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PEDAGOGICAL DESIRE AND THE CRISIS OF KNOWLEDGE

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Every voice speaks to particular ways of knowing as it positions the speaker within an epistemological community. Each of our images of what constitutes knowing, and hence knowledge, is part of what structures one's subjectivity: what is valued as truth or discarded as fiction... Views of knowing tell individuals which accounts count and likewise which accounts do not count. Knowledge then, is not so much about immutable truths as it is about "historical products of certain practices." (Britzman, 1991, p.23-23)

Introduction: Teaching in These Postmodern Times

In these postmodern times much has been made of the crisis in representation and the crisis in knowledge.¹ While some may make distinctions between the two I believe that these crises are intricately linked. In this paper, I look at what happens when the elements that constitute these crises come together and are being played out in multiple ways in the classroom. I turn to poststructuralism² to understand how, when the subject (student and teacher) is decentered, moments of resistance find sturdy ground. While it might be true that decentering of the subject leads to a better understanding of what constitutes the terrain of the everyday, it is important to point out that decentering of the subject is for some a space of vulnerability. The complexity of the problem that exists between identity politics and political identifications is that identity politics does not necessarily produce a politics that can always be helpful, while political identifications can constitute subject positions from which one might act. Questioning identity politics can produce vulnerability in some because the idea still exists that particular identities would produce progressive transformative political positions. Critiques of humanism have influenced what is to follow here but I would like to suggest that "the end" to humanism or an anti-humanist approach is fundamental to any understanding of how a decentering of the subject might not prove to be a site of vulnerability for some. As critiques of humanism have shown, humanist discourses have functioned as a way of placing men before women and ordering the hierarchical relations of "races" (Young, 1990, p.123). In these times of speaking subalterns, humanist discourses have increasingly been countered and subaltern discourses are placed upfront as sites from which the world might be seen differently. Multiculturalisms exist in the classroom as an explicit site from which contestation around various knowledge claims can begin.

This paper is about what might happen and what happens when we teach differently — that is when we call humanist practices into question and teach from and/or about the positions of the subalterns. It is also about the subaltern doing the teaching as well. However this paper is not an attempt to reproduce "the real"³ of what it means to walk into a classroom and "do" pedagogy. It is an attempt at understanding the questions that lie behind our desires and motivations in the "how" and the "what" of our pedagogy. Žižek (1991) writes "that desire is not something given in advance, but something that has to be constructed" (p.6). He further states that "the realization of desire does not consist in its being "fulfilled," "fully satisfied"; it coincides rather with the reproduction of desire as such, with its circular movement" (p.7).⁴ Given Žižek's discussion above, it is important to understand how this paper came about, remembering that it is not an attempt to produce "real" subjects but rather an attempt at understanding how subjects are reproduced in the act(ions) of pedagogy, as well as in the desires of the pedagogue. Thus, before I discuss what we might call the entre of the paper, there are three stories that are important in understanding how this paper came to be.

This paper evolves out of a six week seminar that I took with Deborah Britzman at OISE in the Winter of 1993. The requirement of the seminar was to keep a journal in which the course readings were dialogued along side the authors'/students' thoughts. Most of my journals were concerned with issues raised in seminar discussions and how those issues caused me to think about and rethink my own teaching practices. I was particularly interested in working through questions of critical pedagogy and how questions raised in critical pedagogy writings connected with my own practice.

This leads to the second part of how this paper came about. For two years I have taught Introduction to Sociology, as well as a course called Social Movements, to Community Worker Students at a community college. The Introduction to Sociology was a compulsory course and the Social Movements course was an elective for final year students. The program is a two year duration. The Canadian Community College system does not offer degrees, these were diploma programs. In the particular program many of the students were mature students who had been engaged in community work for long periods of time and had returned to school for legitimization of their practice. Most of these students come with quite well defined notions of community work and what constitutes social movements for them. Many of the students were not concerned with what might be call theory⁵ by some and many were not concerned with connecting in meaningful ways the various social movements of which they are a part. In most cases they were concerned with getting and maintaining a job in an agency involved in the social cause of their choice. All of them saw themselves as radical to varying degrees. A myriad of subjectivities as expressed through affiliation to social movements were present in the classroom and articulated as competing unconnected discourses. I attempt to represent four events in the classroom that called up and played out the competing, conflicted and contested discourses in the classroom.

The third story⁶ that precipitated the paper is an attempt to understand the desire involved in the investments that pedagogues have in the production of knowledge and in particular the pieces of printed knowledge that they take into classrooms to use as surrogates for either their position(s) or as places from which they could work their position(s) into the classroom setting via critique or endorsement of various knowledge claims. The movement between texts works to construct the teacher's pedagogical desires. This last element arises out of my desire to understand how it is that the materials pedagogues use might or might not produce various resistances in their students or might be used to mask the resistance of the pedagogue to the disciplinary and regulatory practice⁷ that teaching is. It is in attempting to work through these questions that I have begun to (re)think the grounds of teaching for emancipation and what that entails (Ellsworth, 1992; Gore, 1993). One of the important questions that I am forced to consider is whether teaching for emancipation leads critical pedagogues to reproduce various or "new" ways of enforcing disciplinary and regulatory practices in the classroom?

I mean to question yours and mine: our pedagogy that is

I do not ask the above questions as easily as they are stated, but I ask them with pain, anguish, fear, and uncertainty. They come after entering the classroom with visions of doing and engaging in radical, critical practice and recognising that to do so would mean that I could not retain my commitment to textually mediated critical pedagogy. By such, I mean to signal that in order to open up the space of the classroom so that it might be different for many meant that I often had to "violate" the so-called rights of others by reverting to the teacher's authority. All my reading in critical pedagogy had taught me that the focus was to give power over to the students. It was in attempting to give power over to the students, that I realised that power cannot be given away, but it must be negotiated away or continually negotiated to be used in non-dominating ways. That subtle but

important difference does not still even begin to allow for the “disasters” that can happen when a teacher is bent on opening up the classroom as a place where all the conflictual elements of the everyday are lived out, discussed and not left hidden in some notion that the classroom is a place where equality exists automatically. By the everyday I mean to signal what Dorothy Smith (1987) has termed:

Locating the subject in one's everyday world means locating oneself in one's bodily and material existence. The everyday world is not an abstracted formal existence. It is an actual material setting, an actual local and particular place in the world. Its formal and generalised properties are generated as such by the social organisation and the material forms produced to accomplish its formal and generalisable properties (p.97).

Using Smith's understanding of the everyday world I hope to avoid seeing and treating schooling as being outside the material and discursive operation of the everyday. As Žižek (1991) writes, “we must learn to consent to our common lot and to find pleasure in the trivia of our everyday life” (p.8). In so doing, interrogation of the everyday becomes not the extraordinary but rather the ordinary. Embedding schools in the everyday world allows for the working across disciplinary boundaries which is congruent with Owens' (1992, p.92) pronouncements concerning poststructuralism as the site where the asking of interdisciplinary questions opens up a space for understanding the various restrictive measures of the everyday in far more complex ways than traditional disciplinary boundaries allow for.

Thus it is the purpose of this paper to rethink the very grounds of my own pedagogy in an interdisciplinary way. Most of the literature that addresses the issues that I want to address look to student resistance as the place to understand what happens in the classroom (Luke and Gore, 1992; Lather, 1991; Gore, 1993; Fuss, 1989; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991). While it is true that all these works take seriously the question of pedagogy and how the pedagogue operates, all these works still seem to suggest that the “problem” lies with the student. It is my hope to understand how my desires to help in the production of a more liberatory future might be a part of resistance in the classroom.

Reproducing the real

Teaching courses like sociology and social movements offers the opportunity to discuss with students who are engaged in important political work the conditions of what they see as vital for the future survival of the planet. At the same time, these courses, because of their content (dealing with actual events), tend to produce an element of “the real” that complicates attempts to theorize the interconnectedness of oppressions in a way that any move towards a more ethically imagined and practiced future does not repeat errors of the past. Why would students resist this effort? Why would teachers resist? Why would politically engaged people resist broader and more encompassing analyses of their work and social relations?

I would like to suggest that the project of sociology as it is configured lends itself to a belief that, in studying “the real”, individual problems can be solved individually. I argue that sociology as a discipline despite its sometimes strong marxist and feminist influences, inclinations and traditions — raising tough ethical questions — continues to organise world events as individuated projects in which people can take responsibility for individual problems. It is in situations where students are prepared to only engage in their own individuated projects that sociological knowledge becomes the tool to dismiss or render mute understandings of others' positions. As Ann Game (1991) states, in her critique of sociology textbooks, “[t]he structure of the textbook maps the assumption that sociologists represent ‘the real’ from which is derived ‘the possible’ — social change. The principle of meaning of ‘the real and the possible’ is one of resemblance: a repetition of the same” (p.187). It is in poststructuralism that I take my cue to decenter the subject in

the hope that new possibilities of re-making sociology might be arrived at. It is in attempting to decenter the subject that the courses I taught became places of contentious debate and individuals sought to and removed themselves from the classes. Those passions and investments in discourses and positions that produced such antagonisms and heated debates rested within the students' feelings of relative vulnerability, which is produced when one begins to acknowledge subjectivities as having already been fragmented in their constitution — the subject was never whole (Foster, 1985, p.132).

The first time I walked into the classroom and stated that I was the instructor for the Introduction to Sociology course one of the black male students in the classroom told me to sit down and quit trying to pull their legs. His assertion unsettled me for a few minutes and our first two hours were not spent on the usual formalities of first days, but instead, we had a discussion on what a teacher is supposed to look like, what is expected visually, and physically of a teacher.⁸ My style of dress, hair style, youthfulness, and manner were not what was expected of a teacher, some students eventually said. It was in attempting to work through the myths of what the teacher looks like that I began to recognise that the institution of 'education regulates bodies in ways that they become marked or distinguished to various discreet categories — i.e. my body did not carry the marks of a teacher, whatever those markers are. "[T]he social body is the effect not of a consensus but of the materiality of power operating on the very bodies of individuals" (Foucault, 1980, p.55). Foucault's assertion that the "materiality of power" operates "on the very bodies of individuals" serves to help us understand how it is that the students did not see my body as that which could be endowed with the power of teacher, but it could be the body of a student.

The above is no insignificant event, since it shaped the entire year that I spent teaching that group of students. I was not simply a teacher. What I had to share and offer was not dismissed, but rather that I was seen as the teacher who was different. I was the teacher who was vulnerable; willing to debate and not insist on a specific position; be insistent on my position, if I felt that practices in the classroom were reproducing structures of domination the group felt we should strive to overcome and attempt to change; I could be dogmatic and contradictory in both my practice and my philosophy and it would be read as, "he is not really a teacher." What does this all mean? What does it signify? What forces, discourses and ideologies were at play in the classrooms that I entered? What led to the strong resistances that occurred? It seems to me that one place to begin to understand what occurred in the classroom is to pinpoint the ways in which pedagogy acts to reproduce subjects and their positions or to call taken for granted positions into question.

It is not in pedagogy that subjects are necessarily made, but rather, they are validated, affirmed and thereby (re)produced. In my own teaching I was interested in unleashing political positions that are often not articulated upfront in classrooms. In so doing, I think that those identities were often attributed to me. This raises a question that Britzman (1993) has raised which is: should pedagogy be about affirmation? To begin to understand Britzman's question I analyze what I call four "encounters" from my teaching practice. There are two ways in which these encounters can be viewed: 1) as memory work, moving thus to psychoanalytic approaches and 2) as ethnography. I have chosen the route of ethnography for a number of reasons. I feel that memory work is best undertaken in a group situation where interaction with others around the events can prove to be useful in terms of questioning one's mode of remembering.

Usually the ethnographer enters the situation as "expert" despite protestations to the contrary; also the ethnographer very much (like) the critical pedagogue, attempts to become just one of the group. These two simple, but important reasons have led me to the route of ethnography to understand these encounters. However, I do not stop there. By seeing my experience in the classroom as analogous with the field, I believe that ethnography offers me the perspective to "disturb the prevailing subjective/objective

balance" by drawing on my experience (Clifford, 1986, p.13). I am not interested so much in telling the story for the entire group, but rather I am interested in telling the story as a partial and incomplete "guilty" reading of what happened back then, when I was there, or as Clifford has termed it a "representational tact" (p.7). Thus it is to critical ethnography and anthropology that I want to turn to in order to make sense of the four encounters that follow.

Close Encounters...: Telling What Happened

ENCOUNTER 1

*While teaching the Introduction to Sociology course I decided to show the film, **Sisters in the Struggle**. This film is a critique of patriarchy and homophobia in the Toronto black community and of racism in the white feminist movement there. A group of anti-poverty feminists in the course accused the women in the film and I of being racists. After struggling to place issues of racism and homophobia on the agenda of the anti-poverty movement in the course for a few weeks, I decided that their accusation was enough, and I walked out mid-way in the class. The group of women decided that they would have me fired. In following classes they secretly tape recorded discussions to replay for the coordinator of the program and the chair of the department as evidence in the case they were intent on building against me.*

What this encounter points to are the varied ways in which the subject position of teacher can be interpreted by students. In this particular case some of the students despite their knowledge of a teacher's power and authority saw my racialized subject position as a site of vulnerability. They attempted to use the perceived vulnerability of the marginal racial subject to produce and maintain a discourse in the class that would effectively place my position on issues in doubt, with others, who had to deal with and confront the presence of an Other in the classroom, who is usually not there, especially, as a teacher. My resistance to being simply a marginalized subject was aided by the administrative power that is accorded teachers, but this could have been limited in my case given the way in which part-time and "racial minority" teachers are treated and perceived in the system — they are seen as less than capable with few if any mechanisms of support. In addition this encounter points to the various subject positions that students can hold. These women who had until then identified as anti-poverty feminist activists were quite willing to use "whiteness" and its assumed privileges to call up, and attempt to put in place mechanisms to challenge my authority. In this case these students did not see themselves as powerless. My desires were clearly unachievable in this context located as they were in a need to see students produce a "real" moment of complex, border-crossing analysis.

ENCOUNTER 2

While teaching a unit on race, racism and ethnicity from the sociology text that was used and keeping with my endeavour to make questions of marginality relate, connect and intertwine, I mentioned homophobia as one oppression that had to be addressed. Many of the students in the class became immediately angry. Some very violent anti-gay and lesbian statements were made and my insistence that many of the statements not be repeated led to a three week improvised session dealing with heteronormativity. I gave additional readings and those readings tended to incite further those who were vehemently anti-gay and lesbian. When we came to a point where discussion was possible, one of the students at the end of a class came to tell me that as a religious person, "I would not throw my peals into the gutter. He who laughs last, laughs best and I would be laughing last."

The religiosity of the student's statement suggests the place from which she was encountering the material and could well suggest a lack of encounter with the material. However, there are a number of points that I want to raise in regard to teaching practice. My insistence on articulating a position that would push students into places they might not want to go could in part be a cause of the response to the material. However, some of the discourses that organise students' responses to the material were located in their lived experiences. It is the seeming normalcy of those discourses that produced the confidence in their positions to openly insist on and articulate heterosexist notions of the world as constituting the totality of normalcy.

Students' response or resistance to the interrelatedness of how oppression works or normativity is constructed in this case represents a number of things, but for me two of the most important are: 1) a commitment to discourses that position gays and lesbians as always constituted as outside normalcy; and 2) their desire to retain discreet categories between social movements in the likelihood of their employment, which is dependent upon government funding of individual agencies that work with specific social issues allowing for little or no acknowledgement of the interrelatedness of the construction, constitution and perpetuation of Otherness. Finally, my giving of more reading material as an attempt to bring the discussion to a place of meaningful dialogue did not help in that the text cannot always serve as the medium through which persons engaged in dialogue might find the resources to call into question their everyday lives (an attempt to construct desire as Zizek signals it) so that all of us might live life differently.

ENCOUNTER 3

In the Social Movements course, as the class approached units on Gay and Lesbian social movements one of the students discloses to me the horror story of having come out as a bisexual to a small group in her counselling course. The groups were not supposed to repeat information learnt in them, trust was supposed to be aimed for. Days later she was attacked by fellow classmates as dirty, sinful, and deadly. Notes were left in her locker and articles were written in the newsletter about her, all saying nasty things. She demanded that I create a safe space for her in the classroom. As we proceeded one of the students decided that he would not take up the readings but rather he would viciously, verbally attack her. I asked him to leave and most of the class supported the decision.

This particular encounter raises a number of issues that are much more closely tied to the call and use of power and authority by the teacher. If the teacher explicitly sees him/her self as a political subject in the classroom then decisions have to be made about the types of practices that the group will participate in. It is by being able to use the teacher's power and authority that a particular classroom might become a safer place for a specific student. However, there is still the problem of the other student being cut out of a classroom discussion that might have led to his rethinking some of his positions. My ambivalent reading of this particular encounter is tied to the question of what actually constitutes a political subject. Clearly not all positions can carry equal weight in the classroom, nor has that been historically true.⁹ If critical pedagogy is about constructing a community based on equality in what context do I make sense of my actions?

ENCOUNTER 4

A student in the Social Movements course decides that I am bashing the police. She asks to have a policeman come to the class, since she had gone on a ride along with the police and felt she and the police had a perspective that we needed to hear. I consented. A black policeman from public relations whom she knew was sent and he singled me out, stating that had he seen me in a particular neighbourhood he would have to question me, given my appearance. He then went on to create multiple pathologies of black youth.

This encounter clearly forces the issue of authority, voice and experience. The student seemed to be operating within a discourse that suggested that a black policeman would be the essential text to explode what appeared to be unfair and "propagandistic" information being circulated in the classroom. My willingness to write letters to have the policeman come that my position might be interrogated by the students and the police did not however mean that I was prepared for an assault on my body.

These four encounters represent my attempts at remembering and narrating what I believe to be significant moments in my practice whereby a call to teacher power, authority and political desire was not enough. As well an understanding that these encounters are but my partial story of what happened is important here. It is these encounters that I hope to use to demonstrate how the crisis in knowledge/representation that has pervaded debates in the academy has found a place in the lived relations of the classroom. In all four of these encounters questions of power, authority and desire seem to be at the fore of what takes place in terms of how the pedagogue decides to work with a situation.

The Bigger Picture or the Crisis in Knowledge

"Truth is 'structured like fiction' " (Zizek, 1991, p.18)

What these encounters represent in terms of the crisis in knowledge is that placing on the agenda, not so much the overturning of grand or master narratives, of how we conceive of and believe to live our lives, but, rather the importance of problematising the everyday world to which we appear not to pay much attention. Yet it is the everyday world that is in crisis. It is in problematising the everyday world that the task of critical pedagogy lies. What this means for a discourse of critical pedagogy is that the positioning of its very possibilities should (re)present moments or lines of convergence with what students deem to be the everyday, but that are disruptive to our notions of the everyday. The encounters in this paper point to the problematic that politically engaged people with strong investments in identity politics cannot or will not shift positions, until, new proposed positions can be desired and realized.

To analyze and disrupt, as well as to put into question, the everyday of students and teachers in classrooms is to realise that one could well be engaging in and be complicit in reproducing the forces and discourses of oppression that seek to maintain relations of domination. It is clear that students come to classrooms with investments in discourses unwilling to give them up.¹⁰ Students also come to classrooms realising that some of the discourses that they are invested in, if successfully disrupted, would mean that their world might change. Thus, it seems to me that the task of critical pedagogy should be an attempt to concern itself with articulating and fashioning a desire in students that they might find to be achievable. How do we place the pluralities of positions in terms (language and desires) that they become important to those who are already engaged in the political work that our teaching hopes to surface, produce and continue?

To make sense of these encounters in the context of these postmodern times within which humanist discourses have been castigated as (re)producing the very conditions that they claim to eschew, I want to look to two related but different positions from which an understanding of these encounters might produce different practices in classrooms. The first is Dorothy Smith's (1990) and Joan Scott's (1992) discussions and critique of experience and the second is Chantal Mouffe's (1988) discussion of solidarity/ alliance politics or radical democratic politics. Their work is used to (re)contextualize my telling here and to move it beyond the simple story of one teacher's encounter in a classroom. Instead I hope to show how your and my experience might be the ground upon which a methodology for research might be built, but also I hope to foreclose suggestions that this might be a self-indulgent project.

Dorothy Smith (1990) writes in her critique of phallogentric sociology:

To begin from direct experience and to return to it as a constraint or “test” of the adequacy of a systematic knowledge is to begin from where we are located bodily. The actualities of our everyday world are already socially organized. Settings, equipment, environment, schedules, occasions, and so forth, as well as our enterprises and routines, are socially produced and concretely and symbolically organized prior to the moment at which we enter and at which inquiry begins. By taking up a standpoint in our original and immediate knowledge of the world, sociologists can make their discipline’s socially organized properties first observable and then problematic (p.23).

In much the same way teachers might begin from their experience of the everyday world as it is located bodily for them, not in an effort to produce or appear to be the unified subject, but, rather to be an example of what it means to be the decentered subject. Such a positionality would produce a pedagogy of desire that does not produce new regimes of truth, but, rather produce dialogue(s) that might lead to transformation, or in the least, a rethinking and thinking about positions in the world. As Smith (1990) further states:

If we begin from the world as we actually experience it, it is at least possible to see that we are indeed located and that what we know of the other is conditional upon that location. There are and must be different experiences of the world and different bases of experience (p.25).

It is in sharing with students the conditionality of ours and their knowledges that we might begin to shift the discourses that enter classrooms and seek to reproduce relations that need to be problematised and transformed.

If transformation is possible, questions of identity must become an integral part of the discussion. In the above encounters it was partly because identities were at stake that much of the resistance to attempts to see and possibly live life differently was produced. I recognise that by using experience as the route through which we might begin to ask some important questions about pedagogy and all the participants in the classroom that we enter dangerous ground. As Joan Scott (1992) warns in her essay ““Experience,”” the use of the term *experience* can often be foundational. Scott writes:

The evidence of experience works as a foundation providing both a starting point and a conclusive kind of explanation, beyond which few questions need to or can be asked. And yet it is precisely the questions precluded — questions about discourse, difference, and subjectivity, as well as about what counts as experience and who gets to make that determination — that would enable us to historicize experience, to reflect critically on the history we write about it, rather than to premise our history upon it (p.33).

She is suggesting that we need not take experience as a site that cannot be interrogated but that experience must and should be interrogated. In so doing teachers are forced to interrogate or ask questions of the various identities that exist in the classrooms that teachers enter. In an effort to understand why politically engaged students would resist more encompassing analyses of their world we must “understand the operations of the complex and changing discursive processes by which identities are ascribed, resisted, or embraced and which processes themselves are unremarked, indeed achieve their effect because they aren’t noticed,” (Scott, 1992, p.33) as a place from which we might begin to understand and do more fruitful work with the various identities in classrooms. How do we as teachers and students work towards a more fulfilling and socially just democratic world?

Notions of radical democracy have been one of the initial and still crucial tropes of critical pedagogy. Chantal Mouffe (1988) claims that we must move to a “postindividual concept of freedom,” in which “we must institutionalize a true pluralism, a *pluralism of subjects*” (p.100, emphasis in the original). She further argues that the concept of democracy must be rethought and that the notion of solidarity should be elaborated. What

Mouffe is suggesting is that social movements reflect the interconnectedness of all social relations that might produce positive transformation or what she calls an “organic ideology” (p.99). Or put another way the African American theorist and critic, Cornel West (1990) asks that we inhabit positions of “critical organic catalyst[s]” from which we might engage in a continuous process of questioning the conditions of existence. West’s project is useful for teaching in that it suggest that schooling might be conceptualised and acted on as a site from which teachers and students might engage in fragile and fleeting coalitions to disrupt the processes of foundationalisms that seek to (re)create “new” conceptual orders of being. Thus critical pedagogy does not become a new narrative or map of liberation but critical pedagogy is enacted as the space through which liberatory moments are lived in the (re)organisation and the (re)fashioning of the self as a continuous process. Critical pedagogy becomes a space where desires are articulated and sought after.

Notes

1. By the crisis in representation and the crisis in knowledge I mean to signal a set of very complex debates that have engulfed the academy but that also has been taken up, albeit differently in the popular media mainly as political correctness. However, I am more interested in the Left’s critique and move away from the grand and master narratives of enlightenment and modernity, its self critique, increasing self reflexivity and doubt that has characterised theory, practice and praxis. In addition I mean to signal also the Right’s attempt at reconstituting universals, its articulation of chaos in the academy, the demand of the return of the “Great Books,” and the Right’s admonishment of the articulation and assertion of a plurality of identities as dangerous and disabling.
2. See Craig Owens (1992), “Representation, Appropriation and Power.” In this essay Owens delineates the definition of poststructuralism that I use. While his comments are located within debates concerning art history it is his argument that poststructuralism allows for the working through of interdisciplinary questions that view disciplines as “products of a systematic activity of restriction and exclusion engineered to control the production of knowledge in our society,” (p.92) that I find most useful for my purposes here.
3. Zizek suggests that the real is unachievable given that unachievability is realistic. Thus we are constantly experiencing realistic conditions. The real is a symbolic form that is only rendered through that form. Thus the real always only exists in the imaginary. As Zizek further states:
For things to have meaning, this meaning must be confirmed by some contingent piece of the real that can be read as a “sign.” The very word *sign*, in opposition to the arbitrary mark, pertains to the “answer of the real”: the “sign” is given by the thing itself, it indicates that at least at a certain point, the abyss separating that real from the symbolic network has been crossed, i.e., that the real itself has complied with the signifier’s appeal. In moments of social crisis (wars, plagues), unusual celestial phenomena (comets, eclipses, etc.) are read as prophetic signs (p.32, emphasis in original).
4. See also E. Grosz (1990), who writes: “As a movement from one contiguous signifier to the next, metonymy is the model for the movement of *desire*” (p.77, emphasis in original). Grosz, like Zizek, once more signals the constant movement of desire.
5. See Roger I. Simon (1992) “The Fear of Theory.” Simon discusses the multiple reasons that students might resist theory in an attempt to look at why some students react to theoretical work with contempt.
6. The three threads that produce this paper are an attempt to make visible in the text how various elements come together to inform the questions that I ask of pedagogy. These three threads represent the unearthing of or the beginnings of what Derrida (1991) in “Living On: Border Lines” has called a “fabric of traces referring endlessly to itself, to other differential traces (p.257).” Thus for me the three threads of this “text” refer to and constantly attempt to reference a pedagogy that might be different not only in the classroom but in its written expressions.

7. By disciplinary and regulatory practices I mean to suggest the regimes of truth that Foucault (1980) has described as,

types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true statements and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true, ("Truth and Power," p.131)

which is often the case of teachers and can well become the case for critical pedagogues attempting to incite critical reflexive thinking in their lives.
8. See Himani Bannerji's (1992), "Re: Turning the Gaze," for a discussion of how the bodies of "racial minority" teachers are positioned vis-a-vis their students in Canadian classrooms. Bannerji cogently theorizes how her body is positioned in some classes:

And while I am lecturing on "bodies" in history, in social organisation of relations and spaces, constructed by the gaze of power, I am actually projecting my own body forward through my words. I am in/scribing rather than erasing it. First I must draw attention to it, focus this gaze, let it develop me into a construct. Then I take this construct, this "South Asian" woman and break it up piece by piece. In every sense they are learning on my body. I am the teacher, my body is offered up to them to learn from, the room is an arena, a stage, an amphitheatre, I am an actor in a theatre of cruelty (p.6).

Bannerji points to one of the very complex ways that traditionally marginalized bodies can be used in the classroom. Her reading of the situation goes beyond the mere discussion of tokenism and appropriation by administration that others have discussed and used.
9. For a discussion of a similar situation, see Magda Lewis (1992) "Interrupting Patriarchy: Politics, Resistance and Transformation in the Feminist Classroom."
10. See Patti Lather (1991) on resistance and the fear that students have of encountering discourses that might unsettle or call their taken for granted notions into question. In particular see the chapter, "Staying Dumb? Student Resistance to Liberatory Curriculum."

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