A REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS OF A TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH AT A RURAL THAI UNIVERSITY

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education (Research)

Murdoch University

2007

I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Ed Rush, September 30, 2007
Abstract

Mass culture in Thailand creates idealizations about female beauty which cause many women to engage in destructive behavior such as starvation dieting and forced vomiting. In this dissertation I describe efforts to develop awareness among a group of predominately female students at a rural Thai university about the ideological purposes of these idealizations. Using a CD-based multimedia research template, the students reported the “common sense” beliefs which help create the beauty ideal and the effects of these beliefs on their own lives and the lives of other women. The major finding of their research was that mass culture creates beauty ideologies to maintain social stratification, in that those women who are made to feel “ugly” because they do not resemble the white-skinned underweight ideal tend not to be members of the elite social class which has the resources and time to achieve these ideals. The significance of this dissertation lies in the emancipatory effects that it produced; although a Critical Discourse Analysis showed that the students continued to assimilate some of the values and interests which they had identified as “oppressive”, they also demonstrated to varying degrees that they had ceased to think and behave in ways which had caused them mental and physical damage in the past.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

- The Research Context ................................................................. 1
- Positioning Myself ........................................................................... 10
- Significance ...................................................................................... 18
- Research Questions ........................................................................... 19
- Outline of Chapters .......................................................................... 20

## THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

- The Politicization of Knowledge ...................................................... 21
- “You Can’t be Neutral on a Moving Train”: Reality, Morality and Research .......................... 28
- The Challenge of Positivism ............................................................. 29
- A “Critical Science”? ................................................................. 33
- Teaching to Resist ............................................................................ 34
- Hegemony: Exploitation as a Natural Part of the Only Possible World .................. 40
- Thai Forms of Power: Introduction .................................................. 43
- Thai Hegemonic Norms of Gender and Sexuality ................................ 48
- Opportunities for Resistance ......................................................... 52
- Conclusion ....................................................................................... 54

## METHODOLOGY

- The Research Environment ............................................................ 57
- The Data Production Tool ............................................................... 61
- Development of the Research Tool Template ................................... 63
- Ethical Concerns .............................................................................. 68
- The Critical Discourse Analysis Methodology .................................... 70

## FINDINGS

- Introduction ..................................................................................... 78
- First Analysis - Body Image ............................................................... 79
  - Some Preliminary Matters ............................................................. 79
  - Body Mass Index (BMI) ............................................................... 79
  - Cross cultural comparisons of relative costs ................................ 81
  - Reporting the participants’ English ............................................. 82
  - A note on referencing ................................................................. 82
- Body Image - Ideologies ................................................................. 83
- A Closer Analysis ............................................................................. 103
- Social and Personal Experiences ..................................................... 113
  - Eating disorders ......................................................................... 115
  - Plastic Surgery ........................................................................... 116
  - “Mental Problems” from Diet Pills and Financial Burdens .......... 124
  - Personal Experiences ................................................................. 129
- Evaluation ...................................................................................... 131
- Comparative Analysis - Skin Pigmentation ..................................... 140

## CONCLUSION ................................................................................. 157
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Project Editing Screen .................................................................64
Figure 2: Media Screen (video image of interviewee intentionally removed) ..........66
Figure 3: Finished Product with editing strap removed (English version) ...............67
Figure 4: Finished product with editing strap removed (Thai version) .....................68
Figure 5: “Personal Experiences” section (“public view”) .....................................69
Figure 6: “Personal Experiences” section (“private view”) ..................................70
Figure 7: Fairclough’s CDA Schema ...................................................................73
Figure 8: BMI Classifications ...........................................................................80
Figure 9: BMI Distribution in Thailand ...............................................................81
Figure 10: U-Srim before ... and identically after? ................................................94
Figure 11: Gifbarine Body Lotion .......................................................................97
Figure 12: Marie France BodyLine: The Perfect Body .........................................101
Figure 13: Marie France BodyLine: the Other Half of the Binary ............................102
Figure 14: Marie France BodyLine: Obese Women are the Subhuman Prey of Wild Animals .................................................................102
Figure 15: Before and after Blepharoplasty ("double eyelid" surgery) (Meronk, 2007) 123
Figure 16: Olay Total White .............................................................................143
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express sincere appreciation to Dr Nado Aveling and Dr James Bell for their assistance in the preparation of this manuscript. In addition, special thanks to Winfred Wordsworth Bisset, without whom nothing has ever been possible, and my wife, Sureeporn, and son, Amata, for their patience and support over the past few years. Thanks also to Gary Waddell for feedback and friendship.