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Power, desire and emotions in education: revisiting the epistolary narratives of three women in apartheid South Africa

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Abstract: In this paper I will attempt to consider emotions in the context of three women's lives, whose passion for education brought them together and then tore them apart along axes of difference defined by race, class and age in apartheid South Africa. I am looking in particular into the correspondence between Lily Moya, Mabel Palmer, and Sibusisiwe Makhanya, published in 1987 by Shula Marks and having since become an almost canonical reading in the 'intersectionality' literature. In revisiting this correspondence, I am exploring how culturally differentiated emotions, as inscribed in the three women's epistolary narratives, can open up spaces for *the subject of feminism* to emerge. In this context, what I suggest is that reclaiming emotions within current educational discourses and practices can have significant effects not only on how lives are shaped and subjectivities formed, but also on how we can rethink about what feminism is and what it can do.

Power, desire and emotions in education: revisiting the epistolary narratives of three women in apartheid South Africa

For congenial reasons I had to leave Adams, due to the fact that I was never meant to be a stone but a human being with feelings, not either an experimental doll (Marks, 1987, p.186).

These are the last lines of a letter that Lily Moya¹, a Xhosa fifteen-year-old young woman growing up in the Transkei in South Africa was addressing to Dr Mabel Palmer, an elderly white academic, Fabian socialist, suffragette and then organiser of the Natal University College's Non-European Section. Lily was writing this letter on July 26th, 1951, just after she had taken the decision to leave Adams College where she had been studying for her matriculation exams—the final school leaving examinations. For a poor orphan girl like Lily, studying at a famous South African high school—the oldest educational establishment in Natal—should have been perceived as a real privilege. Actually, in the course of the two previous years, Lily had fought really hard to find a way to pursue her education. Having learnt about Mabel's pioneering activities in establishing higher education for Natal's African and Indian population, she had written to her asking for help. Lily's first letter written on January 4th, 1949 from Umtata, the community where she lived with her parental uncle, initiated a whole correspondence that was to last for about two and a half years and was soon to include other parts. This correspondence, edited² and published by Shula Marks in 1987 by the University of Natal Press in Durban South Africa, has become a well known piece in the intersectionality literature³. It was almost immediately published by the London-based Women's Press and by Indiana University Press in the United States. Moreover, the publication has surpassed the interest of purely academic circles and was dramatized for BBC Radio Four 'Women's Hour' in 2001. In presenting her work to a wider audience on BBC, Shula Marks has pithily commented:

The letters in front of me opened up an intimate and personal world of women's concerns with obligation and duty, philanthropy and welfare, sexuality and marriage, independence and social control. They illuminated more of the South African condition than the majority of history textbooks: the generosities, yet limitations, of white liberalism, the nature of mission education; the socialization of black girls; and the dilemmas they confront. This was a quite different way of understanding history and the impact of race, and class and gender in South Africa's complex social order. (Marks, BBC, Radio 4, 19th, March, 2001, 7.45pm)

It is in the light of such a wide circulation and reception that Margaretta Jolly (2002, p.268) has presented this correspondence as an exemplary case of 'a post-1970s feminist interest in women's difference', a publication interrogating sisterhood and portraying political conflicts within feminism. Indeed, Shula

Marks (1987) has done an exceptionally careful and meticulous study of the historical, cultural and political background framing the lives and deeds of the three correspondents. Marks has pointed to the ground upon which these three women stood and communicated with each other and this was indeed their common desire for women's education. At the same time however, Marks has traced not only the grand axes of difference that pulled them apart, namely class, race and age but also more subtle differentiations as those of intertribal conflicts, unique personal trajectories and different processes and effects of colonization. According to Marks' analysis it was in the social milieu of these structural differences that Lily's experience at Adams college turned out to be a disaster. Her final letter quoted in the beginning of this paper emphasizes her disillusion and her desperate seek for emotional support: 'I was never meant to be a stone but a human being with feelings'. As Marks has remarked Mabel Palmer and later Sibusisiwe Makhanya failed Lily Moya on emotional grounds. Marks' illuminating introduction actually concludes with the comment that: 'The love, support and attention Lily desperately craved were denied her to the end.' (1987, p.42)

This paper is actually deployed in the space opened up after Marks' concluding sentence, exploring the effects of the force of emotions in producing realities and subjectivities within education. Being aware of the politically significant history of the publication of this correspondence, I have nonetheless reread it from a different angle: I have been more interested in the constitutive power of emotions rather than in their failure. Indeed, in immersing myself in the three women's letters, what has profoundly struck me is the way emotions are emerging and then gradually intertwined with power relations, producing different effects for the subjects that are involved in their complex network. As Smith and Watson (2001) have commented, life narratives—and letters are an important part of this genre—can have different histories, multiple audiences, diverse readings and a wide range of perspectives from which they can be read and used⁴. In attempting 'a different' reading, I am not in any way downplaying the critical role of macro-structures of difference in creating conditions of possibility for particular events and subjectivities to emerge. On the contrary, it is on the complex intersection of grand and minor differences that these epistolary narratives are mapped.

My reading therefore focuses on the forceful way emotions emerge in the epistolary narratives under scrutiny to produce effects and create new social realities. What I want to suggest is that the situation initiated in the context of this correspondence is a specific paradigm of how lives can be so badly shaped when emotions are written out and how on the other hand revisiting the force of emotions can make a difference in the ways we relate to ourselves and to others, particularly so when examined within educational contexts. In considering emotions, what I am further attempting to do is to rethink what feminism is about and what it can do. In this light I am following Meg Boler who has raised the question of how emotions can be 'reclaimed' as part of our cognitive and ethical inquiry ...[in the] hope for changing the quality of [our] lives and taking action towards freedom and social justice' (1999, p.xiv). What can we—feminist educators today—learn about what we do, how can we change what we do as

we lead our professional lives working with students—women amongst them—striving to make their way in the sometimes threatening territories of academic knowledge, trying to make sense of what has occasionally gone wrong with their studies, crying and despairing within and beyond the spaces and places of various educational institutions. As Boler has further commented:

We need only think of the countless instances of affect in the classroom that we rarely acknowledge explicitly: the heated debates and loaded silences in discussion of controversial texts; the dynamics of "success" and failure" evoked when we hand back student essays; the shuffling of boredom, curiosity, confusion during a lecture. These unspoken emotions and affects shape our sense of interest and passion in the educational process. (1997, p.260)

My twofold concern with the power of emotions and with the power of feminism is ultimately mapped on my on-going project of writing feminist genealogies (See, Tamboukou, 1999, 2003a, 2003b). It is my interest in genealogical explorations of the constitution of the female self that I have once more turned to the archives, the forgotten dusty documents inscribing other possible ways of being or rather of becoming a woman, beyond dominant perceptions, discourses and practices. As Teresa de Lauretis has argued, it is from the interstices and margins of hegemonic discourses that the subject of feminism emerges (1987).

Emotions have indeed remained in the margins of theoretical discussions around the structuring of inequalities in education, which have always revolved around the binary opposition between truth and reason on the one hand and passions and emotions on the other. Although there has been a relatively recent resurgence in the research and literature around emotional learning, this interest has been dominated by a utilitarian discourse of controlling emotions and creating 'emotionally intelligent subjects' (See, Boler, 1999). My interest however lies in exploring the grey area of emotions as a field of subjugated knowledges, opening up possibilities for deterritorializations to be actualised. In this context, I am charting emotions in a cartography of power relations and flows of desire, following theorists who have interrogated the reason/passion binarism and have identified the need for culturally specific histories, or rather genealogies of particular emotions to be written (See, Boler, 1999).

Making Spinozist connections

In considering power, desire and emotions, the analysis of this paper is inevitably situated within a Spinozist plane of thinking. Why Spinoza, the question has often been raised particularly in the feminist strand of Spinozist scholarship. (See, James, 2000). As Genevieve Lloyd has argued, Spinoza's philosophy 'offers an alternative to Cartesian ways of thinking about the body and its relation to the mind' (2000, p.41) and opens up possibilities 'for a reconceptualization of the imaginary'. Problematizing emotions in tracing genealogical lines of their interweaving in feminist educational praxis very much involves questions around the troubled body/mind relation and the role of

imagination in the will to knowledge. These are themes that will further be deployed in the analysis of this paper. What I want to do now however, is to chart lines of thought that will be more specifically followed in the narrative analysis of the letters. Having already placed my interest within a Spinozist plane, the vocabularies I have used so far to formulate the theoretical milieu of this paper have already rather explicitly revealed the deployment of feminist analytics in making connections with Foucault's and Deleuze and Guattari's work. In this context, what I suggest is that Foucault's theorization of power illuminates Boler's argument that emotions constitute a site of discipline and social control, while Deleuze and Guattari's take on desire can shed more light on emotions as a site of resistance (Boler, 1999).

In further deploying the project of making connections I have been interested in setting out a plane of consistency for Foucauldian analytics of power and DeleuzoGuattarian flows of desire to work together (See Patton, 2000). In Deleuze's and Guattari's analyses, desire is regarded as an autonomous and productive force shaping the social rather than being determined by it. Instead of being ideological, desire is the real material thing: 'desire is always constitutive of a social field...desire is in production, just as production is in desire as desiring-production' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984, p.348).

In the same vein, power is for Foucault a material entity of relations at play. As Deleuze stresses, power for Foucault, 'isn't just the relation of a force to a being or an object, but corresponds to the relation of a force to the other forces it affects, or even to forces that affect it (Deleuze, 1990, p.117). According to Patton, this affective dimension of power in Foucault forms rhizomes with the Deleuzian notion of desire and becoming (2000, p.53). Furthermore in his theorization of power as a cluster of relations, Foucault has considered the functioning of these relations as 'an economy of power' (1982, pp.210-11), while Deleuze and Guattari have theorized multiple ways in the flowing of desire through machinic assemblages and have stated that 'desiring-machines are the fundamental category of the economy of desire' (1984, p.32).

What I want to suggest here is that emotional learning in education is a field par excellence for the study of how economies of power and economies of desire produce realities and segmentarities, but also incite deterritorializations and open up space for lines of flight to be set into motion, irrespective of the fact that they will also allow grounds for reterritorializations to occur. In this light there is a need to explore power/desire connections in specific contexts and see how the discursive field of culturally differentiated emotions can provide the grounds for desire and power to dance together in the production of affects. It is staging such encounters that I take the thread of the epistolary narratives further examining the microphysics of emotions, 'bringing them out of the private and into the public sphere' (Boler, 1999, p.xx).

On the microphysics of power, desire and emotions

In my attempt to work with situated analyses of the politics of emotions I will now focus on specific narrative lines of the correspondence, charting them on a plane where relations of power, desire, affects and emotions make connections. In turning to the study of narratives revolving around emotions I am aware of the inherent limitations of this project in the theorization of affects⁵. As it has been suggested, while emotions are embedded within dominant linguistic codes and highly territorialized social practices and institutions, affects follow 'lines of flight', escaping planes of consistency and following unpredictable directions—they are forces of deterritorialization par excellence. (See, Massumi, 1996) I am therefore aware that a narrative approach to the study of affects and emotions is necessarily limited within what can only be represented in discourse and in this sense what is inevitably left out is a huge area of non-discursive bodily affects that can only be approached through my own and indeed my readers' imagination. However, as I will further discuss later on in this paper, the Spinozist plane of this theoretical endeavour allows space for imagination to become the medium through which different social and affective realities can be accessed (see Lloyd, 1996, p.63). Feminist philosophers, Moira Gatens and Gneieve Lloyd (1999) have followed trails of Spinoza's conceptualization of imagination to make a forceful suggestion about the power of 'collective imaginings' as an ethico/political project opening up new ways of living and communicating with and through others in our difference. It is—as I will further argue—this collectively imagined possibility of connectedness that can constitute planes of consistency upon which feminism can still be claimed as a relevant and indeed necessary theoretical and political platform.

Clearly looking at these epistolary narratives through the theoretical lenses of what Rossi Braidotti has charted as philosophies of radical immanence (2002) inevitably has its own limitations. There is indeed much more in the rich archive of these narratives and my reading has already drawn on Mark's rich and illuminating work not only in publishing the correspondence, but also in contextualizing the narratives within the specific historical, social and cultural milieu of the early apartheid South Africa.⁶ What I therefore hope the paper can offer, is lines of analyses that can be taken further, changed, bent, redeployed and connected with other possible modes of thought and work in feminist educational theory and praxis.

Situating my analysis in between what can be 'read' and what can be imagined, I have been particularly interested in Lily's epistolary practices geared towards establishing an emotional rapport between herself and her addressee. Thus in initiating their correspondence in the beginning of 1949 Lily was writing: 'Should I be taken in a school near to a University I can be more pleased. I'm really sad about this matter – financial embarrassed, there is no-one who can help me. I like education' (Marks, 1987, p.58). 'Pleased', 'sad' and 'I like education', two passions and an action, form a powerful Spinozist triangle here where joy, sadness and desire, the three primary affects according to Spinoza (2002) are brought together. '*I like education*' sets a whole plane of lines of flight in motion for both Lily and Mabel. And it is such a strong field of emotions staged here, that soon Lily will be able to move beyond her 'powerless' position in a place where she

can actually articulate her own desire and the way she sees herself relating to Mabel.

Human beings tend to make connections with other human beings writes Spinoza suggesting that 'there is [...] nothing more useful to man than man' (2002, p.153). Lily's desire for connection with Mabel has left some textual traces in the initial stages of their correspondence. Although her first letters between January and February 1949, follow the rules of formal openings and endings: 'Dear Madam' or just 'Madam' and 'Yours truly', in March she is opening her letter with 'My dear Miss Palmer' and is ending it 'With greetings and love'. As their correspondence progresses, Lily will even become critical of Mabel's insistence on calling her 'Miss Moya' as the following extract from a letter postscript on June 22nd, 1949, indicates: 'I can be *glad* if you would not call me "Miss Moya" but write "Dear Lily or Patience" not "Dear Miss Moya" ' (p.80). The statement of 'I can be glad' flags up the power of joy in bringing bodies together as they express their power to affect and be affected. In Spinoza's philosophical propositions: 'When we love a thing similar to ourselves we endeavour as much as we can to bring it about that it loves us' and 'the greater the emotion with which we imagine a thing loved to be affected towards us, the greater will be our feeling of glory' (2002, p.105). As Lloyd has commented, 'similarity' in Spinoza's thought should not be understood as a 'pre-existing sameness', but rather as 'a dynamic unfolding of commonalities achieved through collective action' (1996, pp. 88-89). It is I suggest this process of commonalities in becoming that the negotiation of affective salutations between Lily and Mabel allows emerging.

Of course there are emotional fluctuations in Lily's beginnings and endings, particularly when Mabel does not respond to her agonising letters; letter writing is after all a dialogic relation par excellence (Stanley, 2004). By August 1949, however, Mabel is occasionally being addressed as 'My dearest Dr Palmer' and Lily as 'Dear Lily'. The power of emotions has established an affective relationship between the two women despite their multi-levelled differences. Or has it?

I am reading these emotional salutations and the way they are negotiated in Lily's and Mabel's correspondence, reflecting on our current practices as feminist educators when speaking and/or writing—not letters anymore but certainly e-mails—to our students. I am thus asking myself about how often we have really let ourselves be driven/carried away by the flows of desire of our students particularly when learning outcomes of all sorts loom threateningly upon us; when the limited completion spans leave no time for any sort of passions to intervene in the lives and minds of our graduate students; when there is no space, place or time for sociological, philosophical or any other kind of imagination. In thus problematizing our present, I am turning again to the correspondence in an attempt to trace the history of this present of ours—the genealogical task par excellence.

In focusing on the specific epistolary practices of openings, endings and salutations, what I want to suggest here is that Lily's desire for education opens

up a field, 'produces a reality' in Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization (1984) for power relations but also emotions and affects to come on stage: 'I can be very *pleased* if you can take me into your college' [...] If you can answer me at your earliest possible I can be very *glad*' (p.55) It is in this sequence of hypothetical phrases, that imagination meets passion. Restricted as she is within the boundaries of her locality, her race and her class, Lily can imagine that 'another future can be possible'. She wants to educate herself; in fact she becomes passionate about this prospect. In imagining her career as an educated woman, she is therefore surpassing the material conditions of her confinement and is empowered to struggle for a different life.

In Spinoza's thought, 'passion and imagination interact often destructively, but also in ways that create points of transition out of diminishment into conatus⁷-strengthening activity' (Lloyd, 1996, p.78). As Moira Gatens has pointed out Spinoza thinks that without imagining that we can do something, we will actually never become able to do it (in James, 2000, p.47). Lloyd has further discussed how Antonio Negri has read Spinoza's formulation of imagination as a path giving access to the realities of the social world: 'Imagination can play a constitutive role, rather than just a distorting one; in understanding its fictions, reason reflects on the real social world in all its confusion and contradictoriness' (1996, p.63). As already pointed out, it is in this light that Spinoza's thought has been seen by feminist theorists as enabling 'a reconceptualization of the imaginary and the possibility of a sociability of inclusion' (James, 2000, p.40).

Lily's passionate desire for education can thus be fulfilled through her connection with Mabel—a feminist educator within the restrictions of her own geographies and times. If as already discussed, 'there is nothing more useful to man than man', then Spinoza's philosophy according to Lloyd, lays the ground for 'a theory of human sociability and friendship' (1996, p.88) to be deployed and it is at this critical point that his ethics 'merge with his politics' (p.88). Moreover, his idea of the power of connectedness is totally 'grounded in the physics of bodies' (p.88). It is therefore textual traces of the ethics and politics of making emotional connections that my reading of the two women's correspondence is further following.

Indeed, Lily's letters are overflowing with emotional words, phrases and greetings, which I have attempted to chart on a map of narrative moments. These moments I suggest express both her desire for education and her frustration and sadness in the idea of not becoming able to get what she wants: 'I'm still at home not in school only due to financial embarrassment. *My heart aches* when I see other children having gone and still going to school' (p.60). Home and school are rendered here into two incompatible places that mark flows of movement. Lily feels disappointed and sad being 'at home' and not 'in school' and it is in Mabel's help that she will deposit any hope for escaping her fate. Indeed her joy depends on Mabel's possibility of emotional action: 'I can be very *glad* if you can take me *affectionately* and let no other person nor thing restrict you from helping me. I'm still *in great grief and hope* for your earliest reply' (p.65). When no answer comes, moments of emotional frustration are equally forcefully inscribed in her letters: 'How can I show you *the grief which*

overwhelms me? ... 'Just think of the condition and *grief* I am in.' (p.66) Later on however, when Mabel replies Lily's joy is equally forcefully depicted as in a letter written on September 29th 1950: 'Your letter has been the source of inwards happiness. I am really glad, glad indeed ... I hope you stay for years with me. You cannot leave me alone in this merciless world ... Your love has tongue-tied me' (pp.112-113).

Joy and disappointment are closely interrelated emotions in Spinoza's thought, since 'Joy is pleasure accompanied by the idea of a past thing whose outcome surpassed our hope [while] disappointment is pain accompanied by the idea of a past thing whose outcome was contrary to our hope' (2002, p.130). In this light joy springs up in the correspondence by the actual exchange of letters—particularly so, when Mabel responds: 'I become happy when you reply me [...] I like receiving a letter from you' (Marks, 1987, p.80) but also 'It makes me very *glad* writing you this letter. As the year draws near to the end I really become more happy.' (pp.80-81) In the emotional economy of Lily's epistolary narratives it is not only spatiality that is inscribed—as in the school/home opposition mentioned above—but also time, the moment of her writing: 'At the present moment I am feeling quite dry [...] I am just in the black hole of Calcutta and I don't like it at all' (pp.91,95).

So far in this paper, I have discussed the limitations of a narrative approach to the study of emotions and in my attempt to transgress these limitations I have drawn on feminist interpretations of Spinoza's thought in making sense of the power of 'collective imaginings' (Gatens and Lloyd, 1999). In this light I have argued that Lily's flows of desire are liberating a set of subversive forces which produce a new reality for her, a new social milieu, since desire, according to Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy, always 'produces the real' (1984, p.26). In deterritorializing herself from striated spaces Lily's lines of flight⁸ are making forceful connections with Mabel's flows of desire to promote women's education. It is these connections between lines of flight and flows of desire that I will be further following.

Letter writing as a dialogic relation

By responding to Lily's plea for help Mabel is drawn into an intense emotional field opened up by their correspondence and in accepting to care for Lily she takes up ethical positions and responsibilities configured in the philosophical problematics around the often neglected I/you, self/other relation. Commenting on the marginality of this relation in current discourses and practices, Adrianna Cavarero has noted that 'the [singular] *you* is a term that is not at home in modern and contemporary developments of ethics and politics [...] the *we* is always positive, the plural *you* is a possible ally, the *they* has the face of an antagonist, the *I* is unseemly and the [singular] *you* is of course superfluous' (2001, p.90-1). It has to be noted here of course that far from being positive, the 'we' of feminism has long become a contested field. What I want to suggest here however, is that although Mabel's relation to Lily is clearly placed in the neglected space of the 'I/you' relation, it nevertheless carries the possibility of

making connections with a reconfiguration of the 'we'. In this proposition, what I think is strikingly interesting, is the embodiment of the 'I/you' relation grounded as it is, on the intersection of complex and multi-levelled differences. Seen from a line of philosophical thinking that focuses on difference as generating life⁹, 'difference in itself' in Deleuze's philosophy (2004), these situated differences can be thought of and indeed imagined as 'a dynamic unfolding of commonalities achieved through collective action' a perspective that as has already been discussed comes from feminist interpretations of Spinoza's philosophy (Lloyd, 1996, pp. 88-89).

As the ethical space of the I/you connectedness extends and specific arrangements for Lily's education are progressing, slowly but steadily, a decisive rupture emerges: Lily runs away from Umtata—her native location—to escape enforced marriage as explained in a letter to Mabel on September 12th, 1949:

Besides all other reasons I once gave you before, all along our long correspondence I had never dared to tell you this but now I feel compelled to tell you that I could, or in fact try to endure every other difficulty patiently and humbly, but not to see myself getting married in an awkward manner, to a man I hated so much. That is one of the things I so much hate being married. I don't even dream about it. That awful bondage. That is what my uncle did to me. He wanted only the dowry [sic] (1987, p.105)

Lily's voice emerges from the lines of her narrative to resist her oppression as a woman. It is actually by fighting against her gender oppression that Lily goes beyond her discursive resistance, so forcefully articulated in her letters and actually transforms her narratives into action. In getting away from Umtata, she defies both patriarchal and apartheid mobility restrictions while her revolutionary action, her actual deterritorialization is inscribed in the letter above.

Lily's escape breaks the linear continuity of her evolving relationship with Mabel and 'produces a new reality'. Her runaway is a turning point, a transgression of the limit, 'a flash of lightning in the night' (Foucault, 1977, p.34), an action that although crossing the line will soon 'return to the horizon of the uncrossable' (p.34) since transgression and limit in Foucault's thought play together becoming the condition of possibility for each other: 'transgression incessantly crosses and recrosses a line which closes up behind it in a wave of extremely short duration' (p.34). Despite what will turn out to be 'a wave of short duration', Lily's runaway opens up a plane for relations of power and desire to come together forcefully. Her passionate desire for education and her utter abhorrence of the idea of marriage empower her to defy mobility restrictions framed by patriarchal and apartheid structures of domination. Her escape creates a position for her as a subject of feminism to inhabit—albeit not consciously so. Clearly her power to defy has its own conditions of possibility: the cultural capital of her Transkei background so well articulated by Marks (1987, pp. 13-18) was providing her with the tools of seeking help from those powerful others whose gendered and political history created tactical moments of alliance with her specific disadvantaged situation.

Mabel's response—which is surprisingly supportive of such a risky and subversive act—is also conditioned by her own position as a subject of feminism of her own times, consciously constituted as such. This is how she articulates her support for Lily in a letter to Mr Bomback, the Bursar at Adams College, soon after the runaway:

[...] She certainly is in spite of her very quiet and shy exterior, a young woman of extraordinary resource. I do not know if you have heard of her adventures [...] I hope we may have no trouble with her guardian [...] If he gives trouble I am quite prepared to fight the issue even to the extent of appearing in Court if necessary. I have long felt that the powers of Native guardians for their women wards are excessive and often abused and I would be prepared to expose the whole question if necessary.

(Marks, 1987, pp.103)

As Marks has pointed out, Mabel's decision to promote the education of a young woman was indeed part of her feminist agenda (p.103). Moreover it derived from what she felt was her moral duty 'to pay back' women who had previously helped her advance her education and career as a woman. As she was writing to Lily on January 12th, 1951: '

Mrs Bernard Shaw long ago gave me a scholarship which she paid out of her own pocket in order that I might go and study in America [...] The way in which you must pay me back is the way I am paying back Mrs Bernard Shaw, namely by extending help to another poor and ambitious student many years later when in a position to do so. (p.137)

Within this specific situation Mabel's position is heavily invested by the cultural effects of her white middle-class colonial background. Her decision to help Lily is contextualized within the philanthropic colonial discourses of her era but they are also framed within the discourses of the suffragette and Fabian movements she had actively participated in (see Marks, 1987). She thus helps Lily driven by her social debt to her own benefactors, by her own institutional position as a white promoter of non-white university education and of course by a sense of solidarity emerging from her own experience of gendered inequalities. As she was writing in a letter dated April 14th, 1949: 'You are as a matter of fact very much on my conscience and I would feel myself very much to blame as an older woman who has been fairly successful in the field of education if I neglected your appeal' (p.68). In the letter quoted above, where she is contemplating Lily's guardian possible reactions after her escape, she was further writing: 'I am prepared to make a fight to give her an education if it is necessary' (p.104). Susan James has particularly pointed out that if we were to 'translate out of Spinoza-speak', then we would say that 'we can create circumstances in which people see that it is in their best interest to extend the kind of supportive institutions that enable them to realize themselves better, both collectively and individually' (2000, p.49). It is therefore in the context of the political and ethical responsibility of extending institutional support that Mabel's practices can be made intelligible within a feminist cultural register.

The 'seductiveness' of emotions: desire meets power

Mabel's response is shaped by the grand narratives, ideologies and macro-structures constituting the matrix of her multiple subject positions, but it is also largely influenced by 'the seductiveness' of Lily's emotional calls as expressed in a letter to Sibusisiwe Makhanya on November 4th, 1950:

Her letters were so lively and well written that I became quite interested in her, sent her books and tried to raise a small fund from the University women in Durban for her education. In this, however, I was unsuccessful and I finally decided just to undertake the charge myself. (Marks, 1987, p.121)

What Mabel expresses here most forcefully is the way she has been affected by Lily's letters. As has already been noted, Spinoza's idea that bodies have the power to affect and to be affected, opens up a distinct way of making sense of how individuals connect to form communities (See, Gatens and Lloyd, 1999). Moreover, reason and emotion are brought together in the above extract as Mabel is attempting to rationalize her emotional response to Lily's letters. Her narrative moves beyond the reason/passion split, illustrating a crucial point that Moira Gatens has raised in discussing Spinoza's notion of reason: 'Even before then, before I had read any Deleuze, I thought that Spinoza's notion of reason was an active emotion, so that there's not a clear reason/passion split in his thought' (in James, 2000, p.44).

Although drawn in Lily's flows of desire, Mabel's emotions are soon channelled towards utilitarian aims and her praise to Lily on September 29th, 1949: 'I think you really write in a very lively and amusing way' (p.87) becomes a starting point for further asking her 'to do me a short paper on "The Life of a Native Girl in a Native Reserve"'. Having taken the ethical responsibility of caring for Lily, Mabel is attempting here to transform this caring relation into a knowledge relation, thus rendering Lily's emotional self into an object of knowledge, the Cartesian moment¹⁰ as Foucault has identified it (2005, p.14). Thus in a letter written on January 4th, 1950 Mabel's narrative becomes straightforwardly didactic, as she attempts to guide Lily in the kind of essay she wants her to produce:

... try to answer such questions as these:

1. What is your earliest memory?
2. How were you treated as a very small child?
3. Is it true that Zulu children are very seldom punished?
4. What sorts of toys did you have when you were tiny?
5. When did your mother die, and what difference did it make to you?
6. In what ways are little girls say of seven treated differently to little boys say of seven years?
7. When did you first go to school?

[...] I liked particularly the letter you wrote to me describing your experience as a teacher (Marks, 1987, p.92)

Mabel's interrogation driven by her scientific interest in gender differences and young women's lives seem to override her ignorance in the actual details of Lily's life, a point that Marks also makes in introducing the letters (1987, p.12). Lily's background was not Zulu and it was her father who had died, not her mother. But Mabel clearly had her own priorities in this relation and as their correspondence was further deployed, she was particularly careful with distancing herself from any further emotional intimacy, particularly in relation to Lily's insistence on meeting and spending time together. It is in the backdrop of this emotional detachment that she failed to conceptualize the seriousness of the emotional crisis that Lily had been going through while at Adams College, as depicted in the following extracts from a letter written on January 12th, 1951:

You say that one of your reasons for wishing to be in Durban is that you want to see more of me, but have you ever asked yourself whether I wish to see more of you? As a matter of fact I do not [...] At all events you only bother me by these demands for a close and intimate friendship. Do not write to me as 'my dearest Doctor Mabel Palmer'. 'Dear Dr Palmer' is enough and do not write to me more than once a month. You should also wait until I ask you to come and see me (Marks, 1987, p.137)

Marks has noted that it was after this letter that Lily's condition really worsened (1987, p.30) since in Lily's words 'your letter has extremely shocked me' (1987, p.139). In this light, I suggest, it was Mabel's investment in western first-wave feminist discourses stressing the importance of women's distancing themselves from emotional ties and the imperative of their cultivating a sense of self-control and inward discipline, as a technology of the self towards emancipation—an Enlightened discourse par excellence—that ultimately started the cracking process of another woman's life outside the western utopia of autonomy, rationality and freedom¹¹.

Relational selves: recognition and responsibility

I have already referred to Mabel's ethical position of responsibility at the point of her decision to look after Lily's education earlier on in this paper, and I have related this ethical position to Cavarero's philosophical articulation of the I/you relation (2000), where the self and the other are bound together through the narration of stories—in Mabel's and Lily's case through the exchange of epistolary narratives. Cavarero has contextualized this relation within the political practices of second wave feminism, but she has traced its genealogy in a series of unrecognised and often imaginary episodes of the Western philosophical tradition. Following this line of thought I have imagined how Mabel and Lily were bound together through the narratives of their epistolary exchange, but I have also traced significant differences in the way each woman conceptualized the nature and form of this relation. Thus for Lily it was the exciting prospect of emotionally relating to her benefactor—as a plane opening

up different futures for her—that animated her whole existence and indeed the letters she wrote. For Mabel on the other hand it was mainly a relation rationally inscribed in the context of her responsibility as a feminist progressive educator. Indeed she was at pains to raise the rational boundaries of her relation to Lily as the following extract from a letter written on June 7th, 1951 indicates:

[...] in your letter you use the phrase 'adopted daughter'. I don't know if you were thinking of me and yourself when you used those words, but I feel I must make it plain that I have never said anything to justify you in believing so. I was interested in your letters and sympathetic towards a girl struggling for better education and I felt it was up to me to give you some help. That help I will give [...] But beyond that I will not go and every time you press on me a desire for a more intimate relation you really force me back into reserve and guardedness in dealing with you [...] But this does not mean that I am not interested in you or do not want to be kind to you; *I do within due limits.* (Marks, 1987, pp.161-162) [emphasis in the text]

The distance in the two women's conceptualization of their relation is stark here. Although married and divorced, Mabel had actually followed the non-mothering life-style of many of her contemporary educated women and even the idea of becoming a foster mother was inconceivable for her. On the other hand, imagining herself as an 'adopted daughter' was something that Lily would not/could not have perceived as a problem or as a kind of emotional blackmailing in the way Mabel seems to have taken it. As Deleuze has commented when difference affirms itself positively, then it is difficult and sometimes almost impossible for a harmonious balance to be sustained: 'the problematic and the differential determine struggles or destructions [and] every thought becomes an aggression' (2004, p.xix).

It is therefore in the context of relationality and responsibility that I now want to situate an important part of the correspondence, between Mabel, Lily and Sibusisiwe. It is actually the last part of the correspondence being deployed in the middle of Lily's crisis. What this part of the correspondence reveals is that despite her bluntly expressed 'coldness', Mabel was not really indifferent with what was happening in Lily's inner self. On the contrary, it was in her attempt to deal with the crisis that well before the letter of January 1951, she had decided to ask for the help of Sibusisiwe Makhanya, the first woman in South Africa to have been formerly educated as a social worker in the United States, a truly pioneering woman of her times (See, Marks, 1987). Thus on November 4th, 1950, Mabel was writing to Sibusisiwe:

[...] I wonder if it could be possible for you to take some interest in a little protégé of mine? [...] Lily does not seem to be settling down very satisfactorily, of course it is difficult for a girl coming in the middle of a term like that, and she is I am afraid a very self centred young person. (Marks, 1987, pp.121-122)

Mabel's caring for Lily, judgemental as it appears, brings in a third party into the correspondence and indeed into her relation with Lily. Sibusisiwe was chosen by

Mabel in terms of her racial closeness to Lily as explicitly stated in Mabel's letter to Sibusisiwe: 'I feel she could be more effectively helped by a woman of her own race' (Marks, 1987, p.122). This 'closeness' is indeed a figment of Mabel's simplistic dichotomies between black and white women. In painting Sibusisiwe's personal and family background, Marks has clearly shown significant cultural gaps between Lily's strict missionary Christian background of the Eastern Cape and Sibusisiwe's 'strong and emotionally coherent' Zulu identity (See Marks, 1987, pp.30-39). As it has been widely theorized, 'race' is not a homogeneous entity necessarily creating alliances, sympathies and solidarity (See, Glenn, 2000). Despite Sibusisiwe's reputation at the time 'as a shining example for whites of what an African woman could achieve within the limits of the segregationist and patriarchal social system (Marks, 1987, p.37), her failure to communicate with Lily and protect her from dropping out of college is an effect of 'the interracial field' being itself a site of differences, conflicts and intense power games at play.

Sibusisiwe's position is less clear from the content of the letters, which are very few anyway. It is through her correspondence with Mabel however, that we can have a glimpse into Mabel's disillusion and frustration over her relationship with Lily. Moreover, it is through their letters that we know about Mabel's attempts to help Lily out of the Adams College crisis. Thus in a letter on June 21st, 1951 Mabel was writing about her decision—not yet disclosed to Lily—to give her a second chance: 'I have decided to send Lily to Mariannahill; they are willing to take her and offer all the courses she has been studying [...] I do hope she will be happier there;' (Marks, 1987, p.173). Since Lily's unhappiness with Adams was related to difficulties arising from what she perceived as a total lack of discipline, the decision to be transferred to Mariannahill was taken on the grounds that this was a disciplinarian Catholic school which kept boys and girls strictly segregated¹². In addition, the transfer would be smoother for Lily since the school's curriculum was very much similar to Adam's College. Lily would learn about this decision through a different letter written to her on the same date:

Dear Lily,

I am sorry I have been some time in answering your letters, but I have been v. busy with university work and have had to leave my private letters for the time being [...] I have practically decided to send you to Marriannahill next term [...] I am coming down to Adams on Monday afternoon to complete the arrangements about your transfer [...] (Marks, 1987, p.174)

However, in the same letter of practically responding to Lily's frustration about her current school, Mabel sets up certain restrictions to her emotional needs, by asking Lily to decline an invitation from her aunt and cousin to spend her summer holidays with them in Johannesburg. Mabel was reluctant to give permission, since she was afraid that there might have been a secret plot for getting Lily back to her guardian whose power she had escaped by fleeing from Umtata: 'I continue to feel that I cannot approve of your going to your aunt and cousin until I have more evidence that their invitation is not a trick to get you back under your guardian's control' (Marks, 1987, p.174). In her attempt to offer Lily alternative 'homely' holidays Mabel had asked Sibusisiwe to look after her

during the summer holidays. Feeling extremely frustrated about this restriction, however, Lily would finally succeed in persuading Mabel to give her permission to go. The hidden context of this permission is articulated in Mabel's letter to Sibusisiwe on July 8th, 1951:

Dear Miss Makanya,

I hope you don't disapprove of my decision to let Lily go to Johannesburg [...] I hoped we might convince her that it was unwise to go, but if she insists and says that there is a death in the family, and that they want her in connection with that, I felt I had to let her go. I am still not sure that it is not a trick [...] but to tell the truth, I shall not be very sorry if it is. She behaved very badly [...] Her report is not at all satisfactory [...] In fact I am becoming v.sorry that I ever undertook to help her [...] However if she comes back I shall give her the rest of the year at Mariannahill (Marks, 1987, p.180).

Mabel's decision is framed by her ethical responsibilities towards Lily, but also by her own intense frustration and disillusion over Lily's behaviour and educational underachievement at Adams. It is a decision taken in a matrix of ethical necessities—recognizing and respecting Lily's responsibilities towards her family—and real life contingencies. While however, Mabel had taken the decision to continue supporting Lily on rational and ethical grounds, Lily had taken her own decisions regarding her life. Driven by emotional disillusion and despair she had given up the dream of educating herself and had run away.

The relational field that was opened up by the force of emotions of her correspondence with Mabel was ultimately colonized by power relations and structural differences. Lily's dropping out from college had reterritorialized the self within class/race segmentarities. However, what has mostly intrigued me in reading her correspondence with Mabel is not the promising beginning or the harsh end, but the 'intermezzo', the space in between segmentarities, Lily's lines of flight in becoming other. Mapping this extremely divided and contested field that the epistolary narratives have opened up, what I have traced is a diverse range of subject positions for female subjects to inhabit but also for 'the subject of feminism' to emerge from. In thus focusing on the intermezzo, I have imagined virtual possibilities of becoming a woman—through connecting with other women in a critical community of action— within the horizon of what I would like to think of as the feminist imaginary.

Towards an ethology of power: the dance between power and desire

Lily's story is not a happy one and in the epilogue of her book Shula Marks paints a very grey picture of Lily's mental breakdown that completely jeopardized her life. In this final section I therefore want to reflect on the possibility of reading this correspondence within the Spinozist framework of 'an ethology of power'—a theory of the capacities of bodies for affecting and being affected. As Gatens and Lloyd have argued, such an approach enables the understanding of human beings—their constitution, their relations and their actions—not in terms of 'moralistic judgements' but rather 'as a more or less,

successful experiment to create a sustainable world' (1999, p.147). Indeed, it is in the light of an experiment in life that the three women's coming together in terms of their passion for education can be made intelligible if we are to move beyond the recognition and acknowledgement of differences to a social imagination of the virtual possibilities of grappling with these differences then and now.

In this context I want to rethink my initial argument of making sense of these epistolary narratives through a feminist redeployment of the theoretical tools of the Foucauldian power and the Deleuzo-Guattarian desire, in terms of their interrelation, their dancing together. Thus, drawing on Foucault, I have already suggested that the narratives of this correspondence should be analysed in a network of intense power relations at play as they are interwoven with gender, race and age differences. Foucault's analytics of power however cannot fully account for how Mabel's and Lily's relation developed in the first place and it is here that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of desire has become useful. I have been particularly interested in the way Deleuze and Guattari theorise desire not as lack but as productive, and in this way always constitutive of a social field. Lily's desire for education has made connections with feminist discourses and practices of her own time. These connections have indeed shaken the grounds of Lily's disadvantaged position and have thrust her into lines of flight, have literally deterritorialized her from striated places.

In charting these lines of flight, I have drawn on Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalytics, as a way of imagining 'what a subject's desiring machines are, how they work, with what syntheses, what bursts of energy in the machine, what constituent misfires, with what flows, what chains and what becomings in each case' (1984, p.338). There were indeed many misfires and failures and as a matter of fact Lily's reterritorialization on the western ideals of educational discipline, emotional detachment and rationalized life directions fatally destroyed her desiring machine. Her ultimate diagnosis of schizophrenia and her consequent encloement in a series of mental institutions of apartheid South Africa ruined her whole life and it is a harsh episode in a genealogy of cruelties which emerge as effects of the power/desire encounter.

Still, looking into this correspondence from the angle of an ethology of power, I have avoided conferring moralistic judgements on the three women's deeds. I have been mostly interested in the power of their bodies to affect and be affected and in this way to experiment on the possibility of forming a community based on the necessity for women's education to be advanced. Despite the flows of aggression and cruelty that difference can release, it is still possible I argue to imagine virtual relations that could have been actualized and in this context to go on defending the political project of feminism bringing together 'women' not on the basis of an essential ontology but on a political and ethical platform of solidarity, the feminist imaginary. In this light, Megan Boler's suggestion of rethinking the power of emotions becomes I believe so timely and so urgent:

By rethinking the absence of emotion, how emotion shapes how we treat other people and informs our moral assumptions and judgements, I

believe we have the potential to radically change our cultural values and violent practices of cruelty and injustice, which are often rooted in unspoken 'emotional' investments in unexamined ideological beliefs. (1999, p.xvi-xvii)

This plea I suggest keeps raising political and ethical responsibilities for feminist educators as we are continuously involved in stories and relations of failure and disillusion over what feminism is about and of what it can do. Paraphrasing Foucault: 'Feminists know what they do. They frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982, p.187).

Acknowledgements

My interest in this correspondence was stirred by a series of most useful discussions I had with colleagues and now friends at the Psychology Department of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, where I was a visiting scholar in October 2003 as part of a research exchange programme between the University of East London and the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am particularly thankful to Lindy Wibraham for our on-going discussions on cross-cultural understandings of Foucault's work and for immediately responding to my pleas for help regarding the correspondence. In presenting a previous version of this paper at the 5th International Gender and Education Conference on Gender, Power and Difference at Cardiff University in March 2005, I had the chance to test my ideas in a wider audience. I am lucky to have received a series of inspiring comments that have made me dig deeper in my thought. In writing the final version of this paper, I have benefited from my two anonymous reviewers and the editors' comments. I am thankful to all of them. Finally I want to thank Shula Marks for responding to my request and offering me invaluable information about her work with the manuscripts.

Notes

1. As Shula Marks notes, Lily Moya is a pseudonym (1987, pp.xiii, 42) which was attributed to the young Xhosa woman of the correspondence according to the request of her family (Marks, personal communication).
2. Although the publication of this correspondence is indicated as 'edited' by Shula Marks, it is important to note here that the letters have been published en masse (Marks, 2005, personal communication), as they were found in the file 'Lily Moya' amongst the papers of Dr Palmer, 'Palmer Mabel/Papers, 1908-1951' in the Killie Campbell Africana Library, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, where they are still housed. As Shula Marks notes, in transcribing the letters 'I have retained the original spelling, punctuation and usage in the correspondence', adding that 'I have inserted corrections or explanations in the notes only where there is a danger of non-comprehension or confusion' (1987, p.44). Apart from the book, Marks has published two papers on the correspondence (Marks, 1989, 2000). The discussion of my paper totally relies on Mark's (1987) publication of the correspondence in its entirety. I am grateful to Shula Marks for responding to my request for clarification.
3. The term intersectionality was coined in 1994 by Kimberle Crenshaw to capture systems of interlocking inequalities. Going beyond the gender

- aspects of racial discrimination, intersectionality sheds lights on the multiplicity and complexity of ways in which gender, race and class but also other axes of identity difference create the conditions of possibility for discrimination and abuse. See, Crenshaw, 1995. However the history of the concept goes back much further and has been of critical importance to the theory and praxis of black feminism. It is in this context that I have placed Mark's influential publication in what has now been identified as the 'intersectionality literature'.
4. For analyses and discussions of letters and correspondences in sociological research, see Jolly 1997, Barton and Hall, 1999, the special issue of the *Journal of European studies* on 'Lives and Letters' edited by Montefiore and Hallet in 2002, and Stanley, 2004.
 5. I want to thank Kari Dehli whose insightful comment made me reflect on this limitation in the discussion of an earlier version of this paper at the 5th International Gender and Education Conference at the University of Cardiff in March 2005.
 6. This correspondence, dated between 1949 and 1951 is actually placed in the initial period of the enactment of apartheid laws in 1948, when racial discrimination and segregation was officially institutionalized. The formal legal framework of this initial period included the 'Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act' in 1949 and the 'Population Registration Act', the 'Suppression of Communism Act' and the 'Group Areas Act in 1950 and were followed by more Acts later on. These race laws touched every aspect of social life, including a prohibition of marriage and sex between non-whites and whites, the sanctioning of "white-only" jobs, the requirement that all South Africans be racially classified into one of three categories: white, black (African), or coloured (of mixed decent). Finally strict spatial segregations and mobility restrictions were imposed. Affluent city and areas were assigned to whites, while non-whites were banished into the townships. The Separate Amenities Act in 1953 created, among other things, separate beaches, buses, hospitals, schools, and even park benches, while the Bantu Education Act (1953) brought in various measures to reduce the education attainable by black people to the level of training for low level manual jobs. The previous regimes of pass books were strengthened and all blacks and coloureds were required to carry identity documents containing fingerprints, photo and information at all times. Access to non-black areas, was strictly prohibited without specific permission even for short-term visits. It goes without saying that non-compliance with the race laws were dealt with harshly. Clearly the apartheid is the central theme marking the 20th history of South Africa (1948-1994) and it has been theorized and discussed from a wide variety of perspectives. For a critical historical overview of the apartheid system, see amongst others Worger and Clark, 2004 and Worden and Lee, 2000.
 7. Conatus, as the power of striving to persevere in being is a fundamental concept in the philosophy of Spinoza. For an illuminated discussion of Spinoza's Ethics, see Lloyd, 1996.
 8. 'Deterritorialization', 'reterritorialization' and 'lines of flight' are critical notions in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy in their influential work

- Capitalism and schizophrenia (1984, 1988). For a discussion of these concepts in relation to emotional learning, see Tamboukou, 2003c.
9. In *Difference and Repetition* (2004 [1968]) Deleuze-himself perceived as a philosopher of difference par excellence- charts this philosophical line of thinking.
 10. According to Foucault (2005, p.14), the Cartesian moment qualifies the primacy of the imperative to 'know yourself' in the modern world, while in the antiquity it was assumed that the need to take care of oneself, created the need to know yourself, there was a subordination of knowledge to care.
 11. For a discussion of 'technologies of the female self in education' see Tamboukou, 2003b, particularly chapter 5.
 12. Marks offers an illuminating commentary on Adam's College history and the structures that turned out to become hostile and indeed exclusive for Lily (1987, pp.19-30)

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⁷ *Conatus*, as the power of striving to persevere in being is a fundamental concept in the philosophy of Spinoza. For an illuminated discussion of Spinoza’s *Ethics*, see Lloyd, 1996.

⁸ ‘Deterritorialization’, ‘reterritorialization’ and ‘lines of flight’ are critical notions in Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy in their influential work *Capitalism and schizophrenia* (1984, 1988). For a discussion of these concepts in relation to emotional learning, see Tamboukou, 2003c.

⁹ In *Difference and Repetition* (2004 [1968]) Deleuze-himself perceived as a philosopher of difference par excellence- charts this philosophical line of thinking.

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