2 of Leah's notes

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Riaan's notes

University of Cape Town

Anna's notes

University of Cape Town

Kerry's notes

University of Cape Town

Salama's notes

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