Going Postal: Pedagogic Violence and the Schooling of Emotion

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The point of critique is not justification but a different way of feeling, another sensibility.

Gilles Deleuze

... decolonization is always a violent phenomenon.

Franz Fanon

Going Postal in Practice and Theory

A phrase with a rather short history, going postal has proven to be quite portable during its brief life. I came across it most recently in Premiere Magazine, where it serves as the clever title of the letters-to-the-editor section. To get to the glossy pages of a magazine devoted entirely to the promotion of the entertainment industry and the manufacture of celebrity, the phrase had to travel quite a distance from its place of origin: the inner workings of U.S. postal facilities where incidents of violence, usually deadly, have occurred with alarming frequency in the last decade. Since the mid-1980s Post Office employees are said to be going postal when they murder and injure co-workers, often their supervisors, as a way of settling workplace grievances perceived to be beyond resolution or appeal. Coined in this context and in an effort to wrest from senselessness a sense of something unprecedented in labor history, the phrase then moved with surprising speed into the vernacular of postmodern America, where it now may be used to refer to any violent outburst, however mundane and inconsequential. Its appearance in the pages of Premiere Magazine seems to suggest that once going postal goes to Hollywood to entitle a popular court of opinion and appeal, the meaning of the phrase has forever changed. Perhaps going postal has now become merely a catchy phrase whose attenuated power exists only in its ability to incite the anonymous letter-writer to a verbal display worthy of fifteen seconds of notice. If so, then perhaps here the full deadly force of “nobodiness” can be contained and will not collide head on with the full force of the desire for “somebodiness,” and thus in this venue the circuit may be rewired—the short circuit that transforms, for example, a “nobody” like Mark David Chapman into the “somebody” who killed John Lennon. Or perhaps going postal has become just another empty catchword that preserves no memory of what was originally carried in its terms, no memory of the outrage that begets rage and further outrage. If so, then the lines of articulation must be wide open, and going postal may soon turn up as the name for an updated version of that adolescent kissing game once called “post office.” In any event, the strange career of this phrase—its increasing
distance and abstraction, alienation and estrangement, from the objective conditions that gave rise to it—has followed a wild logic that we can neither bear to remember nor afford to forget.

In these pages going postal will therefore remain a canny phrase for remembering, for example, the execution of fourteen women by a man who, on December 6, 1989, walked into an engineering classroom at the University of Montreal and reportedly shouted, “I want the women!” There was laughter—everyone thought it was a joke, a game—as he ordered the women to one side of the room and the men to the other. Before he opened fire, he called the women a “bunch of feminists.” In a desperate effort to quickly reeducate the gunman and reverse the inevitable course of events, one woman screamed, “You have the wrong women; we are not feminists!” But this disavowal alone could never have reversed the momentum of a paranoid logic which, in abject misrecognition, crossed the personal and the political to justify the annihilation of difference.

Going postal will also remember the senseless mayhem created in Stockton, California by Patrick Purdy, who armed himself with an assault rifle, walked onto a schoolyard at midday recess, and began shooting. Five children were killed and twenty nine were injured before Purdy turned the gun on himself. Although news reports indicated that the slaughter might have been motivated by racial bitterness—an influx of Southeast Asian immigrants into the area in the 1980s had taken jobs that Purdy felt should have been his—public memory has since erased the gunman’s smiling face and its recitation of euphoria and rage. In the aftermath, what remained for most of us was only an abstract sense of the event as another moment in the ongoing stalemate over constitutional rights and gun control. What remained for a time in the daily lives of the surviving children of Stockton was a game they called “Purdy.” This child’s play took two forms: the players either reenacted the slaughter with a toy assault rifle placed in the hands of an appointed villain, or they revised the original event by taking up toy guns and, in righteous and justifiable vengeance, staging the villain’s ritual execution. In 1989, Stockton was the fifth in a series of school assaults that year that began when a woman walked into a Winnetka, Illinois schoolroom, saying, “I’m going to teach you a lesson about guns,” and then shot and killed an eight-year-old boy and critically wounded five others.

Then, too, there is the national teaching that took place, also in 1989, in the wake of the Central Park rape. The principal lesson here would reinforce a familiar teaching—the catechism of fear and shame that schools women to accept responsibility for their own brutalization—but it focused attention primarily on the terrible relation that may link boredom and urban violence. Wilding entered the national vocabulary and the postmodern imaginary through this case to describe the seemingly random acts of unmotivated savagery committed by bored and restless groups of youths looking for something to do. Nothing, at least initially, explained the wilding in Central Park, none of the usual social or psychological topoi for locating, naturalizing and, in a sense, organizing urban crime for its profit of meaning. Wilding, by definition, seems to refuse to wear the face of poverty, race, gender, sex, or even madness. The term itself suggests a form of play, except that here the
disappearance of the players (that is, their anonymity) in this brutal game may not signal a suspension of the rules as much as render them more deceptive and more desperate.

If it is to be defined by a poverty of reason, then perhaps wilding should not be associated with the incidents of violence that occurred in Montreal, Stockton, or Winnetka, or with any of the incidents of school, workplace, and family violence which, in the last decade, have increasingly punctuated the everyday—most recently, in Jonesboro (Arkansas), Newington (Connecticut), Milwaukee (Wisconsin), Orange (California), West Paducah (Kentucky), and Pearl (Mississippi). From Pearl to Paducah, the incidence of violence in the U.S. is on the rise: workplace homicide is the fastest growing category of murder, where the number has tripled in the last decade; murder is the leading cause of workplace death for women. The phenomenon of wilding, because it appears to be in a category of its own, may not shed any light on these forms or on more symbolic forms of violence or their effects—for example, the repeated broadcast of the videotaped beating of Rodney King by L.A. policemen; or the ritual humiliation of Anita Hill by the all-male, all-white Senate Judiciary Committee and before the American people, whose need for an education on the issue of sexual harassment has been suggested as justification for her public shaming.

Yet, in my view, wilding is an exemplary instance of going postal. It will therefore prove instructive for what it will offer a rhetoric of "pedagogic violence," a study that would seek to describe both the forms and effects through which violence is lived and experienced and its objective or structural role in the constitution of subjectivities and in the justification of subjection. The increase in violence, especially in incidents of going postal, suggests to me that it is time to reconsider the real and symbolic function of violence. In the liberal view, violence occurs at the very limit of the social order where it displays the fragility of meaning, identity, and value; and the "progress" of modern society can be measured in the successful substitution of persuasion and consent for violence and force. But this view draws attention away from the fact that violence also (and increasingly) arises from within the authority of existing social, political, and economic arrangements and serves quite effectively to reinforce their legitimacy. Given that violence seems to be a permanent and pervasive feature of capitalist societies, circulating its effects widely through the reiterative teaching of media, a study of pedagogic violence may add an additional chapter to Michel Foucault's history of disciplinary society by returning again to the bodily rhetoric of violence, to its visible and invisible scarification of the individual and social psyche.

More specifically, the concept of pedagogic violence seeks to make visible the relationship between discipline and violence, between what is most legitimate and what is most illegitimate, to open for examination the symbolic violence implied in teaching and learning, the real violence prepared in schooling, wherever schooling happens to occur. The concept of pedagogic violence brings together phenomena set apart from one another by the partitioning and individuating techniques of discipline; therefore, I see it as a horizonal or border concept that locates the point at which one kind of thing becomes visible as something entirely different. In its origin and effects, wilding is, as I will suggest later, far less pathological than it is normal (and
normalizing), for it demonstrates and confirms the efficacy of dominant pedagogy.

A rhetoric of pedagogic violence will focus specifically on the way violence addresses and educates emotion and inculcates an affective relation to the world. In the view I develop here, emotion will refer to the tight braid of affect and judgment, socially and historically constructed and bodily lived, through which the symbolic takes hold of and binds the individual, in complex and contradictory ways, to the social order and its structure of meanings. School, workplace, and family violence are pedagogies of emotion, and as such they are particularly effective ways of locating and anchoring us in a way of life. They are an integral part of the political machinery of what I will call, following Ann Ferguson, the sex/affective production system of advanced capitalism, and they arise from within and extend (rather than radically destabilize) its logic. The paradigmatic instance here is the institution of domestic violence (including incest) which has been criminalized in first-world societies, though only recently and unevenly.

In what can only be a limited treatment of the subject here, I am moved by the exorbitant instances of pedagogic violence, suggested by the examples opening this paper, to consider more subtle forms while nevertheless insisting on their relation. In this paper, I want to return to what I think we already know but have learned to forget—namely, that the discourse of emotion is our primary education (primary in the sense of both earliest and foundational). And I argue that if our commitment is to real individual and social change—change that would finally dissolve the relationship between pedagogy and violence—then the work of decolonization must occur at the affective level, not only to reconstitute the emotional life of the individual but also, and more importantly, to restructure the feeling or mood that characterizes an age. To be sure, our most urgent political and pedagogical task remains the fundamental reeducation of emotion. This project cannot succeed by mapping a new regime of meaning onto an old way of feeling, one that has only intensified with the so-called “waning of affect” in the era of the postmodern (see Jameson). Face to face with the indomitable and archaic spirit of sex-hatred and race-hatred, for example, critical social theories have helped to shape an intellectual understanding of the practices and the costs of othering. Yet a tear is not simply an intellectual thing, and a change of heart does not follow, naturally or simply, from a change of mind (see Neu). Grief, hatred, bitterness, anger, rage, terror, and apathy as well as emotions of self-assessment such as pride, guilt, and shame—these form the core of the hidden curriculum for the vast majority of people living and learning in a highly stratified capitalist society. This curriculum holds most of us so deeply and intimately and yet differently within its logic that our affective lives are largely immune to the legislative efforts of social critique and to the legislative gains of progressive social movements.

I am compelled therefore to make the ultimate destination of this paper a consideration of the turn to pedagogy in American literary and cultural studies, which arguably represents an effort to change, through the language of critique and empowerment, the emotional constitution of the postmodern subject. In literary and cultural studies, the pedagogical turn is relatively recent, beginning only in the late 1980s. By the early nineties, education and pedagogy had become, in Gerald Graff
words, the “boom subject” of the academic humanities. In a brief account of the growing interest in pedagogy in literary and cultural studies, Graff finds in the very nature of theory what I have called, in the context of composition studies, a pedagogical imperative to spell out theory’s implications for teaching (see “Writing”). But, in my view, the pedagogical turn in literary and cultural studies is driven by a recognition of the failures of theory—on the one hand, its failure to effectively counter the successes of the conservative educational agendas of the 1980s; and, on the other, its failure to meaningfully confront the political consequences of postmodernism understood as the cultural logic of late capitalism. Interestingly, the decade of the 1980s also closed with the incidents of going postal suggested above and with the so-called global triumph of capitalism represented by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. In the 1990s “Capitalists of the World Unite!” has replaced the failed slogan for worker solidarity, and the triumph expressed in this phrase threatens to foreclose the possibility of any oppositional theory that could effectively organize collective political action (see New York Times C28; Eagleton 5). In this context of failure and triumph, of despair and euphoria, pedagogy finds the political imperative to reconceive itself as a form of radical politics with goals that are formulated with a sense of utmost urgency: to reclaim education as a terrain of struggle crucial to the reconstruction of a public political culture and to constitute a revolutionary subject capable of transforming the world.

Ambitious, to say the least, this project and these goals have been important in the recent history and development of composition studies, a field that has been devalued (“feminized” and “proletarianized,” it claims) precisely because its labors have been deemed “unscholarly” —practical, pedagogical, and applied. Apparently undisturbed by rumors of the failure of theory, composition studies has rapidly adopted the 

lingua franca of theory during the last fifteen years as a way of enfranchising itself as a fully vested member of English studies, while more recently it has appropriated the political language of radical pedagogy as a way of claiming a key role for itself (and writing instruction) as a revolutionary agent of change. The irony for those of us in composition studies is that the pedagogical turn in literary and cultural studies has accomplished what composition has not had the power to achieve on its own: pedagogy has become not only a legitimate object of intellectual inquiry in English studies, a boom subject in the humanities, but also a matter of urgent social and political interest. More sobering is the fact that composition studies, in an anxious effort to travel the circuit from “nobodiness” to “somebodiness,” if only in the culture of English studies, has continued to pursue a relatively uncritical relation to the boom subject that has been such a boon to the field. Understandably content to capitalize on the terms of political vision and to translate them into the more lucrative tokens of professional self-interest, composition studies generally has asked too few questions.

One pivotal question that should be asked—and a question that gives sharp focus to the nature of the failure of theory—concerns the fact that the spectacle of excessive violence returns as an all too familiar form of the everyday, while the category of violence all but disappears in recent theoretical and pedagogical discourse, where the
focus is on detailing forms of desire, pleasure, and consent. Teresa Ebert, among others, also has focused attention on this preoccupation in critical theory and in a way that helps to situate the present inquiry. Ebert suggests the concept of the post-al as a name for various new knowledges including poststructuralism, Lacanian and post-Lacanian psychoanalysis, postmodernism, post-Marxism, postlesbian and postgay queer theory, and almost every brand of feminist theory. These new post-al (a.k.a. ludic) knowledges, and the pedagogies they inspire, are thus differentiated from classical Marxism and are identified as the specific forms that failure takes.

In general, the concept of the post-al designates discourses and practices that concentrate critical attention on the body, that substitute desire for labor as the basic process of late capitalism, that erase the relations of production and class struggle from contemporary analyses, and that in effect reduce the scope of politics to cultural and discursive (or ideological) analysis (Ludic; "Red Pedagogy"). Reclaiming the priority of the categories of labor and class, Ebert seeks to end theory’s long digression into discursive and cultural materialism by setting it on the proper path of historical materialism. A central part of this project is to expose post-al theory as merely a form of bourgeois ideology outfitted in the latest jargon to appear to be “knowledge” and thereby to expose its role in the elision of issues of exploitation and emancipation. To this end, Ebert excoriates cultural materialists for combatting phrases with phrases, for thinking they are combatting the real problems of the existing world and waging real political struggle with discourse about discourse. Her point is not that ideology, cultural practices, and significations are peripheral to political struggle. Rather, her point is that they are not autonomous and must be linked, through materialist critique, to the nondiscursive, to the “real existing world”—whose objectivity is the fact of the ‘working day’” (Ludic 45). Post-al knowledges and pedagogies have failed to perform such a critique and have successfully shifted critical attention from the “working day” to the “everyday,” to popular culture and consumption (see also Kelsh). For Ebert and her cohorts, going post-al is a particularly heinous form of violence because it has effectively paralyzed political will and action. It may not be going too far to suggest that, in this view, going post-al in theory is tantamount to a form of going postal—that is, post-al theory is merely a route for a very few enterprising “nobodies” to become “somebodies” in the academic star system by trading on the misery of the most exploited and oppressed; going post-al in theory is nothing more than a verbal display, even a mode of play or entertainment, that serves the professional and political interests of bourgeois intellectuals (see also Shumway).

In specific cases, I might agree. I too seek a form of critique that links the discursive and the nondiscursive, the working day and the everyday, beyond the mystifying focus on pleasure and desire. Yet I cannot endorse the rather sharp line drawn between (classical) Marxism and all other theories gathered under the rubric of post-al or ludic knowledges. Such strict categorization, coupled with a rather dogmatic return to classical Marxism, ignores the historicality of Marxism as well as the historicality of capitalism. It also suggests a rather undialectical relation to so-called post-al theories that refuses to recognize that history also happens in these theories, that they too may have their moment of “truth” as well as their moment of
"falsehood." At the very least, such strict categorization is arguably another instance of the kind of dividing practice that is the genius of disciplinary thinking, an "up against the wall" rhetoric that historically has been used so effectively against those who are identified as others and enemies. Granted, there is a critical edge given to thought when it can clearly and decisively name the problem and identify the enemy. Perhaps this is the only certain way to achieve the necessary critical distance that leads to oppositional struggle and change. Still, it may be useful here to suggest a distinction between *enemy* and *adversary*, as post-Marxist theorist Chantal Mouffe urges. An enemy is one to be annihilated; an adversary is respected as one to struggle *with and against* in the formation of a new hegemony (2-4, 84-85). Capitalism—complicated and abetted by interacting regimes of white supremacy, racism, neocolonialism, patriarchy, and heterosexism—is the enemy. On this, Ebert and I agree. But Ebert also sees enemies in all of the various post-al knowledges, whereas I see some worthy adversaries and even a few friends. Ebert seeks a correction in the course of theory through the substitution of labor for desire, through the substitution of one way of knowing and its phrasings (historical materialism) for another way of knowing (post-al knowledge); I seek in theory's various phrasings a "critical articulation" that may claim a role in producing, in the real existing world, a different way of feeling, a different sensibility.

The crucial insight here is that what the working day produces and reproduces as its primary and most valuable product is an affective relation to the world, to oneself, and to others. This is in large part what is meant by the social relations of labor. *Going postal* will serve as a representative anecdote and a guide for the kind of critique I have in mind, one that links the working day and the everyday. Although we may prefer to be comforted by the view that violence is the unfortunate result of individual pathology, we must remember that the phrase *going postal* originates in the objective conditions of the working day in U.S. postal facilities and should tell us something about those conditions: conditions of exploitation and domination; humiliating and alienating conditions that produce rage, bitterness, frustration, and indignation. The violence that must be remembered through this phrase is of two orders: the outrage of exploitation and domination and the rage such outrage produces. In the phenomenon of going postal, we have evidence that violence begets further violence; violence legitimizes and justifies as the existing economic and social arrangements begets further violence that, within these arrangements, must be set apart and termed "illegal," "unjustified," and "unjustifiable." Furthermore, the strange career of *going postal* offers a record of the kind of symbolic violence through which a phrase or sign loses its ideological edge, its contact with the objective conditions that gave rise to it, and its potential to call those conditions into question and make them an object of struggle. An oppositional reading of *going postal* and its career would return power to this phrase by retracing the path of disarticulation, alienation, and estrangement and by reconnecting the domains of working day and everyday, of "productive" labor and "nonproductive" emotional labor.

I should say from the outset that I am not overly sanguine about our prospects for reeducating emotion given the prevailing *pathos of theory* (a phrase that includes a theoretical discourse on teaching)—in other words, given the role theory and
pedagogy play in reproducing an affective relation to the world. Here my specific concern is that the new commitment to pedagogy may effectively redeploy key distinctions that mystify the work of decolonization—in particular, the distinctions between public and private and between reason and emotion as well as the gendered and racialized authority of these distinctions. A more general worry is that the turn toward pedagogy may constitute a turn away from the family as a locus of critique and a site for reconstructing social and emotional life. Although the family has compelled some of the most important social criticism of the post-World War II period, it is rarely discussed in recent pedagogical discourse, except in the feminist pedagogy of nurturance, where it is often treated ahistorically. The argument that advanced capitalism reduces the role of the family to a minimum (and that the primary determinants of social and psychic life therefore are to be found in forms outside the family, especially in popular culture and consumption) certainly compels us to look elsewhere if we are going to make fundamental social changes. "The domestic sphere," as Gayatri Spivak observes, "is not the emotion’s only workplace." Still, the claims of any form of radical politics must be qualified by the fact that women of most social locations are still enlisted to take primary responsibility for caretaking and nurturing—in isolated nuclear families, in single-mother homes, in daycare centers, in elementary and secondary schools, and, some would argue, in college writing classrooms. Their working day is also an everyday that takes shape in the objective conditions of emotional labor—largely unpaid, unrecognized, yet socially necessary labor. The education provided by women in an otherwise male-dominated society remains the primary pedagogy on which all subsequent learning is mapped; and, as many feminists before me have argued, it continues to affix the struggle for identity and agency to the emotional repudiation of that which is coded feminine and maternal. My question is whether radical pedagogy is committed in theory and practice to altering what Jon Schiller calls "the social conditions of psychic matriarchy" set up by a gendered (and racialized) division of emotional labor (84).

To develop the notion of pedagogic violence further, I return to this primary pedagogy and its role in the education of emotion in the next section of this paper. Then, in the third section, I consider the way in which some versions of radical pedagogy may actually work to remystify violence and mask their own ambivalence about the work of decolonization. In general, my effort here might be read as a reworking of Louis Althusser’s notion of the family-education couple as our dominant pedagogy and therefore as a crucial place to struggle for the political reconstruction of our emotional lives.

Schooling Emotion

Psychoanalysis has taught that the individual’s emotional attitudes to other people are established at an unexpectedly early age....The people to whom [the child] is in this way fixed are his parents....His later acquaintances are...obliged to take over a kind of emotional heritage.

Sigmund Freud
Pedagogic Violence and the Schooling of Emotion

The idea of pedagogic violence assumes a distinction between two senses of pedagogy: the familiar and specialized sense of pedagogy as a philosophy (or ideology) of teaching, including classroom practices and instructional methods; and the broad sense of pedagogy as education in general, or what the Greeks once called *paideia*. The view of pedagogy as the general education appropriate to members of a culture receives its contemporary formulation, for example, in Althusser's conception of ideological state apparatuses and in Foucault's notion of discipline. Inasmuch as both of these formulations emphasize that modern society makes state-sanctioned violence increasingly unnecessary as a mode of social control, I want to begin to rework the family-education couple along the lines suggested by Bourdieu and Passeron's *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, where the relationship between pedagogy and violence receives explicit treatment. In the following discussion, I identify two kinds of pedagogic violence or two related domains where it operates and organizes its effects: first, the pedagogic violence authorized by and implied in education in general; and, second, the pedagogic violence that initially organizes the emotional life of the individual, approached here through Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection. Finally, I question whether postmodernism constitutes, in Fredric Jameson's words, "a whole new emotional ground tone" and as such represents a break with the dominant pedagogy of emotion.

For Bourdieu and Passeron, *pedagogy* (in the general sense, above) refers to the power held by dominant discourses to impose the legitimate mode of conception and perception. *Pedagogy* refers to the power to impose meanings that maintain and reinforce the reigning social, economic, and political arrangements as legitimate when in fact they are entirely arbitrary. The dominant pedagogy in a disciplinary society consists of the ruling ideas of the ruling class or group—or, the framework of meanings that most thoroughly, though most indirectly and inconspicuously, expresses and safeguards the material and symbolic interests of the dominant group or groups (7-9). Dominant pedagogy is a structure that produces individuals and groups who are recognized as such because they have internalized the legitimate point of view. Pedagogy retains its authority precisely through violence, through its power to impose the legitimate mode of conception and perception, through its power to conceal and mystify relations of domination and exploitation. The specific goal of pedagogic work is the transmission of knowledges appropriate to the position of an individual in a hierarchy of social relations that reproduces the authority of the dominant group and sustains its continued legitimacy. Pedagogy is an apparatus for creating, maintaining, and perpetuating the legitimacy of the interests of the dominant group across many different kinds of discourse that cultivate "the educated individual" as an ideal type of pedagogical subject who possesses the propensity to consume the legitimate products of dominant culture and is predisposed to be used and consumed according its interests. Dominant pedagogy depends on the social misrecognition of the objective truth of pedagogic work.

To ensure its success, dominant pedagogy develops a system of subordinate educational ideologies that serve to mask its truth: philosophies and practices that claim to be non-violent and non-repressive are particularly useful in
promoting misrecognition, such as pedagogies (Socratic or psychoanalytic or ludic) that focus on the erotics of teaching and learning; or pedagogies (deconstructive or collaborative) that are premised on decentered authority in the classroom; or even pedagogies that emphasize affective understanding (feminist pedagogies of maternal nurturance) that exert power through a subtle instrument of coercion, the implied threat of the withdrawal of affection.

Bourdieu and Passeron argue that these pedagogies do not (and cannot) recognize the extent to which their authority is based in dominant pedagogy and contributes to its legitimacy. They also argue that blindness to the structure of domination among classes or groups makes possible and persuasive the “liberating” and “humanizing” project of “culture for the masses” that gives subordinated groups the means of appropriating legitimate culture. It also produces and authorizes the “democratizing” and “declassing” project that gives legitimacy to the cultures of others, a project that begins, as they point out, with the erasure of the distinction between high culture and popular or mass culture and may extend, it seems to me, to include at least some versions of multiculturalism (12). That is, these projects serve to bind individuals and groups ever more closely to the authority of dominant pedagogy. In this context, Bourdieu and Passeron’s reminder is especially relevant: it is one thing to teach the arbitrary nature of all culture to individuals who have already been educated according to the ideas of the ruling class; it would be quite another to claim to give the kind of education that makes an individual a native, as it were, of all cultures (23-24). Radical pedagogy, as I will suggest later, does not claim to offer the latter, but the key to its emancipatory project and its promise of empowerment is the claim to teach the arbitrariness of all culture.

This view of pedagogy clarifies the kind of work that decolonization requires and suggests that the intervention needed to change a hierarchial social order can be nothing less than a radical conversion or complete substitution of one kind of social formation for another. Bourdieu and Passeron argue that pedagogic work is not reversible. In other words, we cannot simply unlearn what dominant pedagogy teaches by mapping a new regime of meaning onto an old one (31-43). Such a strategy, as I indicated above, offers an education in the arbitrariness of all culture to individuals who have already appropriated and who have been appropriated by the prevailing ideas of the ruling class. This means that the work of decolonization cannot consist simply in a struggle for the recognition and legitimacy of an alternative pedagogy in terms set by the dominant pedagogy, for such a struggle would inevitably neutralize the radical change promised by the alternative. Dominant pedagogy is always able to accommodate (and subordinate) alternatives in a way that does not seriously disrupt its own authority. The work of decolonization requires that we change the terms of recognition. Bourdieu writes, “To change the world, one has to change the ways of making the world, that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced” (Language 137). The crucial stakes of political struggle are the categories of perception and the systems of classification and conceptualization—in other words, the words, names, and phrases—that construct the social world, the real existing world. In this view, we must fight phrases with phrases.
The success of decolonization depends, it seems to me, on a recognition that the primary work of pedagogy is more fundamental than the imposition of a dominant framework of meanings. Its primary work is to organize an emotional world, to inculcate patterns of feeling that support the legitimacy of dominant interests, patterns that are especially appropriate to gender, race, and class locations. Pedagogy locates individuals objectively in a hierarchy of power relations; but also, and more importantly, it organizes their affective relations to that location, to their own condition of subordination, and to others in that hierarchical structure. Pedagogy binds each individual to the social world through a complex and often contradictory affective life that remains, for the most part, just beyond the horizon of semantic availability, and its success depends on a mystification or misrecognition of this primary work. In particular, pedagogy provides and limits a vocabulary of emotion and, especially to those in subordinate positions, it teaches an inability to adequately apprehend, name, and interpret their affective lives. This is its primary violence.

Primary pedagogic work mystifies emotion as a personal and private matter and conceals the fact that emotions are prevailing forms of social life, that personal life always takes shape in social and cultural terms (Ferguson; Rosaldo; Lyman; Bartky, *Femininity* 83-98; Foucault 194). Decolonization and the struggle for social change must therefore take place at the primary level of emotion.

The way in which dominant pedagogy organizes emotion may be understood in terms of Ferguson’s notion of systems of sex/affective production. Ferguson argues that historically there are diverse ways to organize, structure, and reproduce what she calls sex/affective energy (or emotion) as a social energy that is bodily lived (77-99). The main task of any society is to create the social desire to cooperate and unite with others and to organize this social energy by identifying the appropriate objects, aims, and persons for emotional attachments and by prohibiting others as legitimate loci of interest. The overall task of the dominant pedagogy of a given society, then, is to coordinate and maintain a system of sex/affective production with a regime of meaning and with an economic system of production. Dominant pedagogy provides a complex system for the production of “goods”—that is, forms of recognized and legitimate affect, meaning, and value. Furthermore, what Alison Jaggar calls outlaw emotions—women’s anger or worker rage, for example—are produced by dominant pedagogy, which views them as forms of insubordination, subject to retraining, because they are clues to suppressed social relations and may become resources for political resistance and social change (145-49). Legitimate and illegitimate (or appropriate and inappropriate) objects of affective attachment, in other words, are structurally or systemically related and, in prohibiting particular objects or persons as legitimate attachments, a society automatically invests them with great value and interest—if only for their disciplinary value in reproducing or policing authorized distinctions.

I want to focus for a moment on the dominant pedagogy of emotion for American middle-class society, which includes an explicit teaching about emotion—in other words, what it makes available at the semantic level in the way it theorizes the category
of emotion—and the more implicit education of emotion itself. Through its explicit teaching, dominant pedagogy historically has held emotion in a relation of opposition to reason and has masked the fact that emotion is, in Catherine Lutz’s words, “a master cultural category” in the West, fundamental to the way we organize understanding and experience (54). This pedagogy mystifies emotion as a natural category and masks its role in a system of power relations that associates emotion with the irrational, the physical, the particular, the private, the feminine, and nonwhite others. In linking emotion to such negatively valued categories, pedagogy deploys emotion to secure the ideological subordination of women and minorities. Lutz also shows that the pedagogy of emotion is more complicated than this: it teaches us to define and value the concept of emotion in a contradictory way—negatively, in terms of its opposition to reason and rationality (as the core of the true self); and positively, in terms of its opposition to estrangement and disengagement from the world (55-59). Here dominant pedagogy invests emotion with the authority to ensure the authentic engagement of the true self over and against estrangement and to provide motivation for taking moral positions and making ethical investments (76-80).  

Pedagogy develops more specific ideologies of emotion that conceal the ways in which it makes emotion an object of cultivation. The positivist approach to emotion, for example—or what Elizabeth Spelman calls the “dumb” view because it silences emotion— restricts emotion to the realm of the body (to sensation, physical feelings, and involuntary bodily movements) where it remains a purely private and internal event. Positivism makes emotion independent of any object or meaning or intention, and it directs attention to the way in which emotion disrupts rational judgment, thoughts, and perceptions. In recent years, the cognitivist theory of emotion has provided an alternative to positivism and has made emotion the explicit and legitimate object of pedagogic work. Emotion, in this view, can be educated, reeducated, or miseducated according to what pedagogy expressly establishes as appropriate, reasonable, and justifiable (Spelman; Jaggar). If emotion is to be a legitimate object of pedagogic work, it must be provided with cognitive content—in other words, its reasons, objects, and intentions that can be known and judged. In this way, cognitivism permits something of a rapprochement to occur between reason and emotion, though it also maintains their essential distinction and resubmits emotion to the authority of reason and the body to the direction of mind. The point here is that cognitivism works indirectly on emotion, which remains “dumb,” through reason (or through the meaning or content to which it is attached).

Neither cognitivism nor positivism, however, unworks that odd bit of reasoning that historically has made members of subordinate groups allegedly more emotional (and “dumb”—irrational and therefore “stupid”) than members of groups that are dominant politically, socially, and economically (Spelman 264). Their increased emotionality does not need reasons; it is simply given and justified by the structure of subordination. Cognitivism nevertheless capitalizes on the fact that those in subordinate positions can and must be taught, especially
in school and workplace, that emotional responses (such as anger, rage, or bitterness) are always inappropriate and unjustified personal responses—forms of emotional stupidity, so to speak, if not psychopathology—rather than suppressed social responses to the objective conditions of humiliation wrought by structures of subordination and exploitation. In general, the dominant pedagogy of emotion refuses the expression of anger by subordinates. More importantly, it schools anger to turn inward so as to become silent rage or passive bitterness, where the energy for political action can be derailed in the pathos of the personal (see Spelman 266; McFall 153; Lyman 68-72). It makes it almost impossible to see that sometimes and in some contexts active bitterness might be a move away from self-deception and hence not only a moral achievement but also a form of political insight because it more accurately apprehends the true source of injury and disappointment.

For much of the twentieth century, anger (or its prohibition) has been the target of workplace training and the effort to inculcate a proper emotional style for work (Stearns and Stearns; Stearns, "Anger"). Forms of pedagogic violence, developed through and authorized by industrial psychology, have so successfully disqualified the legitimacy of worker anger that by the 1960s it was said that anger had been eliminated from the workplace and no longer posed a problem to productivity. Attention then shifted to the cultivation of empathy, friendliness, and consideration (through T-groups or sensitivity training) as an appropriate emotional style for the workplace. Yet the increasing incidence of workplace violence in the last decade suggests that anger was not eliminated by the 1960s, as Peter and Carol Stearns contend, but that it has been driven deeper into silence where it festers into rage. The result: the number of workplace homicides has tripled in the last ten years.

Positivism and cognitivism are two specific pedagogies, then, that support the general way dominant pedagogy understands emotion and organizes emotion-work by channelling it into appropriate and legitimate objects, aims, modes of expression, and stages—all of which are socially and historically produced and organized. While the workplace remains an important site for the education of emotion, the bourgeois model of the family has been the preferred instrument for the production and organization of emotion and the production of the kind of individuals whose affective organization best supports the social order needed by capitalism. The principal work of the family, in other words, is to transmit an affective orientation to authority, an orientation that changes with changes in the economic realm. Although the family has undergone dramatic changes, especially under the pressures of advanced capitalism, the role assigned to women in most social positions has not changed: they remain the primary nurturers and caretakers of men, children, and elders. Ferguson, among other theorists, argues that what I am calling the dominant pedagogy of capitalist patriarchy is a structure of exploitation that organizes the unequal exchange of emotion-work between men and women. The gendered imbalance in the provision of emotional support (which is a form of pedagogic violence) is a significant part of the gendered division of labor. This arrangement gives men
a privileged position in the sphere of sex/affective production, where women are required to produce more nurturance than they receive. And they are required to engage in more nurturing labor not only in the home but also in the workplace (see Schell). Sandra Bartky extends Ferguson's analysis to argue that this structure of unequal exchange disempowers women at the same time that it binds women to a conviction that their moral worth and epistemic power consists in their greater capacity for love and nurturance (Femininity 99-119). The ideology of nurturance, in short, is a key example of the mystificatory violence of dominant pedagogy.

More to the point here, the nurturing labor assigned to women arguably sets them up to be the first objects of pedagogic violence on which all subsequent education is mapped. Primary pedagogic violence occurs in what Kristeva calls the crisis of abjection that founds meaning, identity, and value—not only for the individual but also at the social level. Kristeva regards abjection as a universal psychological mechanism that operates to create the distinctions through which self-consciousness and culture (or the social) develop, but I see it as a way of understanding how social order is organized for the patriarchal domination of women by men. In Kristeva's view, each individual undergoes the violence of abjection at the time of his or her earliest attempt to break away from the mother and to establish boundaries as an autonomous ego. Abjection, she writes, is "a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling" (Powers 13). That power is the mother, and abjection serves to situate a first, fragile sense of place, before full subjectivity and objectivity emerge, upon which the psyche is built. The psyche is built on this primordial act of violence, and it is rocked by the ambivalence of attraction and repulsion, of fascination and terror, in its struggle for separation from the mother. The first fragile position the future subject takes, then, is defensive. The crisis of abjection is not, precisely speaking, a crisis of identity but of position and location: the decisive question is not "who am I?" but "where am I?" Before the subject is, it is abject and apotic (7-8).

Through interaction with the mother, which is its first contact with authority, the future subject learns about its body in a process Kristeva calls the "primal mapping of the body" (72). This is essentially an affective mapping, or education, in which the future subject learns rudimentary emotional orientations that distinguish between "inside" and "outside," "clean" and "unclean," "good" and "bad," "proper" and "improper." Abjection is, then, a kind of emotional boundary-work. It is a mechanism that works affectively to create a sense of place, orientation, and, ultimately, a sense of self. Abjection knots affect and judgment together and does its boundary-work especially through what we would call emotions of self-assessment, such as pride, shame, and guilt. Abjection is a precondition of oedipalization, or the process of repudiating the maternal and of internalizing and identifying with paternal authority. Kristeva argues that abjection and the repudiation of women and maternal authority are the precondition for social order, the precondition of the subject's entry into the symbolic and the acquisition of language. Abjection sets in motion a process that
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oedipalization completes: the primordial estrangement that haunts the future subject. The experience of emotion will offer the thread leading back to the maternal, or to the constellation of contradictory emotions the maternal signifies in a patriarchal symbolic economy: bliss and terror, euphoria and rage, desire and disgust ("Psychoanalysis" 316-17). Abjection and oedipalization provide a particular organization and education of emotion; they describe a violent movement from a world without shame to a world of shame and more violence. Shame, according Thomas Scheff and Suzanne Retzinger, is the consequence of estrangement, or the loss of social bonds, and this loss is, in their view, the major cause of destructive violence of all kinds. They argue that shame leads to violence when it goes unacknowledged, silenced, and repressed. Silenced shame produces anger and rage that are then turned inward to destroy the self or turned outward to destroy others (also see Bartky, "Pedagogy").

Abjection is continually restaged in a kind of psychic drama that maintains identity; as a consequence, the subject remains in process and on trial, so to speak, and is always in danger of falling back into indiffereniation. Dominant pedagogy works reiteratively from the foundation of this initial affective mapping to continually educate emotion. It employs a regime of meaning that affectively identifies the abject with the experience of whatever disturbs identity, system, order—with whatever does not respect borders, positions, and rules (Kristeva, Powers 4). Dominant pedagogy sets up an equation, at the level of meaning or signification, among the abject, emotion, the maternal (or the feminine), and the profane—all of which are made to signify a threat to established authority and thus are made the legitimate objects of repression, control, and consumption; or denial, rationalization, and rage. Historically, this equation is then extended to include racialized others.

There is nothing necessary, of course, in the organization of emotion through a process that begins with and sustains itself on the pedagogic violence of abjection and the repudiation of women and the maternal. Nancy Chodorow makes an important point about the emotional heritage of women's mothering as it is organized in isolated nuclear families and single-mother families and in the context of women's social and economic inequality. Her point pertains to the organization of emotion and the education of gender personalities through a distinction between "positional" and "personal" identification processes (173-90). Women's mothering sets up an affective organization in boys that requires that they not only give up their primary identification with the maternal but that they also deny this primary attachment. Their emotional education stresses differentiation from others and the repudiation of relationship and nurturance—and all things feminine. Boys learn proper gender identification negatively through a repudiation of the feminine and a movement from the personal (identification with the mother) to the impersonal and positional (identification with aspects of the masculine role, especially economic power, rather than specific attributes of the absent or remote father). Gender education through positional identification breaks the tie between affective processes and gender role learning (175).
Women's mothering and nurturing labor sets up an affective organization in girls based on personal identification with the mother, with her general personality, behavior, and values. In the process of personal identification, the affective processes and gender role learning are not severed. In girls, hostility toward the mother (the affective memory of abjection) tends to be more personally tied to an individual rather than generalized to all women as it is in masculine development. I want to extend Chodorow's argument here and say that women's mothering and nurturing labor organizes in men an identification (and preoccupation) with position, with "where" as an authoritative answer to the question of "who." It tends to establish in women an identification (and preoccupation) with the authority of the personal, with the affective relation of "who" and "where." These preoccupations are reiterated throughout recent discourse—for example, in Jameson's pedagogy of "cognitive mapping," which foregrounds the role of theory in producing a sense of position; and in Adrienne Rich's "politics of location," which emphasizes the sense of personal locatedness provided in feelings and the body. I will return to these two kinds of education below.

Oedipalization—or the internalization and identification with an authority figure to which one is attached emotionally—is the specific way the patriarchal and bourgeois family produces individuals whose affective orientation to authority best supports the early period of capitalist development. With the development of capitalism and the corresponding changes in the social and cultural realm that are identified with postmodernism, the process of oedipalization is disrupted and it is argued that our affective lives are organized differently. In Jameson's view, postmodernism constitutes "a whole new emotional ground tone"; in Pfeil's view, it is a new "structure of feeling." More specifically, postmodernism produces a subject who is variously described as de-oedipalized, narcissistic, feminized, lost, fragmented, and schizophrenic. The de-oedipalized subject is deeply ambivalent because it is locked in a perpetual crisis of abjection in which it oscillates between self-exaltation and dejection, between euphoria and hostility or rage. With the loss of paternal authority in home and workplace and the consequent loss of oedipal struggle to fortify ego boundaries, the postmodern subject is also narcissistic, bored and apathetic, isolated by its possessive individualism, incapable of feeling solidarity with any social or cultural group, unable to feel truly connected in love or work or to make lasting emotional commitments (Lasch). Both de-oedipalization and narcissism are said to represent the feminization of the postmodern subject, a change that is described both positively and negatively. On the positive side, de-oedipalization produces a change in the social organization of emotion allowing for what Mike Featherstone calls "controlled de-control," or the greater range of emotional expression for both men and women (81). It also loosens the bonds of male domination and allows for the expression of the epistemic and ethical vision of women, especially figured in terms of nurturance and reciprocity (Pfeil, "Postmodernism"). De-oedipalization coincides with, and indeed authorizes, some of the progressive social movements of the last thirty years—in addition to feminism, the environmental movement, civil rights, and
gay rights. On the negative side, feminization is the sentimental education of the postmodern subject who, on the other side of boredom and apathy (as the total defeat of all desire), feels its power only in feeling too much or in feeling for the sake of feeling, in the absence of the possibility of anything more significant. “It is not that nothing matters,” Lawrence Grossberg says of the postmodern condition, “but that it doesn’t matter what matters” (“Pedagogy” 108).

To the extent that postmodernism constitutes a whole new emotional ground tone or a new structure of feeling, we would expect it to constitute a new pedagogy, one that breaks with the one I have discussed thus far. Yet postmodernism as historical reality and cultural dominant is arguably not a pedagogy at all, for it produces a mutation in the disposition of the subject and in the external world that makes impossible the kind of pedagogic work I have outlined above. In other words, this pedagogy, if we can call it that, does not bind the subject to its place in the social order through the organization of emotion. If it can be said to be a pedagogy, then postmodernism is a wild pedagogy; the subject it educates, a wild subject. As such, it inculcates a kind of ultimate estrangement or dissolution from the structures that traditionally have supported both self and world. More specifically, the “waning of affect” is one of the defining features of this new epoch, a feature that Jameson correlates with the condition of alienation that coincides with the extension of commodity fetishism to the human subject. The waning of affect is the liberation from the structures of recognition that bind meaning to feeling. Jameson explains, “This is not to say that the cultural products of the postmodern era are utterly devoid of feeling, but rather that such feelings... are now free-floating and impersonal, and tend to be dominated by a peculiar kind of euphoria” (64). Jameson’s view suggests that the pedagogy of postmodernism offers an extreme version of the dumb view of emotion, where emotion no longer can have any appropriate objects, aims, or interests. Indeed, postmodernism would seem to provide for the decolonization of all feeling. For Jameson, even the term emotion has lost all relevance and has become obsolete with the deconstruction of the bourgeois ego and the modernist ideology of expression. Furthermore, a whole range of cultural experiences corresponding to such concepts as anxiety and estrangement are no longer appropriate to the postmodern world since there is no longer any self to feel anxious, estranged, or even neurotic.

This mutation in the subject corresponds to changes in the external world as a consequence of the penetration of capital into hitherto uncommodified areas—specifically, nature and the unconscious. This latest development of capitalism creates an utterly alien and alienated object world in which the subject cannot recognize the results of its own activity in the world and, as a consequence, is unable to recognize the subjectivity of the other. The inability to recognize the subjectivity of the other, as Jessica Benjamin explains, is another aspect of the inability to recognize one’s own subjectivity (“Authority” 41). Subjectivity and agency are denied to the other at the same time they are denied to the self. Hence, the collapse of the demarcation between human and non-human in diverse forms of explicit violence is the final lesson in the
pedagogy of postmodernism, whose symbolic violence leaves nothing and no one exempt from commodification. The logic that sorts people into two legitimate forms, consumer and consumed, is as crude as it appears: “eat or be eaten,” “commodify or die” (also see Bourdieu and Passeron 34-39).

This wild postmodern space transcends the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and to map its position cognitively. Jameson identifies this wild postmodern space with the great global multinational and decentered communicational network. This is the other in the postmodern era, or the postmodern experience of the sublime. Confronting “the impossible totality of the contemporary world system”—confronting an object world that renders the subject wholly inadequate psychically, cognitively, perceptually, and physically—the postmodern subject experiences the intensities of euphoria, exhilaration, apathy, and terror. For Jameson, these changes in the subject and object world are both the moment of truth of postmodernism and the “demoralizing and depressing” situation of this new global space. Driven by a need to both affirm and intervene in this situation, he calls for a radical cultural politics, a pedagogy of cognitive mapping that would return authority and agency to the subject. Through the pedagogy of cognitive mapping, Jameson claims, “we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion” (92). Cognitive mapping provides specifically for “the practical reconquest of a sense of place, and the construction or reconstruction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in memory” (89; emphasis added). In other words, it provides an internalized authority that allows the individual subject to locate him- or herself in relation to what is radically other, in relation to what disturbs identity, position, and rule. As a process of internalizing a critical orientation, it works to transform the subject into a revolutionary agent who will once again be able to act and to struggle to transform the world.

Although postmodernism may constitute a whole new emotional ground tone, much of Jameson’s mapping of the postmodern condition seems all too familiar. His postmodern subject is a universal subject, apparently unmarked by class, gender, and race (91). Those who have been othered are less likely to recognize themselves in this postmodern subject, for they are less likely to be lost in postmodern space but continually located and oriented affectively by the organization of gender, race, and class. In my view, Jameson’s postmodern subject is most likely a de-oedipalized but nonetheless patriarchal subject, a marginalized white man who has lost his economic position and cultural authority and is relatively dissatisfied with (or can be made to feel dissatisfied with) a more feminized identity as consumer and consumed. For this subject, emotion does not offer a resource for critical positioning or coalition-building because, given the power of dominant pedagogy, emotion remains reason’s other. The pedagogy of cognitive mapping represses and diminishes emotion as an effect of alienation and a source of postmodern estrangement. From this perspective, the reeducation of emotion will be achieved only indirectly through the return of substantive reason and critical consciousness that alone offer the capacity to hold a position in relation to the only ultimate object that remains—the maternal, figured
here as the postmodern sublime, a figure more terrifying than ever in its ability to disturb, confuse, and neutralize a sense of self and agency. Jameson's revolutionary project provides for a re-oedipalization (and a remasculinization) of the subject's relation to the symbolic (see Pfeil, "Postmodernism" 395). Through the pedagogy of cognitive mapping, the postmodern subject is meant to internalize the authority it needs to recapture a position from which to act and struggle in a world it once again recognizes and reconquers as its own. In this context, multiculturalist reforms to pedagogy appear to intervene in the postmodern situation to recognize the other's subjectivity and agency but may serve more effectively to reclaim agency for the historically privileged subject (white, male) who has most recently undergone an erosion of authority and lost a sense of place and position. Again, the danger is that these reforms will commodify difference in a way that safeguards the privilege of those historically constituted as subjects (and as legitimate consumers).

If ours is an age besotted with a sense of loss (of authority and position), then wilding should be remembered as a uniquely postmodern expression of pedagogic violence, one that may be structurally linked to the cult of emotional restraint that Stearns calls "American cool" (American). Conceived in boredom and apathy, which is the utter defeat of all desire, wilding may be the ultimate expression of "cool" and the consequence of the kind of postmodern alienation that marks the absolute limit of meaning and feeling, the limit of the human. If it is defined by its lack of motive, then wilding would seem to possess no content to its message—no reason to it, no justice for it. From a kind of post-positivist but nonetheless dumb view, wilding is perhaps the predictable form violence takes when meaning is cut loose from affect: free-floating violence, so to speak, and its apparent randomness makes it seem purely anonymous and impersonal, even unintentional in the sense of having no proper object or aim. In the way the phenomenon is represented and defined, a second, more symbolic violence is committed. In other words, much of the lesson of wilding can be read in the gesture of abstraction committed in the way it is taken up into discourse and circulated. As symbol or figure, wilding posits a disjuncture between the real and the symbolic, suggesting that violence gone wild achieves a pure or sublime form that is made especially horrific by its refusal to be understood or explained. The definition of wilding masks the origin of the phenomenon in the othering practices that we call gender, race, class, and sexuality that still map the postmodern topography. Gender, race, class, and sexuality are the authorized tropes that name and mask the disfigured faces of hatred, bitterness, and rage that the definition of wilding further mystifies. The symbolic transformation of wilding into a random and unmotivated act of violence mystifies the fact that the phenomenon itself confirms the dominant pedagogy of emotion in which violence always finds its "appropriate" object in any audacious and insubordinate refusal of pedagogic work, such as a woman jogging alone at night in a public park or a Vietnamese child in carefree play at last. Kristeva reminds us that those besotted with archaic conflicts are always vulnerable to the paranoid rage to dominate, to transform, and to annihilate what threatens position and rule (Powers 4). The question that haunts the wild subject is not "who am I?" but "where am I?"
Rethinking Pedagogy

[Decolonization is always a violent phenomenon. At whatever level we study it... decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain "species" of men by another "species" of men.

Franz Fanon

In the U.S., teaching has been women’s work since at least the late-nineteenth century when a gendered division of labor was established to secure higher status administrative positions for men and to place women in low-paying, labor-intensive teaching jobs (Gorelick). This gendered division of labor is reiterated in the distinction between scholarship and teaching, a distinction that associates scholarship and theory with productive labor and assigns it a masculine position and that associates teaching with reproductive labor and assigns it a feminine position (see Scholes; Watkins). This division of labor also correlates with the distinction between the two senses of pedagogy that invests one form of pedagogy with the productive power to organize a way of life and gives the other (in the form of educational ideologies or instructional methods) only a reproductive role. This series of distinctions locates some of the kinds of questions that need to be asked of the recent pedagogical turn which, not incidentally, has been driven in large part by male intellectuals. Will radical pedagogy unwittingly sustain the gendering of these categories by symbolically remasculinizing pedagogy and materially remarginalizing women in traditional roles? Will it work to produce a new affective life for the contemporary period or extend the dominance of an old one and thereby remystify pedagogic violence? Is the euphoria of some of radical pedagogy’s central claims—to enlighten, empower, and emancipate—structurally related to the rage expressed in pedagogic violence? In other words, are euphoria in the classroom and rage in the streets products of the same pedagogy and, if so, is radical pedagogy (or at least some instances of it) a symptom rather than the cure for our cultural pathology? These questions, though they cannot be fully answered here, are motivated by a concern that radical pedagogy will take a position in the reconstruction of political life that will work against its explicit claims and goals. To consider some of these questions, I first need to map the territory to which I refer.

Radical pedagogy refers to any number of different kinds of oppositional pedagogies—poststructuralist, psychoanalytic, Marxist, critical, feminist, postmodernist, and even sub-categories within each of these—that are offered as alternatives to the dominant pedagogy. Given this variety, I want to quickly organize the field with a distinction, borrowed from Morton and Zavarzadeh, between two approaches: pedagogies aligned with critical cultural studies and pedagogies aligned with experiential cultural studies. In reconceiving pedagogy in the broadest terms available, these two approaches have much in common, but the distinction between them turns on what each identifies as its principal object of critique: critical cultural studies seeks to unwork the power/knowledge relation that produces the objective conditions of domination and exploitation; experiential cultural studies focuses on experience as the medium through which the conditions of domination and subordination are articulated and resisted. Both seek to empower the pedagogical subject by creating
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in students a critical position in relation to the authority of those objective conditions and to the authority of experience. In other words, they both emphasize and authorize the political importance of positional identification and thus may be said to be remasculinizing the pedagogical subject. For the sake of clarity, and to use the term each employs to identify itself, I will refer to the former as “postmodern” pedagogy and to the latter as “critical pedagogy” in the following very general, and all too cursory, observations.

Through the language of critique and the rhetoric of empowerment, both critical pedagogy and postmodern pedagogy arguably seek to change the emotional constitution of the postmodern subject so as to produce either a democratic citizen who participates fully in public life or, more radically, a revolutionary subject who is capable of the kind of political struggle that will transform the world. Yet, in both discourses, emotion is a vague figure, present but also absent in some substantial sense. Emotion appears as a phantom limb, so to speak, more nearly felt than precisely seen, and thus it remains undertheorized and mystified in many important respects. More to the point, its mode of existence in pedagogical discourse (as a phantom limb) is itself an effect of the phenomenon I seek to describe in this paper. That the vocabulary of emotion in pedagogical discourse might be rather limited should not be particularly surprising, but it should be read as a sign that critical and postmodern pedagogies still operate within the closure set by dominant pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy, unlike postmodern pedagogy, develops an explicit discourse on emotion where it refashions but does not break significantly with the dominant pedagogy of emotion. Critical pedagogy approaches emotion along the lines suggested by both the cognitivist and the positivist view, though necessarily politicized (sort of) for the contemporary context. Critical educators place emotion within an economy of meaning that contrasts emotion and meaning (or reason) and emotion and disempowerment, which arguably is the postmodern figure for alienation and estrangement. They separate emotion from meaning, empty it of content, and relate it specifically to the body. In other words, they smuggle in a rather traditional pedagogy of emotion, though one that is more closely tuned to the postmodern situation. Their discomfort with the category of emotion and its potential reception in theoretical discourse is evident in this statement from Giroux and Simon: “[W]e are not trying to privilege the body or a politics of affective investments over discourse so much as we are trying to emphasize their absence in previous theorizing for a critical pedagogy” (“Popular” 16). Following Grossberg, critical educators distinguish between the affective and semantic planes of experience and discourse, where emotion pertains to the intensity or desire with which we invest the world and our relations to it with meaning (“Postmodernity”). The distinction between affect and meaning (or ideology) simply reformulates the distinction between emotion and reason, and while emotion is not negatively valued in an explicit way, it retains its subordinate status. From this perspective, the pedagogical problem in the era of the postmodern is to place emotion, which has been severed from meaning, at the disposal of meaning once again and thereby produce affective investments in forms of knowledge that will lead to empowerment and emancipation. If, as Grossberg says, it is not that nothing
matters but that it does not matter what matters, then the pedagogical problem is to link emotion and meaning in a way that provides orientation and a sense of commitment to social change.

In developing a discourse on emotion, critical pedagogy has focused almost exclusive attention on pleasure and desire. This focus is a function of the attention given to popular culture and its manufacture of pleasure. It is also part of the affirmative stance that critical pedagogy takes in relation to students who “not only unwittingly consent to domination but sometimes find pleasurable the form and content through which such domination is manifested” (Giroux and McLaren 169). With attention focused on knowledge and its relation to “the politics of pleasure, the typography of the body, and the production of desire,” the discourse of critical pedagogy moves constantly from making a general claim about emotion to a specific reference to pleasure or desire, as if the emotional constitution of the student were described entirely by these two figures (also see Ebert, “Red Pedagogy”). This interest may be explained by the focus on popular culture and the everyday, but the overall effect is to seriously limit the discourse of emotion.

A similar limitation occurs in the way that critical pedagogy understands the nature of what Giroux and Grossberg call affective struggle. For example, critical pedagogy sees affective struggle in terms of empowerment rather than resistance. Giroux and McLaren quote Grossberg to make the point: “Affective struggles cannot be conceptualized within the terms of theories of resistance, for their oppositional quality is constituted, not in a negative dialectics, but by a project of or struggle over empowerment, an empowerment which energizes and connects specific social moments, practices and subject positions” (170). Giroux and McLaren go on to say that resistance must be understood as a way of gaining power. Resistance, as a sign of affective investment, is read positively as a sign of engagement with other forms of knowledge outside school culture as well as a sign of political and social disempowerment. This view of the affective struggle for empowerment expresses the affirmative stance of critical pedagogy, a stance that recognizes in students’ resistance their affective investments in popular cultural experience and knowledges. The job of the educator is to understand this investment, even better than students understand it, and to harness its potential for engaging students in and empowering them through self-criticism and cultural critique. Yet this view of the nature of affective struggle is not sufficiently nuanced, it seems to me, and it may be reductive in two ways. First, it does not recognize, or perhaps it misrecognizes, the fact that the work of the dominant pedagogy of emotion has given affective struggle a negative moment, its moment of pure resistance and repudiation. Our earliest affective struggle requires that we pass through a negative moment (actually, a series of such moments) of resistance and repudiation in which resistance clears the ground, so to speak, for an initial defensive position from which to begin to constitute identity and existence. In ignoring this moment, critical educators misrecognize the dynamics of struggle imposed by dominant pedagogy and are likely to misread their students’ affective lives. Without wanting to sound glib, I would suggest that in the pedagogical relationship what sounds like “no” may in fact constitute a “no.” It might also sound like anger,
hostility, or apathy—not pleasure and investment in popular cultural forms. Also
noteworthy here is the fact that the affective struggle for empowerment places the
teacher in the rather traditional patriarchal role as the sign of power and the agent of
empowerment, as the one who has the power to know students better than they know
themselves and to transform their relation to the world (see also Gore; Weiler).

Second, in its development of an affirmative pedagogy of empowerment, critical
pedagogy does not seem to require a particularly nuanced understanding of
disempowerment beyond its origin and perpetuation in the ideological mystifications
of race, class, and gender. (This is true of postmodern pedagogy as well.) Specifically,
it does not read the many different faces of disempowerment—in particular,
disempowerment as boredom, apathy, bitterness, hatred, anger, rage, generosity,
nostalgia, euphoria, sorrow, humiliation, guilt, and shame, or the ways these emotions
are organized and practiced differently across differences of race, class, gender, age,
and sexuality. Beyond a consideration of a few of the familiar tropes (particularly
pleasure and desire), critical discourse does not apprehend its own limitation of the
discourse of emotion—that is, what it places beyond the horizon of semantic
availability. In this respect, critical pedagogy fails to be sufficiently critical; it does not
carefully consider, through a subtly articulated discourse of emotion, how students
have been taught to name their affective lives, how they might begin the process of
renaming and rephrasing. Critical pedagogy does not make emotion and affective life
the crucial stakes in political struggle. With its rhetoric focused on pleasure and
empowerment, critical pedagogy works against itself to remystify not only the
objective conditions of human suffering but also the varied experience of suffering.

From the perspective of postmodern pedagogy, critical pedagogy reduces
exploitation to the experience of exploitation and represses the objective logic of
domination by privileging the local site of the experience of the dominated. Morton
and Zavarzadeh suggest that a focus on experience depoliticizes cultural work
precisely at a time when we need to depersonalize experience to analyze domination
as a global strategy. In contrast to critical pedagogy, postmodern pedagogy pursues
what it considers to be a rigorous critique and demystification of the structures of
authority, including the authority of experience. In particular, this pedagogy examines
dominant discourse and the way it situates people at “posts of intelligibility from
which the reigning economic, political, and ideological social arrangements are
deemed to be uncontestably true” (Morton and Zavarzadeh, “Preface” vii). Dominant
discourse here means liberal humanism, and postmodern pedagogy, at least as Morton
and Zavarzadeh develop it, focuses its effort on the displacement of the traditional
humanistic subject and its posture of unthinking obedience to authority—whether
that authority is the text, the tradition, or the teacher (see Strickland).

The specific way this displacement occurs is through the figure of the teacher who
takes an adversarial role in relation to the student. The confrontational teacher seeks
to depersonalize the student’s understanding of him- or herself and the world by
showing how the student’s “ideas and positions are the effects of larger discourses (of
class, race, and gender, for example), rather than simple, natural manifestations of this
consciousness or mind” (Morton and Zavarzadeh, “Theory” 11-12). The goal of such
an adversarial relation is to develop in the student a critical position that never defers obligingly to any authority and, most immediately, the authority of the teacher and other students. Practically, this may take the form of the polarization of classroom dynamics where students and teacher alike write position papers that argue against (even "attack") other positions presented in the course (Strickland). Morton and Zavarzadeh continue: "Having denaturalized himself, such a partisan subject will see the arbitrariness of all the seemingly natural meanings and cultural organizations based on them" (12). The idea here is to create an alternative pedagogy that does not consolidate into a new norm because it is a relentless critique of authority and invites students into the game of power/knowledge. What this approach does not fully acknowledge is that students have already learned the dominant pedagogy, which radical pedagogy then suggests is purely arbitrary. It also does not consider the distinction between the demystification of authority and the dispossession (or decolonization) of its effects. Demystification operates at the level of meaning; dispossession or decolonization, at the level of both meaning and affect. Through demystification, the postmodern pedagogical subject may intellectually understand the arbitrariness of dominant culture—for example, the arbitrariness of the teacher's authority or of the patriarchal or racist psyche—but intellectually grasping the arbitrariness of a way of life does not then lead naturally or simply to the power to change it (see Bartky, _Femininity_ 45-62).

In demanding a confrontational and adversarial relation between teacher and student, especially as "the only way to achieve an intellectually responsible pedagogy," postmodern pedagogy may successfully demystify authority and give students a way to achieve a practical reconquest of a sense of place and position (Strickland 294; emphasis added). But it also triangulates the pedagogical situation and gives the teacher the authority to stage the kind of oedipal conflict that the de-oedipalized family and postmodern society no longer provide. The authority that has become disembodied and abstract as a consequence of the bureaucratization of postmodern space is re-embodied in the (impersonal) figure of the teacher. The teacher actively confronts the student who is required to take a position and defend it. In what critical theorists have called a world without fathers, postmodern pedagogy offers the conflict and critique needed for internalizing authority which, according to classical psychoanalytic theory and critical theory, is the only basis for the subsequent rejection of authority and for political action (Benjamin, "Authority"). This agonistic pedagogy offers a re-oedipalization of emotion that requires a conscious denial of the experience of fear in the presence of the teacher who is, all posturing aside, still an authority figure. It requires a reassertion of the dominance of emotions of self-assessment, such as pride, guilt, and shame, and it requires submission to the constant examination and assessment of individual adequacy. Shame is a key instrument of this pedagogy, as it is in what I have called dominant pedagogy, for as the student struggles to articulate a critical oppositional position and defend it, the student will meet his or her "betters" in the figure of the teacher, if not in other students (also see Bartky, "Pedagogy"). The demoralized postmodern subject is, in effect, re-moralized and capable of differentiating the good from the bad. In general, the turn to pedagogy might be read, at least
in part, as a form of crisis intervention and management in the postmodern age; it suggests that what is needed is a kind of psychodrama in which the radical educator stages an affective relation to the wildness of postmodernism. In my view, the recent fascination with the pedagogical, at least in some quarters, may have as much to do with meeting the needs of (white, male) intellectuals for a sense of position and authority as with addressing the needs of students.

Stated plainly, I read the recent interest in pedagogy in literary and cultural studies at least in part as an expression of a crisis of (white) masculinity that coincides with postmodernity and late capitalism. In The Hearts of Men, Barbara Ehrenreich offers a history of this crisis, which begins in the 1960s and 70s with a male revolt against what has been called the breadwinner ethic. She reads this revolt ambivalently (as do I) as a childish flight from responsibility, as an effort to legitimate a consumerist personality for men, and as a libertarian movement that parallels the women’s movement and other progressive social movements associated with the New Left (171). The pedagogical turn in the academic humanities may be part of this history. It may be an expression of a (white) masculinist subject’s recommitment to the social order, of his effort to reconquer the social order and replace the breadwinner ethic and consumerist personality with a revolutionary ethos. And if this pedagogical subject reconquers a sense of place and position, the question remains whether or not the reinvestment in pedagogy will significantly alter prevailing patterns of feeling organized by gender, race, and class.

In this context of crisis and management, feminist pedagogies of maternal nurturance offer no escape from the recolonization of the postmodern imaginary and little hope for real resistance to the process of re-oedipalization. Feminist pedagogies of nurturance, we must remember, receive their pedagogic authority from a dominant discourse that sets up the ideology of nurturance and its gender duality. Pedagogies of nurturance work alongside (often cheerfully) radical pedagogies of critique and confrontation to reproduce and reauthorize the affective relations typical of the middle-class nuclear family and thus constitute the latest version of the family-education couple. Here the feminist mother-teacher provides a personal education, and the postmodern teacher triangulates the pedagogical relation to produce a positional education. This new situation, still charged with archaic conflicts, resubmits women to the disempowering effects of nurturing and to the hostility of pedagogical subjects who are schooled to recognize the prevailing authority of position in a highly stratified society.

This view runs contrary, of course, to the claims made by feminists engaged in developing the political significance of nurturance. In “The Politics of Nurturance,” for example, Margo Culley and her coauthors join with many other feminists working in the areas of epistemology and ethics to make broad claims for the importance of the maternal (idealized as metaphor and experience) not only in reconstructing the pedagogical relation in the classroom but also in replacing the fundamental structures of patriarchy with a new pedagogy that protects and promotes the welfare of all.

Specifically, the authors of “The Politics of Nurturance” argue that nurturance is the topos that will alter the fundamental construction of gender in our culture, that
it will "heal" the cultural split between mother and father (or, more accurately, maternal authority and paternal authority), and that it will "heal" the existential, ethical, and epistemic fragmentation caused by capitalism and patriarchy. Women intellectuals in the academy do this important work, they argue, by virtue of their contradictory position in a culture that separates the role of nurturer from the role of intellectual and makes these roles gender-specific. They argue that the fusion of these roles in the woman intellectual produces the power to create changes in what I have called dominant pedagogy. Yet this is more nearly a dualism than a fusion, for the pedagogic authority of women intellectuals devolves from their role as the "fathers," who are the "word-givers" and "truth-sayers," at the same time that they bring to the classroom their inscription in the symbolic as "mothers," as nurturers and caretakers. This contradictory position elicits a "highly charged" affective response from students, and while these authors focus on women students for whom this pedagogical relation is a return to the pre-oedipal mother/daughter configuration, psychoanalytic theory suggests (and my own experience confirms) that this pedagogy can elicit an equally volatile affective response from male students. "Powerlessness, rage, and guilt conflate with longing, love, and dependency," these authors write, "just when our students are confronted by a woman professor, purveying at the same time the maternal breast and the authoritative word" (16). The classroom becomes a transferential space for reliving pre-oedipal and oedipal emotions but, as these authors see it, in a way that allows new patterns to emerge (17; see also Grumet). Furthermore, this "intrusion/infusion of emotionality" into the classroom provides the occasion for the reconstruction of knowledge and ethics through the fusion of affect and intellect.

From this perspective, the feminist classroom is the locus desperatus for reenacting and transforming, through the emotional labor of the feminist teacher, "threatening and joyous psychic events" and thus offers the best chance to reformulate our relationship to others, to knowledge, and to the world (17). Feminism, accordingly, must "assert that its project is not to abandon the femininestandpoint, but to insert its best qualities into history" (18; emphasis added). Again, maternal nurturance and care are considered the best qualities of this standpoint, and a key place to insert them into history is the feminist classroom. From my perspective, however, nurturance is, at this time, an impossible topos for the feminist teacher, one that simply resubmits women intellectuals to the pedagogic authority of dominant discourses that sets up the ideology of nurturance for the benefit of men and at the expense of women. This kind of feminist classroom makes women responsible in their professional lives for the emotional labor of "tending wounds and feeding egos," to use Bartky's apt phrase for describing women's traditional role, and we must remember that this is unpaid labor that is expropriated from women. For nurturance to operate politically toward the ends outlined above, it must be entirely reconstructed and, along with it, so must the sex/affective system that sustains and justifies pedagogic violence of all kinds.

The symbolic reconstruction of nurturance will require, at minimum, an understanding that the development of individual identity need not require (or posit) an originary oneness with the mother (or caretaker) and abjection as the mechanism
for creating and sustaining boundaries—for defending against the overwhelming desire for and fear of reabsorption into a state of indifferentiation associated with the maternal. Neither will it focus so exclusively on the intrapsychic world of the subject and the way in which the subject incorporates and expels, identifies with and repudiates the caretaker-as-other, not as a real being, but as a mental object. Nor will it privilege autonomy, separateness, and position as the principal goals of the psychic struggle for identity and authority. In *The Bonds of Love*, Jessica Benjamin suggests a different conceptualization of the formation of individual identity based on the idea of intersubjectivity and the process of mutual recognition. She argues that subjectivity emerges in an interaction with significant others and through a paradoxical process of balancing the need for self-assertion and autonomy with the need for connection and recognition. In her view, theories (such as Kristeva’s) that posit an original state of oneness and symbiosis that must be resisted and repudiated distort our understanding of individuation. Early infancy studies show that from the beginning the child’s interest in the external world alternates with absorption in internal rhythms. Before consciousness of difference, and because of prevailing woman-centered parenting/caretaking styles, the child affectively associates the excitement and difference of the external world with the father and the safe but dangerous inner world with the mother who regulates the emotional life of the child by satisfying or thwarting basic needs. The father is idealized and his authority internalized because he represents the external world and the way into that world. What the child wants above all is recognition that he or she is an agent who can make things happen in the external world. The recognition necessary for individuation can only come from one whom the child recognizes as subject and agent. Benjamin stresses that mutual recognition as a form of emotional attunement, and the basic form of social bonding on which all other bonding is built, is a goal that is as important to the formation of self as separation and autonomy. Ideally, the world “recognizes” the child as subject and agent; the child becomes subject and agent in a world that is responsive to his or her needs and actions. While individuation may ideally require two subjects in interaction with one another, the real existing world does not offer an economy based on recognition and mutuality. Women are enlisted and exploited as nurturers in a society that does not recognize this labor as labor, as the most necessary labor if the social is to exist. Moreover, it does not confer on women and racialized others the status of full psychic, economic, social, or political subjects and agents. Dominant pedagogy requires that women seek recognition of themselves as subjects and agents through emotion-work and nurturing labor but in a system that withholds recognition of the necessity and value of this work. Maria Mies calls this situation “superexploitation” (48). It is a system that calculated to ensure that women are the “appropriate” targets of further violence, real and symbolic.

The failure of mutual recognition—the loss of social bonds that leads to shame (understood as a sense of personal inadequacy)—promotes a premature formation of a defensive boundary between inside and outside. It fosters an intensification of the desire for omnipotence and of the expression of narcissistic rage. At the social level, the failure of mutual recognition takes the form of relations of exploitation and
domination. A hierarchical social order is nothing more than an efficient arrangement for doling out what Sennett and Cobb call badges of recognition and unequally distributing tokens of human dignity. When Patrick Purdy walked onto that Stockton schoolyard at midday recess, a schoolyard he himself played on as a child, he was arguably acting out the kind of omnipotence and rage that results from the failure of mutual recognition and a thwarted sense of agency (see Benjamin 70; Miller 30-48). Likewise, the surviving children also sought to reclaim a sense of agency by revising the event through a make-believe game that restored their power. That Purdy misrecognized the children as the enemy, as the source of injury to his dignity, is significant. News reports compared Purdy to Rambo and remarked that because many of the children were Vietnamese, his actions should be read as an effort to settle America's political score with Vietnam (see also Schneiderman 59-99). Perhaps his was another demented expression of rugged (white) masculinity attempting to reclaim a sense of position and agency and thereby to remasculinize the postmodern wild(er)ness and reassert dominance over women, children, and racialized others (see Jeffords). If so, then surely it must be time, as Pfeil suggests, to end a collective silence and "to get up the strength and wisdom to call [our] foremost enemy by its right name, corporate capitalism, the enslave of those (largely) white men who really own the field and call the shots" ("Sympathy" 124). Yet the odds are against any success here, if for no other reason than that too many anonymous (white) men want to maintain a belief in a system that gives them the advantage. The sex/affective production system of corporate capitalism (or the dominant pedagogy of emotion) ensures the continued misrecognition of the enemy, the source of injury and cause of violence. It ensures the continued misrecognition of incidents of going postal as the pathological or purely criminal behavior of isolated and disaffected individuals. And yet the dramatic increase in the number of incidents of workplace and school violence in the last decade (even in the last year) demands another explanation.

The challenge for radical educators (feminist, critical, postmodern) is to offer that explanation. The intersubjective model gives recent pedagogical discourse a way to begin to rethink its goals of returning agency to the subject and of recognizing the other as subject and agent—that is, an alternative to the postmodern pedagogy for the reconquest of the external world, or what is radically other. Without a fundamental revision in our conception of subjectivity and of our affective relationship to the world, the radical potential of recent pedagogy to reconstitute our emotional lives may be re-contained, in spite of its best intentions and the euphoria of its claims, as a strategy of condescension. Bourdieu points out that condescension occurs in situations in which agents occupying a higher symbolic position (by virtue of race, class, gender, or education, for example) deny the social (and, I would say, emotional) distance between them and those to whom and for whom they speak (In Other 127-28). This distance does not cease to exist simply because it is symbolically denied through claims of identification and recognition. Rather, the purely symbolic negation of distance ensures that the profits of recognition and distinction will confer the status of somebodiness on self-styled radical agents but without necessarily producing significant structural change in the social conditions of those who are
subordinated. If radical pedagogy operates in this manner, its condescension might be the unfortunate result of a misrecognition of the kind of work required for decolonization, or it might be symptomatic of a predictable (and perhaps historically inescapable) ambivalence toward decolonization. In any event, strategies of condescension always appear otherwise than as instances of pedagogic violence concealing the power relations that are the condition of possibility for so-called radical alternatives and for their alleged success.

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Notes
1See Time (Dec. 1989) and New York Times (9 Dec. 1989) for typical reports of this incident. See also Cameron and Frazer on gender issues in mass murder.
2See Newsweek (30 Jan. 1989) for a typical report of the Stockton assault. Goleman discusses Purdy, the rage that led to such violence, and the game the children created in its aftermath (200-01, 208-09).
3After the initial news report on the Central Park rape, which tended to downplay the issue of gender and race, a number of editorials called into question the mystification around the phenomenon of wilding. See, for example, Pogrebin, Krauthammer, and Zuckerman.
4For a more global perspective on domestic violence and an illuminating discussion of the political economy of dowry murder in India, see Mies.
5Dyer is particularly helpful in clarifying the ways in which emotion and emotional expression have been racialized.
6Feminist work on morality and ethics often focuses on the role of emotion. Noddings, for example, bases an ethic of caring on the priority of what she calls sentiment or feeling, and distinguishes natural sentiment (which is experienced in the caring relationship established between mother-child) and ethical sentiment (which is the memory of natural feeling and the basis for ethical action) (see 79-103). The ethical ideal driving this view is not an abstract principle or rule of right action but maintenance of the caring relation, both care for the other and care for the self. Ethics, in her view, does not focus on the problem of justification and justified action but on the issue of our obligation to maintain caring relations.
7Interestingly, this shift to a more personal style coincides with the entrance of many more women into the labor force. Perhaps sexual harassment, which surfaced finally, as an issue, in the 1980s, should be understood in the context of this history of workplace emotion. Specifically, I am suggesting that dominant pedagogy authorizes a style of work emotion that cultivates the conditions for sexual harassment to occur with greater frequency and for harassment to be misrecognized and tolerated by training women workers to accept a more personal and friendly style. To the extent that anger has been eliminated from the workplace, the victim of sexual harassment is subject to a secondary violence that may short-circuit or censor her anger as a legitimate response to violation.
8The pervasiveness of commodification does not nullify the hierarchy that renders women, children, and people of color the preferred objects of consumption. Here the film The Silence of the Lambs is especially instructive as a parable of the patriarchal psyche of postmodern America and illustrates many of the issues I deal with in this essay. Of particular interest is the pedagogical relation established, on the one hand, between F.B.I. trainee Clarice Starling and her mentor, Jack Crawford, and on the other, between Clarice and the serial killer, Hannibal "the Cannibal" Lecter. Clarice is positioned between two fathers, the good father and the bad, both of whom feed off the emotion she is made to confess. This film is also relevant in the way it treats skin as a signifier of difference and a commodity in postmodern America. A reading of the film appears in my article "Reading Wild, Seriously."
9Gore also focuses on the "overly optimistic" claims of recent pedagogical discourse, especially its claim to empower students. On the subject of violence and pedagogy, see Lewis.
10Morton and Zavazadeh identify Jameson with critical cultural studies, and Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson with experiential cultural studies ("Theory" 23-29). They also associate Janice...
Radway and Teresa de Lauretis with the experientialists. They want to suggest, through this distinction, that a focus on personal experience depoliticizes cultural work precisely at a time when we need to depersonalize experience to analyze the objective conditions of existence. Morton and Zavarzadeh say these two approaches to cultural studies and to pedagogy are necessarily in competition. My own treatment of pedagogic violence in the second section of this paper recognizes that we need both a critique of the objective conditions of domination and a phenomenology of the forms in which we live and experience domination and oppression. Merged in this manner, these two approaches to cultural analysis and pedagogy constitute what I call a political phenomenology. See Bartky (Femininity) and Lyman who also recommend a political phenomenology of emotion.

This nomenclature is bound to be confusing in light of the fact that critical pedagogy has begun to engage the discourse on postmodernism and to move away from its commitment to a modernist agenda and consequently has begun to call itself a postmodern pedagogy. See Giroux and Simon; Aronowitz and Giroux; and Giroux.

Morton and Zavarzadeh recognize that emotion constitutes a "frame of intelligibility" on a par with ideas and texts, but they make no specific effort to develop a discourse on emotion. I see their relative inattention to emotion as a participation in the dominant tradition that continues to marginalize this category of existence and instead privileges reason.

This highly charged classroom sets women up to be the targets of violence and harassment. For example, several years ago a student offered this crude assessment of my teaching: "A good teacher but she has invisible tits." The hostility expressed in this statement, the way in which it retaliates against (perhaps even repudiates) authority through objectification, suggests that women teachers always labor under the obligation to provide the (maternal) breast. Nurturance, in other words, is an obligation for women who live and labor in an economy that recognizes them only as providers of an all too often sexualized nurturance.

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Works Cited


Pedagogic Violence and the Schooling of Emotion


