REPARATIVE THERAPY: QUEER MODELS, QUEERNESS, AND EDUCATION

By

Adam J. Greteman

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ABSTRACT

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In this dissertation, I seek to imagine alternative ways in which particular relationships or intimacies that are often positioned as perverse or immoral might be read reparatively to see schools and the relationships that are and are not allowed in schools in a different, stranger light. Working out of queer and poststructural thought, particular queer models are brought out from the sexual underground and past to see what lessons they might teach and what intimacies their queerness might offer schools and education. Looking at the models of intergenerational relationships between men (gay teachers) and boys (male students), sadists, and queer school shooters, this dissertation attempts to illustrate non-paranoid ways of understanding alternative sexualities and the ways such alternative sexualities when thought through, rather than simply about, open up complex ethical frameworks that challenge and offer a different purpose to education and the practices of schools.

To my Mother

Roxanne Goetzinger

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struggles, your own scandals, your own “shame,” taught me from a young age to always keep my head high, to perhaps embrace the shame that others would heap on me, to become the person I wanted to become by doing my thing. You never backed down in your defense of me, you always stood by my side, and in this I learned the ethical lessons that I have been fascinated with and continue to explore in the coming pages. I am a momma's boy and because of that, I dedicate these ideas, this work, that I have birthed to you…

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Prelude: A Meditation on Old Gay Gentlemen and a Gay Sensibility

I moved to Chicago the year I wrote this dissertation in the hopes that I would find inspiration and prepare myself for what would come – whatever that may be – when I finished such a momentous task. Upon arriving in Chicago, I began volunteering at the Center on Halsted (COH) – a Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Center – for a program that served the elderly LGBT community. I choose to volunteer in this program because it would provide me with a responsibility every week outside of working on my dissertation. As I began volunteering and getting to know the program, its staff, and the community members, I found myself writing about and thinking about nostalgia. I was finding myself quite nostalgic for a past – a rather queer past – that I had only ever read about or seen in the movies. I think looking back on this time I was interested in the mode of being and thinking that seemed to be present in the queer archives. And, as I got to know some of the elders in the program, I found myself having access to their stories, their memories of that past I was exploring, providing me with a lesson in the gay sensibility. These elders allowed me to not simply think about the past, but to think through the past.

I would on Tuesday afternoons for the duration of the writing of this dissertation slowly develop relationships with these men and have the chance to listen to their life experiences. This allowed me to see the past in a different way that further pushed my ideas in this dissertation and provided me with an education of my own. This education started with flirting as the older gentleman and I would flirt – casting glances and comments back and forth. One particular gentleman, I will call him Jimmy, was one of the first men to flirt with me – telling me that I was pretty – and initiating my education with old gay men. Jimmy was not the only one who taught me, as many of the gentlemen would flirt with me also, telling me I looked good in whatever I

was wearing or asking when I was going to dance (read "strip") for them. I was quite flattered by all of this – and would over the course of months receive an education in the gay sensibility and its intimacy that emerged out of such flirtatious moments. It is this education and the intimacy that developed through it that I meditate on briefly here at the beginning of my dissertation – a dissertation itself that might be read as a meditation on intimacy in education.

I learned during those afternoons about a gay sensibility – about an ability of gay men to banter with one another, use flirtation to communicate, and to take anything and make it sexual. This was not done solely for comedy's sake, but also, I would learn to create a shared sense of intimacy and survival. While some of my friends – mostly younger gay men – were confused as to why I wanted to work with "creepy old gay men," I found what they termed "creepy" to be a vital part to this gay sensibility. It made me laugh. It also challenged divisions between generations – opening up space for intergenerational contact – and the assumed propriety of communication – illustrating the complexity of what might be called harassment. I learned this in the contrast I noticed between the "policy" of the Center to avoid conversations of a sexual nature and the practices of the elders of infusing conversations with the sexual. The tension between policy and practice came to light when months into my time volunteering, an announcement was made about "respecting" the volunteers and not making inappropriate comments to them. As the announcement was being made, I could not help but feel the announcement directed at the comments I received while volunteering and felt sad that such an announcement might disrupt the relationships that we had developed and the education I was receiving.

Moments after the announcement was made, I had several of the gentlemen come over to me and apologize to me for having potentially made me feel disrespected or uncomfortable.

They informed me that that was never their intention and how much they appreciated my presence. I responded that I did not know what the announcement was talking about and cannot think of a time that I felt disrespected or uncomfortable while with them. I told them each that I appreciate their concern, but that I volunteer at a gay center precisely to have the ability to have such banter and believe having such banter is a sign of our mutual appreciation of one another. We all smiled and went on with the day.

I, of course, could not simply go on with my day but became fascinated by what had happened. For me, the announcement illustrated the push to "straighten" out the ways gays communicate to be in line with propriety, but also and I think more importantly illustrated the intimacy that had developed precisely because of the "inappropriate" comments. The gay men I had come to know and enjoy, the gay men who flirted with me and I with them had developed an intimacy. This intimacy was not named as such, but it had emerged as we bantered back and forth. We, or at least I, felt a connection, a bond with these individuals. We came to recognize when someone was missing and asked about to see if anyone had heard anything about the missing person. There was something in the air – in the time and space of our time together – that I am not sure I can put in words. There was concern, compassion, joy, and love. They would ask me to "dance" for them – stripping. I would bashfully reply that I am no dancer and that no one needs to see me with my clothes off – the fantasy is much better than reality. And in these moments, we would look into one another's eyes, laugh, and enjoy the smiles such comments elicited.

Yet, upon hearing such "inappropriate" comments those in charge could see them as nothing but potentially disrespectful and damaging. There was it seemed to me, an inability to recognize the intimacy – through respect and admiration – that had developed through such

"inappropriate" or "disrespectful" comments. For those of us implicated in this, we felt something akin to a momentary loss that was transformed into further developing our intimacy. Our momentary loss was felt as I was fearful that they might view such an announcement as me having "told on them" while they viewed such an announcement as illustrating that they might have "crossed the line" with me. We were scared that we had "lost" the other in some way. However, in these responses, our shared intimacy was further made apparent. We sensed a need to address this potential "disrespect" and make sure our shared understanding of our relationships were still improperly proper or in line with our sensibility of gayness. The intimacy that had developed was not simply about sexual banter and flirtation, but also about a concern for one another's sense of wellbeing. These men were concerned that I had not felt disrespected by them and I was concerned that they not feel betrayed by me. We all felt some sort of responsibility to one another so that our space and time together continued on gaily.

Yes, some might have seen such banter as "childish" because "old people" should know better, but these men, all who were members of the "lost generation," having survived the HIV epidemic after losing lovers and friends were not childish. They had survived and thrived despite the violence against the gay body. In surviving and thriving, these men became my teachers, transferring their knowledge and understanding of "gayness" to me. They embodied, for me, Crimp's contention that "AIDS didn't make gay men grow up and become responsible. AIDS showed anyone willing to pay attention how genuinely ethical the invention of gay life had been" (16). These men each showed me in different ways, an ethics of life that emerged out of gayness, an ethics that built from the sensibilities that allowed them to survive and thrive despite the lack of governmental intervention and the fears that filled the air around issues of HIV and

homosexuality in the recent queer past. And it is with their lessons that I move into my dissertation.

Chapter One

An Introduction: Toward Queerness in Education

> As writers, researchers, and teachers, pretty much all we do is make other people possible, or hope to, and the best of us don't look for results that look like us. Neither *no* future nor *the* future can encompass all that that entails.
>
> - Elizabeth Freeman

> If we can laugh at the worst things that happen to us because of our sexuality, we'll be the strongest minority of all, proud to be illegal, proud not to be like everybody else. Instead of "act up," I'm for "act bad." Let's embarrass our enemies with humor.
>
> - John Waters

In the anonymous leaflet entitled *Queers Read This,* distributed during the 1990 Gay Pride March in New York City, the anger and hatred felt by queers was made explicit. One of the targets of queer hatred and anger was public education. As one of the anonymous writer(s) proclaimed:

> I hate that in twelve years of public education I was never taught about queer people. I hate that I grew up thinking I was the only queer in the world, and I hate even more than most queer kids still grow up the same way. I hate that I was tormented by other kids for being a faggot, but more that I was taught to feel ashamed for being the object of their cruelty, taught to feel it was my fault. (8)

The assaults against queer bodies in education were and still are appalling. Education has not yet, if it even can, in its current manifestations, grapple with queers and queerness in its classrooms and hallways. Multicultural education and struggles for social justice bring issues of sexuality to the field of education, allowing for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students and teachers some semblance of recognition and protection.[1] While such improvements have occurred, in varying ways, in the field of education, allowing for students and teachers to experience "less" harm due to their sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation, these changes have often neglected the messiness of queerness. In the current dissertation, I seek to wrestle with queers and queerness to explore what it might mean to learn to grow queerly. How does queerness challenge ways of growing – growing intimate with others, growing in knowledge of the self, others, and the world, and growing in ways to respond to the violence in the world? How might contemporary schooling move beyond the improvements of the last two decades that have more often assimilated LGBT students into the main "straight" student body? Can queer theory disrupt this project and challenge the project of schooling – a project of social reproduction and socialization that inculcates students into particular ways and sensibilities – to allow students to learn from (an issue of curriculum), by (an issue of pedagogy), and with (an issue of bodies) queers and queerness.

It is a strange thing to write about "queers" or "queerness" in schools. I think this strangeness comes from the competing, dare I say, contradictory ways that "queer" as a concept has been taken up in educational scholarship. Some utilize "queer" as a synonym for LGBT

[1] This can be seen with anti-bullying legislation, the rise of Gay-Straight Alliances at the collegiate and high school levels, and the slow emergence of Lesbian and Gay issues in pre-service teacher education programs. As recent scholarship has shown, within education there has been a lack of attention to bisexual and transgender students and teachers although this is changing. See Bilodeau, 2005; 2009.

persons taking up a project that is rights based – seeking inclusion and access to benefits. Such work embraces "identity politics" – even as it often recognizes the limitations of such politics. It, one could say, takes a pragmatic approach arguing that rights and benefits are necessary and important to the material well being of queer, read LGBT, persons. Others utilize "queer" in what might be seen as a more "radical" way whereby queer is not an "identity" category, but a tool used to question and challenge "identity" and the process of normalization. It is "anti-identitarian". This work embraces a radical politics that does not seek access to "rights" and "benefits". Rather, it seeks to question the ways such rights and benefits, even if granted to LGBT persons maintain injustice and oppression by further stigmatizing those individuals who still do not have a "place at the table". And within each of these two broad uses of "queer," there exists of plethora of camps that engage queer in diverse and divergent ways.

Queer, we can see, is quite contested. Some even refuse to use the word "queer" finding its violent history impossible to redeem or reclaim. It is this contested-ness of queer that I find most compelling, but also most difficult because I am not sure where I fit into – if I even do fit into – this queer picture. As a teacher educator who is charged with training pre-service teachers to enter the complex and strange space of teaching, I cannot help but think about, what feels to be very the "real" issues that thinking about "queer" as an identity category. It is an identity category that many of my students have never extensively thought about while for other students who claim such an identity, thinking about it often brings about a traumatic past in schools. I believe, the claim to a "marginalized" identity is a claim that warrants critical attention even if "identity politics" has gone out of style. After all, the evidence is quite compelling that LGBT students, students perceived to be LGBT, and gender non-conforming students face an uphill battle in surviving school, but at the same time live quite fulfilling and fabulous lives. High

suicide rates, high drop-out rates, and experiences of harassment and discrimination are not a joking matter. These students are wounded on a daily basis in the phobic space of the classroom and hallway either because they actually lay claim to a queer identity OR are perceived to be a part of such a "community".

However, the plight of LGBT students has been known for some time. Scholarship investigating the issues that impact LGBT students is entering its third decade – showing some changes but also illuminating that much has remained the same. It is here that I find the more radical use of "queer" to be quite compelling as it challenges the strategies that have been tried and seemingly failed to offer its own queer agenda. This queer agenda seeks to undo the normative categories of sexual and gender identity and their intersections with racial, national, and religious identities. It seeks to do this by exposing how such identities become naturalized or to be more in line with the lingo of this strand of queer theory – it seeks to do this by exploring the process of how subjects are formed. How does the "subject" become thinkable, what does such a process expose, and how might such exposure open up new avenues for becoming in the world? This may sound like a rather serious project, but as Richard Ford reminds us "queer theory embraces, even celebrates transgression; it seeks the sublime not in resistance – that's too damn bristly and self-serious – but in blithe and gleeful disregard for social convention" (122). This part of the queer project does not seek to "act up" to resist, but rather to "act bad" and not abide by conventional wisdoms.

Both of these "queer" projects are concerned about time. The former is interested in the present, the here and now where material student bodies are being violated for claiming a LGBT identity. The latter is interested in the past – the then and there – in order to explore how the present "categories" have become possible and how they might learn from the past to do

something different. Both though are interested in creating different worlds as some imagine a world of liberation while others imagine a world transformed. I want to imagine a world that is transformed, that has transgressed or moved into forms but still recognizes the need to grapple with the limitations of such forms. I cannot believe in liberation, nor can I buy into notions of progress. I can only buy into the contingent and fleeting possibilities where the world experiences moments of disorientation that may alter its form ever so slightly and make a different horizon visible and touchable.

Queer utilizes many different words to do its work. Queer theorists have quite often been charged with obtuseness and excessively difficult language. Identity and subject, identification and subjectivation are words most often thrown about by various camps of queer theorists. These critical terms are useful, but also confusing. I will throughout this dissertation utilize the concept of the "subject" while also at times discussing "the individual". Judith Butler provides a nice explanation that I think is illustrative here at the outset to differentiate the use of these terms. She writes:

> 'The subject' is sometimes bandied about as if it were interchangeable with 'the person' or 'the individual.' The genealogy of the subject as a critical category, however, suggests that the subject, rather than be identified strictly with the individual, ought to be designated as a linguistic category, a placeholder, a structure in formation. Individuals come to occupy the site of the subject (the subject simultaneously emerges as a 'site'), and they enjoy intelligibility only to the extent that they are, as it were, first established in language. The subject is the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility, the

> linguistic condition of its existence and agency. No individual becomes a subject without first becoming subjected or undergoing 'subjectivation.' (*Psychic Life* 10-11)

We see with Butler's eloquence that the subject and individual *are not* interchangeable but *are* interrelated. The individual, or the ability to claim an individual identity, is tied up in the process of becoming subjected to the discourses that exist within any given space and time. In order to claim an identity one has to have access to language and the language which one has access to is always tied up in history, knowledge, and power. We cannot simply choose an "identity," because our choices are always already limited. At the same time, there is always the possibility that language will fail and in failing open up new possible ways of claiming an identity. It is in these failings that it is possible to "transgress" or "subvert" (other famous queer words) gleefully the conventions of identity but in doing so one might become unintelligible, unrecognizable (even more queer words). It is a tenuous process indeed.

We claim an identity as an individual to be recognized and for many the ability to lay claim to an identity is not difficult. But as Butler reminds us "the thought of a possible life is only an indulgence for those who already know themselves to be possible. For those who are still looking to become possible, possibility is a necessity" ("Global Violence" 209). It is with this that we are able to see the complex interplay between those who utilize "identity" and those who utilize the "subject". Those who utilize "identity" are in many ways concerned about the immediate material survival of those who have laid claim to marginalized identities. What policies or interventions can be made to assist in helping such persons in the immediate? Yet, this project, while important, neglects those bodies that cannot even lay claim to an identity

because they do not “fit” because they “are still looking to become possible”. It is here that the project of thinking about the “subject” becomes important in exploring the process by which it is possible to lay claim to an identity and expose the limits of such a strategy. It is this type of queer work that often utilizes “history” in order to propose a “future” that is yet to be. But in doing so such work has been seen as ignoring the present.

This is problematic, of course, because those who take up any of the above approaches engage with the past, present, and the future – even those queers who embrace the anti-social thesis. The choice of time frame makes a difference. And it is this difference that this current project will implicitly struggle with extensively. I am concerned with the very real lives of students who do not fit in the desks of their classrooms or who in claiming an identity are violated by their peers, teachers, or the curriculum itself. Yet, while I am concerned with these students (they are always on my mind) I align myself with work that is interested in exploring the “past” in order to offer alternative ways to imagine the future. I am not “interested” in LGBT students per se, but how various conceptions of “queerness” might open up space that has been foreclosed by the incessant focus on “LGBT identity”. I am, I suppose, interested in allowing for different subject positions to become possible in order to allow those who do not “fit” into the LGBT identity or who refuse to claim such identity to become recognized.

Deborah Britzman and Jen Gilbert mapped out this strange space when they asked “what will have been said about gayness in teacher education?” (81). They asked such a question in order to explore conceptualizations of gayness in teacher education and how new conceptualizations of gayness may allow for new ways to imagine teacher education. With this, they inquire into “how teacher education narrates gayness” proposing three temporal narratives of gayness – the time of difficulty, the time of relationality, and the time of hospitality (83-84).

Teacher education, they note, often narrates "gayness only as a problem of fighting discrimination and rescuing disparaged identities" whereby homophobia is the prevailing way to conceptualize gayness – deferring the times of relationality and hospitality (84). The other times – of relationality and hospitality – open up teacher education to thinking differently about gayness, "shift[ing] the difficulty from disparaged identities to reading practices" and "rais[ing] the problem of learning to be normal as a place of inquiry" (85). Britzman and Gilbert's time of relationality helps me to "reconsider the question of education…in its largest sense: as socialization, as legitimization, as convention, as culture, as theory, as upbringing" (85). It is in this time that queer theory's role in teacher education is found, illuminating that "sexuality is never far away from education" (85). Education and schooling are rather intertwined. However, education as Britzman and Gilbert inform us is a broader concept while schooling is situated in the particular space of schools. Schools "school" children, and while education might occur in schools, it also occurs outside in other spaces. I ask that you keep this distinction in mind, while being kind when I fail at distinguishing adequately.

For this current project, I am concerned about education – as learning and coming to know or not know – and at times will think about incidents in schools that illuminate the problems with learning. Specifically, I will look to queer models from the past that have been negated or neglected to explore what queerness offers education and the possibility for the student body to grow queerly. This is to help me think about issues of relationality and intimacy in order to illuminate how queerness might educate and be educated to transform horizons forever in the distance. It is my belief that the models we have available to us have an important impact on our ability to relate and develop intimacy. These models impact what and how we are able to relate, perceive, and experience the self and other. They illuminate practices that assist us

in actively fashioning the self. As Foucault notes "these practices are nevertheless not something invented by the individual himself," rather "they are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by him culture, his society, and his social group" ("The Ethics of the Concern" 291). The politics of models is one that often privileges normative or "positive" modes of being that maintain particular moralistic frameworks while perpetuating forms of violence against bodies that are disruptive of or challenging to the social world those models make intelligible. Or, put more simply, the models we often hold up as moral exemplars are always already limiting possible ways of engaging our ethical responsibility to the self and other. My use of queer models to explore possibilities in education is partially ironic, but partially an attempt to utilize such models to think through ethics.

I critique the reliance on "positive" models while proposing different models that many may find offensive, distasteful, but even so suffer from limitations. Yet, it is with offense and distaste that I believe new insights might be made because moments of offense or distaste push up against what is considered "normal" or "tasteful". Queer itself has been viewed as offensive, a pejorative hurled at LGBT persons, that has been reclaimed to offend further. In doing so, the limits of taste and propriety are exposed to produce or propose something else. "Such queerness proposes" following Lee Edelman "in place of the good, something…'better,' though it promises, in more than one sense of the phrase, absolutely nothing" (5). Invoking these models and their queerness does not promise illusions of progress. Instead, they challenge the values that are held up to violate queer bodies in the present moment to offer a glimpse of a different world.

On Ethics: The Haunting Presence of Foucault

I have learned that ethics is a rather tricky subject. The common understanding of ethics ties it to morality and ideas about "good" and "bad". This often consists of universalized notions of values and good behavior while placing judgment on those practices and ideas that exist outside the set moral framework. This common understanding will not be how I understand ethics throughout this dissertation project. Ethics, for this project, will emerge out of the work of Michel Foucault who simply (although complexly) asked, "couldn't everyone's life become a work of art" ("On the Genealogy of Ethics" 261). It is Foucault's ethics – what he calls "care of the self" – that will haunt these essays – as I seek to illustrate the potential of education to help us "escape as much as possible from the type of relations that society proposes for us and try to create, in the empty space where we are, new relational possibilities" ("Social Triumph" 160). Ethics is, as I see it, a relational endeavor that seeks to constantly create the self in different ways. Such an endeavor is never isolated to the individual, but always tied up with others and the need to constantly remain vigilant about the wellbeing of the self and the other in the intimacy of these relational encounters.

I will not constantly refer to Foucault even though it is his ethical project that undergirds my own thoughts in this dissertation. In order to help the reader see Foucault, despite his absence, I want to provide a brief introduction to Foucault, as I understand him in relation to this project.

Foucault's work has always been concerned with the ethical. His is a project that sought to expose the limits of the subject and the possibility of moving beyond such limits. His *History of Madness* was his first attempt to analyze the question between the subject and truth whereby "madness lies at the heart of that question, since the stakes of madness are the stakes of rational subjectivity" (Huffer 258). Madness is a complex figure that becomes associated with, as

Foucault's later work in *History of Sexuality* illustrates, sexuality. Madness and sexuality become associated with one another allowing for distinctions between reasonable and unreasonable forms of sexuality and relationality. The modern sexual subject then was founded by a denial of eros post-Descartes whereby not only does the "cogito" of Descartes exclude madness, but also refuses the transformative potential of the erotic (Huffer 260). The Enlightenment (or Age of Reason) simultaneously allowed for the production of the sexual deviant while excluding that deviance through confinement illustrating the birth of biopower.[2]

The ethical vision of Foucault plays with biopower by returning to the erotic. This erotic ethics relies on transformation, which is "the basic ethical principle in Foucault," but a principle that is not prescriptive but "a poetic attitude and practice" (Huffer 243). This poetic attitude and practice is one that seeks a "becoming-other" that strips "away the structures of thought that produce reason and madness: an unlearning or releasing of the rational subject" (243). The ethical project of Foucault is one that has an "openness to change, mutability, the capacity to shape-shift" and he offers this ethics through reading the archival voices that have been hidden or ignored, not because these voices are without their own problems, but because they offer evidence to the limits that exist around subjectivity and help in Foucault's "trying to find a way out from under those modes of subjectivation that keeps us, and others, unfree" (247). Foucault's ethical imagination seeks to open up ways to relate and engage intimately in the process of

[2] Biopower is a modality of power, proposed by Foucault that "is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population" (History of Sexuality, p.137). This modality of power emerges and develops during the Classical age where "there was a rapid development of various disciplines – universities, secondary schools, barracks, workshops; there was also the emergence, in the field of political practices and economic observations, of the problems of birthrate, longevity, public health, housing, and migration" (140). It was through these "techniques" that "that subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" was achieved – seen in contemporary times with the use of demographics. See Lynn Fendler (2010) for a comprehensive account on Foucault's biopower.

living.

This is a difficult ethical project to be sure. It is one that challenges the ways in which life has been ordered through the techniques of biopower - pushing the subject to the limits in an attempt to undo the self where “the possibility of going beyond the limits is, in this perspective, not only something we are ethically called to do, but part of the modern ‘politics of ourselves’ we are called to practice” (266). This ethics represents “an attitude that characterizes a present disposition" that "is both ancient and always changing” (268) requiring “thinking-feeling”. As Huffer explained “this kind of thinking-feeling…constitutes, for Foucault, a ‘useful’ knowledge that can help us in our ‘effort to think [our] own history’” (275). This that might allow us “to become again what we never were by ‘free[ing] thought from what it silently thinks and so enable it to think’ – and feel – ‘differently’” (275; Foucault as quoted by Huffer). Foucault refuses to accept a separation of thought from feeling, seeing them as intimately connected to this project of “how to live”. This is illustrated wherein the emergence of the modern rational subject came to rely on knowledge and the knowing subject while neglecting the "care of the self". Knowledge of the self, conditioned by modern biopower, privileged knowledge and repudiated eros because eros, in Foucault's genealogical project, transformed the subject, removing the subject from its current status or condition (260). Eros undoes the subject and seeks to transform the subject, perhaps only fleetingly, from the regimes of the normal.

It is Foucault's project and dedication to “limit experiences” that allow him “to interrogate a culture about its limit-experiences” which “is to question it at the confines of history about a tear that is something like the very birth of its history” (*Madness* xxix). I (try to) take up, problematically to be sure, this interest in limits. Like Michalinos Zembylas’s “pedagogy of passion” I too want to explore how “the art of being oneself through learning is the

transgression of one's habitual self and beliefs and the shattering of 'normal' identity in order to *invent* one's self differently" (53). Such a pedagogical project is one "in which teachers and learners are endlessly producing new relations to themselves" but to do so Zembylas contends "we need to explore the ways in which passional experiences, the kind that are usually regarded as sensational experiences, might be re-framed and turned to useful and transformative political ends" (55; 56-57). How might re-framing the sensationalism around inter-generational erotic relationships in education illuminate new relational potentials for students and teachers? How might the Marquis de Sade's extremely pornographic pedagogical dialogue, relegated to disciplines outside of education, point to the potential of a sadistic pedagogy that allows the female student-subject to undo or strip away (literally and figuratively) her previous learning and self - challenging contemporary pedagogical practices? How does the representation of violence and intimacy, as seen in Gus Van Sant's *Elephant,* touch upon the fear of intimacy in contemporary schools that is "the elephant in the (class)room"? How do these three engagements allow for us to re-think possible ways of becoming in the world to offer up queer mode(l)s of relating to the self and other?

The Lessons of Queer Models

Queer models are no doubt sensational. Education's gaze at queers – defined most frequently as LGBT students – is one that seeks to make such experiences understandable and reasonable. For instance, creating safe spaces for such students and including LGBT issues in the curriculum does this. While a noble project, making LGBT students and issues safe stabilizes queerness and eliminates its challenges to the process of normalization. It sanitizes queerness and the threats that queerness offers to the status quo. Education, as such, seeks to understand LGBT

students and issues to create them as objects of knowledge to be known while refusing to grapple with the challenges of queerness as a model of relating to the self and other. Education is, as McWilliam's notes, "stuck in the missionary position" that has severely limited the ways in which students and teachers might relate to the self, the other, and the curriculum ("Stuck in").

Eric Rofes noticed that one particular strategy of anti-homophobic education had been in fact, presenting positive role models of openly gay and lesbian teachers. Along with this, he noticed another strategy of providing books, films, and other curricular materials that present positive representations of gay and lesbian individuals so that they are recognizable to the social world. Of interest in such an approach were the positive representations of "gay" men – namely representations of gay men that are not promiscuous, not pedophiles, not flamboyant, not drag queens, not men who seek out anonymous sex in bathrooms and parks, not male hustlers. Positive representations seem to be representations that de-sexualize and neuter the "gay" male community to make them appear rather sterile and respectable. These representations provide what Britzman (1995) called a "double remedy". This double remedy allowed homophobic or hostile individuals who could not imagine difference to see positive images that they might find more appealing *and* those "queers" who lack self-esteem because they cannot imagine themselves as having a "self" beyond the pathological model are shown positive ways of being gay (158). The homophobic and queer individuals are seen as being cured by this remedy of positive representations.

One of my main concerns in this current work is thinking through the valuable lessons that can be drawn from queer models that are not considered "positive" in order to imagine new ways students might be able to invent themselves. To do this, I draw upon the "family values" of queers. As Douglas Crimp reminds us "values are, in fact, just what we need, but they must be

the values of our actual communities, not those of some abstract, universalized community that does not and cannot exist" (*Melancholia* 77). Throughout this dissertation, I will rely on the values and lessons expressed by and espoused in queer practices, relying on a number of negative affects and sensibilities.[3] This is not, however, a project to normalize such models but to illuminate how such models and the values they rest on open up radical potentials for new ways of being and thus relating in the world. These models are my objects of inquiry, the subjects of my intellectual imagination. However, once I utter such potentials and write them into intelligible existence for education, their queerness might be erased – as Gayatri Spivak pointed out when she asked if the subaltern could speak (1995). These models and the ideas they allow me to think through may themselves be taken up and straightened out to fit in. This is, perhaps, unavoidable. The devices for straightening out bodies and ideas are ever-present and our task, or my task, is to watch for how such straightening occurs and what might be lost and gained in such a move. How the forward march of time erases the queer past cannot be avoided, but can be re-birthed with imagination and an ethical stance towards those bodies left silent or unintelligible.

While I find the positive representations education has utilized problematic, I do not want to negate their importance for providing alternatives to students. I want to instead offer different models that are not better or worse, but allow for a different engagement with the issues of inclusion and diversity. You might say, I am nostalgic for different models. One model that inspired this dissertation was the gay men who courageously fought and died while positive. These men were my first role models as a queer child. My first role models of gayness were positive as I understood homosexuality through issues of HIV/AIDS. I see it apropos to find

[3] For discussions on queerness and negative affects see Ann Cvetkovich (2003); Heather Love (2007); David Halperin & Valerie Traub (2010).

inspiration in these figures that, at moments, I myself derided, to pay homage to their courage in the face of immense hostility. During the writing of this dissertation, I befriended an elderly gay man who acquired HIV in 1985 – mentioned in the prelude. It is in the stories he told me while writing this that I was simultaneously saddened by the immeasurable loss of life that continues to this day but also immense amazement at the beauty of my friend who lost his lover and friends in the matter of months. This sadness and amazement led me to, in many ways, become even more nostalgic for the past that my generation of "gay" men often only read about and are faulted for in our own apathetic attitudes towards what is now for the privileged a "manageable" illness. This friendship has allowed me to learn from a model, an elderly *positive* model about the queer sensibilities that helped him survive, thrive, and become my teacher. He and the men of his generation that became positive were trying to care for themselves and others like them while living and dying in a hateful, homophobic, racist, classist, sexist, and violent world. They in being positive, created and maintained a "positive" queer sensibility that this dissertation thinks about and perhaps feels toward. Yet, these positive men are rarely seen as "positive" role models in the proper sense of the word. They are instead viewed as negative models – models to learn from by not doing what they did.

The models I will explore in the following essays are not considered positive role models within traditional school curriculums – a rather conservative and even reactionary enterprise. These models are, in many ways, erased from the archive to be replaced by role models that did not live such lives, but played their cards "right," "survived," and "fit in". I seek to bring these models – negative models for many – back in order to contribute to the archive of queerness often lost or ignored in schools while also seeking to do justice to these models and the lessons they provide. My task here is perhaps an impossible one, for Sade might never be acceptable to

the field of education, intimacy might always be feared in favor of violence, and intergenerational relationships might always be looked at suspiciously. But, I hope to see what they might teach us about life, about living and dying, about caring for the self and the other to ***learn ways of growing queer in the world.*** Perhaps, just perhaps, I might contribute to Eve Sedgwick's recognition that lesbian and gay studies, and I would add queer studies since distinctions are often made, are about survival (*Tendencies*).[4] But along with survival this is work that is also about thrival – about producing space and time that allows students to thrive in a million different ways. The significance of this project is to imagine, incite, and engage the imagination in order to allow the bodies of education to no longer survive their 12 years of mandatory schooling, but thrive in the queerness of education.

I move now to provide an introduction to queer theory to situate my reader within the realm of queer scholarship that I draw from extensively. This introduction is limited, but provides a view into the work that is always implicated in the current project.

Queer Theory: An Introductory View

A theory is, in many ways, a model. A theory offers a particular way or ways to look at or think about the world. A model (or theory) provides us with specific ways to explore the world or how to see and explore it. And they are also always under construction, giving us a starting point that can be altered depending on the context. Models change over time allowing "us" to see the world in different ways. My essays here work broadly with Queer Theory, which, depending

[4] Distinctions are often made between "lesbian and gay studies" and "queer studies." Such distinctions are problematic, but usually point to different theoretical and political commitments.

on which queer theorist one reads, teaches us about "x" in very different ways.[5] Because queer theory is a contested and complex territory, and because the idea of "queer" – both in substantive and methodological ways – is so fundamental to this study, I want to provide a brief introduction to queer theory and the different, albeit related ways, queer operates in major theorist's work that has played a role in my own development as a scholar and in my explorations in this dissertation.

Queer theory, it seems, has potentially become normal – an irony, to echo Michael Warner, that might be called "The Trouble with Queer".[6] David Halperin expressed concern with the normalization of queer theory, providing a rather concise history of its descent into normality ("Normalization"). I want to begin with an engagement with Halperin's piece as it is, in my readings, the most thoughtful and challenging take on the normalization of queer theory in the new millennium. Teresa de Lauretis coined the phrase "queer theory" for a conference held at the University of Santa Cruz and in her opening remarks of that conference mentioned doing so to provoke and unsettle (339). Queer theory began as a joke that was meant to provoke and "unsettle the complacency of 'lesbian and gay studies.'" (340). It was also to challenge "the erstwhile domination of the field by the work of empirical social scientists" (340). Furthermore, as Halperin explained:

> She hoped to make theory queer (that is, to challenge the heterosexist underpinnings and assumptions of what conventionally passed for 'theory' in academic circles) and to queer theory (to call attention to everything that is

[5] This "x" echoes the "x" of Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner's (1995) essay "What Does Queer Theory Teach us About X?"

[6] This is a reference to Warner's book *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life* that provides one of the most trenchant critiques of mainstream gay rights politcs.

> perverse about the project of theorizing sexual desires and sexual pleasures). (340)

In this provocation, de Laurtis hypothetically birthed a new school of theory but there was such a demand for this "queer theory" that its "hypothetical knowledge-practice not yet in existence" had to be birthed backwards. This came in the form of canonizing texts – particularly Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,* Eve Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet,* and Halperin's own *100 Years of Homosexuality* – as the models of queer theory that challenged the academy – particularly through literary theory, philosophy, and the classics – to engaged with the unruliness of sexuality.

Upon its emergence, queer theory became trendy in the academy and accomplished what "lesbian and gay studies" had not brought about – "namely, the entry of queer scholarship into the academy, the creation of jobs in queer studies, and the acquisition of academic respectability for queer work" (340). Such accomplishments while noteworthy, brought problems and challenges. Halperin writes:

> There is something odd. . . about the rapidity with which queer theory – whose claim to radical politics derived from its anti-assimilationist posture, from its shocking embrace of the abnormal and the marginal – has been embraced, canonized by, and absorbed into our (largely heterosexual) institutions of knowledge, as lesbian and gay studies never were" (341)

Queer theory has been abstracted from its specificity with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and transgressive content and "turned into a generic badge of subversiveness, a more trendy version of 'liberal'" (341). This de-specification and diffusion of queer has caused Halperin to ponder "what's so very queer about it [queer theory]?" (342). While the struggles of "queer theorists" such a Butler, Sedgick, Halberstam, Edelman, and Halperin himself have sought to make work that engages sexuality possible, it has in its evolution perhaps lost its edge. It has become blunted as the academy has disciplined it. As such, Halperin leaves us with a thought:

> If queer theory is going to have the sort of future worth cherishing, we will have to find ways of renewing its radical potential – and by that I mean not devising some new and more avant-garde theoretical formulation of it but, quite concretely, reinventing its capacity to startle, to surprise, to help us think what has not yet been thought. (343)

I am not sure if I have been able to renew this radical potential here. After all, Halperin notes specifically "those working in English, history, classics, anthropology, sociology, or religion would now have the option of using queer theory…to advance the practice of their disciplines – by 'queering' them" (342). Absent from Halperin's list is education. This is not surprising as education is not considered a discipline and has perhaps come late to this project of "queering". Yet, it is my hope that I will be able to build upon the queer work in education to perhaps offer something new and surprising to use queer theory to queer education.

I came to queer theory through feminism – particularly through a reading of an excerpt from Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble.* As already noted, her text was backwardly birthed as

"queer" – perhaps a fitting way to be birthed. Butler does not utilize the critical term "queer" nor provide a definition of "queer" or "queerness". Rather, her text subverts identity and challenges feminism's commitment to "women" allowing me to begin to grasp the challenges queerness offers to taken-for-granted identity categories. Significant attention has been given to Butler's *Gender Trouble* so I do not feel the need to recapitulate it here. What I would like to do instead is engage another oft cited piece by Butler - her engagement with "queer" in her essay, turned book chapter, "Critically Queer".

Queer is a contested term, one with a violent history. Yet, its uptake in youth cultures, AIDS activists, and the art world in the 80's pointed to the possibility of its reparative capability. As such "here it is not only a question of how discourse injures bodies, but how certain injuries establish certain bodies at the limits of available ontologies, available schemes of intelligibility" (Butler, *Bodies* 224). Queer is a term that "emerges as an interpellation that raises the question of the status of force and opposition, of stability and variability" where this interpellation or calling some other "queer" produces that subject through shame as it "derives its force precisely through the repeated invocation by which it has become linked to accusation, pathologization, insult" (226). Queer works because of its performative nature and is successful as such, provisionally, "because that action echoes prior actions, and *accumulates the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices*" (227). The task of queer in queer theory is, in Butler's use, to question the constitutive identities of the present. She writes:

> The genealogical critique of the queer subject will be central to queer politics to the extent that it constitutes a self-critical dimension within activism, a persistent

> reminder to take the time to consider the exclusionary force of one's activism's most treasured contemporary premises. (227)

Queer is not a stable signifier but one that is empty, shifting over space and time to allow for a politics that encounters the "queer," the shamed bodies, in the hope to open up space to do justice. The political and ethical project of queer is to never be too self-congratulatory or too self-righteous but to continually expose the limits and invent new forms of becoming and relating.

The "progressive left" has used Butler's work as an argument against identity politics, but such use is, in my reading of Butler, a limited reading of her politics. Queer vacillates for Butler, between, what Eve Sedgwick called the universalizing and minoritizing positions (which I will discuss later). Queer is partially a mood of self-critique that remains vigilant about the exclusionary power of discourses. But queer's mood resides in queer bodies. It relies on, or I might say lives in, those bodies that do not fit within the heteronormative and homonormative logics. As she argues:

> The political deconstruction of 'queer' ought not to paralyze the use of such terms [identity categories], but, ideally, to extend its range to make us consider at what expense and for what purposes the terms are used, and through what relations of power such categories have been wrought. (229)

My own work here wants to acknowledge this vacillation. I will write about students, students who identify as a sexual minority and experience life in particular ways, while seeking to open

up space beyond such subject positions to imagine what has yet to be thought possible for students. I will rely on specific queer models and their practices as analytic categories – seeking to recognize the specificity of subject positions while also wanting to, dare I say, generalize out to bodies outside those particularities. For Butler, and for my own work, identity is a "necessary error" and an error that simultaneously allows for the production of livable lives and limits the production of other possible lives.

Eve Sedgwick, the "soft-spoken queen" of queer theory according to *Rolling Stone*, concerns herself with this tension between how sexuality impacts specific identity groups – namely sexual minorities and how sexuality impacts everyone. This is apparent in the first lines of her *Epistemology of the Closet* where she "proposes that many of the major nodes of thought and knowledge in twentieth-century Western culture as a whole are structured – indeed fractured – by a chronic, now endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual definition" arguing that "an understanding of virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition" (1). Similar to Butler, Sedgwick never uses the terminology of queer, queerness or queer theory – something she notes in the preface to the 1998 edition to *Epistemology of the Closet*. But she does offer, as I noted earlier, her helpful distinction between the minoritizing and universalizing position. The minoritizing position on one hand sees the definition of homo/heterosexuality "as an issue of active importance primarily for a small, distinct, relatively fixed homosexual minority" while the universalizing position, on the other hand, sees this definition as "an issue of continuing, determinative importance in the lives of people across the spectrum of sexualities" (1). These two positions illuminate the vacillation of queer between its particular importance to the "queer" community, but also its

general importance to the world writ large. As such, she writes in *Tendencies* that "queer is a continuing moment, movement, motive – recurrent, eddying, *troublant"* (xii). It is "inextinguishable," "relational and strange" (xii). Later on she writes queer "can refer to: the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't be* made) to signify monolithically" (8). Queer for Sedgwick is rather playful as it seeks to do justice not only to the specificity of a "homosexual" minority but to all sexualities that people live.

Queer's playfulness is not without a sense of responsibility. Play has a history. And history plays a significant part in queer theory as the ghosts of HIV/AIDS, youth suicide, and violence against the queer body haunt it. Such hauntings, according to Sedgwick, create a sense of survival for those of us left, those of us who made it and now devote our lives to queer scholarship. While uncomfortable with this generalization, she writes:

> Many adults . . . are trying, in our work, to keep faith with vividly remembered promises made to ourselves in childhood: promises to make invisible possibilities and desires visible; to make the tacit things explicit; to smuggle queer representation in where it must be smuggled and, with the relative freedom of adulthood, to challenge queer eradicating impulses frontally where they are to be so challenged. (3)

I cannot remember promises I made to myself as a child. In fact, I was but a child when Butler's and Sedgwick's books were published. I have arguably benefited from such queer work, that had

by the time I made it into college become part of some collegiate curriculums. Yet, while I may have come late to the queer party and experienced a different relationship to my sexuality than those who birthed this field, I am still haunted by the same voices silenced by the heteronormativity and the new homonormativity that are pervasive in today's cultural climate. I am haunted by the deaths of school children that have committed suicide because of the harassment they experienced. I am haunted by the bullies who themselves lose their lives in the act of violence against the "queer" body. But, I am also haunted by the joys and pleasures I have experienced as a gay man who has benefited from the struggles of those who came before me, who fought for and made it possible to do the work that I do today. Thus, for me my survival is haunted not only by the negative archive of queerness but also the positive archive of queerness.

It is difficult to write about the positive and negative archives of queerness. It would seem to write about one or the other limits, as any choices do, the stories one can tell. To some extent, as sociologist Laura Essig notes, the negative archive, in one sense, dominates the stories we tell about "queers". She writes after the spate of youth suicides in the fall of 2010:

> The fact that way more than five queer teens had an amazing month, had their first love, their first encounter with the richness of queer culture—from drag to politics—is not a story we want to hear as a culture. The fact that hundreds or even thousands of queer kids stood up to a bully, injected queer consciousness into a classroom or a family dinner, and generally lived Technicolor lives over the rainbow rather than locked down in some black and white Kansas is lost in the news cycle. We prefer our queers as victims. They're easier to support and much less scary that way. (np)

And queers might be less scary as victims. But, it is victimization through shame, the insult, and violence that has constituted the queer subject.[7] Insults, shame, negative feelings have the strange potential to become "positive," illuminating ways in which queer subjects find possibilities in the abject. Michael Warner astutely explores this queer ethics asking, "what will we do with our shame?" (3). Mainstream gay rights speaks of the dignity and respectability of the gay community while queer culture recognizes the potential in shame where

> everyone's a bottom, everyone's a slut, anyone who denies it is sure to meet justice at the hands of a bitter, shady queen, and if it's possible to be more exposed and abject then it's sure to be only a matter of time before someone gets there, probably on stage and with style. (34)

Warner's queer ethics - an ethics of shame or where there is dignity in shame - is one that does not seek to become or remain respectable. Rather, it revels in the states of debasement as opposed to trying to achieve some level of dignity by appealing to the mainstream or dominant culture. This ethics "begins in an acknowledgement of all that is most abject and least reputable in oneself" where "shame is bedrock" (35).[8] Warner writes:

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[7] See the work of Didier Eribon (2004) where he engages the concept of the "insult" and the "making of the gay self". See also Judith Butler (1997), Heather Love (2007), and Leo Bersani (1995) for thoughtful engagements with these issues.

[8] While shame is bedrock to queer culture, I might argue following the brilliant lyrics of hip-hop group Young Money, that in their shame queers make the "bed rock."

> Queers can be abusive, insulting, and vile toward one another, but because abjection is understood to be the shared condition, they also know how to communicate through such camaraderie a moving and unexpected form of generosity. No one is beneath its reach, not because it prides itself on generosity, but because it prides itself on nothing. The rule is: Get over yourself. Put a wig on before you judge. And the corollary is that you stand to learn most from the people you think are beneath you. (35)

This queer ethics, I imagine reads rather strange in education. Education seeks to be a respectable profession – seen poignantly in the professionalization movement of teaching and comparisons to the "professions". Education's – via schools – project is one that seeks to make students intelligible and productive within the given socio-political context. Education directs its students towards particular futures – orienting them towards some futures and away from others all related of course to their racial, economic, gendered, and geographic positions. Might queerness and thinking through it, inhabiting queer positions, teach us about how the world looks and might look to challenge such futures?

Models: Intentions in tension

Nel Noddings contends:

> Students may object that not all gays and lesbians are ordinary, decent folks. Look at the way some dress and behave in public. Look at the disgraceful displays in so-called gay parades. It can be admitted that many of us find these antics

> distasteful. We don't have to romanticize a group by creating a false, positive stereotype. There are many displays and habits in all kinds of people (even in our friends) that we find distasteful or even offensive, but we do not usually feel justified in abusing those who so offend our sensibilities. (*Critical Issues* 248)

I agree with Noddings that not all gays and lesbians are ordinary folks – thankfully – and while these "folks" might be distasteful, we have no justification to abuse them because their distasteful antics teach us about alternative ways to conceive of and exist in the world. I am not, however, satisfied with Nodding's contention because it seems she seeks mere tolerance of taste without seeing, as John Waters does, that "bad taste is a great freedom if you have it". The current project does not seek to be ordinary or decent. It seeks to embrace those "disgraceful displays" that are distasteful and offensive so not to create a "false positive stereotype" that might "romanticize" the gay and lesbian population. I have no desire to be romantic. Rather, I have immeasurable desire to find the freedom Waters speaks of in bad taste through three particular models that I have found allowed me to "gleefully disregard social conventions".

The collection of essays engaged below draws upon different queers – from queer school shooters to the Marquis de Sade and intergenerational relationships. I believe that the issues I discuss are critical issues, but the manner I engage them may be viewed as inappropriate for educational research and rather distasteful at a time when education is in yet another crisis. I engage these models at a time of crisis in order to illuminate how appropriateness and taste in education are complex and might be challenged to offer alternative tastes for students to develop. And I will, ironically, propose another crisis education is experiencing but will not name.

I take an intimate look at the following three models, in order to explore what such models offer education and how they might challenge schooling. To call upon the epigraphs that

open this introductory chapter, I hope to think and write about ways to make other people possible that are different from me. My approach is to focus on, play with those models that many might see as the "worst" representations or models of the "queer" community not viewed as "ordinary, decent folk". In doing so, my project is not primarily an epistemological project, although I cannot avoid such issues becoming a part of this project as many may read this and see it as offering a view of a "better" mode of thinking about queerness. However, I am not concerned with knowledge and what we "know" in order to produce more "accurate" or "better" knowledge. Rather, the primary focus of these essays is ethical. I am interested in how these models allow "us" to see how we relate to one another and the self. In exploring these issues, I hope to minimize paranoid readings in the hope of maximizing reparative readings – a method of reading more fully explored in the next chapter. Simply put though, I want to look at representations or "models" that have been ignored, avoided, or seen negatively and read them not to further expose how they are "bad" or "negative" or "set the movement back," but rather to allow them to surprise me by opening up avenues for relating to the strange bodies in the world and creating a new horizon of potential within that world. I guess, I could say I am reading against the grain…

Of particular interest to my overall project are models that are not seen as a part of the educational canon or frame. Another way to put it would be that my concern is with queer models, queer "role" models, that open up unseen or ignored practices and subcultures that have a lot to teach us about becoming in the world. I write thinking through these models' queerness – inhabiting them – rather than writing about them to create a curriculum of queer models.[9]

[9] Ellen McCallum in *Object Lessons: How to Do Things with Fetishism* takes this approach writing "the change from thinking *about* fetishism to thinking *through* fetishism calls for a change in attention, from fetish objects to the use subjects make of fetishes and fetishism." This

I want to dwell momentarily on the notion of models because I think it is a generative term. The notion of a model is seen often in educational scholarship. Math and science teachers use models to help students understand complex concepts in those fields. English teachers often have a model for different types of paper writing. Education talks about the importance of modeling "good behavior". Teachers are thought to be role models for their students. Students are called upon to be role models for their peers and younger students. In scholarship on inclusive education on sexuality the common view is that "one should attempt to 'recover' authentic images of gays and lesbians and stick them into the curriculum with the hope that representations – in the form of tidy role models – can serve as a double remedy for the hostility toward social difference" (Britzman, *Lost Objects* 86). Models abound in education. Students and teachers also model for one another - new fashions or styles that allow their "self's" to be seen in particular ways (e.g. a hip teacher, a goth student, a hipster, preppy, etc.). The school is, in some regards, an incredibly large and complex catwalk where modeling fashion has serious consequences for students and teachers.[10] Models matter. And the task is to create models to make such queerness survivable while not subsuming such models into the regimes of the normal. Thinking the improbable then is key and I hope that the improbable coupling of my queer models with education might, oh just might, do something interesting, adding to the

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change in thinking has an aim "to show how thinking as a fetishist leads us to a more complicated and nuanced view about sexual and ontological differences and . . . more creative and productive interpretations of subjects and objects can emerge" (xvi). I am, obviously, not engaging fetishism, but find McCallum's distinction between thinking about versus thinking through assists in my aims here.

[10] See Glorianne Leck (2000) for an essay that addresses the issue of uniforms in schools and the implications on queerness. See also Kathryn Bond-Stockon (2006) who provides a fascinating analysis of "queer clothing" as a form of skin in "Cloth Wounds Or When Queers are Martryed to Clothes: Debasements of Fabricated Skins" in *Beautiful Bottom Beautiful Shame*.

growing literature around queer theory in education, and allowing us to move from thinking about queers to thinking through queerness.

There are different ways of conceptualizing my work here. I could write about it in relation to "Queer Theory" as that is broadly the theoretical frame I draw from and address later. I have found it useful to shy away from using " queer theory" to using that of "queer models" - in part because it allows me to maintain my relationship to "theory," but also because it is a versatile word that implicates the "body" (e.g. the model's body) and an "idea" (e.g. the model citizen). I hope to, in the essays that follow, think through different queer models - that navigate the tension between a minority practice/identity and a universal concern/issue.

A Note On Humanities-Oriented Research

These essays rely on the humanities - broadly literary and film theory, philosophy, and history. They are a humanities-oriented collection of essays, though I myself am not situated in a humanities department or discipline. I situate my work in the humanities because "if the humanities has a future as cultural criticism, and cultural criticism has a task at the present moment, it is no doubt to return us to the human where we do not expect to find it, in its frailty and at the limits of its capacity to make sense" (Butler, *Giving an Account* 151). In these essays, oriented in this way, I seek to explore the human in moments that are often avoided, neglected, or viewed as -phobic instances of representation. I explore these moments because they illuminate moments of failure and fragility that expose the precarity of relating to one another. What happens when we dwell in those others that we marginalize or find strange? What lives are uncovered or made possible in such dwelling? What lives become inhabitable in reading these moments as opportunities to see the human, the subject in new, generous light?

Humanities-oriented work is relatively new to educational research. It was not until 2009 that the American Education Research Association (AERA) released its "Standards for Reporting on Humanities-Oriented Research in AERA Publications". In this document, AERA created:

> A framework of expectations providing guidance for writers, readers, reviewers, and editors, rather than to define the conduct of humanities-oriented research, to specify its acceptable modes or formats, or to suggest that acceptability can be determined through application of a checklist of guidelines and procedures. (481)

The following collection of essays takes this approach to exploring, problematizing, and critiquing particular educational practices (e.g. multicultural educations use of "good" representations) and phenomena (e.g. school violence) and how such issues frame the student or make the student possible. In light of this, these essays seek to, as the standards note, "foster dissonance and discomfort with conventional practice" (482).

I want to dwell on this type of research for a moment because of its recent acceptance into education research. I do this particularly to further discuss the "orientation" of these essays and the concept of orientation. It is curious that the AERA, after extensive debate and politics, named this type of research "humanities-oriented". This research is not "humanities-based" or simply "humanities" research. It is specifically "humanities-oriented," implying that such research is oriented towards the humanities, but perhaps not entirely humanities research. This may be because education recognizes the necessity for the humanities and is making it possible for those interested to orient their research gaze towards the humanities, but maintaining some

relationship to the empirical social scientific realm that dominates education. What of this orientation and what might the use of "orientation" provide in thinking about research and education in my work here?

My work seeks to provoke thought within the general field of teacher education and, specifically I suppose, within Educational Philosophy and Curriculum Theory. I am situated within a College of Education and am responsible for teaching courses primarily for pre-service teachers. At the outset, my project here might seem like it does not relate to teacher education or have anything "practical" to offer education. It is my sincere belief, though, that this project will have something to offer education – beyond how it has helped me develop as a scholar and engage in my own teaching practices. It will not offer solutions. It will not offer a list of best practices to be an ethical or "queer" teacher. Rather it will do what humanities-oriented research has the potential to do – to open up space for questions and create discomfort in the hope that such discomfort brings "us" to a different space and time. My hope is that my "humanities-oriented" reporting will "orient" the reader in different, surprising ways that may not be practical but useful nonetheless.

And orientation is important. Sara Ahmed was nostalgic for the orientation of sexual orientation ("Queer Phenomenology"). Her nostalgia is not to go back to some romanticized past, but to utilize such a term to open up or provoke new possibilities of engaging how bodies are situated in time and space. Orientation is important because "being oriented in different ways does matter, precisely because of how spaces are already oriented...Orientations affect what bodies can do" (563). In re-engaging sexual orientation, particularly the "orientation," questions emerge about what it means to be oriented both spatially and temporally and how such orientation impacts the bodily horizons, the possibilities that bodies have when oriented or

disoriented. In this analysis, orientation is in part about directions...we are oriented through directions (and teachers enjoy giving directions) and such directions produce particular bodies as being more visible, more possible than others.

My task in this dissertation, beginning here with Ahmed's engagement with "orientation," and the AERA's standards for reporting "humanities-oriented" research, is to utilize queer models that may orient bodies within education differently and how an encounter with such models opens up ways to think about the ethical task involved in orienting bodies. How does research oriented towards or by the humanities as opposed to the more dominant paradigms in education (e.g. social scientific) put education on a different path or orient the project of education toward different futures? And how do the queer models that the texts and stories I utilize to produce my essays orient my own investigation in a way that is not on the straight-and-narrow? Can this project and its orientation toward queer models open up space and time to imagine new pedagogical and ethical possibilities within the realm of teacher education?

Chapter Sightings

In this dissertation, I look to explore a "queerer" pedagogy that explores the historical shifts since the mid-90s when a "queer pedagogy" was first theorized. I engage the disreputable Marquis de Sade - utilized more in French and Literature than Teacher Education - to see if his work, particularly *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, can provide a different route in educational philosophy and pedagogical studies. I utilize a film that chronicles a mundane school day turned horrifying to explore the scene of the school, including the school shooting, and what can be extrapolated about intimacy and violence in contemporary schools from such a filmic representation. Throughout these essays, I rely on work that is sexual in nature or concepts

related to sex and sexuality in order to illuminate alternative modes of relationality in society at large and in schools particularly.[11] I will do so, as I explain in the next chapter, by reading reparatively or exorbitantly in order to counter – though not replace – the dominance of paranoid reading practices in critical theory and education.

There are a number of words – eros, erotic, intimacy, passion – that scholars utilize to intervene in the dull and mundane state of contemporary education. These words will be bandied about at different moments in this work. However, each word points to different but closely related issues. Particularly, the concerns for a pedagogy of eros, an erotic, passionate, or intimate pedagogy seek to explore the ways in which education is embodied and how the challenges the body brings into the space of the classroom, while dangerous, cannot be denied or repressed.[12] The hope of such work is to open up space and time in the classroom and research to recognize and engage the issues brought forth by the body and to illustrate how we can learn from such issues if we are able to move out of a position of judgment. Doing so is, of course, rather challenging and some believe controversial because such words are almost always thought about in terms of the sexual. But as hooks writes "to understand the place of eros and eroticism in the classroom, we must move beyond thinking of those forces solely in terms of the sexual, though that dimension need not be denied" (*Teaching to Transgress* 194).

I contribute to this scholarship and depending on the chapter, I utilize different words – eros, erotic, intimate, passionate – not necessarily grappling with the distinctions between such words, but with their similarities. I suppose I could say I do so promiscuously, caring less about

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[11] While there is often a knee-jerk reaction when sexual minorities hear the phrase "alternative lifestyles," I find the notion of "alternative lifestyles" to be quite important and useful because such alternatives allow for the possibility of a much richer tapestry of relationships.

[12] See Jane Gallop, 1997; Jim Garrison, 1995; bell hooks, 1994; Erica McWilliam, 1999; Tara Star-Johnson, 2008; Zembylas, 2006

what word I am using and more in what using different words allows me to do. In my opinion, the common denominator between these terms is that through their relationship with the body they challenge the pervasive privileging of the mind over the body. These words illustrate that bodies can touch in more ways than one. That intimate touch cannot be equated as always violent or improper, but can also be construed as pleasurable and proper. Eros, the erotic, the intimate and passionate all touch upon the unreasonable demands the body places on the mind - disrupting the mind's reasoned and logical functioning. As Foucault aptly showed in the *The History of Madness* the erotic (or eros or passion as Foucault uses them all at some point) after Descartes becomes associated and tied with unreason. Reason via the cogito is reasonable, while the erotic, the passionate, become associated with the body and makes unreasonable demands on the mind. When passion or eros come to play, they overpower the mind, seen quite simply in the phrase after an intense sexual experience that we say was “mind-blowing”.

Theorists of eros, erotic, passionate pedagogies, in part, illustrate is that education is about more than knowledge acquisition or transmission. It is also about inventing modes of relating to the self, the other, and the world – for both teachers and students. Bodies matter in education and to ignore the bodies of education, is to ignore the ways in which such bodies are produced in relation to one another and in relation to the context in which they are being educated. As McWilliams so aptly noted “for better or worse, a school teacher is still some body who teachers some body” (107).

Significant popular and academic attention has been granted to the student body around "eros" – often producing the student as the victim of sexual abuse and teacher misconduct. However, recent work by Star-Johnson, Cavanaugh, and Sikes has begun “investigating the phenomenon descriptively from the teachers' perspective” (*From Teacher to Lover* 2).

Interestingly all this work has focused on teacher-student sexual relationships between a female teacher and male student – mostly because those are the cases that have captivated international attention. And this work, while complicating the "line" between teachers and students, has maintained that it is always improper and inappropriate for teachers and students to have sex. As Star-Johnson writes "let me say unequivocally – because I have discovered that it does *not* go without saying, as I used to naively presume – that I do not in any way condone teachers having sex with students" (7). It happens, but it should not, appears to be the explicit message. We should look at the issues from the teacher's perspective to understand their position, but we should do so to learn how not to cross that sexual line. We must dance the dance of the erotic while not allowing that dance to become horizontal.

This project will take a less "pragmatic standpoint" (Star-Johnson 7). I will not outright deny the potential in teacher-student sexual relationships, leaving space for my reader to accuse me of condoning such relationships. Allan Ginsberg supports this saying that "the best teaching happens in bed" because "its healthy and appropriate for the student and teacher to have a love relationship whenever possible" (426). Attraction is, after all, quite complicated. While I leave open the possibility of such relationships, the relationships I might condone are probably quite rare. Abuse of power - both student and teacher – is an issue that I cannot deny. And the abuse of power, is I hope to show (perhaps implicitly) is related to the inability of bodies to honestly relate to one another. The abuse of power is, I think, related to the lack of or fear of intimacy within education where teachers and students look at each other frightened for what may or may not happen. The essays that follow then seek to explore the connections between violence and intimacy within the pedagogical relationship and how various intimacies might allow for new possibilities for becoming while simultaneously not negating the possibility of violence.

In the next essay, I provide the methodology for the dissertation by exploring the reading strategies – namely reparative or generous reading – that I privilege throughout this dissertation. In providing these reading strategies, I then perform them later in the chapter to ask, "is there a queerer pedagogy". Re-reading Deborah Britzman's iconic *Educational Theory* article "Is there a Queer Pedagogy: Or Stop Reading Straight" I provide a generous reading to bring Britzman's piece into the 21st Century after significant amount of queer work has taken place. In many ways, this chapter can be seen as paying homage to an article that provided the impetus for my own explorations here around queerness, pedagogy, education, and ethics. Particularly, this chapter reads a moment in a Teacher Education course where the figure of the "twisted" teacher emerges along with Jane Rule's (1978) article "Teaching Sexuality" that explores the controversy around the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). Looking across these two moments, I conclude asking what possibilities are opened up when the taboo issue of intergenerational relationships is explored outside of a paranoid framework? Can erotic encounters between generations offer possibilities for relating and learning?

Following my initial exploration of a queerer pedagogy and my reading strategies, I read Gus Van Sant's *Elephant* to propose a fear of intimacy that exists within the school space. This fear contributes to the ever-present crisis in intimacy in schools. While the film has often been discussed for its representation of the school shooting, I want to extend the reading to show that the "elephant" in the room is not solely the possibility of a school shooting. Rather, the film horrifyingly represents the crisis in intimacy that one can aptly see in contemporary schools. To explore this issue, I look specifically the infamous shower kiss that occurred in the film, its relationship to the school shooting, and the overall lack of any touch in the film. I want to ask, particularly, what happens when we do not seek to negate the negativity of these teens, these

lonely, unhappy subjects of school that do not know how to survive the world they inhabit? What happens when we instead inhabit that position and see what it might teach us about how we are oriented in the world toward the self and others? Might the lesson of *Elephant's* queered observation be about the state of intimacy in education and how the "elephant" in our schoolrooms is our own phobia of intimacy?

I end by exploring the Marquis de Sade as an improper pedagogue. Sade, a rather reviled and censored novelist – pornographer in some individual's estimation – is rarely taught or seen within the world of Teacher Education "proper". Yet, his boudoir philosophy offers insights into a rather queer pedagogy – one I call Sadean – that offers a challenge to poisonous and permissive pedagogies. Sade's work has caused quite disparate opinions as he is seen as a "sexual liberator," "woman hater," and often associated with "fascism". His work is, in no way easy to read as it confronts the reader the scenes of sexual intimacy and violence. It is precisely his insistence on exploring and wrestling with the relationship between intimacy and violence that provides the ground for his boudoir philosophy of education. Sade cannot separate lessons for the mind, seen in his libertine instructors dissertations to the young ingénue Eugenie, from lessons for the body, seen in the sexual practices explored throughout the instruction. Sade's pedagogy opens up space to further theorize the relationship between violence and intimacy that seems to always exist in the space of schools. But, he offers up a way to engage such issues head-on.

Throughout these essays, I want to ask what might the queer models presented bring together? Might they touch upon new alliances for students and teachers to build? Are there commonalities across these models, aside from their queerness, that might be politically productive and provocative? In the concluding essay, I hope to return to the issues of each essay and see just what might have become possible. What have these queer models illuminated for

contemporary education to play with? Can queer models be played with or is the fear of the infecting potential of such play too risky and serious in a rather risk-averse field?

Chapter 2

Is there a Queerer Pedagogy?

> It should be evident by now that, as readers, the attitude we adopt in relation to the labile, incomplete, open-ended text is precisely the attitude that we are invited to take up in relation to the subject/other.
>
> - Sarah Salih

> In an odd turn of events, curricula that purport to be inclusive may actually work to produce new forms of exclusivity *if* the only subject positions offered are the tolerant normal and the tolerated subaltern.
>
> - Deborah Britzman

Introduction

Strange looks often accompany confessions that one is working with sexuality in education. It is, it seems, rather queer to talk about sexuality – in any form – in schools. Deborah Britzman in her now canonical article "Is there a Queer Pedagogy? Or Stop Reading Straight" notes these strange looks at the beginning of conversations in the early days of queer thought in education. She explained, "one difficulty that borders these conversations is that for many of my colleagues, questions of gay and lesbian thought are, well, not given any thought" (151). Having worked with queer theory for the past five years of my graduate studies, I am not familiar with this look around thinking about gay and lesbian thought. It seems "questions of gay and lesbian thought" are given, perhaps not extensive, but at least some thought. This thought is seen notably around issues of gay and lesbian identity (e.g. coming out and inclusive curriculum) and

"victimization" (e.g. bullying and discrimination).[13] Such thoughts are, of course, quite important and have contributed to what some might see as progress for "gay and lesbian rights". With this rise of thought around gay and lesbian subjects, however, we see the simultaneous movement of normalizing such thought and subjects. For a significant part of such "thought" or "scholarship" there is a concern, dare I say desire, to create spaces, safe spaces, for the gays and lesbians among us (or within us).

I do not want to contest this scholarship as it has allowed me to do the work that I seek to do in this essay (and the rest of this dissertation project). Queer educational thought has brought attention to the queer subject figured most frequently as gay and lesbian students and teachers with some scholarship emerging focused on bisexual and transgender students and teachers.[14] This work has created spaces in education to think about LGBT persons – seen in struggles for various forms of protections and the emergence of Gay-Straight Alliances – and LGBT topics – seen in struggles for including LGBT issues in the curriculum. Yet, as we move into new territory the subjects – both the material and curricular – of education must continually be re-thought and re-imagined. It is here where the issue of queerness as a "verb," as a process of doing, comes into play. How does or might education imagine new subjects within its classrooms – both curricular and embodied – and what does such a project of the imagination challenge and implicate?

The current essay serves *three* purposes. *First*, I provide a brief introduction to queer thought(s) in education to situate my work. *Second*, I will provide an exposition of the reading

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[13] For work on issues of identity and curriculum in schools see: Carlson, 1998; de Castell & Bryson, 1998; Harris & Bliss, 1997; Herr 1997; Jordan, Vaughn & Woodworth 1997; Letts & Sears 1999; Mayo 2009; McLaren 1999; Morris 1998; Sears, 1999). For work on bullying and violence see Elizabeth Meyers, 2009; GLSEN, 2008; Herr, 1997; Rey & Reed Gibson, 1997.

[14] See Bilodeau, 2005; Steinberg and Talburt, 2000; Rodriquez and Pinar, 2007.

strategies or positions that I will utilize and occupy throughout this essay and the remainder of this dissertation to follow Britzman's call to "theorize how one reads" (163). *Third*, I will perform a reading in order to illustrate how I understand and engage in reparative or exorbitant reading around the issues of student/teacher relationships. Specifically, I will read two pedagogical moments that mirror moments Britzman read herself, that illuminate the potential in the intergenerational relationship that exists between the student and the teacher. Together, these three purposes, I hope, will point to a "queerer pedagogy."[15]

Queer Educational Thought

Britzman's article, as one of the first theoretical excavations of queer potential in educational thought is, in my estimation, one of the premier examples putting queer to work in education. She proposes three methods queer theory insists on – the study of limits, the study of ignorance, the study of reading practices – utilizing the subjects of queerness particularly gay and lesbian students and the issue of HIV/AIDS. She creates space to imagine education in strange ways helping gay and lesbian students come into educational thought and be recognized while in doing so challenging the grounds of education. As such, I want to, 15 years later, ask "Is there a queerer pedagogy" that allows us to "stop reading queer" in order to explore what has and has not changed in education around queer issues and the radical potential of queer theory.

My intentions in utilizing Britzman are not to contest her brilliance. After all, her work is foundational to my own work in queer educational thought. I have no intentions to, "kill

[15] I ask "is there a queerer pedagogy" with a sense of irony. To ask for a queerer pedagogy assumes progress where a "queerer" pedagogy is better than a "queer" pedagogy. Britzman may have had a queer pedagogy, but I will have a queerer pedagogy. And of course, you the reader might get the idea to propose the queerest pedagogy of them all (at which point you will be labeled a size queen). Queer theory contests the notion of progress. A queerer pedagogy, as I set it out here, is a recognition of the changes that have occurred without negating the work that occurred "back there".

mommy," rather, I want to attempt to "break with the oedipal deadlock that creates and sustains intergenerational conflict" (Halberstam 69). I hope to create conversations across generations – across the span of time – in order to recognize "queer studies varied and complex past" which "is a history that we need to teach, pass on, and learn from" (69). This is not an attempt to illustrate the shortcomings of previous queer work, despite my own boredom, at times with such work. Rather, I want to work through or with my boredom to build from the previous work in queer educational thought that in its time was quite "queer." I do this to pay homage to those who charted paths before me, in order to propel such thought into new directions and possibilities for the various bodies of education – from the student and teacher body to the body of knowledge utilized in the curriculum.

Central to Britzman's queer project is the work of psychoanalysis, with a dash of Foucault. This Freudo-Foucaultian framing of queer theory allows her to ponder the "relations between a thought and what it cannot think" (Britzman, Queer Pedagogy 151). Her project is concerned with the history of thought, along with the psychic troubles of learning whereby the "it" of her statement operates as both the "history of thought" and the "subject that cannot think". Education was, at the time of Britzman's writing, unable to think about the "gay or lesbian student," particularly outside of issues of pathology and the appropriateness of gay and lesbian as matters of content. Along with this inability in the history of thought emerges the inability of gay and lesbian students to think of themselves as subjects in the educational space. Gay and lesbian students are to some extent, since the early 90's, more able to "think" themselves – seen quite simply, by the vast cultural shifts in education with regards to Gay-Straight Alliances.[16]

What matters for Britzman is "more interestingly, what if gay and lesbian theories were

[16] See Blumenfeld, 1995; MacGillivray, 2007.

understood as offering a way to rethink the very grounds of knowledge and pedagogy in education?" (151). Britzman's concern is about what can be thought, what can be known, and simultaneously what are the structures of disavowal that refuse "to engage a traumatic perception that produces the subject of difference as a disruption" (152). Hers is an epistemological project that explored queer theory's challenge to knowledge and knowing. Yet, such a project also hinted at the role of ethics and the necessity for ethics in engaging queer potential in education. She writes "at the very least what is required in an ethical project that begins to engage difference as the grounds of politicality and community" (152). It is Britzman's nod towards ethics that my re-reading will focus on because I find her epistemological project quite persuasive. My reading will exploit Britzman's methods by thinking about a particular limit (student/teacher sexual relationships) plagued by ignorance (the resistance to engage childhood sexuality) while utilizing reading practices that produce a different relationship (non-paranoid) toward knowledge about teacher/student sexual relationships, the bodies involved in such relationships, and the body of knowledge produced about student/teacher relationships. Or put differently, I am interested in utilizing Britzman to open up space to contemplate the relationality of bodies in education by exploring what I see as one of the limits of thought. These questions propel an investigation, like Britzman's, into "what counts as anyone's sociality" as education and its subjects experience redefinitions and new possibilities in becoming.

Issues related to sexuality have existed in the education of youth, particularly boys, since ancient times. One could conclude from this that queer issues have always been present in the pedagogical space.[17] However, in contemporary education there has been for some time a

[17] Attention has been given to "eros" in education by scholars such as Jim Garrison, 1997; Roger Simon, 1995; Erica McWilliam, 1999; and of course, Michel Foucault discusses this in his *History of Sexuality,*1978.

reticence to discuss issues of sexuality, particularly homosexuality. This reticence is due to fears that discussing sexuality will lead students to become sexual or worse, discussing homosexuality will recruit students into the homosexual lifestyle. In the 1990's, scholarship on sexual minorities in education came into its own with studies proliferating that looked at the homophobia and heterosexism present in education. Yet, "homophobia (not to mention heterosexism) is especially intense in the field of education, a highly conservative and often reactionary field" which made it complicated to address issues of sexuality (Pinar, *Queer Theory* 2). William Pinar's collection *Queer Theory in Education* was the first significant collection of essays on queer theory's potential in education.[18] It had the hope that the field of education would "hear us," the queers, allowing for a less homophobic(?) less heterosexist(?) less reactionary(?) less conservative ideas and bodies to exist and survive. This first collection was not a "coming out" but a demand that the field "come to" its senses and responsibility towards queers. Noting the concern about normalization and assimilation, Pinar wrote about the queer potential in disrupting claims to identity. For him, identity is something that we need strategically, but is also something that must be challenged because "identity" and "identification" always operate with exclusion. The task of "queer theory" in education, in this regard, is to help students become aware of who they are AND, along with that what they are not, what they have repudiated in order to be who they are. Or as Pinar notes "we must teach our students their inextricable relation to those they fantasize as other" (7).

The queer, in Pinar's estimation, is figured as doing this work around identity as "queer decenters, it deconstructs, it disrupts, it displaces." Queer does this to expose injustice(s) and open up new potential ways of identifying. However, he contends:

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[18] There were other book length engagements with sexuality in education, however, Pinar's book was the first to expressly engage sexuality via Queer Theory.

> Despite the explosion in scholarship and an apparent and slight clearing in the public space, we remain in a *defensive* position: trying to teach tolerance, trying to teach the truth, trying to find ways to decenter and destabilize the heterosexual normalization that so constructs the students we teach, indeed the public world we inhabit. (italics mine, 6)

So, while queer theorists in education hoped to move education to come to the potentials of queer, such a process has been slow-moving. It has placed queer theorists in the defensive position, in need of defending their work, their goals, their hope, in order to maintain the space that has been cleared and work towards clearing more space.

One could suggest that the defensive position that "we" remain in is because of the horrors that still exist in the hallowed halls of schools. We must be defensive, defend ourselves or those bodies we feel need defense (those unintelligible, marginalized bodies of the LGBT student) because such bodies are still routinely violated - either physically or psychically. We cannot help but be paranoid that violence is about to be inflicted or suicides about to take place because of the homophobia that pervades the spaces of schools. In fact, at the time of this writing, the US experienced an "unprecedented" number of teen suicides related to bullying and harassment due to perceived or actual sexual orientation.[19] These suicides have reminded "us"

[19] Of course, suicide related to sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation is not a new phenomenon. It is a phenomenon that has been documented for decades, seen poignantly in Eric Rofes (1983) *I Thought People Like That Killed Themselves: Lesbians, Gay Men, and Suicide.* New York: City Light Books.

of the need to be defensive about our existence and recognize that "it gets better."[20] Yet, in being defensive, in remaining in the defensive position, "we" limit ourselves in imagining other possibilities outside of the homophobic, heterosexist and, I would add, homonormative logic that festers in contemporary educational spaces and thought. By maintaining the subjects produced under the logic of victimization and utilizing them to make change, we simultaneously close off producing new subjective possibilities that operate outside of or alongside victimization.

In 1998, Pinar pondered, "perhaps for now it is enough to assert difference, to theorize queer curriculum and pedagogy, and to watch the horizon" (44). And, perhaps then in the late 90's, that was enough, but I want to believe that over a decade after the publication of Pinar's provocative and much heralded collection that we might be able to move away from the defensive position - not entirely of course - in order to open up multiple ways in which we might teach "tolerance," teach the "truth," and find ways to "decenter and destabilize the heterosexual normalization." The defensive position that dominated queer theory in the 90's and early 2000's is a position that sought to expose, to destroy, to deconstruct, to destabilize the norms, and challenge the injustices and the horrors associated with (homo)sexuality in education.[21] In Pinar's early collection we see various authors expose different normative ways of thinking or normative cultural productions - with each exposure or deconstruction allowing the reader to pause and see the world slowly become more and more complex. And, in such complexity, we

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[20] Dan Savage's viral Youtube campaign "It Get's Better" that emerged out of these suicides illuminates this defensiveness as adults seek to "defend" youth against their bullies by asking queer youth to defer their happiness for a later time when "it gets better".

[21] I imagine that when Pinar's collection was published it had the potential to offend and be taken offensively by particular readers – namely conservative moralists. As such, Pinar et al. had to defend the importance of their work, offensive as it may be and it is this need to be or remain defensive that I want to move away from in this essay. This is of course recognizing the necessity and importance of the defensive position.

are able to see who or what has been out to get us and stop us from becoming something fabulous. Such work has been done, as Pinar hopes, so that we might, converse across and within differences. After all, for him queer theory is a "conversational discourse" (4). It does not merely seek to destroy and deconstruct, but also to converse, to produce new ways of understanding and becoming in the world. This conversational discourse will require speaking, listening, and in my imagination, an openness to occupying other positions beyond the defensive or "paranoid" position.

What is of interest in this is the possibility to move from the defensive position to the possibilities that have emerged on the horizon of Pinar's imagination because of the insights gained from the defensive positions. This work done before me that I build on has shown:

> the explicit and implicit homophobia in mainstream scholarly discourses and political movements can lead to the continuous violence perpetrated upon LGBT individuals and groups, the dismissal of LGBT historical legacies, and contemporary contributions, and the failure to forge meaningful coalitions based on combined vision and politics. (Coloma 645)

Recognizing such violence, dismissals, and failures, I ask if queer theory might occupy an explicitly offensive position to build from what has been learned from the defensive position? Of course, offense is often scandalous and once one offends, one often becomes defensive and asks for others to come to their defense. Yet, as Edelman so nicely illustrated, defensive maneuvers "serve only to compromise further one's immunity and to stimulate greater virulence"

(*Homographesis* 83). To offend and not defend such offenses might open up and challenge violence or hatred into a conversational space, rather than driving such hatred or violence deeper.

However, to be offensive usually is not something one aspires to be. It is rather difficult to offend and not be asked to take up the defensive position in order to "defend" one's honor. Yet, James Kincaid argues:

> We are drawn to scandal by our desire to trip up the cultural censors, by a dream of escaping culture or transforming it…Let me assume, then, what draws us to scandal is the energy and promise of scandal itself…It's the offense that matters, that holds out promise, gives us hope. (26)

Scandal and the offense it produces is hopeful as it points to a different horizon that might transform culture – a "fact" that will induce fear in some and joy in others. Scandal also requires, in my view, a position that is open to the surprises that emerge with the scandal. The work I build on here that I now call "defensive" was, of course, in its day quite offensive. I do not in calling it defensive seek to denigrate the scandal and hysteria such work provoked or continues to provoke.[22] Rather, I want to ask more explicitly if queer theory take up an offensive position by constructing stories, within the homophobic, heterosexist, heteronormative, and homonormative logics, to make such logics livable in rather strange, perverse, offensive ways?

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[22] Kevin Jennings – founder of the Gay Lesbian Education Straight Network (GLSEN) – who wrote the foreword for *Queering Elementary Education* a decade earlier in 1999 faced scandal in 2009 for his involvement with that project. Upon his nomination by President Barak Obama to be the Assistant Deputary Secretary for Safe and Drug Free Schools Jennings faced scrutiny for his involvement in the book as conservatives accused him as condoning the statutory rape of a 15 year-old boy in a gay relationship with an older man. Jennings and the Obama administration stayed silent on the scandal. See the editorial in the Washington Post "At The President's Pleasure" that discusses this scandal.

Might queer theory in education fashion, style, and model ways of becoming that no longer rely solely on defending our right to existence and the defensive position that pleads with its readers to recognize the importance of such issues? Can queer theory in education draw upon alternative reading practices, soon to be explored, that propose to read the world in reparative, generous, or exorbitant ways?

Part I: Reading Strategies.

Almost two decades ago, Sedgwick claimed "seemingly, this society wants its children to know nothing; wants its queer children to conform or (and this is not a figure of speech) die; and wants not to know that it is getting what it wants" (*Tendencies* 3). Such a statement rings true despite what might be seen as "progress" in the civil rights movement for LGBT persons and particularly LGBT students. A queer pedagogy was necessary in the mid-90's in order to assist in the survival of queer subjects (students and teachers) and create a space for queer curricular issues to be incorporated. Survival is still the name of the game for these queer subjects, but this survival, as Sedgwick pointed out, is multilayered. Being a survivor in the 80's and 90's was "surviving *into* threat, stigma, the spiraling violence of gay-and-lesbian bashing…and the omnipresence of the somatic fear and wrenching loss" but also to be a survivor was "to have survived into a moment of unprecedented cultural richness, cohesion, and assertiveness for many lesbian and gay adults" (3). There have been significant changes in the legal and political realm in regards to rights for LGBT persons and maintenance or even an increase in violence against the queer body.

Added to this project of survival is the survival against the "new homonormativity" that has arisen as particular segments of the LGBT community have gained access and recognition in

the world writ large. Homonormativity, as Duggan writes "is a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (50). Survival of queer subjects becomes ever more precarious as its past is decimated, ignored, or forgotten, making it difficult to imagine a future that is not already determined by the hetero- and homo-normative orders.[23] It is for this reason that a queerer pedagogy is necessary, one that offers different reading practices that complement the defensive and paranoid positions that have dominated critical theory in order to allow for the survival and thrival of queerness in these strange times.

Sedgwick argued, "queer studies in particular has had a distinctive history of intimacy with the paranoid imperative" (*Touching Feeling* 126).[24] This intimacy with paranoia emerges out of Freud's work on homosexuality where he always traced paranoia to the repression of same-sex desire. Homosexuality and paranoia become tangled as homophobic psychoanalysts pathologized the homosexual as paranoid or saw paranoia as a distinctly homosexual disease (126). Paranoia became in her estimation "a privileged object of antihomophobic theory" where:

> Given that paranoia seems to have a peculiarly intimate relation to the phobic dynamics around homosexuality, then, it may have been structurally inevitable

[23] The struggle for gay marriage is a useful illustration of this process. Gay marriage is seen through a rights based lens that seeks to allow gays and lesbians to have the same rights as their straight counterparts. This strategy does not question the rights being fought for or how gaining access to the institution of marriage hides alternative types of relationships. See Michael Warner's *The Trouble with Normal* for the most insightful analysis of this issue.

[24] Sedgwick utilizes the concept of position from Melanie Klein's work, noting that position implies a flexible to-and-fro process.

> that the reading practices that become most available and fruitful in antihomophobic work would often in turn have been paranoid ones. (127)

The paranoid reading position of queer studies became the only legitimate way to critique causing any other form to be seen as naïve, complaisant, or pious (127). This paranoid work was and still is important work as it is "anticipatory," "reflexive and mimetic," providing a "strong theory of negative affects" and relies on "its faith in exposure" (130-143). Paranoia hates surprises and prefers to expose, providing insights into the workings of homophobia, heterosexism, heteronormativity, and much much more.

There are problems with relying entirely on paranoia and the paranoid reading position. To be paranoid all the time that "someone is out to get you" and therefore no surprise is a good surprise negates the joys and possibilities of being surprised. Sedgwick suggested that alternative reading positions be explored for their potential in allowing for surprises and a different affective relationship to the world. She offered what she named the reparative reading position. For her "the desire of a reparative impulse...is additive and accretive...it wants to assemble and confer plenitude on an object that will then have resources to offer to an inchoate self" (149). It is not a reading practice that is constantly seeking to expose some lurking violence or hidden oppression. Nor does it rely on the same affects of the paranoid reading position. The reparative position takes objects to be read and finds new possibilities of survival in those objects. It reads objects not to destroy them, to expose, say, their homophobia but reads those objects to create something new and affirmative. This critical position though, as Sedwick notes, has so often been viewed as sentimental and anti-intellectual (150). It is not as serious as a paranoid reading even though "to practice other than paranoid form of knowing *does not,* in itself, entail a denial of the reality or

gravity of enmity or oppression" (128). The reparative reading position *does* engage enmity and oppression, it just does so using different tools, producing different affects, and taking different risks.

However, these two positions should not be understood as separate. Nor should one be seen as one being better than the other. Different reading positions will do some things well while doing other things poorly. The task is developing a heterogeneous array of critical reading practices to engage the complexity of the world and the injustices, oppressions, and violence that exist in that world. Or to bring this back to Britzman – the study of reading practices and engaging various practices is imperative to queer theory. And as Salih points out in the epigraph "it should be evident by now that, as readers, the attitude we adopt in relation to the labile, incomplete, open-ended text is precisely the attitude that we are invited to take up in relation to the subject/other" (47). So we see, to take up a reparative position allows for new relational possibilities to emerge within education and the world it inhabits. Alternative reading practices allow for power to be seen as not always in a negative light, but as something positive to exploit and produce new lines of thought and ways of relating to the other.

In a similar vein Jane Gallop proposes a methodology "trying to theorize pedagogy in a way that resists the norm, a way of theorizing that I want to call exorbitant" (*Anecdotal* 6-7). This exorbitant theorizing is "excessive," "romantic," "perverse," and "queer;" thus humorously challenging engagements with difficult topics (7). The pedagogical relationship is quite central to theorizing, for it is the pedagogical relationship that gives way to theorizing - particularly in an incident with Gallop's then student and my now current committee member Ellen.[25] Gallop

[25]I would like to note how this realization came about, because it was far from intentional. While I had read some of Gallop's work in a course with Ellen on Feminism and the Marquis de Sade, I

through interactions with students exposes that theory and pedagogy go hand in hand - one perhaps cannot theorize without the pedagogical relationship. Theory is quite real and pedagogical. It has implications for students, teachers, and how they are able to relate. So, with Gallop's then student Ellen now in the position of "pedagogue," I seek to theorize through my own pedagogical experiences utilizing a theory that she, as student, was a vital component in developing.

Exorbitant reading would cut through the oppositions or theory and practice; humor and serious "in order to produce theory with a better sense of humor, theorizing which honors that uncanny detail of lived experience" (2). It is theory that is open to surprise. Relying on the anecdote – an "exorbitant model" – Gallop illuminates through her rigorous close readings of cultural shifts and texts the importance of the moment. It is the moment that deconstruction has taught her is "the site of productive thinking" (3). Moments in her life as a feminist, as a professor, as a feminist professor accused of sexual harassment ground her "literary theory" as a way in to thinking about the real lives and issues at hand. And this theory turns out to be "insistently sexual," as it constantly is "grappling with its erotics" (8). Yet, it cannot be mistaken as forgoing its responsibility to the real. Rather it seeks to open up, as Sedgwick also does, more heterogeneous ways of producing theory and experiencing the world. Theory and reading do not

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never recalled her noting that Gallop was her dissertation advisor. So, in the summer that I began writing my dissertation, I began to read Ellen's book *Object Lessons: How to do Things with Fetishism*. Shortly after reading Ellen's book, I picked up Jane Gallop's *Anecdotal Theory* - a text Ellen had not pointed me to. Upon reading the introduction, Gallop discusses "an intergenerational encounter" with her student Ellen and provides a footnote explaining who Ellen was by noting that she had already published a book with a university press. And that book was the book by my committee member, Ellen, that I had just finished weeks earlier. Needless to say, when I saw Ellen the next time to discuss my dissertation, I told her of my story with her then providing me with her own experience encountering the "Ellen" of Gallop's text when she first taught the text in a graduate seminar.

have to be paranoid. They do not have to be humorless. Rather, they can be multiplicitous, illuminate the complexity of lived experiences, and give education a good dose of humor to help with its iron(y) deficiency (McWilliam, *Pedagogical Pleasures*).

My interest in practicing and inhabiting these reading positions is to imagine a different there, in the future, that offers more than paranoia. José Esteban Muñoz wrote, "queerness is a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see and feel beyond the present" because "the present is not enough. It is impoverished and toxic for queers and other people who do not feel the privilege of majoritarian belonging, normative tastes, and 'rational' expectations" (1; 27). Queerness, as we see, is an "educated mode" that does not naturally emerge, but is taught and I hope to illuminate that queer theory's insistence on reading practices assists in this strange teaching. Queers and their queerness teach lessons and it is these lessons that I am most interested in, despite the possibility that such a project could turn slightly utopic. Yet, "utopianism can only exist via a critique of the dominant order; it has no space to exist outside of the most theoretically safeguarded abstractions" (39). The utopian impulse hopes to produce pictures, images, possibilities that allow for different worlds to come into existence whereby "queer world-making then, hinges on the possibility to map a world where one is allowed to cast pictures of utopia and to include such pictures in any map of the social" (40). Queerness seeks to open up space to hope for a queer time that has not yet been to disrupt the present for queer bodies. This queerness is not natural. It is educated.

My project in utilizing the reparative or exorbitant is about survival, but also about thrival. Survival can no longer be the sole goal of queer work – if it ever really was. Queer work must offer alternative lifestyles to those who still stand, who survived the violence so visibly lodged against queer bodies. We can no longer just expose the injustices in the world but also

focus on creating new ways of relating and challenging such injustices. My project here relies extensively on the past as "teacher" for it is the past that illuminates queerness. Afterall, queerness is "a temporal arrangement in which the past is a field of possibility in which subjects can act in the present in the service of a new future" (Muñoz 16). The past to which I and many queer theorists return to is not the mainstream or known past, but rather "to the fringe of political and cultural production," where it is "drawn to tastes, ideologies, and aesthetics that can only seem odd, strange, or indeed queer next to the muted striving of the practical and normalcy-desiring homosexual" (26). This queer past is utilizes oddball or strange productions to intervene in an academic climate that is "dominated by a dismissal of political idealism" (12). This is done in order to provide and produce hope where "hope is spawned of a critical investments in utopia, which is nothing like naïve but, instead, profoundly resistant to the stultifying temporal logic of a broken-down present" (12). Within education, the present logic is one that only seeks to recognize the necessity for safe and affirming spaces for queer subjects. Yet, as Britzman argued "queer theory disrupts the normalcy of education, maintains the difficulty of education, and because it is meant to provoke, cannot be easily integrated into education as usual" (as cited in Mayo 81). Britzman leaves open the possibility that queer theory is not compatible with education – a theory always at odds and unacceptable to the education project, but in being so, provides the opportunity to imagine new lessons for education.[26] It is

[26] As will become apparent throughout this dissertation, I am not sure queer theory can be or should be accepted in education. This thought is reminiscent of Patti Smith's recollection about Robert Mapplethorpe's views on his own work that came out of his S&M pursuits. She writes in regards to his work "that he wasn't taking pictures for the sake of sensationalism, or making it his mission to help the S&M scene become more socially acceptable. He didn't think it should be accepted, and he never felt that his underground world was for everybody" (235). I do not think the models I explore and propose here are for everyone. I do not seek to contribute to progressive worldviews because I believe the habits of queer theory are to disrupt and challenge the world to forever imagine changes that many will resist and refute.

simultaneously optimistic and pessimistic – engaging the reality of today while imagining a different tomorrow.

Part II: Stop Reading Queer

Britzman's "queer pedagogy" sought to stop us from reading straight by exploring reading practices that disrupt normative ways of reading and thinking.[27] To have a queer pedagogy or perhaps to queer pedagogy is to develop reading strategies that make the world appear rather strange. It is my contention that the above reading strategies offer potential within education, namely for students and teachers, to challenge, albeit in very different ways, business as usual to produce queerer pedagogies. The reading strategies I propose do not, like Britzman, seek to "expose" or "reveal" what has been hidden in thinking about pedagogy. This essay instead will focus primarily on reading to invent and create using what pedagogy has ignored to offer a particular way of fashioning queer thought that is positive, reparative, and exorbitant.

Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner understand "pedagogy has long involved the formation of identities and subjectivities" and so the pedagogical potentials of "queer" are not esoteric, not devoid of political concerns, but are "radical in aspiration to live another way now, here" (348). Since the emergence of Queer Theory, a contested emergence I will not re-tell here, educationists have sought to investigate what education might do with queer theory. How might queer theory "make sense of and remark upon what it [education] dismisses or cannot bear to know" ("Queer Pedagogy" 154). Britzman uses a psychoanalytically charged queer theory to

[27] I don't want to oversimplify "reading straight," but for clarification to "read straight" is to read without a critical eye towards how such reading practices are implicated in maintaining or reproducing the "normal." Queer theory, with its emphasis on sexuality reads with particular attention to the implications of reading on sexuality. Other critical theories disrupt "reading straight" by exploring issues of race, gender, class, and ability as a way to illuminate normative structures.

satiate her “interest in unsettling the sediments of what one imagines when one imagines normalcy, what one imagines when one imagines difference” (165). Queer Theory is a method – a method that education might utilize to ask new questions:

> Particularly questions concerning what education, knowledge, and identity have to do with fashioning structures of thinkability and the limits of thought; and questions concerning what education has to do with the possibilities of proliferating identifications and critiques that exceed identity, yet still hold onto the understanding of identity as a state of emergency. (165)

These questions are meant to open up a space to think about what "counts as anyone's sociality" and how education generally and pedagogy specifically are central to thinking about not only the politics of education, but the ethics of the educational project. There is a struggle here with the contradictions between Sedgwick’s minoritizing and universalizing views addressed in the introduction where teachers must be concerned about all students learning about difference, but also about those students who are viewed as more vulnerable. We also see, I believe, the possibility that education may not be adequately equipped to grapple with queerness, if it even can. Education’s own reliance on social reproduction and social efficiency may not be the “proper” place for a queerer pedagogy as education may always void queerness in its drive for efficiency and reproduction. Queerness may always be learned out of the school desk and the hallowed halls of school.

Queer theory insists on three methods. These three methods are “the study of limits, the study of ignorance, and the study of reading practices” where:

> Each method requires an impertinent performance: an interest in thinking against the thoughts of one's conceptual foundations; an interest in studying the skeletons of learning and teaching that haunt one's responses, anxieties, and categorical imperatives; and a persistent concern with whether pedagogical relations can allow more room to maneuver in thinking the unthought of education. (155)

A queer pedagogy is "an attempt to articulate a thought of a method…to bring to pedagogical spaces consideration of…'unstable differential relations'" (155). Queer, it appears, is a habit of mind – educated in a strange manner. It is not easy, rather it is in a constant state of excitement – seeking to disrupt and find pleasure within an ever-changing and highly contingent world.

The limits of the world are interesting. Any body has felt the limits of the world – feeling that they are the only one or that they cannot imagine a world where they are possible beings that can "love" whom they want to love. Queers can quickly learn ways to "deal" with these limits responding in transgressive, perverse, and political ways (157). Transgressing the norms, the regulations and repressions by focusing on the perverse, the improper and deviant as inhabitable spaces/times all with a sense of the political. These three imperatives challenge normalcy and what it is that, within education, students (and teachers) cannot bear to know. Queerness, as a habit of mind, takes its cue from the models that are disparaged in order to make such space inhabitable and extend the time of such lives. This is not however to simply add these "queer models" to the already overpopulated curriculum of difference because such a move for inclusion "produce[s] the very exclusions they are meant to cure" (158). Rather, these queer

models expose the very limits of knowledge or how knowledge is itself a form of resistance. Britzman writes:

> Pedagogical thought must begin to acknowledge that receiving knowledge is a problem for the learner and the teacher, particularly when the knowledge one already possesses or is possessed by works as an entitlement to one's ignorance or when the knowledge encountered cannot be incorporated because it disrupts how the self might imagine itself and others. (159)

Queer habits or the habits of queers are to constantly acknowledge this limitation and how knowledge can be part of the problem. Knowledge is not always liberating, but dependent on the context and powers within any enduring context, as shown within the work of Foucault. And knowledge undoes the subject, which is, seemingly, contrary to the project of education that seeks to build subjects (particularly their self-esteem and self-understanding).

But knowledge is not the only game in town. Ignorance plays a constitutive role as well. Ignorance, as Cavanaugh puts it, is "an organization of knowledge that prohibits ways of thinking that challenge structures of normalization sustained by the institution of heterosexuality" (17). Knowledge and ignorance are not opposed to one another, but assist in the maintenance of normative thinking and the heterosexual matrix. Within schools, knowledge and ignorance play on one another around sexuality as schools are "charged with the reproduction of heterosexualities." However, with the rise of gay and lesbian studies, and queer theory, it may be possible to see that schools have also been charged with a reproduction of a normalized and potentially desexualized homosexuality in order to create "safe spaces".

To stop reading straight requires an engagement with how ignorance is implicated in disallowing forms of thinking or ways of being in the world. And for Cavanaugh "queer pedagogies call on us to grapple with ignorance, particularly with our refusals to know about clandestine genders, desires, and expressions of love and hate" (17). Desires, genders, and sexualities are a complicated mess often occluded by discourses of heterosexuality. Pedagogies that queer this and open up spaces to see and produce alternative orientations are, inevitably, a part of the queer project – a project that is about survival for queer subjects – perhaps the queerest subjects – the child legislated to sit in school desks but completely desexualized by doing so.

Student and teacher identities, within the pedagogical space, are a contested site where reading practices come into play. It is a matter of reading practices, of engaging different forms of reading, that teachers and students within the pedagogical space might do the difficult work of navigating the terrain of identity, desire, and knowledge. As Britzman argues then "reading practices might be educated to attend to the proliferation of one's identificatory possibilities and to make allowance for the unruly terms of undecidability and unknowability (*Contested Subjects* 85). It appears that, for Britzman, it is the undecidability, the uncertainty of queerness that opens up space and time for pedagogical investigations of sociality and the development of ethical modes of being. She refuses "to secure Queer Theory to a fixed content, to a set of guidelines one might apply to automatize a queer logic, and to a stable and singular body of knowledge that supposes medicalized or minor identity" ("Queer Pedagogy" 155). To stop reading straight "we may cease reproducing a set of heteronormative identifications that depend on the erasure or exclusion of those who are uncomfortable or at odd with its normalizing agenda" where "queer does not refer exclusively to those who have same-sex desire but includes those who do not live,

express, or feel their genders and sexualities in a manner compatible with normative heterosexuality" (Cavanaugh 13). Queer pedagogies are quite strange, fluid as they navigate the changing terrain of desires and norms. But can these queer pedagogies be queerer to explore the new heteronormative and homonormative agendas?

Part III: Start Reading Queerer

During the late 19th/Early 20th Centuries gender and sexual regulation took on more conditions (Blout and Anahita 2005). Single sex schools and boarding schools became more heavily monitored by adults "to ensure that their charges developed correct gender characteristics – and more important, that they keep students from acquiring sexual vices" (68). This new monitoring was related not only to student-student interaction, but also the influence of teachers on student development. Teachers, as such, became more cognizant of their behaviors, as physical displays of affection and public personas became more private. This was seen significant with regard to female teachers where "after enactment of women's suffrage, criticisms of unmarried teachers became more menacing" where "detractors insinuated that such women harbored sexual maladies, constituted a 'third sex,' or more boldly were lesbians" (71). Unmarried women and homosexual men became figures that schools began to distance themselves from because of a fear about how such "immoral" figures might pervert the project of education.[28] These teachers became stigmatized for what was previously not seen as problematic. The fear of the gay agenda emerges in this history, a fear that California assemblyman Steve Baldwin in a "report on the gay agenda in our public schools" argued

[28] This belief reemerged interestingly during the midterm elections of 2010 when Sen. Jim DeMint during a rally said "if someone is openly homosexual, they shouldn't be teaching in the classroom and he holds the same position on an unmarried woman who's sleeping with her boyfriend – she shouldn't be in the classroom." See Terkel.

students who attend schools like the Harvey Milk High School in NYC "are subjected to unrelently [*sic*] homosexual propaganda with no information allowed about programs that have successfully counseled homosexuals to return to the heterosexual lifestyle" (np).

A queerer pedagogy is perhaps one that reads the stereotypes used to (mis)understand sexual minorities, particularly those implicated within the pedagogical scene, to inhabit them in order to see what emerges in such inhabitation. What is so frightening about queerness in education and its "propaganda?" Of course, sleeping with Baldwin's ilk might cause many a gay to take offense Baldwin's blatant homophobia, but I hope that in reading through Baldwin's fear and embracing the feared outcomes his homophobia imagines might allow new lines of thought and relations to be offered. As Britzman concluded her engagement with a queer pedagogy she wrote "that reading the world is always already about risking the self, and about the attempt to exceed the injuries of discourse so that all bodies matter" (165). Baldwin's rhetoric is rather injurious as it attempts to negate the queer body, yet I do not seek to negate those bodies feared by Baldwin (namely gay recruitment) in order to save the queer body. Of particular interest to me then is the homophobic fear that LGBT teachers, notably gay male teachers, will "recruit" or "pervert" or "taint" their students and how we might read such homophobia – a rather injurious discourse – to make all bodies matter.

King writes "gay and lesbian teachers are undesirable because it is assumed that they will influence or *recruit* their students. More to the point, gay men are especially troublesome because they are seen as pedophilic" (122). The belief or fear is that LGBT teachers will disorient students from the "normal" development of heterosexuality and re-orient them toward the lascivious life of the homosexual. The popular response to charges of "recruitment" and or "pedophilia" utilizes social scientific research that illustrates the lack of scientific evidence for

such claims with the belief such evidence will eliminate the false or "misinformed" belief. But, as Paula Treichler taught me with her brilliant analysis of AIDS as an "epidemic of signification," we cannot simply avoid or dismiss what are seen as misconceptions, irrational myths, and homophobic fantasies. We cannot hold up "scientific facts" and believe that they will 1) solve the problems or 2) are they themselves not biased and filled with fantasies and myths. Rather, "they [misconceptions, irrational myths, homophobic fantasies, scientific facts] are part of the necessary work that people do in attempting to understand – however imperfectly – the complex, puzzling, and quite terrifying phenomenon of AIDS" (14-15). Utilizing Treichler's insights, I propose there is an epidemic of signification around LGBT teachers or more specifically the "gay" male teacher that might be read in an exorbitant way. I do this to explore the misconceptions and homophobic fantasies about gay male teachers to understand such views, while exploiting them to embrace what might come when gay's recruit or promote the gay life.

Simon Watney noted that the fears about "homosexual promotion" already acknowledge "the *pedagogic value* of gay culture in developing and sustaining gay identities" (392). Gay culture is pedagogic as it sustains and develops gay identities that challenge the heteronormative. The fear of promotion is quite real and grounded in the continued presence of "queers". The specter of the LGBT teacher, however, haunts education and has been seen as a subject that requires regulation to minimize its ability to promote queerness. LGBT activists have countered these issues by often relying on "evidence" or distancing themselves from the stigma – claiming "we are not that". We do not recruit nor pervert our students.[29] We are just as responsible and

[29] Pinar provides an illustration of the common move of distancing one's argument from the idea of recruitment stating "I am not arguing here in favor of 'recruitment,' a military idea heterosexists project onto homosexuals which more accurately depicts their own aggressive tactics, demanding that their sons and daughters, everyone's sons and daughters – couple and produce children, children that now threaten to overwhelm the earth's deteriorating ecosystem as

asexual as it seems non-homosexual teachers are assumed to be despite evidence that non-homosexual teachers are far from asexual with students. I am, as you can tell, not a big fan of this approach. I, of course, understand its appeal and imagine it has allowed for changing opinions about LGBT teachers. I am concerned however that such an approach does little to take on the assumptions that recruitment and promotion are wrong or not the place of teachers. Or, to bring this in line with the current project, how the queer models of LGBT teachers as "recruiters" might provide an interesting place to think about education and possible lives.[30]

It seems quite rare to recognize the pedagogic value of gay culture in this regard. I have rarely seen people in education embrace the gay agenda and its potentials as an agenda. Instead, there is a distancing from there being a "gay" agenda (or agendas) as "we" seek what everyone else has already – namely rights and recognition. What happens though if the pedagogical value of gay culture and its recruitment capability is embraced to playfully offer a queerer pedagogy that seeks to offer counsel for students into the "gay lifestyle?"[31] After all, Richard Ford commented "even if one is born straight or gay, one must decide to be queer" challenging the message of Mother Monster (a.k.a. Lady Gaga) who contended "we are all born superstars. . . cause baby you were born this way" (123). While we might be born "gay" – a hope seen in the desire for the "gay gene" – we must work at becoming queer. And, in order to decide to be queer,

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the world's population exceeds the capacity of the planet to support it." (2003, p. 275). I instead want to accept that "queers" recruit as a move to undo the harms of normative thinking.

[30] Books available in schools are one visible place where this fear emerges as every year any number of books are challenged and sought to be "banned" See: http://www.miller-mccune.com/culture-society/book-banners-finding-power-in-numbers-28097/ http://jezebel.com/#!5757143/banned+book-groups-target-gay-themes

[31] The potential controversy of teaching students to be "gay" can be seen in the controversy that emerged around David Halperin's course at the University of Michigan entitled "How to be Gay: Male Homosexuality and Initiation." See "'How to be Gay' Course Draws Fire at Michigan."

children must have queer as an option. Queerness, as Muñoz noted above, becomes something necessarily educated and as Watney contended:

> Good education involves helping children to learn how to make and exercise choices. This is not to say that one's sexuality is in any simple sense 'chosen,' at least not in the same way that one might choose a career. However, the choices one makes on the basis of one's sexuality should be respected and encouraged, and this much include sexual experimentation, which in turn involves (for most of us) both success and failure. (397-398)

Might education educate queerness and in doing so recruit students to such perversity to allow students to experiment, succeed and fail in exploring the possibilities of sexuality? This is, of course, not an attempt to create a curriculum of queerness or to tame queerness, but move away from the paranoia and erotophobia that dominate discussions of sexuality.[32]

Queer Reading: A Pedagogical Exchange on "twisted" teachers

In an ethnography I did of a pre-service Teacher Education course that focused on "human diversity, power, and opportunity in social institutions," the "teacher" emerged as a potentially twisted figure. In one particular class – the token class devoted to sexual orientation – students discussed the issue of homosexuality and education – both for LGBT students and teachers. The discussion almost immediately raised the notion that sexuality is something to be distrusted or viewed as improper in education because:

[32] See the work of Gayle Rubin that addresses erotophobia and the politics of 20th Century sexuality.

> There are so many twisted people out there molesting children or having these sexual relationships with children at these middle school or high school level, people who are not even 18 and people are very, very upset about it and so we as future teachers need to take these precautions on how you touch a student – there's different ways to give a hug to a student. I can give a hug to a student where my breast does not need to touch. In this situation now, kids can lie on you, your door is shut and people come in what are you doing and it becomes a he-say she-say situation and your job will be in jeopardy. So even with the background checks people are getting round this and these are bad people who are teachers, I know a lot of times people don't want to admit that, but there are some twisted people in these day cares and after school programs and we do have to make sure that we take the proper precautions because you don't want to put your self in that situation.

While I think this student illuminates the very real world fears of being charged with molestation or sexual harassment, the response is to distance the self from any contact with students so to avoid the possibility of being implicated in such cases. Paranoia around sexuality is the proposed strategy because it seems students might be out to "get you" – understood as either trying to get you as a sexual partner or trying to get you fired by relying on sexuality. Due to this, it is the teacher's responsibility to "watch" him/herself so not to create any relationships that might be viewed as unreasonable. Yet, to follow Gallop what might it mean to resist reasonableness?

My interest is then to think through this paranoia to youth sexuality and intergenerational relationships in order to explore what might be made possible if we allow the self to create relationships unknown before being lived.[33] However, I cannot deny the tricky territory this brings me. It is quite unreasonable in the 21st century to engage love of youth outside of a platonic or maternal love. As Gayle Rubin commented:

> Lovers of youth enjoy virtually no legal protection, because any sexual contact between an adult and a minor is illegal. This means that a fully consensual love affair is, in the eyes of the law, indistinguishable from a rape . . . Lovers of you are the cheapest targets for inflammatory rhetoric. Very little public education has occurred to dislodge the stereotypes which depict adult-youth relationships in the ugliest possible terms. (197)

Fortunately, I do not have to look far to find the productive potential of intergenerational relationships between students and teachers that might attempt to dislodge the stereotype that such relationships are a "conflict of interest" or "inappropriate" or "ugly".

Significant attention has been granted to the scandals of these relationships seen notably with the case of Mary Kay LaTourneau.[34] But I want to utilize the story of a student from this same class who provides a nice example.

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[33] See James Kincaid's *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting* (1998) and *Child Loving:The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (1994) for the most compelling analysis of the history of child abuse and molesting.

[34] See Sheila Cavanagh (2008) *Sexing the Teacher: School Sex Scandals and Queer Pedagogies* and Tara Star Johnson (2010) *From Teacher to Lover: Sex Scandals in the Classroom* for two

> How do you feel if the student-teacher love is professional though. Cause I know, this is weird, like "relationship love" like dating, when it's professional? I was thinking of this story cause my friend, its kinda weird we were all talking when we were home how our Spanish teacher is so hot and he was like 'I have to tell you guys something' cause he studied abroad his freshman year of college and he was like 'I've been dating him for 2 years' and we were like He's gay, we didn't even know that, wait your dating our Spanish teacher and he was like 'yeah, we're in love' and he went to visit him while he studied abroad and we had class with him and no body knew.

This "relationship" or "professional" love begun in high school when the student's friend was a student of this teacher – an obvious violation of policy and potentially the law. The story is "kinda weird" – as intergenerational love is often seen – but in being weird, or dare I say queer, the student allows for youth sexuality and the potential benefits of an intergenerational relationship. The story challenges the "twisted" figure of sexuality in education by offering a reparative example of the sexual relationship in school – an example that touches upon a rather romantic ideal. This example illuminates, as I believe it did for the students in the course, the complexity of love in education, but also the different ways the subjects of education can relate if the ways such relationships are read might be broadened.

Of course, some might say that this is an exception to the rule, but as I noted earlier – it is in the extreme or odd cases that queer theory finds its home. Gallop, who writes of an extreme

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academic investigation of these scandals and their queer teachings. For mainstream filmic investigations of such scandals see *The History Boys* and *Notes on a Scandal.*

case of student/teacher love, notes this as well finding in such extremes "a sort of ideal, an old-fashioned romantic ideal" (*Anecdotal* 73). I cannot help but feel the same about this example, despite it occurring between a high school student and teacher – a type of relationship that Gallop does not address in her work. Perhaps it is the exception that should be followed and utilized to create the world rather than obeying the rule? Yet, can resisting what seems to be reasonable (and we usually think rules are reasonable) about the problems of student/teacher sexual relationships at the high school level challenge high school to more carefully and ethically engage the multitudinous ways relationships may exist?

I see in this relationship the potential for an ethic that does not base itself on the norm, but on the pursuit of and wish for the invention of new relationalities. None of this student's friends knew of his relationship with the Spanish teacher during high school. This allow for a relationship to flower and this particular student to receive vital experience into a gay way. There is here, some might say, a sense of closeting and hiding this relationship. But I find rather than closeting out of shame, closeting out of a recognition that this love – a love that dare not speak its name – is controversial to those outside of the couple. The couple closets itself (if we use such language) out of a care for one another and the mutual recognition that this love is perhaps too precious to be shared with those who may refuse to read such a relationship any way except as abusive or a "conflict of interest".

This makes sense of course because there has been a growing inability to investigate models of gay subjectivity outside of the homonormative. As Halperin notes:

> Thanks to gay pride, whole dimensions of gay subjectivity are off-limits to gay investigation and thus unavailable to us for systematic reflection and

> understanding. For all its benefits, gay pride has made it impossible for us to inquire into ourselves ("Homosexuality's Closet" 4)

The gains made in education that have legitimated the gay subject – both student and teacher – simultaneously have made it, arguably, more taboo to discuss the intergenerational possibilities of relationships and how these intergenerational relationships offer particular lessons, especially to queer students. The possibilities that emerge between gay boys and men – while potentially abuses or coercive – also can be something more. The controversy I mentioned above involving Kevin Jennings illuminated this as the very thought of an inter-generational relationship being anything but abusive was unthinkable and grounds (though not successful) for denying Jenning's a post in the Obama administration.

A certain anxiety arises, we can see, for gay teachers around their gay students for fear that being seen together will automatically provoke the homophobic imagination that the student and teacher are doing something "gay" together. This anxiety simultaneously denies students and teachers from relating in non-sexual ways and sexual ways as either form of such relationships can further inflame the homophobic fantasy of the pedophilic homosexual. This fear of intergenerational relationships and their challenge to the proper face of gay rights is a fear that played out and arguably began in the late 1970's as NAMBLA was removed from being a part of the International Gay and Lesbian Association (IGLA). I transition now to reading Jane Rule's engagement in *The Body Politic* – a now defunct Canadian monthly gay magazine – that was censored twice for publishing articles on "Men Loving Boys Loving Men" and fisting. It is in Rule's article that I have found the most useful engagement with intergenerational relationships

and the problems with youth sexuality. In doing this, Rule offers her own lessons on teaching sexuality that I want to bring forward.

Queer Reading: Teaching Sexuality

The closet still operates in education. I am not sure what this closet does all the time, but it is discussed quite a lot it seems – often in relationship to whether teachers should "come out" to their students. The closet operates in this question, however, "to conceal not homosexuality as desire but homosexuality as queer affect, sensibility, identification, habitus, style" (Halperin, "Homosexuality's Closet" 6). The question of the closet is one that implicates not only one's "identity," but also as I think Halperin aptly notes, queer modes of being and learning. Questions of coming out – whether one does or does not – almost always rely on a "sanitization" of queerness by focusing on sex.[35] This sanitization comes in the form of the addendum "my sexuality does not matter" or "my sexuality is just a part of my being" instead of recognizing the sensibilities that can be associated with queer sexualities. Sexuality is situated as unimportant, pushed to the side so that the real material and perhaps even the "real" teacher can do what needs to be done. But, in doing so, the potentials that exist within the archive of queerness and queer experience are relegated, as usual, to the trash bin. The focus is on sexuality as "desire" and "sex," as opposed to the affects and modes of living associated with such lifestyles.

One way that I think these responses can be seen is through a lens of censorship whereby teachers hide affects and modes of living that are too disrupting to the educational project. One, of course, always censors who one is and what experiences one shares with others, but when it

[35] My interest in the closet and coming out is not to offer a recommendation that teachers and students should or should not come out. Rather, I am interested in how either "act" is already limited by a "straightening" out of queerness – seen particularly in the reality that "coming out" in particular states can impact one's employment as a teacher.

comes to sexuality it would seem that censorship is often the taste du jour. Like Jane Rule, I am convinced though that "censoring serious discussion of unconventional sexual relationships does nothing to protect those who might be exploited. To test, to contest, is the only way to reach forward into understanding areas of human experience vulgarized by either taboo or glorification" (1). Exploitation of students is a major concern for education, yet the gradation that exists between exploitation and agency is rather precarious. Youth sexuality is an under investigated and politically fraught research arena – one of the limits that education dare not think beyond abuse and impropriety. As Rule so aptly concludes "children are sexual, and it is up to us to take responsibility for their real education. They have been exploited and betrayed long enough by our silence" (6). As numerous scholars who study youth, particularly LGBT youth, have noted, gaining access to this population around the topic of sexuality is almost impossible and perhaps even intellectual suicide.[36] There is no life in speaking out and discussing sexuality with youth – it creates problems for youth who speak out or claim alternative sexualities and for adults who seek to take responsibility and offer youth access to the sexual culture.

It is not difficult intellectually to recognize the insights Freud made over a century ago about the polymorphous perversity of children. Children are sexual. Yet, such recognition within the field of education is almost impossible. The sexual child in education has become defined, almost entirely, by child sexual abuse where seeing a child engage in any "sexually" provocative way is an indicator that abuse may be a factor. The child's potential curiosity of its body is almost entirely defined as inappropriate and perverted by the adult touch when numerous

[36] See the appendix of Mary Gray's (2009) ethnography of rural queer youth where she addresses the complexity of doing research on queer youth.

narratives of youth often expose sexual experiences with similar aged peers.[37] These experiences with similar-aged peers however, are often kept secret until later in life out of fear often times. This secrecy is perhaps problematic from an educational perspective because it limits the ability of education to speak of sex.

Sex education is, of course, rather dismal in the US, and has been seen as one of the contributing factors to the countless problems around sex that exist such as teen pregnancy, sexism, homophobia, rising rates of HIV incidence. But as Rule writes:

> If defecating and eating were left to the same secrecy and chance we might face the same problems with basic sanitation and nutrition that we do with sex. When the relatively simple task of teaching table manners takes so many years, why do we assume that sexual manners need not be taught at all? (2)

Teaching sexuality is not simply about teaching the "facts" nor is sexuality simply about the sexual act.[38] It is about so much more – particularly if we follow the Freudian paradigm.[39] Teaching sexuality is not simply about "sex acts" but also about relationships that emerge and develop between bodies. The possible relationships that are allowed around sexuality are therefore severely limited when not explicitly engaged or taught under the narrow rubric of either "abstinence only" or "safe" sex. We suffer from a severe lack of relational possibilities because

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[37] Some attention, controversial to be sure, has been granted to the contested nature and rise of child sexual abuse. Amy Adler in her 2001 Columbia Law Review article "The Perverse Law of Child Pornography" aptly engages the complex and morally tense area of child abuse and child sexual abuse. This issue is also seen in discussions around "mandatory" reporting in education.

[38] See Britzman's "On Some Psychical Consequences of AIDS"; "Precocious Education"; and Britzman & Gilbert "What Will Have Been Said about Gayness in Teacher Education".

[39] See Freud's "Three Essays on Sexual Theory" in *Psychology of Love* (2007).

broadening such possibilities challenges what is fantasized to be neat and tidy nature of education and youth (a)sexuality. The social institutions of education, the law, and medicine have constructed discourses around youth sexuality that cannot allow it to be explored or seen outside of the frames of abuse or developmental-ism. But as Rule aptly argues:

> If we viewed sex as a basic appetite normally satisfied and gradually cultivated, we would not need to keep our children isolated and in ignorance for so long, building in them what we have ourselves experienced: intense fear and desire which, so long uninstructed, produce dangerous stupidity. Of course we don't want dangerously stupid adults initiating our children. Fear of that leaves the children to themselves, not out of our conviction that children are, in this matter, the best teachers, but by default. We have so little trust in what we have to teach that we not only abdicate our responsibility, but label criminal any adult who might attempt instruction. (2-3)

Instruction of children into the ways of sex is here, not simply about sex, but about the relationships that are possible within the sexual realm. Adults, via Rule's reading, are fearful of addressing such alternatives because they (we) ourselves were denied access to the imaginative potentials that "sexuality" offers. We are unsure of ourselves and our ability to engage sexuality that, to draw upon psychoanalysis, we project such fears and inabilities onto our children. But, in doing so we make them their own teachers, having to learn through playroom dalliances or come to understand sex and sexuality through available discourses that rely heavily on "bad touch" and

abuse.[40] Yet, as we saw in the story from the pre-service teacher education class, there are examples of students learning about sexuality (and sex) from teachers in ways that are productive and useful if we allow them to be seen as a particular ideal-type. How might such moments – anecdotes really – be brought to the forefront of educational discussions about sex and sexuality to offer a queerer pedagogy that makes the unthinkable thinkable while recognizing the complexity of such thinking?

Conclusion

To propose that sexuality be incorporated into education, not simply for education's sake but for the ethical sake of learning how to be and relate to others in complex and divergent ways might sound inappropriate. Britzman herself recognized that in proposing a queer pedagogy the very foundations of education might be challenged. Yet, as we have moved from the time of Britzman's writing, gay and lesbian thought has changed calling for new engagements with the policing and disciplining of sexuality in schools and education. Such a project is, for many, maddening and unreasonable. This makes sense as Foucault exposed in his *History of Madness,* sexuality and madness became quite intertwined at the dawn of modern sexuality (and rationality). Non-normative sexuality has particularly become associated with madness and unreasonable desires or pleasures. Madness undoes the subject and sexuality as a subject undoes the sanitized, heteronormative, and I would argue homonormative logic that structures education and its purposes. Sexuality challenges the space of education and the responses to such challenges, often seek to relegate sexuality to the outside of education.

[40] I think about this in relationship to my own life. I remember playing with my neighborhood boyfriends when I was a child. We never spoke of this form of play as we grew up and for a while I felt ashamed of such play because of seeing the made-for-tv film about the McMartin Trial that made it seem to my childhood mind that such play was wrong.

Queer theory contests this confinement of sexuality to particular realms and deconstructs the discourses that produce the regimes of the normal. Instead, "in its positivity, Queer Theory offers methods of imagining differences on its own terms: as eros, as desire, as the grounds of politicality. It is a particular articulation that returns us to practices of bodies and to bodies of practice" (Britzman, "Queer Pedagogy" 154). Queers and queer theory return us to the body and bodies of practice that (dis)orient bodies and practices by thinking through queerness. It provides methods to subvert and or transgress the limits. The particular method I have used here is the reading practices that queer theory offers – particularly the reparative or exorbitant reading practices. While educational relationships are almost always intergenerational between student and teacher, the potentials between such bodies have been sorely limited and confined. Using the above reading practices has allowed me to grapple with intergenerational relationships in education in order to open up possibilities such relationships point – not to simply condone any type of relationship but to leave space open to honestly explore the potentials in relationships.

As I hope to have illustrated in this current essay, what is viewed as "proper" or "appropriate" for relationships between students and teachers is tricky territory. However, it is my contention that taking up a reparative or exorbitant reading position allows for a critical reimagining of relationality in education to see what the "improper" might expose and create. In the next essay, I read Gus Van Sant's 2004 *Elephant* in order theorize a crisis in intimacy in schools. I extrapolate from his representation of the high school *mise en scene* to particularly re-read the infamous shower scene that has been viewed as homophobic by creating an association between murderous rampages and homosexuality. In my reading however, I disassociate the kiss from homosexuality to think about the relationship that is sought out in that final moment of intimacy before the massacre. It is this reaching out to be touched – kissed – by an other where

Van Sant's commentary on contemporary school can be read as a meditation on the crisis in intimacy in schools. It is this crisis that is the elephant in the classroom.

Chapter 3

Kissing Elephant: Theorizing a Crisis in Intimacy

Unless we can believe in our responsibility to each other,
we may be in store for an endless history of
self-righteous violence.
- Gregory Jay

Representing Schools and Shootings

Upon hearing the title of Gus Van Sant's 2004 *Elephant*, we are met with the various lessons brought about by the elephant. Elephants, after all, teach many lessons and it is these various lessons that *Elephant* touches in order to explore the issues of intimacy in contemporary schools. The purpose of the current essay is to engage this filmic representation of the school and the school shooting to extrapolate from the film to theorize a crisis in intimacy in education. I want to particularly inhabit the position of the "school shooter" to see how thinking through such a position illuminates this crisis. What happens when we do not seek to negate the negativity of these murderous teens, those lonely, unhappy objects that commit murder and suicide to instead inhabit that position and see what it might teach us about how we are and are not oriented in the world toward the self and others?

This is not a review of the film, although I re-view the film. Rather, this is an engagement with the film as an object that helps me think through the complexity of relationality in education broadly. I extrapolate from Van Sant's representation of a contemporary high school to theorize a crisis in intimacy. This is not a crisis that can be overcome and has arguably always been present in the pedagogical space. When bodies meet tensions are inevitable in someway. The

task in recognizing and theorizing this current crisis is to find or imagine less violent ways for bodies in schools to relate and come into being. I assert that thinking about violence as a symptom of the inability or lack of relational possibilities is central to the educational project. Schools are one of the social institutions where bodies come into contact with one another, yet far more attention is paid to what students should learn or how their learning should be measured than the very basic complexity of learning to relate to the self and other. Schools do think about violence – particularly with the national attention on bullying in 2010 – but their responses to such violence heighten the crisis in intimacy by further distancing bodies from touching. How though does thinking through the school shooters – queer to be sure – allow us to humanize their plight to touch and be touched in a space that has become so heavily policed and disciplined from allowing intimacy? Can these figures in *Elephant* provoke a re-imagining of ways to respond to violence and the crisis in intimacy such violence exposes?

The elephant is "in the room," the classroom, as we watch Van Sant's *Elephant.* There is an elephant in the classroom, yet no one is discussing its presence.[41] No one seems to understand it. Or, to think about the elephant, when it is in the room, we are told: "don't think of an elephant." The elephant is there in the room, and despite its size, is over looked, not to be thought about in its grand presence. Sight here fails with those in the room unable to "see" the elephant. And even if we see the elephant, we are asked to not think about it. Yet, with the inability to "see" or "think" the elephant, everyone feels the elephant in the room. It touches everyone involved. Those in the room cannot (or do not) want to see or think about this elephant, but cannot avoid being touched by it. The elephant teaches not by being seen, but by being felt.

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[41] Van Sant drew inspiration for the title and aesthetic of this film from Alan Clark's 1989 film short *Elephant* that illustrates the violence in Northern Ireland during The Troubles. Van Sant mirrors Clark's style by utilizing the long shot from behind and minimal dialogue in order to represent violence without providing any answers or motives.

Van Sant's *Elephant* performs this lesson. His film never discusses the issues of contemporary schools directly, including the school shooting. He provides no polemic or moral condemnation of the school shooting. Rather, he chronicles the day of a school shooting to teach a different lesson or perhaps teach no lesson at all. He shows the shooting, but unlike other films about the school shooting – notably Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* – tells us that the shooting is, in fact, not the elephant in the room, leaving us in an anxious state of unknowing as our body shakes. What is the elephant that is touching us in this film?

Van Sant asks that we focus not on the shooting but adjust our focus to the rest of the classroom. He asks that we be touched by the representation of schooling, with the shooting being but one, the most extreme in his film, part of the "elephant" in the classroom. We know enough and have seen enough representations of the school shooting, but we have not been touched by the crisis (the elephant) that is in the classroom. So, while the shooting might be thought to be the elephant in the room, the school shooting has actually displaced engaging the elephant. The school shooting has rather than engaging the elephant, asked us to "not think of an elephant." The school shooting and its charged meanings have, I believe in fact, disallowed an examination of the "elephant" OR to draw upon the parable of the blind men and the elephant – the school shooting is but a piece, perhaps the leg, of the elephant. Van Sant's *Elephant* provides numerous representations of this elephant illustrating the need to touch the elephant in its entirety to grapple with its immense size. While the shooting itself is indicative of the crisis of intimacy – the inability for students to relate to one another outside of violence – for the purpose of this essay, I will focus on the infamous kiss that occurs between the school shooters prior to the shooting.

I will begin, however, by exploring why I use the language of intimacy and crisis within the space of the school. I do this in order to situate this discussion in a particular space – leaving it up to the reader to connect my argument to other spaces. Following this, I will move into a reading of the film as a whole and the particular kiss in the shower. I will conclude this essay contemplating the significance of the negativity of the queer subject and how thinking through the unhappiness of the school shooters exposes not pathology but a plea to find more ways that bodies in schools might be able to touch and relate. Over all, my attempt in this essay is to draw out of Van Sant's film – the formal elements and representations – a way to talk about the state of intimacy in contemporary schools and the need to address one of the foundations in education – the relationship between those bodies engaged in teaching and learning, growing and relating.

Why Intimacy? Why Schools? Why Crisis?

The elephant, as I will argue, that Van Sant's film poignantly produces and explores is the crisis of intimacy in contemporary schools. Here I would like to address why I think this is a crisis, a crisis of intimacy, and why I focus on schools. The school shooting is arguably the most extreme example of this crisis and one that has often been seen as the focus of Van Sant's film. The violence of the act is seen as emerging because of the lack of intimacy afforded the shooters because of bullying. Yet, the act simultaneously produces rather perverse scenes of intimacy. In preparation for the school shooting, Van Sant shows the two male shooters engage in their "first" kiss. And, in the actual representation of the shooting, the school shooter and victim die together, their blood touching on the cold, school floor. Bullying itself is rather intimate, as the bully requires its relationships with the bullied in order to be a bully. There is a strange closeness that exists between the bully and the bullied such that in the absence of bullying both parties can feel

some form of loss. And of course, in the aftermath of the school shooting, we are shown John and his father coming together as they are "touched" by the tragedy. We do not know what happens after, what policies or changes are made in this fictitious school to thwart more shootings. Instead, we are left looking in the sky feeling scared and sentimental about what has just transpired.[42]

Intimacy is a rather complicated concept and a tricky term to think through in schools. I utilize the concept of intimacy to engage the relationships between bodies and how they are or are not able to relate. In the previous two chapters I have thought through the possibilities that emerge when adults and youth are able to relate to one another outside of the frameworks of abuse or manipulation. Yet, what is required for bodies to relate? And are these "requirements" a part of the puzzle that needs to be addressed?

Intimacy is commonly defined as being about a close or personal relationship between persons or groups. It is something that is to be aspired toward in normative frameworks of relationships. Lovers are meant to develop a close and personal relationship that requires an understanding of the other, their wishes, their desires, and their faults. However, such knowledge is potentially wrapped up, as psychoanalysis has taught us, in the individual's inability to know the other without projecting any number of their own wishes, desires, or faults onto the other in

[42] We, of course, know that after major school shootings in the US, the response has been swift. Scenes of intimate touch outside of the school as victims and the community mourn are soon replaced by rather violent touch – seen notably after Columbine when parents stood outside with signs saying "Fags Killed Our Kids." The blame game begins as particular bodies – namely queer ones – are seen as the problem and are pushed away or outside of the school space while simultaneously becoming objects to examine and know. Touch, itself becomes further pushed outside of the proper realm of education as various policies and practices are instituted post-shooting in order to create the illusion of "safety" where such violence cannot "touch" the student body again. Metal detectors, cameras, and no-touch policies are instituted and enforced, albeit perhaps briefly, further complicating the ability for those involved in education create intimacy with various bodies.

order to assimilate the other into the "self's" world view. Those who fail to develop such personal intimacy are viewed as failures, unable to or unwilling to gain an understanding of knowledge about the other. Those who prefer the joys of promiscuity where the personal is less important are viewed as deviant, immoral, or perverted for their disinterest in such personal knowledge in favor of narcissism. However, Leo Bersani and Adam Phillips contend there might be something to the impersonal intimacies associated with promiscuous, anonymous sexual relationships (*Intimacies*).

Intimacy might not require knowledge of the other's person, but an ethical stance towards the other that does not rely on such personal knowledge. This type of intimacy relies less on the past – and knowledge of the self is built on past experiences and interpretations of those experiences. Instead, the impersonal is interested in "the possibilities of the future to the determinations of the past" (Bersani and Phillips viii). Impersonal intimacies are interested in what forms a relationship might take if the personal past is not given precedence in intimate encounters. This, of course, may sound strange in the context of schools where close and personal relationships between students and teachers is heralded as necessary for student development and academic achievement. Teachers need to know their students – inside and out – in order to adequately teach them and "differentiate instruction." And I do not want to contest the potentials that such knowledge offers. Rather, I want to utilize the notion of impersonal intimacy to wrestle with the role intimacy playsin *Elephant* to theorize what I am calling the crisis of intimacy. I do this in order to open up space to think about new ways students and teachers might relate and invent themselves. I do not do this as a way to privilege impersonal intimacy over personal intimacy. I believe both forms of intimacy are vital to the diversity of human relationality.

I focus this analysis on schools because I believe it is in schools that "we" primarily encounter and develop relationships with others outside of our family unit. In the United States children are required to attend school for their entire childhood and adolescence. Children spend more of their waking hours in schools or preparing for school, learning the subjects while becoming subjects themselves. They come into contact with various bodies and bodies of knowledge in order to become the particular type of student that is made possible to them within that given space and time. And for some students (perhaps even all students) such a process is not easy, as the options available do not fit them, causing them to struggle to find and create themselves in unrecognized or "unacceptable" ways. Schools also recognize their role in developing students' ability to relate to others and the self. Schools have created policies and class lessons that focus on building "character" and police proper and improper ways of relating. Furthermore, the relationships that are formed in schools are relationships that are viewed as requiring reunions in order to "rekindle" previous friendships, remind students of their tormentors, allow the tormented to now torment their tormentors, or in refusing attendance show that such relationships are a thing of the past, not meant to be brought forward to the future.

It is because of the struggle with relationships that schools produce and maintain that I utilize the language of crisis. Education broadly and schools particularly are seemingly always in a state of crisis and such crisis is seen as something to overcome or bring to a close. I do not use language of crisis in intimacy in the hope that we can overcome this crisis. Rather, I write about this crisis to bring it to our attention in the hopes that we might find ways to live through the crisis and cause less harm in doing so. Van Sant's *Elephant* while representing a school shooting does not provoke or incite rage, anger, or sorrow. Rather, he utilizes an aesthetic that touches the elephant in the classroom using the impersonal also. He illuminates the crisis by not providing

extensive personal testimony or knowledge about the subjects of his film. Yet, it is precisely Van Sant's attempt to represent the school and the shooting through an impersonal aesthetic that allows Van Sant to explore what affectively heightened representations miss – particularly the crisis in intimacy that the school shooting is but a part.

Elephant does not sentimentalize the victims nor demonize the perpetrators. Rather, it remains quite impersonal as it "merely" chronicles, most often from a distance, the day of ten students, as it cuts and layers the scenes on top of one another. This provides the viewer with an impersonal observation into the complex social milieu of the American high school. The viewer is provided with no psychic understanding of the students, as they are bodies moving about the space of the school. The past is ignored while watching the present, with a hope for some future that is not yet here. Might the lesson of *Elephant's* queered observation be about the state of intimacy in education and how the "elephant" in our schoolrooms is our own fear of intimacy – both personal and impersonal – what I will call intimaphobia.[43]

Touching Elephants, Touching Film

Elephant touches upon the parable of the blind men and the elephant. This parable, depending on the cultural tradition, teaches slightly different lessons. Yet, in all versions this parable, of course, privileges the importance of sight - that if the men could "see" the whole elephant they would "know" an elephant and not argue about what they are seeing or need a sighted individual to teach them the error of their ways. However, since they are blind they cannot "see," only feel the elephant. They are put at a disadvantage, manipulated by the sighted king, to teach a lesson. Had the men been sighted, they would have seen the whole elephant and

[43] I thank Ellen McCallum for helping me come up with the term "intimaphobia." If such a concept ever makes me famous, I hope she will be credited more than I.

the quarrels would have, seemingly never emerged. Yet, the parable's lack of sight through the blind men might teach a lesson about intimate touch. The men are perhaps not focused on knowledge via sight about the elephant, but about the use of the sense of touch – of skin-to-skin contact – to relate to the world. They do not have to operate under norms of the sighted world, but can touch the world to understand it in different ways. Their touch is not violent as they do not beat the elephant. Rather, their touch is intimate as they feel the elephant, trying to grasp the texture and the size of it. The men may not know what an elephant is, in its entirety, as understood by the sighted king. But, they do have an experience with a thing called an elephant via its various parts and it is this attention to details that might teach another lesson - as I hope to illustrate through Van Sant's film – about the importance of the skin, of touch and intimacy, in the contemporary scene of schools.

Elephants, in their grandeur and scale, are thus quite good teachers. But, the ways they teach have more to do with touch it seems than sight. It seems that we cannot see the elephant - because we are blinded, because we deny its presence, because we are told to not see it - but the elephant still touches us – not violently through a, let's say, mini-stampede, but through its quiet, grand, and gentle presence. We cannot escape being touched by an elephant. And we cannot avoid being touched by films. Film theory has, of course, been dominated by "an ocularcentric paradigm" (Elsaesser & Hagener 109). Vision and the visual are quite central to the filmic experience. Yet, film is also an embodied experience. It engages all the senses. Van Sant's film, I want to contend, provides an example of the "cinema as touch" utilizing the lessons of the "elephant" to not dazzle the viewer with spectacular visuals, but through the mundane visuals, to create an experience that revolves around the lack of touch, the lack of contact in the space of the

school (Elsaesser & Hagener). Elsaesser and Hagener, in theorizing film through the senses, especially touch, write:

> On the one hand, it examines positions that conceptualize cinema as a specific kind of contact, as an encounter with the (racially or culturally coded) Other…On the other hand…it introduces approaches predicated on the idea of skin as an organ of continuous perception that understands cinema as a haptic experience. (110)

This approach to film theory, while not neglecting the importance of vision, seeks to "understand the senses in their interplay and perception as embodied, as well as to theorize this embodiment in its own complexity" (110). Film, theorized through touch, engages not only how those in the film touch one another in any number of ways, but also how the skin physically experiences the film. Or, how film literally touches us. This is perhaps less secure than thinking about what we see in film. Touch feels more "touchy-feely," less stable and less rigorous. Yet, it is precisely touch that Van Sant explores mostly through its absence in *Elephant* – an absence that teaches us about the problems with intimacy in the school space.

The school is a rather perfect place to create a film that addresses the "cinema as touch" because of the complex place touching holds in education. Touch seems to be an important concept within educational practices and policy. Teachers are not to touch their students, while research illustrates the importance of touch in teaching, particularly in early education. Teachers want students to be "touched" by the material but not too in depth as teachers are asked to touch on too many topics in a class. Van Sant's film constantly illuminates this complexity with the

lack of touch existing alongside moments of touch in education – the former outnumbering the latter. Touching is complex as it is both intimate and violent. It is full of contradictions. We seek to minimize the violent touches that occur but in doing so, often make any form of intimate touch either impossible or seen as already violent. We can, in schools, look all we want as long as we don't touch. But, what Van Sant shows is the costs of not touching. And how in not touching we feel isolated and alienated from others and the filmic experience. However, "the shift from look to touch therefore does not mean the shift from a surveilling, controlling, and punishing eye to a caressing hand" (Elsaesser & Hagener 115). *Elephant* does not touch us to embrace touch. It touches us to allow us to engage the complexity of touching.

In the very opening scene John's father is crashing into the sides of cars, forcing John to take the wheel and drive the rest of the way to school, but perhaps more poignantly illustrating that the only way to experience touch in education is by crashing into the other. Father and son do not touch. The father in his drunken state is deadened to the world and the son immune to being touched by, what is seemingly, a common occurrence. Despite crashing into objects, the subjects in the car remain untouched, only jolted by the crashing objects. Later on, the bullies in chemistry class throw spit wads at their object, Alex, one of the shooters, pelting his skin. Bodies cannot touch one another, as such touch is mediated by objects. Objects can crash into bodies while bodies remain unable to touch one another. Photography student Eli asks two students to pose for his camera, directing their bodies to touch, specifically their lips so that he can get the perfect shot. Touch is something represented through directing such touch. And Michelle is taunted for wearing granny panties, as the popular girls try to get under her skin, touching her with their wounding words. All these moments touch upon the crisis of intimacy in education and the use of touch to create intimacies in a space constantly policing against intimacy.

Elephant: Van Sant's Chronicling of a School Shooting

Van Sant credits Clark's style for his own take on the elephant in the room in a contemporary school. His film, while often seen as a take on Columbine, was a fictional film that created an ambivalent viewing also of a highly personal experience. He did not create a film that chronicled Columbine, rather he created an artistic representation – a dramatic art film – of the day a shooting occurred with high school aged actors in a school in Van Sant's hometown of Portland Oregon (La Bruce). Van Sant notes that the film was "more of a song about the event as I perceive it – a song or a poem" (Said 16). This poetic or song-like chronicling allows Van Sant and his viewers to move away from the personal traumas of Columbine and enter a space that is not personalized by the events that unfolded that day in 1998. Instead, it offers up the space of the impersonal where there is "no sense of judgment or moral alignment" so that something new might emerge out of such scenes (17). The viewer may not be able to forget Columbine, and many viewers arguably did project onto Van Sant's film different figures from Columbine onto the characters in Van Sant's film - notably Alex and Eric, the "killers." But, the film provides more possibilities in its impersonal look, in its aesthetic form to engage the issues at hand and the future of schools that I will turn to do now.

Elephant provided a piece of art to contemplate the contemporary American school, including the school shootings' place in how we think about school. Sophie Moore writes "as much as school shootings are an American phenomenon, they nonetheless fit into a larger web of carefully planned violence of a sort that arrests our attention and compels us to feel around the edges of the issues again and again, searching for a point of entry" (45). The issues that Van Sant raises cannot be isolated to the school. They are issues that relate to the broader world. Van

Sant's *Elephant* provides a point of entry, one that has received praise and critique, to potentially engage this violence in one of the social institutions responsible for preparing subjects for adulthood and citizenship. Both critiques and praises of the film do not deny that the film engages, in some manner, the "elephant in the room" where even 5 years after Columbine, the shooting heard 'round the world, school violence is still not understood. It is still, like the parable of the blind men describing an elephant by each touching a different part, a phenomenon that has an infinite number of interpretations. Van Sant's film works with this by not focusing on Columbine and the well known "causes" for that massacre, but providing a more complex take that does not offer any simple cause-and-effect possibilities. Some commentators have tried to reduce the film into simple "cause-and-effects" by focusing on the scenes of the boys playing violent video games or watching a TV show on Hitler. But, the boys also play classical music, live in what appears to be a two-parent middle class household. The typical signs associated with the school shooter are present but disrupted. He relied on stereotypes associated with school shooters in order to make the film recognizable, but moved beyond stereotypical representations to produce a more nuanced reading of the event.

We, of course, still look for ways to understand, to make meaning of such violence as it unpredictably erupts each year. However, instead of providing a direct commentary on the violence such as Michael Moore does in his *Bowling for Columbine* released the same year, Van Sant provides an aesthetic engagement with intimacy in schools – with little narrative. This lack of narrative contributes to the complex feelings that touch us in watching the film. The viewer has no personal viewpoints from the characters and is asked to explore the potential benefits of taking this impersonal view of the events in the film. Young notes "the film's very refusal to give us the narrative information that would allow us to piece together plausible psychological

understanding of what takes place is exactly what creates the aesthetic effect of alienation" (500). There is no place in the film to understand the psyches of the students - victims or perpetrators – rather the film chronicles and shows us the day "in the life of" these ten students. We are alienated from the personal nature of such representations, asked to take a distance from the personal to be impersonal in order to move forward into the future rather than wallowing in the past.

Van Sant chronicles the event but does so for cinematic suspense, not to provide in-depth portraits of the characters. There is no serious dialogue in the film, only ad-libbed conversations created by the characters in the moments of filming (Van Sant, Director Commentary). The story is therefore quite minimal. It dodges having to abide by historical reality and the discussions around such a reality. Instead it provides multiple character's experiences, but the details - the "story-line" – provide little, if any, depth to the characters. The camera follows the students, most often eerily from behind, showing the back of their head more than their face – sending chills down the viewer's back.

This chronicling, for Moore, "is missing much of its psychic load," allowing Van Sant and viewers to be relieved of our complicity in the issues the film addresses (47). Yet, if we read Van Sant's aesthetic style as producing an impersonal chronicling, the film does not relieve our complicity, but requires us to engage the ethical consequences of the violence without having a sentimentalized view of the victims represented for us. It does not take the much sensationalized and personalized case of Columbine, like Michael Moore did, which was "much more a further work of *attachment*, of a sort of ideological suturing into the text where we're positioned as political good guys against the baddies who are in essence the political right and gun lobbying groups" (McKibben np). Instead, *Elephant* creates a much more detached text through its long-

shots and refusal to provide a commentary, that does not allow for feeling smug by being on the "right" side of the narrative. The viewer is able to feel anger at the killers while simultaneously feeling sympathy for them. We are unsure how to condemn them, but feel responsible to think about such issues. Van Sant's text is a fiction whose similarity to "real life characters is coincidental".[44] It takes a view of the school shooting that provides us with only the generic first names of the characters and shows us, but about an hour of their life out of one, seemingly typical, day. This view performs the impersonal intimacy that one of the film's most controversial scenes exposes. The film's aesthetic allows the viewer to watch these characters they do not really know and never will really know to "not take it personally." This is to open up a conversation about how to take it in order to think about the possibilities in the future. I will dwell on one particular scene already over-thought in order to think through it differently.

The Kiss

The students in *Elephant* are rarely shown interacting in any significant way with their peers or teachers. The framing of the students is almost entirely fragmented, providing no space for personal contact or intimacy within the school setting. The students move about their day as if no one else really exists. The kiss, however, is seen as a personal experience. Yet, it is rendered impersonal in *Elephant* by leaving the viewer without an understanding of the significance of the kiss in any of the scenes where a kiss takes place.[45] The particular kiss I want

[44] This phrase is seen at the end of most films.

[45] There are three other kisses that I will not focus on in this essay. One kiss occurs between Nathan and Carrie who are dating in the film. We, as the viewer, know the significance of the kiss. The other is a kiss staged between two punk students that Eli photographs the morning of the shooting. The third kiss occurs between John and Acadia as John stands crying in a large empty room – an emptiness that illustrates the emptiness of meaning the kiss provides.

to focus on here is the kiss that has garnered the most attention in the film. It is an intimate moment that comes out of no where – a surprise to the viewer – but in doing so propels the possibility for thinking about the future such kiss points toward. The kiss, while trivial, becomes poignant once the violence begins, and provides a queer sense of hope in the film. As S. Moore notes "disaster looms all the larger as we know that this trivial exchange will be rendered at once more trivial and more poignant for having taken place in innocence – before terror, sorrow, and confusion." (46). The "kiss," as it appears in the film allows the viewer to notice the lack of intimacy because the kiss, this particular kiss, disrupts the narrative and reminds the viewer of the humanity of all involved and of the possibilities that might exist after school. This is particularly important for the two killers whose kiss "provokes a tenderness in the midst of the chaos" (Said 16). The viewer, upon seeing their kiss, sees the killers from a different perspective provoking the viewer to feel torn between the tenderness and humanity of the killers and the monstrous act they soon commit. The kiss and its ability to shift the affective reaction towards the killers emerge as a space to engage intimacy in education and the crisis it seems to (always already) be in.

With about 20 minutes left in the film we see the final kiss of the film. It is this kiss that has provoked the most discussion around *Elephant.* In this scene, we see Alex enter the bathroom, turn on the water and take his final shower. Moments later Eric enters the doorway, sees Alex in the shower and removes his pants and underwear to get in the shower. He says, "I guess this is it, we're going to die today" followed up by Alex replying, "Yeah, I've never even kissed anyone." With this, the boys awkwardly, like the first kiss is meant to be, lean in to one another. For a moment it is only their lips that touch before Alex moves his hand up, gently, though still awkwardly, and rests it on Eric's upper arm as the boys continue to kiss. The

camera's gaze lingers allowing for the erotic appeal to build just before cutting to Alex fully dressed, tying his shoes and Eric, off camera, talking casually before the plans for what will soon come are gone over again.

Young notes that this scene "draw[s] a charge from their homoeroticism, but not as a means of delivering any narrative clarification or psychological insight" (501). Rather, the kiss allows for the viewer's feelings toward the killers to become complicated. Their humanity and dare I say "innocence" is exposed and they cannot be simply condemned. We see them kiss, but we do not know if there is significance between the kiss and the massacre that is about to take place. We are not sure if the boys are "gay" (Alex says "I've never kissed anyone") and this is their moment of "coming out" or if this dynamic is about something else, about reaching out for a final moment of intimacy.

Karyn Sandlos offered several interpretations of this scene – from settling the speculation that the boys from the Columbine shooting were in fact gay to the notion that the scene is a warning to homophobic bullies that this could be the consequence for such violence against the gay body. She distances herself from both of these readings arguing instead that "the shower scene...comes as a surprise to the viewer, a rupture of ideological and conceptual norms" that allows us to "move toward questions of symbolization, or how we meet and make use of aesthetic representations in order to imagine new possibilities for understanding historical reality" (66). Van Sant's aesthetic representation provides a space not to make conclusions about school violence by looking toward the past for explanations. He instead produces a representation to grapple with and create new possibilities for engaging such a complex topic for the future. It is a hopeful film as it provides a representation of the "elephant" in every

schoolroom without providing, as education so often wants, easy solutions.[46] It asks for an impersonal view and an impersonal intimacy with the subjects to look to the horizon.

The shower scene, in particular, when read as a moment explicating the boys homosexuality, forecloses engaging the way such a moment surprises the viewer to think about the human need for intimacy and such a need to the future. The scene is less about homosexuality or the possibility that bullying is one of the causes of the violence. The intimacy that erupts at this particular moment in the film is not a factor for the development of the narrative or establishing motive. Rather, it is intimacy that provokes or challenges the viewer to grapple with its juxtaposition with violence.

The kiss between Eric and Alex appears on the surface to be without hope. It is a last attempt, before death, to experience the iconic moment of the "first kiss." The kiss is not hopeful, rather it is a kiss of death - sealing the fate of the boys and illustrating the monstrosity of queerness. It is this reading though that I want to work against by arguing that the boys kiss, in fact, is quite hopeful. It is a strange hope, of course, but I cannot help but feel hope when the boys experience this first and last kiss. It touches me to hope for a different future. My hope or the hope of the scene is strange because it does not follow the logic of the heterosexual kiss that is meant to be the start of a happy future, but seeks to open up space for the possibility of same sex pleasures and relationships that contest the normative frameworks of the future. It does this by relying on the impersonal nature of the kiss. What I mean by this claim is that while this scene has been called "homophobic" because of the association between same sex intimacy and murder, it actually, when read reparatively, relies on the specter of impersonal intimacy that is

[46] These easy solutions are for instance legislation that outlaws bringing guns to school or zero-tolerance policies that force students out of the school space and thus out of the schools responsibility.

one of the foundations of homophobia. Anonymous sex, perhaps the best example of impersonal intimacy, is disparaged by heteronormativity (and homonormativity) but it is precisely that form of intimacy that Van Sant represents in the shower scene, harkening back to a history of same sex intimacy. He does this by allowing the kiss to occur in the showers, giving a nod to the queer spaces of homosexual desire where many a queer has experienced intimacy. The scene is surprising because it places two boys who are friends into an intimate embrace that is placed in the impersonal space of the "shower". Their intimacy is not about reproduction. It is not about becoming acceptable and embracing a "gay" identity that they may have been closeting. No, their kiss, their embrace is a queer embrace of the impersonal. And it is this impersonal embrace and the impersonal's focus on the future that this kiss touches upon. They may not survive, but they ask, they plead their case that the future not be the same as the past even as they give up their future.

Education's Elephant: A Crisis in Intimacy

What is at odds here, in my opinion, is the inability for bodies to interact or relate to one another in non-violent ways. The students in *Elephant* are never shown to touch except in rare moments or in the moment of violence. These students are unable to relate to the other. They "dunno" except through what history has taught them – such as bullying and teasing. Van Sant's momentary scenes where students kiss, fleetingly glance to a future that is not yet written, but not tied down by the personal past. Van Sant's chronicle provokes a call for new stories. The issue is not solely about calling for new stories to be told that say gay is good by refuting the homophobia of the shower scene, but about creating representations that show ways bodies can interact, touch, and relate to one another that maintain uncertainty or definition which is what the

shower scene seeks to do. We cannot simply suggest new stories that present "good" representations about homosexual representations that will impact the issue of homosexuality in schools; although this is an important piece. Rather, we must experience new modes of relating to the other that are not reliant on the "old" stories and old reading positions. Education has to find ways out of its obsessional drive to legislate intimacy in education and inhabit the much trickier ethical space that cannot rely solely on paranoia. *Elephant* in its representation of a school space asks us to "feel the edges" in order to create a different space for the future.

This is no simple task because of the ways stories can become normalized or censored if they challenge the normative ways of thinking. Telling stories that show the "gay" kid is like the "straight" kid might minimize the type of violence inflicted on that gay kid in the present, but it might also eliminate other, queerer ways of relating to the self and the other.[47] And it is in this notion that I find hope in the kiss between Alex and Eric. They are, after all, queer figures. For Eric and Alex, we do not know if they are gay and that is, in fact, beside the point. What we do know is that they are searching for something, for ways of living in the world and understanding their place. Their kiss illuminates this as it disrupts our ability to see the boys solely as monstrous, but as boys seeking the touch of the other. However, the world they are living in is quite narrow. It does not seem to allow for their own queerness to exist here or it would seem in the present as they end their lives.

Death seems to follow the same-sex intimate encounters in a variety of senses. In the news the gay body is associated with violence and often death. In the cultural narrative of HIV/AIDS, same sex intimacy is still seen as the cause and for some the punishment for such a

[47] This can be seen, I believe, in the struggle for gay marriage where gay youth are unable to think about alternative ways of being in relationship aside from the legitimated model of marriage.

perverse lifestyle. And on the global scene we see bodies engaged in same-sex intimacy denied existence seen notably with President Ahmadinejad of Iran's comment that "there are no gays in Iran" or murdered as seen in the recent legislation and murders in Uganda. Where there is same-sex intimacy, there is death it would seem. The consequences of same sex desire are severe, coming in the form of the grim reaper. The queer is still monstrous and this is of course seen quite visibly after Columbine where parents held signs that said "Fags Killed our Kids"[48] along with the reality that in other instances of school shootings the shooter's sexual orientation came into question.[49] One way to engage this issue, as we see often, is to counter it by illuminating how the queer is in fact not monstrous. That such reactions are because of homophobia and heteronomativity that we know exists in the world. And to counter such murderous rampages, we should address homophobia and heteronormativity.

This is not what I have sought to do. Rather, I have tried to embrace the negativity of the queer as monstrous to read such monstrosity for what it illuminates about our "culture". I do this because it seems one of the concerns in these cases is the future and how death, especially suicide, denies the future. Following Lee Edelman, the future has never been friendly to queers for "there are no queers in that future as there can be no future for queers" (*No Future* 30).

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[48] I find it curious how even though the Columbine shooters were also kids, their perceived sexuality trumped their status as kids. Kids did not kill our kids in Columbine, rather fags killed our kids allowing "kids" to remain innocent. I find this curious indeed.

[49] The relationship between sexuality and murderous rampages is common. Not only were the Columbine shooters thought to be "gay" by some. Seung-hui Cho, the Virginia Tech shooter, was thought to be a "closet homosexual" (http://www.theinsider.com/news/155159_Inside_Cho_Seung_Hui_s_Closet). And more recently the "sexual" nature of Jared Lee Loughner, the Tuscon shooter, came into the frame as photos of him wearing a g-string and holding his gun were found. There is a obsession it seems to associate non-normative sexualities with murder. Some might interpret this as a call to address "homophobia" because it is this homophobia that is the cause of these shootings. I am not interested in making such a claim, but rather using this association to argue for the need to imagine new possibilities.

Rather the future is "mere repetition" and "just as lethal as the past" (31). The project of Queer Theory and "queers" is a resistance to the future, where "we do not intend a new politics, a better society, a brighter tomorrow, since all of these fantasies reproduce the past, through displacement, in the form of the future" (31).[50] We are frightened by suicide and suicidal rage because it confronts us with the failure of fantasy...that the future is inevitably always, as that cute little Orphan Annie sang "a day away." Before you write me off as being a pessimist or worse, a nihlist, there is hope within Edelman and the thought of no future. And that hope emerges out of its pessimism, a rather queer optimism, where there is optimism in pessimism for the pessimist reveals the limits of optimism and what optimism refuses to see as "possible". The queer optimism produces a hope that, as Ahmed writes, "rests on the possibility opened up by inhabiting the negative" (*Happiness* 162). This inhabiting the negative does not promise happiness, it does not promise anything except, as Snediker notes, "a new terrain of critical enquiry which, seems a felicity in its own right" (30). It is a form of enquiry that is hopeful in a strange way as it re-engages the past that has been ignored or pathologized. It re-reads the negative not to "know" or "redeem" but to allow negativity to re-orient us and point us down a different path and illuminate new possibilities of relating.

Unhappy Queers and Intimaphobia

The "queer" student is an unhappy object. It is unhappy itself and makes others unhappy also by not fitting into the models available to it. This unhappiness and the objects that cause such a state are "not simply reactive; they are creative responses to histories that are unfinished"

[50] The past here refers to the history that is allowed to be told. Queer Theory, instead, following Foucault, relies on moments from the past that disrupt the allowed history to show its complicity in violence. These ruptures or limit experiences are, I hope, what I am trying to explore throughout this dissertation.

(Ahmed, *Happiness* 217). Unhappy objects are creative responses, interventions in happiness because happiness itself orients us toward a particular image of the future. *Elephant* does not make its viewer happy; it ends without providing closure.[51] But following Ahmed, unhappy objects might be explored for what responses they might provide or provoke in us in their unhappiness, rather than pushed aside or asked to "become happy". Unhappiness is not an illegitmate affect to be overcome, but a legitimate affect that challenges us to imagine a future that happiness has always already foreclosed. This is of course for some an unreasonable or even maddening way to go about reading queer objects, but it is, in my opinion exactly its unreasonableness that might provoke new, creative responses.

This creativity is necessary because of the poverty we see in relationships in education and the world writ large. Michel Foucault already noted this poverty in the mid-80's writing, "We live in a relational world that institutions have considerably impoverished. Society and the institutions which frame it have limited the possibility of relationships because a rich relational world would be very complex to manage" ("Social Triumph" 158). Since Foucault's writing, the issue has only been heightened as legitimate possibilities for relationships have been further limited – causing an inability to imagine relationships outside of the narrow frame of family and marriage. Such a narrow view of relationality inhibits bodies from finding new ways of being in relationship to others. His project is strangely hopeful as it, while not being prescriptive, opens up a mode of critique that exposes the poverty of our relational world in order to create new modes of relating by relying on historical relations often forgotten or confined in the asylum.

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[51] It is possible that the film, as an object of art, is critiqued for not providing escape from the issue or closure around the issue and thus takes the place of the queer object in the film that are critiqued for not allowing the viewer to escape from their own paranoid readings of, in the instance of the shower scene, homophobia.

These relations are not explored for what knowledge they provide about the subjects, rather these relations illustrate different ways bodies have been allowed to and might relate in the future.

My main claim here is that the unhappiness that is seen as causing violence, along with our own unhappy fascination with ending such unhappiness is a manifestion ***not*** of a lack of knowledge or of homophobic knowledge that could be cured by simply "knowing" the other but a lack of relational possibility. We have in creating objects of knowledge – unhappy objects particularly – failed at creating ways to relate to the other and the self. We are not sure how to relate to the other, nor are we sure to whom we are accountable within the world. And it is sexual orientation that is the culprit in this confusion – as intimacy towards others is constrained and oriented in rather narrow ways – particularly either gay or straight with no in-between. Students are, in fact, often asked to follow the "straight and narrow" and it is this request, this demand that limits our imaginative capacities to relate to the self and the other. We can only relate to others in a "straight" and "narrow" fashion. Whether we are "gay" or "straight" we must still behave "appropriately" as defined by the hetero and homo-normative logic of education.

It seems strange to want to talk about violence, particularly school shootings, ambivalently or impersonally. Murder and suicide are often not something we think about with ambivalence; rather these are topics that garner intense feelings of passion and outrage. Rarely do we sit on the fence when it comes to murder, rather we denounce such actions unequivocally. Murder and suicide are personal – they impact the person. It feels almost that exploring the potential of the impersonal neglects some responsibility for those who are killed in such an event. How dare "I" not fight against the violence inflicted in the school shooting by demanding justice and violence in return? It feels that an ethics where "I" accept my own implications in the violence is too daunting, for it creates more grey area between the "good" and the "bad" than I

am comfortable with because "I" am a "good" person. It is better to strike back, denounce such violence, rather than remain vulnerable and open to more harm, to potentially being wrong(ed). Yet, we cannot avoid more harm. However, we might begin to disintricate harm that is "bad" and harm that is "productive." After all, it can produce changes and responses. And this is why I find ambivalence and the impersonal appealing. It is not appealing because it allows me to be apathetic, but because it demands that I remain vigilant of the constantly shifting world and listen to that complex world filled with messages of pain and suffering, but also joy and pleasure. *Elephant* provides a filmic version of this in its impersonal, affectless chronicling of the school shooting. Van Sant's representation of the school shooting, as I hope to have shown by the end, creates space for reconfiguring and reimagining relationality. It tells a story we may have heard before, but the ways it represents that story in an impersonal way challenges us to think about our own relationship to the film and the issues it presents. It is the impersonal that provides hope in not foreclosing meaning or providing, as many films or prescriptive "anti-bullying programs" do, a nicely wrapped curriculum of what to do. Rather, the impersonal requires a distance that allows for seeing the "bigger picture" and how different responses may actually re-capitulate the very issues at hand.

Violence speaks. It teaches us something, but it does it rather impersonally in Van Sant's film. *Elephant* is not concerned necessarily with who lives and dies. The violence inflicted by the school shooter is often quite similar to the suicide bomber – seen in the haphazard ways Alex and Eric kill those who come into range. While the school shooting has often taught us about the shooter – their pathologies, their history being bullied, their abusive homelife, etc. – it has perhaps taught us less about our relationships with the other. Spivak claims suicide bombing is a form of resistance, a resistance to no longer being ignored, to being violated, etc ("Terror"). The

task in such recognition is to imagine new ways of listening to these messages – perhaps before they get to the extreme of suicide bombing where "no other means will get through."[52] Spivak believes that "unless we are trained into imagining the other, a necessary, impossible, and interminable task, nothing we do through politico-legal calculation will last" (83). The task is one of learning to imagine and listen to the other – the unintelligible other – in order to create new modes of relating. This is not an epistemological task but one of ethics for "I understand the ethical, and this is a derivative position, to be an interruption of the epistemological, which is the attempt to construct the other as object of knowledge" (83). Rather than seeking to produce an object out of the other, she seeks to learn how to listen to the other to allow the other to be a subject itself. She treats the suicide bomber as a subject trying to speak through the only means left available to it. Doing so might expose something to the self that was unknown or allow for the self to engage the other in new ways. Instead of morally denouncing suicide bombing (or murder) the task might be to distance oneself from the personal issues, taking an impersonal stance to imagine a different future.

It is the final kiss between Eric and Alex that, in my reading, demands an examination of intimacy. It is the intimate touch, the disruption of that touch to the viewer, that causes the viewer to see the figures of the shooters, not as monsters as they often thought of, but as human subjects who want to touch, to love, to kiss in those final moments before their massacre begins.

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[52] Gayatri Spivak in talking about terrorism and the suicide bomber writes that

> suicidal resistance is a message inscribed on the body when no other means will get through. It is both execution and mourning, for both self and other. For you die with me for the same cause, no matter which side you are on. Because no matter who you are, there are no designated killers in suicide bombing. No matter what side you are on, because I cannot talk to you, you won't respond to me, with the implication that there is no dishonor in such shared and innocent death" ("Terror" 96)

Yet, their intimacy brings about the spectacle of the impersonal as it offers no personal insight into the boy's psyche or desire. While this moment of intimacy allows the viewer to see the school shooters as humans who want that final kiss before death, in seeing them this way – perhaps seeing the self in those moments – the viewer is led to question themselves and their relationship to the shooters. The juxtaposition of the violence to come and the intimacy of that moment, within the aesthetic style of Van Sant, creates dis-ease. The viewer is still unable to make a clear moral denunciation about the shooters, but is challenged to explore the extreme emotions that emerge from this representation to think what might the future be like to minimize the potential of the school shooting. The boys, the teen boys, cannot be understood in the space and time of the film because the film refuses a psychic load. In such a move, Van Sant exposes that we can often barely understand ourselves. The task, in engaging this representation of the shooting, it seems is to find ways to relate to the other and in doing so not violate the other in order to protect the self. The queer kiss between the shooters it seems is a hopeful kiss after all. It illuminates the poverty of relational possibilities as represented in the film and demands that something occur, but what occurs is left to those living, looking up at the sky as we are unsure how the final game of "eeny, meeny, miny mo" played out.

Conclusion

Critics of *Elephant,* as Sandlos points out, have argued the film failed on two pedagogical accounts: "first, Van Sant's impressionistic aesthetic contributes nothing to our collective understanding of why the murders happened at Columbine" and "second the film offers no insight into how this sort of tragedy can be prevented in the future" (57). What these critiques fail to take into account is that Van Sant's failures in their opinion are in fact a part of the success

of the film. Van Sant's aesthetic does not seek to offer insights on how to "prevent" such violence nor does he want us to understand the Columbine murders. Rather, he wants us to leave the film uneasy through the impersonal take on the school and the shooting. He creates a dramatic art film that opens up different avenues to investigate the issues that emerge in a representation of schools. While psychologists, sociologists, and legal scholars can provide representations of schools that are useful, they cannot be the only representations utilized to engage the issues that emerge in the school space.

Van Sant's *Elephant*, unlike other films about high schools, is not a space where lessons are learned. There is no moral to this story, there is no lesson that is played out through Van Sant's naturalistic style. Rather, Van Sant's filmic style allows for a representation that remains at a distance from the student-characters in order to take an impersonal look at the state of contemporary education to propel us forward into the unknown future. In this minimalistic chronicling, he provides only brief moments where students experience any meaningful human intimacy, but it is these moments of intimacy, particularly the scene I focus on, that ask the viewer to be touched. Van Sant's *Elephant* refuses to provide a narrative typical of most high school filmic representations. And it is in this refusal, we are able to see that *Elephant* is much more similar to the pedagogical modes of address of teachers. Just as teachers are unable to "know" in advance the lessons that students will take away from a lesson, so too does Van Sant create a film that offers, like the parable its title is drawn from, an infinite number of perspectives and interpretations.

The impersonal is not opposed to the personal for, as Denise Riley notes in *Impersonal Passion*, the impersonal is a vital component to the personal. The impersonal as performed by Van Sant's aesthetic assists in exploring ways to navigate the affectively charged arena of

schools where intimacy has become heavily disciplined and controlled. Yet, this has not minimized the presence of violence in schools, but re-capitulated that very violence in various forms. Van Sant, returns to the scene of the school and the school shooting years after Columbine shocked the nation in order to re-examine through the impersonal lens of the camera the contemporary state of education. This is a difficult task because to not take something personal, to recognize the impersonality of language and actions is immediately unfathomable and perhaps one of the reasons Van Sant's work was seen as irresponsible. Such an impersonal stance takes one into the state of ambivalence where one cannot remain close to the person, but must sit on the fence in order to see the bigger picture. Van Sant fails to provide the polemical and moral denunciation of the school shooting, but in such a failure opens up a space to think about the issues at hand.

One of my concerns in this essay has been to explore the representations of school shootings in order to explore how such violence might be read as a manifestation of the lack of intimacy or intimate relations within the educational realm. While significant attention has been given to the psychological profile of the school shooter, the issues cannot be individualized. Rather, as Van Sant shows in *Elephant*, there is a way to investigate these issues from an impersonal view that illuminates the strange lack of intimacy within education. There is a poverty of relational possibilities in the West because:

> In effect, we live in a legal, social, and institutional world where the only relations possible are extremely few, extremely simplified, and extremely poor. There is of course, the relation of marriage, and the relations of family, but how many other

> relations should exist, should be able to find their codes not in institutions but in possible supports! ("Social Triumph" 158)

Van Sant's shower scene touches upon the queer intimacy of the impersonal and in doing so illuminates the severe lack of possibilities for intimate life in contemporary society because the two boys in this moment will soon be dead. The reader of this representation has no insight into the reasons for the moments of intimacy except that, in the moment, it feels "right." That spontaneity points to the need to investigate the representations of schools to see if there are ways to redeem this violence to provoke new possible relations within education. What relations are made impossible by violence and how does that violence point toward the need to broaden how bodies might be able to relate? Is the issue one of allowing such intimacy in education, rather than negating the possibility of intimacy? Might the queer scene between Alex and Eric in the shower become a call – despite accusations of its homophobia – to redeem the necessity of intimacy in education and offer new relational possibilities rather than, as is more often the case, limit and prohibit relations and touching? Might Alex and Eric become queer models for an educational space that demands the presence of intimacy in the future? Can education become a space that invents new relational possibilities to create a world that is not constrained by the personal?

In the final essay I will turn to the improper, unreasonable philosophy of the Marquis de Sade. In doing this, I will move away from work with in queer theory in education that draws upon "eros" in education often from either a psychoanalytic frame or from the late work of Foucault (notably *The History of Sexuality: Volume One*). Instead, I will turn to the possibility of sadism in education through the work of that infamous Marquis. I make this move for two particular reasons. First, I move toward sadism as a route to read Sade as an improper

Educational Philosopher who satirizes the more reputable Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Second, this move seeks to turn to Foucault's *History of Madness* that has been under utilized within queer theory and education. This turn to Foucault's earliest work grounds the possibility of differentiating between “eros” and “sadism” where he writes:

> Sadism is not a name finally given to a practice as old as Eros: it is a massive cultural fact that appeared precisely at the close of the eighteenth century, constituting one of the great conversions in the Western imagination - unreason transformed into the delirium of the heart, the madness of desire, and an insane dialogue between love and death in the limitless presumption of appetite. (362)

So, while eros tells an ancient story beginning with the Greeks, sadism is a practice that emerges within a particular context and it is, in part, through Sadism that Foucault contends unreason transforms into madness and particular sexualities become “forever” tied to madness. Can this queerer pedagogy and philosophy espoused by one of the most infamous and censored novelists provide a strange look into education and provide insights into new social relations between bodies?

Chapter 4

Fantasies of a Sadean Pedagogy: Notes from the Boudoir

But vice teaches us a certain truth through the very fantasies on which it feeds, and the proof is that it ends in orgasm, that is, in a definite sensation

- Dolmancé (52)

Oh god...I am in ecstasy

- Eugénie (291)

Introduction

Alice Miller argues "all pedagogy is pervaded by the precepts of 'poisonous' pedagogy'" (96). Poisonous pedagogy – whose motto might be "thou shalt not be aware of what your parents [and pedagogues] are doing to you" – is pedagogy where "scorn and abuse [are] directed at the helpless child as well as the suppression of vitality, creativity, and feeling in the child" (58). It is pedagogy that seeks to "impart to the child from the beginning false information and beliefs that have been passed on from generation to generation." Pedagogy is synonymous here with "child-rearing". Pedagogy is the manner children are reared to become bodies or made subjects – subjected to the whims and fancies of adults. It is Miller's overall argument that understanding what happens to us in our childhood via parents and teachers, particularly the first couple years of our lives, could lead to breaking the cycle of poisonous pedagogy – a cycle where adults, both parents and teachers, without recognizing their own traumatic upbringings, recapitulate the same trauma on their children and/or students.

To counter this, an "anti-pedagogic position" is needed because "there is in the word *pedagogy* the suggestion of certain goals that charge is meant to achieve – and this limits his or her possibilities for development from the start" (100). Pedagogy must be abandoned for its

reproductive underpinnings so that children, rather than being manipulated, can receive support. Pedagogy is, here, always already part of the problem as it fails to allow children (or students) to follow their impulses, develop their curiosity, and explore their imagination. Pedagogy, instead, a priori defines and sets parameters around what is important, necessary, and proper with little input from the child/student. It coerces and uses various "mind games" to discipline the child/student so that their impulses, curiosity and imagination are squelched before really being explored. Pedagogy is a disciplinary technique, as Foucault so aptly pointed out in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. And, even in pedagogies that might be termed "permissive pedagogies," that allow the child-student to do as they please, there emerges a severe lack of support for children to actually "do" as they please.

In the current essay, I want to explore what an anti-pedagogy might look like utilizing the work of the Marquis de Sade – particularly his *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir.* How might Sade's dialogue in the boudoir illustrate teaching and learning that is neither poisonous nor permissive? Or put differently, how might we think through Sade and his sadism to learn our lesson? When I discussed this essay in various phases of development with colleagues, friends, and people I would randomly meet on the street, I received a fair number of looks - looks that expressed mild amusement, looks that expressed extreme confusion, looks of utter disdain and horror. It was this combination of looks that continually pushed me to explore how the infamous Marquis de Sade might offer a rather strange lesson on pedagogy. It is his offensiveness and the potential to offend using Sade in education that I believe pushes up against something – what I am not sure at this point – and touches upon the crisis in intimacy I will explore in the next chapter.

Contemporary education seems to be in a constant state of crisis around what is "proper," what the "standards" should be, and how we are to educate our children for the future. This crisis seems to ask for creative "solutions" so much so that the American Education Research Association (AERA) for its 2011 annual meeting took up the theme "Inciting the Social Imagination" with the hopes research can help "in re-imagining the promise and potential of education research" to help "move us past the current policy impasse toward a new democratic vision of schooling" (AERA). This call from the largest professional education association asks for "nothing less than a renewed, creative social imagination" (AERA). I take up this challenge and engage Sade's work because Sade is no stranger to inciting, dare I say inflaming, the social imagination. After all, he spent the majority of his life in prison, cut off from the social world because of his fantastical sexual explorations and while imprisoned produced his infamous novels that were so titillating, so pornographic, that they were censored for almost two centuries. I utilize Sade then because of the lack of critical attention that has been granted his rather impressive oeuvre that is, as Jane Gallop notes, "a meditation on teaching" where what is "repeatedly represented is a confrontation between ignorance as innocence and knowledge as power – a confrontation constitutive of the classroom dialectic" ("Immoral Teachers" 117). How might this infamous pornographer whose name gives rise to the sexual pathology "sadism" allow us, in the 21st Century, to think through pedagogy – its pleasures and dangers?

I am not sure my phallus is large enough to enter the fray of Sadean scholarship, much less the Sadean scene.[53] I am not sure I am Master enough to master Sade, nor do I believe I

[53] Of course the phallus is a rather complicated concept and one reader of this chapter commented, "I am not sure it is large enough either – I'm not going to check! Regardless, what does the size of your phallus have to do with this?" The phallus has everything to do with it, but the phallus is a rather complicated concept – seen as a body part (the penis) and a symbol

have control of this material – making it quite likely my argument will be (in)coherent and riddled with contradictions.[54] This is fitting because Sade, himself, sought to be the master of his universe, constructing novels situated in enclosed spaces (convents, castles, boudoirs) to control the scene. But, he was never fully able to master and control (t)his universe, just as Sade himself spent much of his life controlled by the (m)other.[55] There are always moments that remained unknown, censored in the Sadean scene and biography.

What follows is my attempt to read one particular work of the Marquis - *Philosophie dans le Boudoir* (Philosophy in the Boudoir) while pulling upon critical work around Sade's oeuvre.[56] It is his *Philosophy in the Boudoir* that provides the most explicit insights on pedagogy, although "what insists in Sade's writing is the drive to 'teach someone a lesson'" (Gallop, "The Immoral" 117).[57] I focus on this text because it is, as Lacan aptly notes, "a treatise on the education of girls" (664). And provides an interesting "libertine complement" to Jean-

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(power). Sade is obsessed with the phallus as a synonym for "penis" seen in his constant reference to the size of various penises. But, Sade also stages the scene where the phallus always disappoints where one cannot ever possess the phallus.

[54] John Phillips draws attention to the issue of mastery and control within Sade and Sadean scholarship writing "everyone it seems, author and critics alike...wants to control the text, and this desire for mastery can lead to a forcing of the argument, to a process of polarization or oversimplification" (*"Tout Dire"* 37). I am hoping to control the impulse to master Sade in the hope that I might play with Sade, to engage in an exercise of reading Sade, I might say, less rigorously so not to "master him" or "control him" but lose control, like the Sadean victim/pupil, to try and see what such an attempt garners.

[55] See John Phillips for a discussion of the censored scenes of Sade.

[56] Sade's novel is more commonly known as *Philosophy in the Bedroom.* This is a mistranslation of the term boudoir from French which is a gendered space (feminine) in aristocratic architecture. See Jane Gallop's "The Liberated Woman" for an examination of the importance of this.

[57] Interestingly, the boudoir as an educational space emerges in Lady Gaga's single "Born This Way" where the "I" of the song is taught, as noted previously, "we are all born superstars" while her mom "rolled her hair and put her lipstick on in the glass of her boudoir." Unfortunately, Gaga's lesson is much more essentialist and conservative than Sade's lessons.

Jacques Rousseau's educational treatise *Emile: Or On Education* (Carpenter 521).[58] Sade's treatise is a complement not by continuing the tradition of Rousseau's manipulative pedagogy but by providing an alternative, an anti-pedagogy that supports the pupil of his boudoir. Rousseau's influence is rather recognizable in education, so Sade enters here in this project as a strange, or I might say, "queerer" alternative to thinking about pedagogy. Sade's explicit use of sexuality and sex as pedagogical tools provides another, this time literary, representation of intergenerational relationships that if read from a reparative position opens up different ways to think about the education of youth – particularly girls.

At the outset, this may sound strange. Some work around Sade and numerous popular representations have associated Sade with fascism and violence. Sade is not seen as providing any kind of support or kindness. Yet, such readings do not adequately grapple with the complexity of Sade's work. It is his play between violence and intimacy, pleasure and pain, which might help to engage the current fear of intimacy in education and the violence that pervades the schooling experience. Sade's pedagogy, far from perpetuating violence, seeks to disintricate violence from pain and illustrate the presence of pain in coming to know. This while simultaneously recognizing the responsibility of instructors to support and listen to the student's fears, wishes, and emerging desires.

In order to think through a Sadean pedagogy, I will begin by providing a distinction between eros and sadism. While educational scholarship has engaged with the role and importance of eros in education, I feel it necessary at the outset to distinguish my project from work on eros. This is followed by some biographical and contextual information about this

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[58] Rousseau was, as Sade himself notes in his "Reflections on the Novel", a one of a kind novelist possessing the both a fiery soul and philosophical mind – "two things which nature does not bring together twice in the same century" (13). I read Sade's educational treatise with Rousseau in mind, to see the complement that is provided through the lessons of the libertine.

infamous novelist and why it is that I utilize Sade. With this introductory material presented, I will explore the pedagogical insights of Sade through the eyes of the student Eugenie. My focus in reading Sade's *Philosophie* is to illustrate the importance of the "student" within Sade's pedagogy and how sadism as a theoretical concept implicates both the pleasures and pains of learning. A Sadean pedagogy does not deny the pains of learning nor the pleasures. Rather, it seeks to minimize the violence of learning by making the painfulness of learning explicit and a part of instruction. The relationality that Sadean pedagogy imagines is not idealized or based on manipulation. Rather, Sade imagines relationality that makes explicit the pleasures and pains of learning that rest on intergenerational contact between the master and student.

Eros, Sadism, Oh My

I enter this essay with a mixed bag of hopes and fears. I hope that I can do justice to the work of Sade that, while challenging, offers such a rich source unexplored within educational theory, educational philosophy, and pedagogy. Erica McWilliams argued, "we need to re-conceive of pedagogical spaces as productive, not simply malevolent erotic spaces, and to find ways to do this without stepping away from the radical pedagogue's insistence on moral responsibility" ("Beyond the Missionary" 233). Such a project has often come under the name of eros. Beat poet Allen Ginsberg believed "eros is the great condition of teaching" and without eros, the educational project fails at reaching its potential (426). Teaching has become wrapped up in overly rational and reason-based views of the world and the human psyche – often disavowing or criminalizing the presence of eros and the erotic. This is seen in how the legalistic and moralistic discourses in education have come to dominate the profession and, for example, made touch off-limits. The dominance of legal and moral discourses has contributed to the "malevolent erotic spaces" of pedagogy by making the erotic only ever seen as malevolent.

Teachers and students have been made to fear one another. Ginsberg argued, however, "it's not perfectly normal for students and teachers to be afraid of each other erotically" (428). And such fear contributes to a denial of the possibilities in the pedagogical relationship as experiences with eros become confined to particular spaces – spaces that separate bodies in particular ways – even though "the best teaching is done in bed," because "its healthy and appropriate for the student and teacher to have a love relationship whenever possible" (426). This type of teaching creates what Ginsberg calls a "philosophy of the boudoir" where the bodies and minds of students and teachers are able to grapple with their vulnerabilities and joys (426).

It is with Ginsberg's belief in a "philosophy in the boudoir" and McWilliam's call for a re-conceptualization of pedagogical space that Sade's radical insights for contemporary education in the 21st Century come into view. It is in the Sadean boudoir filled with sex, eroticism, pleasure, and violence that an anti-pedagogy emerges that complements the more traditional and reputable pedagogy espoused by Jean- Jacques Rousseau. It is an anti-pedagogical approach that undoes the manipulative pedagogy of virtue, by allowing the pupil entrance into the pleasures of vice. Sade's instruction in the boudoir does not seek to reproduce the social norms, but to challenge those norms in order to open the student-body up to pleasures previously hidden or obscured from the student gaze. Sade's complexity, I believe, provides one possible way to do such work. His work in *La Philosophie* refuses to shy away from the responsibility of the instructor to the pupil and vice versa, but he does this not in the tradition of eros as educationalists have previous explored, but creates his own tradition – sadism. It is the tradition of sadism that educationalists have not taken up that I hope to take up and think through here.

Sade's anti-pedagogy does not rely on eros, relying on (or inventing) sadism. As Foucault wrote:

> Sadism is not a name finally given to a practice as old as Eros: it is a massive cultural fact that appeared precisely at the close of the eighteenth century, constituting one of the great conversions in the Western imagination – unreason transformed into the delirium of the heart, the madness of desire, and an insane dialogue between love and death in the limitless presumption of appetite (*Madness* 361-361).

Sadism, offers a name for something that is newer than Eros that emerged out of a historic shift in how unreason was conceived. And the madness of Sade and his oeuvre is, it seems, quite unreasonable to think about in this day and age.

Sade is an important, unrecognized figure who provides a treatise (and oeuvre) on education that challenges pedagogy in complex and contradictory ways. I was able to find only fleeting references to Sade in education, often disparaging, but such absence offers the potential to now fill in the absence, to incite new modes of thinking about pedagogy. My purpose in engaging Sade in relation to pedagogy is, in reading him, offer an exploration for how he might help us re-conceive pedagogy – a pedagogy opposed to the poisonous and permissive pedagogies that dominate contemporary education. Many popular conceptualizations of Sade see him and the sado-masochistic sexual subculture as violent and aggressive. In sexual politics the S/M

community (and boy-lovers) continue to bear the brunt of sexual repression as Rubin noted close to twenty years ago.[59] Yet, as Foucault so aptly noted in an interview in *The Advocate*

> What all these people are doing is not aggressive; they are inventing new possibilities of pleasure with strange parts of their body — through the eroticization of the body. I think it's ... a creative enterprise, which has as one of its main features what I call the desexualization of pleasure.

I intend to draw upon Sade's thoughts on pedagogy to illuminate how thinking through the lens of Sadism "teaches a lesson" that is highly ethical, supportive, and pleasurable. A Sadean pedagogy provides space and time for the student to invent the self anew, playing with one's bodies and the instructor's bodies to create new possible worlds.

Before moving to my engagement with Sade, I would like to first provide a brief biographical and contextual sketch of Sade for those unfamiliar with this novel-philosopher. I do this because Sade's biography and historical context cannot be divorced from any reading of his work and Sade has rarely, if ever, been taught in the field of (teacher) education so an introduction is necessary.

The Marquis de Sade: An Introduction

[59] This can be observed in the changing make-up of the "gay ghetto" where Leather Bars have been displaced to spaces outside of the "gay ghetto," making such spaces less accessible and visible as a part of the gay community in favor of bars and clubs that are friendlier to the "straight" world.

The Marquis de Sade is a name and a myth that brings about feelings ranging from disgust to fascination. His published oeuvre is immense and the amount lost due to censorship and burnings is immeasurable. Some, notably Andrea Dworkin, have accused him of being a woman-hater whose work exposes the sadistic violence of men against women, while others have argued he is a liberator of women by exposing how social forces have repressed non-normative sexualities. Someone who picks up one of Sade's texts with only cursory knowledge of his work and the scandals his name provokes, is more likely than not to quickly close the text - horrified by the graphic sexual violence and monstrous deeds of the Sadean libertine. However, as many commentators on Sade's work have argued, Sade cannot be read at a superficial level because to do so neglects the context of his work and the challenges his work brought particularly to literature.[60] Marcel Hénaff argues that while Sade might be seen as an illegal alien to literature "proper" (*Lalittérature*), it is "precisely because of his position as an outsider and precisely because he disappoints and betrays, Sade can force us to notice Lalittérature's look of disapproval and, above all, to think in terms of literature - in terms, that is, of what the modern era calls the *text*." (3) Sade is a disappointment but he disappoints with a style that transgresses and teaches. In his work, Sade takes us to the margins, outside the traditional confines of literature and as I hope to argue, pedagogy. Within the history of the novel, his technique is quite bland, banal really, but his originality as an ethical philosopher is revolutionary, making any engagement with Sade one of extremes – rather fitting for a queer project (May).

To write a biographical sketch of Sade is quite difficult however because "we have no authentic portrait of him, and the contemporary descriptions which have come down to us are quite poor" (de Beauvoir 5). Hénaff contends, "in Sade's case, the historical figure once

[60] See particularly the work of Georges Bataille, John Phillips, Jane Gallop, Josue Harari, and Simone de Beauvoir;

designated by this name, the figure whose traces we still hope to discover, is released from his own biography only to be born, monstrous and menacing, from a womb of legend and fantasy" (2). Sade has no real biography, only the stuff of legend and fantasy that have emerged around his name. His is a biography that cannot be contained because of his own transgressions against the confines of his context. Hénaff continues, and I quote at length, that:

> The biographers can object all they like, denying that this was the real Sade. They can offer proof that Sade the child was sensitive and affectionate, that Sade the adolescent was mischievous and witty, that Sade the *grand seigneur libertin* was an unrepentant atheist, a wild reveler, and that, in the end, as the victim of his imperious, sanctimonious mother-in-law, he was convicted of trifles that must have brought a smile to the lips of the king whose *lettre de cachet* put him behind bars for life. But the fact remains that Sade is still a name. (2)

It is necessary to remember, as I move forward, that the name Sade invokes the legends that have arisen around that name. His biographers and commentators construct different pictures (psychological, sociological, historical) by which to understand this larger than life figure but none offer access to the real Marquis de Sade. The purpose of the biographical sketch here is not to tell the real story of Sade, but to use these tellings of his biography to have access to an image of Sade and his context for this particular project.

Sade was born Donatien Alphonse François de Sade in 1740 to a privileged aristocratic family in southern Provence. From the ages of 10 to 14, the Jesuits at the Jesuit School of Louis-le-Grand in Paris educated him. (Phillps, *Introduction* 1). The men in his life, notably his father

and paternal uncle, had a taste for the libertine lifestyle with his uncle having an extensive library collection of libertine writings and Enlightenment philosophy (3). It is in this library that Sade would, according to Phillips, begin his lifelong engagement with radical thought.

The women in Sade's life have garnered more attention in thinking about his life and work. Sade would marry Renée-Pelagie de Montreuil in February 1763 and months later be arrested for the crime of debauchery and spend three weeks in prison (4). Yet, Renée-Pelagie would "remain utterly devoted to him for the next 27 years, in spite of the trial she would have to endure during her husband's long years in prison in the 1770's and 1780's" (4). Her mother - Sade's mother-in-law - did not care for Sade, especially after he seduced her younger daughter (his wife's sister). Phillips notes Mme de Montreuil "did all she could henceforth to have him placed and kept under lock and key" (6).[61] It is with his experiences with various women in his life, particularly his mother-in-law who becomes, in a sense an anti-muse, that Sade crafts the complex Sadean universe allowing for such divergent readings, particularly around gender, of his work.

The young Sade, de Beauvoir notes however, was not revolutionary or rebellious. She writes that "superficially, Sade, at twenty-three, was like all other young aristocrats of his time; he was cultured, liked the theatre, and the arts, and was fond of reading" (7). But, as she further notes, Sade's eroticism at this time "had already assumed a disquieting character" which would become for him the way in which he explored sexuality as an ethic (7). Our interest in Sade, according to her, is not in his aberrations, but with the ways in which he assumed responsibility

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[61] Sade was imprisoned under the *lettres de cachet* which, as Foucault illustrates in *The History of Madness* was one way "madness" was confined during the 18th Century… "In fact madness during the classical age received two different types of hospitality – one in hospitals proper, the other in centres of confinement" (130). Sade would spend much of his time in centres of confinement.

for his sexuality (6). Sade's exploration of and wrestling with this responsibility is perhaps where his pedagogical insights open up and challenge contemporary education's inability to think sexuality outside of the bigotry and ignorance it maintains. While Sade would be accused and imprisoned for numerous crimes, often sexual in nature (e.g. sodomy, debauchery) and against prostitutes in the brothel where he could unleash his fantasies, his writings engage in exploring a sexual ethics that (un)successfully could never fully conciliate his social existence with his private pleasures. Yet, I find Sade's continued commitment to this project quite compelling.

Why Sade?

Sade was a scandalous figure and his name still invokes numerous responses depending on how one knows of Sade. Sade's name is perhaps most recognized because of its relationship to Sadism - a sexual pathology coined using Sade's name and novels by sexologist Krafft-Ebing in his *Psychopathia Sexualis* in 1890. And one might wonder why I would utilize Sade in education. Antonio de Nicolás contends that "the Marquis de Sade should be compulsory reading for all those people who claim to be the owners of a liberal education and who claim to be free citizens" for "there is no better test to find out how deep our habits of mind are impressed in us through the education we have received" (164). Sade's work reveals to us what our education failed at and exposes the habits of mind it, our education, instilled. Sade takes us out of the normal headspace and challenges us to develop new spaces – physical and mental – for education.

In my research around Sade, I found very little emerging out of education scholarship. Antonio de Nicolas quoted above in his *Habits of Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* is the only Educational Philosophy text I found that includes Sade as an important

Educational Philosopher. Sade's work has been taken up within Literature and French Departments, but rarely within education - perhaps because of Education's conservative and reactionary approach or because Sade's challenge is too disruptive to education as currently conceived. Sade is scandalous and scandal is not something education seeks freely, although education seemingly enjoys a good scandal when it emerges. I do not invoke Sade to create scandal – although I have been told such scandal is possible. I do not invoke him for pure shock value as such a use of Sade neglects the important and richness of his intellectual projects and pursuits. Rather, I invoke Sade because he is perhaps a radical pedagogue, not yet, if ever, taken in by the arms of education. And "the challenge of radical pedagogues is to re-examine the assumptions underlying the perversity of pederasty concept" which James Sears believes we have distanced ourselves from because of our own "lack of comfort with the homoerotic liaisons – imagined, desired, actual – within schools" (99). Sade, within his *Philosophie dans le Boudoir* engages these very issues – complicating the pederasty as pedagogy while relying on various forms of erotic liaisons. I want to look back to Sade to produce an engagement with pedagogy that disrupts the proper domain of education and its philosophy that so often relegates the sexual to the closet. It is the space of the closet – a room off the bedroom that has become the metaphor for sexuality in education in the 20th and 21st Centuries. But for Sade, the boudoir, a room off the bedroom that is for women, becomes central to a Sadean pedagogy. Sade relegates the instruction of a young girl to a female space.

Sade had a complicated relationship with himself, those close to him, and the world. De Beauvoir notes that some commentators hypothesize that he was scared of people and the reality of the world, preferring instead to devote his eroticism to the stories he could write - choosing the imaginary over the real (9). It is with his stories, the imaginary, that Sade provides radical

possibilities in thinking about the human and its education. My interest in him is therefore multifaceted and perhaps for some problematic. I am not situated in the discipline of Literature or that of History. I am rather, situated in the field of Teacher Education that pulls from, rather promiscuously, different disciplines in order to make sense or offer insights about the state of and possibilities in the educational endeavor – figured most frequently in schools. And, it seems Sade is perhaps a figure that allows for such promiscuity, in part because of his own dealings in different genres and styles (e.g. dialogues, plays, novels, etc.), but also because of the sexual promiscuity that emerges within the libertine universe. He is also not considered a philosopher in most regards - providing an alternative to the more traditional philosophers often taken up in education - the "proper" philosophers of education.

Yet Sade is, as I would argue, an improper philosopher of education. He is a philosopher who works with sex as his mode of analysis and in doing so produces, as de Beauvoir aptly noted, a "sexual ethics" and a Sadean pedagogy. Sade teaches through sex as he creates a catalogue or an encyclopedia of sexual perversions always confined to particular spaces. Sex and sexuality, then and now, evoke and provoke a wide range of responses from imprisonment and moral outrage, to cheers for liberatory insights and revolution. Sade uses his authorial pen to write about sex in order to open up not only the realm of sexual fantasy, but also discussions around the sexual that are often hidden or seen as improper to be brought up in conversation. Sade introduces sexuality-as-limit that can be taken up, as it has, for repressive and liberatory projects.

I am not a scholar of literature and am not interested in Sade from such a disciplinary framework, although his literary techniques are intriguing. They are of intriguing, however, because I am hoping to extrapolate from Sade, his biography, his literary insights on pedagogy,

and critical commentary on Sade to see how he might be seen as an educational philosopher and what he might teach contemporary education about itself and its pedagogical strategies.

The Student Body: Rousseau and Sade's Competing Pedagogy

The student body is a fraught body in education, provoking various approaches to how the student body is to be educated and brought into the social world. These various approaches attach different purposes to education and different understandings of the student and/or child. Very rarely, in all of this, is the student a part of the conversation – seen as too young, too naive, too ignorant, or allowed to speak in a token fashion. Because of the student's lack, it is unable to speak for itself, but must be spoken for, often "in their best interests". This is, in part, Miller's concern with pedagogy - that pedagogy "for your own good" traumatizes, violates and inhibits the child-student, from becoming anything outside of the prescripted good.

Rousseau's pedagogy, as earlier noted, is a pedagogy that Sade's work "complements." For Rousseau – who is so often lauded in education – pedagogy is meant to provide the illusion of granting the child "say" in his education but underneath the illusion is built on manipulation. This is seen poignantly when in *Emile* he informs the tutor:

> Take an opposite route with your pupil; always let him think he is the master, but always be it yourself. There is no more perfect form of subjection than the one that preserves the appearance of freedom; thus does the will itself become captive. The poor child, who knows nothing, can do nothing, and has no experience - is he not at your mercy? Are you not in control of everything in his environment that relates to him? Can you not control his impressions as you please? His tasks, his

> games, his pleasures, his troubles - is all this not in your hands without his knowing it? Doubtlessly, he may do as he wishes, but he may wish only what you want him to; he may not take a single step that you have not anticipated, he may not open his mouth without your knowing what he is going to say. (Book II)

The student body is manipulated to believe he has power, when such power is a ruse of the tutor's doing. The student does not create himself freely, but exists in a controlled environment that limits his potential. While Rousseau proposed an education that is founded on the natural goodness of man by protecting him from the social institutions that corrupt man, his pedagogy subjects the student to the will of his instructor - man. His instructor's knowledge, wants, and desires are instructed into Emile so that he becomes like the instructor. The illusion of freedom for the student is entirely the freedom of the instructor to do as he pleases.

Freedom, one of Rousseau's central concepts, is an adult concept that he wrested away from the Church and the taskmaster to show the individual "is the critic of all values" (Fowler 205). Man could because of Rousseau "rejoice in his own goodness, and . . . throw off on his institutions the blame for any evil thoughts he might harbor and any evil deeds he might commit" (205-206). In man's natural goodness, instructed from his youth on by what I imagine to be a "good man," Rousseau provides a pedagogy that legitimates the subjection of the child-student to the adult-instructor. It gives a nod to being "child-centered," but it is only a nod (with a wink) that the adult is still master of the child. The boy-child is not yet man, not yet free; He is only naturally good and to be manipulated to fulfill the desires of the instructor. Children are not free – girls much less so – until they have been properly educated into the social order.

Sade does not offer a view that man is "good," but rather focuses on how, Dolmancé, one of the co-instructors central to *La Philosophie*, explains, "virtue is but a chimera whose worships in perpetual immolations, in unnumbered rebellions against the temperament's inspirations" (208). Instead, Sade's education focuses on vice. Some see this focus on vice as his declaration that "men are created evil...and should rejoice in their essentially evil nature and give it full away, regardless of the vain and foolish attempts their institutions make to curb instinct and impulse" (Fowler, 206). I, however, believe that Sade's pedagogy is not one that declares than men are created evil, but actually tries to take a critical look at the way virtue and vice are created and used to manipulate "man". Freedom, for Sade, emerges in the ability to recognize the social prohibitions and challenge them to expose their inadequacies.

As such, Rousseau may be the educational philosopher that catapulted what some view as a more humane and child-centered pedagogy into a world that preferred to whip its students into shape. His virtuous attempt, however, is but a chimera that allowed adults to maintain their control over children by more sneakily hiding this power in order to create an illusion of freedom for the child. Sade however, using his sadism and proposing an educational philosophy ignored by most because of its immediate violence, provides a pedagogy that does not hide power, but creates a space where his pupil is not subjected to the morals and norms of various social institutions because as Madame de Saint-Ange says "it is to them, to free public schools, and to charitable establishments we owe the terrible disorder in which we presently live" (216). The student must be, in Sade's boudoir, allowed to engorge her curiosities and imaginations in order to undo her previous years of education through virtue. It is in this act of undoing, of being provided the support of instructors to "fuck" virtue in the name vice that pedagogy is provided an example of child-centered education that seeks to undo the poisonous pedagogy of virtue.

The Student Body: Through the Eyes of Eugenie

It was in the Eighteenth Century that education became preoccupied with the education of females (Gallop, *Thinking*). This is seen in Rousseau's *Emile* that devotes the entire fifth section to the education of Sophy - a section lambasted by Mary Wollstonecraft and other feminists. And it is seen in Sade's entire oeuvre where the female pupil is always under examination. Yet, critical scholarship around Sade's pedagogy has almost entirely focused on the libertine instructor. It is the libertine instructors that take center stage in Gallop's "The Immoral Teachers" which would later become a chapter in her book *Thinking Through The Body,* interestingly re-titled "The Student Body". Yet, even with the title change the student body remains obscured by a focus on the libertine instructors' use of the student body. The student body is constructed – by instructors – as something always examined and never seen as offering something to the pedagogical space. Gallop beautifully illuminates the use of the examination illustrating "just as pedagogical tests seek to draw out from the student what was implanted there by the teacher; so the Sadian surgeon wishes to examine an interiority devoid of any sexuality, any carnal knowledge originating within" (51). This reading, informative as it may be, maintains the instructor at the center of the pedagogical exchange and the individual responsible for both giving knowledge to the student and assessing what knowledge is taken in. The instructor is vital to the pedagogical scene, but for my purposes, I want to see if the student, Eugénie in particular, de-centers her co-instructors to create a Sadean pedagogy that is consensual and challenges the manipulation so often present in pedagogy.

I believe, perhaps more through my intuition than my expertise on Sade, that, *Philosophie dans le Boudoir* engages a different pedagogical moment than other pedagogical scenes in Sade's

work. *Philosophie* is, as Gallop herself points out, "the most pedagogical" (*Immoral* 117). Because of this and its style as a dialogue as opposed to a novel like *Justine, Juliette* and *120 Days of Sodom,* it provides a complex engagement with pedagogy and the potentials for the student body within a pedagogy that does not rely on manipulation. While Rodin is often noted as another libertine instructor, I actually find his techniques different from those of the co-instructors in *Philosophie.* Rodin instructs in a schoolroom and brings his pupils into another room for punishment, seen as his attempt at "trying to whip the unruly objects into shape and order, into neat rows and classes" (Gallop, "Immoral" 120). Rodin is, as I see it, the image that the popular imagination sees as a "sadistic schoolmaster" as it inflicts violence onto the student body and is utilized for the master's pleasures. However, co-instructors Domancé and Madame de Saint-Ange in *Philosophie* engage in a starkly different manner that I find more compelling.

In order to make the argument I would like to make in this chapter about Sade's pedagogical insights and the (female) student body, I want to limit myself to the beginning of *Philosophie dans le Boudoir.* I do this for a variety of reasons that I hope will be acceptable. First, it is the beginning of the pedagogical experience – the first weeks of a semester, a lesson – that is often seen as setting the tone of the semester or lesson. It is in those first moments, those first impressions, that students and teachers often understand just how the learning experience will play out. Second, it is in the beginning of this most pedagogical of texts of Sade's that I believe we see the most explicit pedagogical scenario set up that plays out again and again through the rest of the Dialogues. Sade is, after all, incredibly repetitious.

Sade begins *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* with a letter "To Libertines," that states the book is written to "voluptuaries of all ages, of every sex" who are to "nourish yourselves upon its principles: they favor your passions." Sade's education, principled to be sure, is one that seeks to

undo the "insipid moralists" who have made passions something to be feared, arguing that it is, in fact, the passions that "can conduct you to happiness." However, this is not an education for the masses it seems, rather it is an educational model that is geared towards those inclined to the libertine life, to those voluptuaries of every sex.[62]

Some critics see Sade as proposing that man is naturally evil (see Fowler above) and might conclude that this set of dialogues will propose an education that initiates the innocent into the wickedness that is natural to man. However, to read Sade in this way lacks the nuance that Sade provides on this very issue in this short letter. He concludes this letter reminding his reader that we are those "who never asked to be cast into this universe of woe" but having been cast into life, we might with Sade's pedagogy "be able to sow a smattering of roses atop the thorny path of life" (185). Man is neither good nor evil, rather as Dolmancé will teach his young ingénue:

> Ah, be in no doubt of it, Eugénie, these words *vice* and *virtue* contain for us naught but local ideas. There is no deed, in whatever the unusual form you may imagine, which is really criminal, none which may be really called virtuous. All is relative to our manners and the climate we inhabit; what is a crime here is often a virtue several hundred leagues hence, and the virtues of another hemisphere might well reverse themselves into crimes in our own . . . When geography alone decides whether an action be worthy of praise or blame, we cannot attach any great importance to ridiculous and frivolous sentiments, but rather would should

[62] While I will not explore this in this essay, I find it significant that Sade addresses this to "every sex" allowing space outside of a "two-sex" system.

> be impeccably armed against them, to the point, indeed, where we fearlessly prefer the scorn of men . . . (218)

Although Sade might be seen as a "philosopher-villain," his villainy is really in the ambivalence he places at the center of his universe. His is a universe of extremes, yet in such extremes he produces a pedagogy that constantly questions what becomes viewed as a "virtue" or "vice" in order to expose the contingency of such things.

Sade's education does not present a moral universe that is defined by universals of "good" and "bad" but presents an ethical system espoused in the proverb he relates to Eugénie. "Wolves are safe in their own company," he says, noting that "my friends, dread nothing from me, ever: I'll perhaps have you do much that is evil, but never will I do any to you" (244). Eugénie responds to this ethical imperative realizing that "never will Dolmancé abuse the privileges we grant him; I believe he has the roué's probity: it is the best" (244). The recognition that the pedagogical space is an ethical space that may in some contexts by some outsiders be viewed as criminal leads Eugénie to "bring our teacher back to his theorems and, before our senses subside into calm, let us return, I beg of you, to the great design that inflamed us before" (244).

This may be viewed as an ethics that isolates groups –a return to separatism – but what Sade does via Dolmancé is present an ethics that relies on the recognition that morals are always already contingent. This requires an ethics – a mode of relating – that is dependent on the context one finds oneself in and a trust that those involved in that context will respect the norms. This is quite scary for some to imagine because of its ambiguity and ambivalence, but it is that very

ambiguity and ambivalence that open up, in the given space, an opportunity to experience pleasures (and lessons) in ways not previously defined.

Sade does not teach this lesson through traditional means. His pedagogy, as I will show, does not rely on coercion or manipulation because those strategies undo the necessary respect required in the sadistic scene. All involved in Sade's pedagogical scenes must consent and understand what is happening in that scene – hence the excessive direction. Sadean pedagogy, rests on mutual cooperation and support, ironically refusing the illusion of being harmless, but accepting the inevitability of pain and resistance within the pedagogical space. This I believe is exposed within the first three Dialogues where the four main characters – 1 pupil, 2 co-instructors, and 1 assistant – are introduced.

Commentators on *Philosophie* often point out that instruction is done entirely with the desires of the instructors in mind. In the first dialogue, Mme. St. Ange states as much, saying "Dolmancé and I will put into this pretty little head every principle of the most unbridled libertinage, we will set her ablaze with our own fire, we will feed her upon our philosophy, inspire her with our desires. . ." (191). The pupil, Eugénie, in this statement, is viewed as an empty vessel – the pedagogical object – to be filled with the desires of her instructors. Yet, I am not interested in the desires or fantasies of the instructors. After all, instructors/teachers/pedagogues always have desires and fantasies about what they are going to do to their students. Teachers always speak of wanting to "inspire" their students and "set them ablaze" with a passion for learning. Yet, any one who has been in a classroom knows that despite our best attempts to inspire and set ablaze, it is up to the students to "take" us in. They must consent to being penetrated by the instructor. This is of course the problem with pedagogy because despite its best intentions to define in advance what students should know, it will fail as

students resist and seek other paths of knowing.

Due to this, I am interested in exploring Eugénie in relation to her instructors. Eugénie is always seen as a mere vessel that takes in her instructor's "lessons;" placing the pedagogue at the center of the pedagogical moment. Rather, I will contend Eugénie is not a student that is an empty vessel but one who, actually, in the pedagogic scene receives support to explore her curiosities and imagination. She provides the fuel that can be set ablaze. After all, Madame de Saint-Ange has faith in Eugénie because of "the dispositions I know her to possess" and Dolmancé very quickly realizes her to possess "excellent predispositions" (192; 199). Eugénie then is no empty vessel, but a student with potential that will, due to her dispositions, be a mover of the pedagogic scene. Her flame is already lit and with a Sadean pedagogy allowed to grow.

Eugénie is introduced to the reader in Sade's letter "To Libertines," discussed above, as the individual "young maidens" should imitate. They "too long constrained by a fanciful Virtue's absurd and dangerous bonds and by those of a disgusting religion" should "be as quick as she to destroy, to spurn all those ridiculous precepts inculcated in you by imbecile parents" (185). Eugénie is a model student who due to her dispositions and the support of her libertine instructors was able to embrace her educational opportunity and become that which she was inspired to become – a libertine woman.

Eugénie, while not yet a libertine when she arrives at Madame de Saint-Ange's, arrives nonetheless of her own volition. The two met at a convent but "dared try nothing" (190). Instead they "made a promise to meet again, to get together as soon as possible" (190). The dialogues then make good on the promise, seen poignantly when Eugénie lovingly says "so eager was I to find myself in your arms" (194). This promise, we learn is, in part, a promise made by Saint-Ange to initiate Eugénie into libertinage: as Saint-Ange says "you know, do you not that 'tis

during this interview that I am to initiate you into the most secret of Venus' mysteries" (194). Eugénie's response was "Ah, were I not to arrive at a complete knowledge, I should remain…I came hither to be instructed, and will not go till I am informed…" (194). While Mme. St.-Ange clearly desired Eugénie and Eugénie's own father is a libertine, Eugénie wanted to learn from Saint-Ange. She initiates her education. She was neither coerced nor manipulated but made a request to her father that was granted and consented to by her mother.[63] The fifteen year old girl was able to assert herself as a (sexual) free being that should be allowed to explore her curiosity and desires – obviously curiosities and desires that cannot be separated from her upbringing by a prudish mother and libertine father. Sade was interested in sexual freedom, although in complex ways, and his use of this fifteen year old girl puts into play, particularly in the 21st Century, a whole host of fears around youth sexuality (explored in the previous essay in relation to same-sex intergenerational relationships) but provides a complicated argument for female youth sexuality.[64]

Eugénie's Instruction

Back to Eugénie's education and the pedagogy that is exposed through it. As Eugénie and Saint-Ange walk into the boudoir they are surprised to meet Dolmancé who was not to arrive for

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[63] The mother's consent to Eugenie's traveling alone to Saint-Ange was not necessarily free, as she was "so abused" by her libertine husband that "a single one of his glances was quite enough to cause Madame Mistival to subside utterly" (194). While the abuse of the mother relates to the complex ways the Mother plays out in Sade, the significance of this moment is in Eugenie's own ability to make a request and be allowed, by her parents, to explore her curiosity.

[64] At the time of writing this essay, the fears around female sexuality are in the press, particularly around reproductive rights via the defunding of Planned Parenthood along with issues of teen pregnancy illustrated in the controversies surrounding MTV's series *Teen Mom.* Sade, is important in thinking about youth female sexuality because of his insistence and illustration of Eugenie and her initiation into a sexual being.

a couple of hours. Upon seeing Dolmancé, Eugénie screams "dearest friend, we are betrayed" and after an explanation from both Saint-Ange and Dolmancé , she is unconvinced saying "I am not deceived, my good friend: it is all your work…At least you should have consulted me…instead of exposing me to this shame." (196). Madame Saint-Ange protests saying:

> My brother is responsible for this, not I. But, there's no cause for alarm: I know Dolmancé for a most agreeable man, and he possesses just that degree of philosophic understanding we require for your enlightenment. He can be of nothing but the greatest of service to our schemes…(196)

Eugénie continues to be upset, despite this explanation upon which she receives a preliminary lesson to put herself at ease because "modesty is an antiquated virtue which you, so rich in charms ought to know wonderfully well how to do without" to which she cries out "but decency…" (197). Dolmancé again tries to provide a mini lesson on the hostility of such concepts to nature, grabbing Eugénie and kissing her causing Eugénie to struggle against his grasp asserting "That's quite enough Monsieur! . . . Indeed you show me very little consideration!" (197). Upon hearing this, Saint-Ange steps in noting her own prudishness, giving herself to Dolmancé to show that she, like Eugénie, is not acquainted with Dolmancé but interested in learning from him. Upon seeing her friend-lover-instructor take the position of pupil and become vulnerable to this unexpected guest, Eugénie calms down and "most willingly" places herself in Dolmancé 's arms and receives his tongue into her mouth. It is with the kiss – something to be explored in the next chapter – that the pedagogical encounter begins.

In this first scene where the pupil surprisingly meets one of her co-instructors, we are

shown that Eugénie is treated with respect. Her concerns are not simply ignored with her being told to "shut up and sit down" or "listen because we told you so," but actually engaged so such concerns can be alleviated. Dolmancé and Mme. Saint-Ange take their new pupil seriously and seek to find ways to calm her down so that their time together is not tainted by distrust or worse, virtuous feelings. When Dolmancé, without permission, grabs and kisses Eugénie, she is resistant – the kiss is not wanted. She refuses the penetration of his touch or tongue until she her dis-ease has been addressed and she feels comfortable within the boudoir-classroom.

The significance of this scene is that it sets the tone for the rest of the pedagogical experience. The first impression that Eugénie presents both her instructors, but particularly Dolmancé, is one of a strong female student. She knows that she is there to be initiated into the mysteries of Venus, but she will not be abused or caught off guard in such instruction. After all, her time is limited. Detractors to this reading could easily argue that this is simply a moment where the libertine instructors manipulate Eugénie by giving her the responses that they think she seeks in order to placate her. Such a paranoid reading fails to see the evidence that emerges in the rest of the dialogue, to be addressed shortly, that illustrates how Eugénie directs the lessons and receives insights into language, culture, religion, and sexual practices that she so desires. Eugénie's education begins as she is initiated into a Sadean pedagogy that recognizes her as a subject with a will. This pedagogy is one that merges theory with practice, but does so always with the student directing the scene.

As the triad of student and co-instructors settles into the boudoir, Eugénie and Saint-Ange get comfortable by undressing, donning negligee that conceals "only those that must be hidden from desire" (198). Eugénie, still nervous about this, is comforted by Saint-Ange with a kiss as Dolmancé, without touching, considers Eugénie's breasts. He expresses eagerness to inspect

Eugénie's rear to which she asserts, "No, I beg of you!" (198). Saint-Ange steps in yelling "No, Dolmancé …I don't want you yet to see…an object whose sway over you is so great that the image of it once fixed in your head, you are unable thereafter to reason coolly" (198) Eugénie's rear is here positioned as a "reward" for Dolmancé for his lessons which Dolmancé accepts, noting however that he will require Saint-Ange's cooperation – meaning he will need her to be the body he utilizes, along with his, to make his dissertations.

This scene illustrates the necessity of disciplining the passions, not to prohibit them, but to form them into the necessary shape for the scenes that will take place. A Sadean pedagogy relies on the scene, to be directed, in order that the maximum pleasure (and safety) is achieved. It is actually a highly regulated and regimented system, but in order to provide lessons that are pleasurable without causing harm. Pain will occur within these pedagogical scenes, but it is a pain that gives way to pleasure seen when Eugénie first receives vaginal and anal penetration. She laments the pain "My God, how he does wax hot! And my buttocks too, they are all afire!...But indeed, you're hurting me!"…Aie! Aie! Aie! I believe my blood is flowing" only to, upon quivering and wriggling, utter "I am dying from pleasure! That whipping…this immense prick…the amiable Chevalier who frigs me the while! My darling, my darling, I can no more!" (280-281). The pedagogic scene relies on a certain level of pain with the recognition that such pain, regulated in the moment, leads to pleasure and post-coital Eugénie is provoked to ask more questions. Eugenie is after sex – as an experience and a form of knowledge – and it is after sex that she is propelled to ask more questions. This is seen where upon everyone coming, Eugénie moves to say "no more, enough…my friends tell me now if a woman must always accept the proposal, when 'tis made to her, thus to be fucked?" (282). The relationships between the bodily practice of learning propel further questions to understand the curiosity of the pupil. The sadistic

scene needs the complex relationships between bodies and the discourses that structure the world around virtue and vice in order to teach lessons and further inflame the imagination.

This scene, and similar scenes throughout, also point to the utility of co-instructors so they can keep an eye on one another so that no one gets out of control and fucks up the scene. Unlike the pedagogy of Rousseau that relies on one tutor, Sade's pedagogic scenes in this dialogue require co-instructors for a variety of reasons. As we saw in the first scene, Saint-Ange stepped in to cooperate with Dolmancé in order to allow Eugénie to become comfortable with this new pedagogical encounter. As we see in the scene just analyzed above, the co-instructors and assistants (Chevalier and Augustin) are vital to create a complex scene that allows the pupil to experience multiple forms of penetration and pleasure while practicing her ability to please at the same time. The instructors and students in all the scenes model particular practices and positions.

Conclusion and Implications

Sade's work grapples with the changing societal norms of the late 18th Century as it is itself implicated in changing those norms. I grounded my exploration in this essay with the work and insights of Sade in *Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, in part because his work, pornographic as it may be, exposes the sexuality that "underlies our social order" (Irigary 203). Irigaray contended that this sexuality "is better...to be exercised openly than for it to prescribe that social order from the hiding-place of its repressions" (203). The pornographic, sexually explicit scenes of Sade highlight in all their mundane, encyclopedic excesses just what is at stake and complicated about, the pedagogical encounter, particularly in *Philosophie dans le Boudoir*. Pedagogy is tied up with

bodies, desires, pleasures, and violence. It also perhaps illustrates an acceptance of sexual behavior between a youth and adults illustrating, as Rule did that:

> If we accepted sexual behavior between children and adults, we would be far more able to protect our children from abuse and exploitation than we are now. They would be free to tell us, as they can about all kinds of other experiences, what is happening to them, and to have our sympathy and support instead of our mute and mistrustful terror. (6)

Sade's pedagogy and its refusal to deny the importance of sex, sexuality, and its implications in knowledge and power relations opens up space to more adequately think about abuse and exploitation – showing that not all sexual behavior can be viewed as abusive. Rather, a much more complicated and nuanced language is required.

Sade's pedagogy – a queer pedagogy to be sure – is not one that relies on manipulating students or repressing the erotic space that is always present in the pedagogical setting. Rather his sadism, in education, actually allows for and demands respect between those bodies involved. As Rubin writes "the systematic restraints on curiosity about sex maintain sexual ignorance, and where people are ignorant, they are manipulable" (214). Sade seeks to undo such restraints and welcomes the curiosity of the student. This is significant because the student body is allowed to have a voice, but that voice is only a piece of the complex pedagogical space. Eugénie is allowed to direct her education via her curiosity and imagination, but is, at key moments, asked to "calm herself" or present a "trifle less passion" in order to learn from her instructors. Sadean pedagogy refuses to disavow the pain of learning and in this refusal opens up space for an ethical endeavor

that while risky seeks to do minimal harm to those involved. Eugenie concludes her education, directing her new knowledge onto the body of her Mother – literally sewing up her Mother's vagina, but metaphorically tying up her past education, represented by the Mother, and being reborn in her inflamed imagination as a libertine woman.

It is unfortunate, however, that Sade is viewed with such disdain and horror. Common usage and understanding of sadism often produces images of extreme violence connected more often to fascism and Nazism than it is to the actual work of the Marquis. Numerous times in my research I have come across educational scholars arguing that education is sadistic without recognizing the complexity and ethicality of sadism. Sadism is an easy straw-man that no one wants to support – othering, in my opinion, the insights of Sade and the contemporary sexual subculture that draws upon the eroticism of Bondage, Domination, Sadism, Masochism (BDSM). Of course, I do not want to imply that Sadism is the picture of perfect human relations or the utopia we need. There are sadistic scenes that fail to meet the "standards" of a scene and it is often these scenes that captivate the popular imagination.

Standards are quite high within the BDSM scene and individuals are accountable to themselves and their partners. Education is, of course, no stranger to standards and accountability. They are, in fact, the dominant way in which we understand education. Education within the last three decades has become rather enamored with testing as a way to assess the quality of education and teaching. The rise of standardized tests allows "us" to measure student progress (and teacher quality). One cannot get outside of the logic of testing and its relationship to standards. Tests, particularly "well-designed" tests, are the instruments of choice to assess students (and teachers) to cut them up to see "what they know". Tests are the standard way of going about business in education. Testing, in this regard, has become the current form of

eroticism in education - erotic not for the children per se (although I do remember getting some pleasure out of filling in the little ovals on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (now the Iowa Test of Educational Development)), but for the adults in charge who want to control what is available for students to know and how they are coming to that knowledge. The tests provide by displacing the real-world interactions and complexity of education, the standard way of assessing learning and figuring out who is and is not being held accountable for the education of our children.

This might be seen as, to borrow from Jane Gallop, "logical eroticism" which she defines as "an eroticism of control and power, striving in the spirit of Scientific Progress and the Technological Revolution toward the bigger and better" (*Thinking* 75). The "dream of logical eroticism" is one where "there is nothing more than that which can be measured by instruments rather than judged by a subject" (75). For politicians and particular sects of educational reformers, the test is key to saving education because tests can tell us exactly what we know and also what we do not know about our students. They are a pedagogical invention that has come to replace bodily contact and interactions in education for political gain.

Sade can be seen as providing an example of "logical eroticism". His texts are highly structured and hierarchical. Yet, his eroticism refuses to deny the embodied nature of education – despite its textual form. The bodies of education – student, instructor, and knowledge – are intertwined and never denied. The body and the mind are connected through both theory and practice in order to "teach a lesson". Eugenie is never tested in her education. She is never examined (like those in Rodin's classroom). The proof of her education is in her ability to take direction and be a part of the sadistic scene. Her success as a student is in the respect she received from her instructors – established early on – and the support they offer in responding to her questions. It is in this dynamic – a dynamic that in contemporary BDSM practices relates to

consent. Consent in the sadistic scene is necessary (unlike in most forms of pedagogy that are forced upon students out of legality). How does consent within the sadistic scene work? "Well," Guy Baldwin writes, "some part of our mind is always paying attention to what is happening, and making constant evaluations about the action and the interactions with our partner(s)" (185). Might then a Sadean pedagogy ask that the pedagogical encounter recognize those involved as partners with different needs and desires while constantly re-evaluating and re-directing the scene. This, in fact, might be the pedagogy practiced by some teachers today but not recognized for its relationship to Sade's pedagogical treatise.

Chapter 5

A Conclusion: After Queerness in Education

There is more than one strategy for entering into a queerer future

- David Halperin

Deviant, ex-con, alien, welfare queen, pervert - the queer body, produced as spectacular, incites outlaw relationalities.

- Therese Quinn and Erica Meiners

Cathy Cohen in her poignant challenge to queer politics sought to "complicat[e] our understanding of both heteronormativity and queerness" in order to build a "progressive coalition politics" (453). Queer politics, in her estimation, has a responsibility to pay attention to relationships – hetero and homo – that "have been prohibited, stigmatized, and generally repressed." In doing so, she contends we might be able to answer the following question "How do we use the relative degrees of ostracization all sexual/cultural 'deviants' experience to build a basis for broader coalition and movement work?" (453). Throughout this dissertation, I would like to think I have begun an attempt to answer Cohen's question and think about how such "queers" – namely inter-generational relationships, murderous teens, sadists, and gay teachers – might teach lessons and in teaching such lessons offer new forms of relating and new political coalitions or alliances within the space and time of education, particularly schools. I of course, have focused more on the relational possibilities such models allow us to imagine – what I think to be the ethical project of this dissertation – but *I* imagine these relations are implicated in the potential political coalitions and the sense of unity such coalitions offer. This unity is not, as Butler reminds us, a:

> synthesis of a set of conflicts, but will be a mode of sustaining conflict in politically productive ways, a practice of contestation that demands that these movements articulate their goals under the pressure of each other without therefore exactly becoming each other. ("Merely" 37)

My provocations or potentially offensive engagements set forth in the previous chapters are not meant to be merely "provocative." Rather, this has been my attempt – initial to be sure – to articulate my own goals using queer theory in order to open up space to fruitfully engage the scandalous or taboo or improper – whichever term one uses – within the space of schools and teacher education. This is so that education and schools might broaden what intimacies are allowable and hence what pleasures potentially experienced. How might the queer models and their lessons open up ways to contest the calls for inclusion or tolerance that offer rather sanitized or politically correct forms of intimacy in order for queer models to build coalitions with such political initiatives?

It is no surprise that thinking of coalitions of queer students and teachers is perhaps a pipe dream because of the conservatism and fears that remain around the queer body. Queer, here, is of course rather empty taking up meaning in the context of whatever particular space and time one is inhabiting or investigating. But, queer is also always intimately connected with sexuality as Sedgwick reminded us years ago requiring simultaneously a vigilance to differences but a promiscuity in recognizing difference. When sexuality, particularly queer sexuality, enters the school space, however, controversy or scandal often emerges.[65] Britzman and Gilbert see this as

[65] The most recent example of this at the time of this writing occurred in Florida where a student was harassed by his teacher and told that he could not put his soda in the same refrigerator as the

the narrative of difficulty of gayness in teacher education. This is the narrative that dominates not only teacher education, but educational discourse in general as education grapples with the bullying, harassment, and exclusions that LGBT students face both in the classroom and in the curriculum. Unfortunately, these narratives of difficulty rely on homophobia and cannot engage queer sexuality outside of the narrative of victimization and I would argue, the logic of identity politics. Further, such narratives and their politics often focus on the singular issue of sexuality without addressing the intersections of race, class, and gender with the experience of violence in schools.[66] Queer populations and sexualities cannot be explored as a singular issue, but need to recognize the relationships between various oppressions and injustices in order to see commonalities within differences and politically come together to struggle against the normalizing pressures of society.

Obviously, queer populations and sexualities have more to offer and experience than difficulty and stories of victimhood. Not all LGBT students are bullied and in some public schools, LGBT issues are incorporated into the curriculum. Yet, the lessons that LGBT issues are allowed to teach in contemporary schooling have been based on strategies of assimilation and a reliance on "positive" or "good" role models that maintain and replicate the normative goals of schooling and education. To some extent, this strategy has benefited particular student populations and contributed to the survival of some LGBT students. However, such strategies are limited and thus require multiple strategies to contest the project of normalization and the process of subjectivation. Or put simply, the presence of LGBT issues allows for a particular LGBT subject to emerge while making other subjects impossible to become.

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other students because he might "wear" off on his colleagues – further illuminating the fears of contagion associated with "gayness." See "Teen: Teacher Mocked Me For Being Gay"

[66] For an example of educational scholarship that grapples with intersections see the work of Lance McCready.

Queers and queerness in opposition to LGBT strategies of assimilation offer a radical project in schools and education that teach different lessons – not better, not worse. It has been these lessons that I have begun to explore in this dissertation. Queers and their practices can teach us about consciousness raising, advocacy, ethics, and the joys of youthful same-sex intimacies. Youth sexuality after all – be it "hetero" or "homo" – is perhaps the queerest sexuality and the sexuality that is most heavily policed and regulated. It is also the most difficult sexuality to engage as an "adult" because doing so, particularly if one is a homosexual, potentially leads to accusations of impropriety. For many in the "gay" community, the fear of accusations of pedophilia and the haunting of the homophobic fantasy of recruitment continues to limit the ability for youth to relate to and interact with adults in complex ways.[67]

In this dissertation, I have sought to explore some of the lessons that queer models might teach us around issues of youth sexuality and the queer space and time of sexuality. I utilized the frame of "models" somewhat playfully imagining each of the models walking the runway to teach us their queer lessons – showing us how we might "be" in the world. But, I also utilized the frame of models somewhat ironically because "models" have been utilized in education, particularly multicultural education as a way to teach about the other. Yet, I did not use these models to teach "about." Rather, I used the models to think through how they disrupt and point towards a different today and tomorrow.

In the first essay, I introduced the reading position that I utilized and advocated for throughout this dissertation. It was in the reparative or exorbitant reading positions that I offered a queerer pedagogy that engaged the issue of intergenerational relationships between students and teachers with particular emphasis on the gay teachers implication in this dynamic. While

[67] See Daniel Tsang's edited collection *The Age Taboo* for a brilliant analysis of youth sexuality and its relationship to the adult, politics, and capitalism.

such relationships are often seen as abusive, coercive, or manipulative – which some are – I sought to read a particular relationship to allow for different possibilities that help those involved survive and thrive. Looking to an example offered by a pre-service student-teacher that illuminated such a relationship between a student and a teacher that was, as she noted "professional," I moved away from a focus on the abuse discourse or desires to manage risks. Such relationships are, by no means, common, and always involve risk. But, all relationships involve risk. Some just are stranger than others. As Gallop illustrated however, it is the exorbitant (or strange) case that often propels us into thinking beyond the status quo and illustrate the potentials of taking risks. Challenging the status quo in this example allowed me to point towards the strange territory that "teaching sexuality" places both adults and youth. Returning to Jane Rule's insightful essay from *The Body Politic* written after the controversial distancing of the mainstream Gay and Lesbian politics from NAMBLA, I illustrated the possibilities that might become possible if we risk it and teach sexuality. This is not, I hope I have made clear, a further attempt to tame sexuality, but a move to allow sexuality to teach, be taught not for knowledge sake, but for the types of relationships that become possible when sexuality is not feared, disavowed, or disciplined but allowed to surprise. How might education teach sex as a pleasurable experience, not solely an experience one must "protect" oneself during?

It is evident in the strange space that sexuality and teaching sexuality occupies in schools that intimacy is a problem. Many, if not all, recognize the need for intimacy within the pedagogical exchange. Yet, in schools the possibilities for intimacy is incredibly limited. As such, I theorized a crisis in intimacy by reading Gus Van Sant's *Elephant*. Extrapolating from Van Sant's representation of a school day that ends in a tragic school shooting, I moved from a

focus on the school shooting that many commentaries have addressed to read the broader lack of intimacy in the film – through the lack of touch, the lack of psychic depth in the characters, and filmic structure. I moved from a focus on the school shooting to argue that the "elephant" in the room that we are told to not think about is the crisis in intimacy that is present in education where it appears even getting to know students becomes a fraught endeavor. Schools struggle with how students and teachers are able to relate and touch and it is through Van Sant's dramatic art film that we are able to see the state of intimacy in education. The state of intimacy in education, as I argue is in a state of crisis that lacks any sense of pleasure or joy. And while I do not propose to end this crisis because a crisis can be productive, I do believe that we might learn new ways of relating and developing intimacies in education to do less harm to the self, others, and the world. How might investigating and opening up new ways of relating in schools allow students to be touched in more humane, pleasurable ways?

Following my initial foray into the reparative and exorbitant reading positions and a theorization of a crisis in intimacy, I moved to offer a reading of the Marquis de Sade's *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*. While I have learned that doing so was a rather surprising move in the field of teacher education, it was with Sade that I offered a fantasy of a sadistic pedagogy that offered images of intimacy in the pedagogical exchange quite queer for most to handle. In this, I sought to see Sade as a pedagogue whose lessons cannot simply be viewed as fascistic violence, but might be recognized as offering a rather perverse sexual education and ethical education. Sade is, as I argued, a pedagogue who exposed the relationship between pain and pleasure within the pedagogical exchange by inventing sadism. Sadism through Sade's universe emerged on the scene at the end of the 18th Century as a revision to or perhaps more so an alternative to Eros, a challenge to the Enlightenment, and a lesson in the possibilities for the education of youth.

However, beyond this, Sade illustrated the importance of students within such an exchange as his student Eugenie was produced as a student in a complex play. In this play, she controls the pedagogic scene to learn what she so desires. In doing so, Sade's project becomes visible as always pedagogical – seeking that one "unlearn" the norms of life and in doing so, undo the self to be re-made and undone in the next scene. Such an education is not entirely easy. It is also not entirely difficult. Rather, it requires a vigilance to the self and the others involved so that lessons are learned and the relationships between those bodies are invented in new and pleasurable ways. Sade allows for intimacy in education to be seen and in this opens up the opportunity to imagine being touched by sexuality in pleasurable ways.

Each of these essays can be read as taking up a different contemporary concern within contemporary schooling from reading positions to alternative conceptualizations of pedagogy. However, while these essays engage different issues, they are also intimately connected. Throughout the essays and their concerns, I have struggled with the ways in which bodies in education are able to relate and/or exist. I have attempted to engage these issues by reading against the grain – refusing the paranoid position – to offer reparative and exorbitant readings that might allow for educated bodies to emerge in new, different, and perhaps queerer ways. The possibilities that exist within schools to relate and be intimate are narrow. To imagine that the purpose of schools might be to develop intimacies and their attendant pleasures is not common. School shootings, student/teacher sex scandals, bullying, teaching sexuality, and touch in education are, well, touchy subjects that have contributed to seeing "intimacy" or any sign of pleasure as something to be policed and denied. The dominant way we are allowed to experience touch is, it seems, through violence, suspicion, and paranoia. We are suspicious and afraid of being accused of impropriety or inappropriate conduct that we protect ourselves to a

detriment. We fail to use risks productively to speak back to the conservative and reactionary forces that dominate educational discourse and politics.

I leave it up to my readers to determine if these lessons have been successful and have inflamed the imagination that schooled subjects might relate in new and strange ways. The models I utilized to teach each touched upon different forms of queer sexuality and in thinking through such models (rather than about such models), I hope to have shown ways that these queer models open up alternatives ways to imagine relationality in the pedagogical space. I suppose that the future imagined in doing so is one where the relationality established and explored in schools transfers into the outside world allowing for "adults" to relate to one another in contested, but non-violent ways. Students eventually grow, but perhaps they might grow queerly, rather than "up."[68] This queer way of growing might provide a world that embraces the contested in order to allow us to touch less violently and perhaps more pleasurably.

The alternative lessons I explored here might be seen as challenging traditional schooling relationships. And alternatives or challenges to traditions in schools are most often met with significant resistance or controversy. One can look no further than the history of controversy surrounding gay teachers to see how the very idea of a "gay" teacher challenges the heteronormative assumptions, temporal fantasies, and desires for schools. From the "Save our Children" campaign of Anita Bryant in the 70's to the ballot measures of the 90's and 2000's, gay teachers are imagined to bring about alternatives – perverse to be sure – to the proper purposes of schools. Foucault illustrated this fear, noting "what makes homosexuality 'disturbing': [is] the homosexual mode of life, much more than the sexual act itself" because "sanitized society can't allow a place for it without fearing the formation of new alliances and the tying together of

[68] See the work of Kathryn Bond-Stockton who explores the metaphors of growing up and the queer potential of growing sideways.

unforeseen lines of force" ("Friendship" 136). The alliances that Foucault's "homosexual" offers are too challenging to the social order. This is seen most vividly in the devastatingly poignant language of the 1992 Ballot initiative in Oregon that stated:

> All governments in Oregon may not use their monies or properties to promote, encourage, or facilitate homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism, or masochism. All levels of government, including public education systems, must assist in setting a standard for Oregon's youth which recognizes that these behaviors are abnormal, wrong, unnatural, and perverse, and they are to be discouraged and avoided. (as cited in Quinn and Meiners 3)

There is a desire seen here to avoid and discourage such queer behaviors because of the challenges and alternatives that such behaviors open up. Queer sexualities – not simply homosexuality – are seen as abnormal, wrong, unnatural, and perverse. They allow for alliances to emerge that might teach bodies to relate differently. They illustrate alternative lifestyles and intimacies. They set the wrong standard(s) for students, but in doing so allow for different types of students to exist.

I have explored in this dissertation, one could say, the "standards" queer sexualities might offer to students and how such standards might open up new ways of relating in education and the very project of education. They are behaviors or practices that allow for a heterogeneous and complex array of options to creatively play and invent one's self, along with questioning the knowledges and ignorances present in schools. This creative play and invention of the self, to remind the reader, is not mere voluntarism but difficult work that relies on those traditions and practices made available in a particular context (Butler, *Bodies*).

I want to end this conclusion by offering a reading of a pedagogical incident that occurred during the final months of this writing and caught the nation's attention for a moment. I offer this reading in order to make sense of the various issues engaged in the preceding essays and perhaps most explicitly imagine what "teaching sexuality" might look like in higher education.

Sex Demonstration: Fuck Saws and Female Orgasms on Display

Controversy emerged at Northwestern University after Prof. Michael Baily invited four members of the Chicago BDSM community to discuss "kink" during an after-class lecture. This lecture spontaneously moved into a live sex-act demonstration where the female BDSM member experienced consensual penetration with a "fuck-saw" controlled by her male partner. Initially, the university supported the demonstration using academic freedom as a defense and the importance to be able to teach controversial topics. Alan K. Cubbage, vice president for University Relations, noted, "Northwestern University faculty members engage in teaching and research on a wide variety of topics, some of them controversial and at the leading edge of their respective disciplines. The University supports the efforts of its faculty to further the advancement of knowledge" (Spak). Baily's syllabus for the course itself noted that the course is "skewed toward controversial and unusual aspects of sexuality" so the discussion of BDSM was, by no means outside the parameters set forth in the syllabus (Spak).

Amid the growing outrage from parents, alum, and Evanston community members, the university decided to open an investigation to, as Northwestern President Schapiro stated, "investigate fully the specifics of this incident, and also clarify what constitutes appropriate pedagogy, both in this instance and in the future" (Spak). With potential bad press, a reputation at stake, and the promise of lost monies, the tune changed and the pedagogical propriety of the demonstration became questioned, with President Shapiro saying he was "'troubled and

disappointed' by the live sex toy demonstration . . . and that it was not in keeping with Northwestern's mission" (Spak). Perhaps illustrating quite comically McWilliam's concern that education is "stuck in the missionary position" since challenging the "mission-ary" position of the university allows other positions or possibilities to be opened up.

Lance Gravelee, who teaches a human sexuality course at the University of Florida, believed that Baily went too far stating, "this case is so far on the other side of the line that it doesn't strike me as difficult to figure that out" and that as a professor he "can't imagine doing something like this in a classroom" (Leibowitz). Gravelee noted that he has discussed the issue of female orgasm (one of the topics during the after-class demonstration) but argued "you can do that and stop well short of bringing it into the classroom." (Leibowitz) For him, "they would have a hard time convincing me that this was an appropriate way to challenge misconceptions" (Leibowitz). Misconceptions it seems can be addressed by simply discussing them, but to illustrate the existence of and experience of a female orgasm is out of the question. Human sexuality, as an academic pursuit is, it would seem, purely a mind game, about acquiring knowledge and overcoming misconceptions without any attention to the physical or material complexity and experience of the physical body. There is, unlike in Sade's boudoir, a complete inability to merge theory with practice. The voyeuristic lesson on sex toys and kink, performing an alternative sexual practice itself, was seen as inappropriate for the proper pedagogical lesson on sexuality, quite missionary to be sure.

In this case, it was the body that was the problem – particularly the female body. There were no problems with the female orgasm as a "proper" academic lesson, only with the female orgasm on display. To illustrate, with a real-life woman, particular sexual practices that brought about pleasure and orgasm that did not include a "real" penis was seen, as one Evanston parent

wrote, as a sign of "low-class depravity." It was unclear why such a sexual practice was (or is) a "low-class depravity" as the female participant fully consented to the act and expressed her own enjoyment of exhibitionism. The sexual and sexualized body is quite the problem in schools for a number of reasons already engaged.[69] But, the body itself is not always the problem as there are all kinds of embodied demonstrations that take place on a university campus, from rock climbing, to ROTC drills, to scuba diving. Rarely are there any controversies surrounding such demonstrations and actions - except ROTC drills and the exclusionary practices of the military that are too complex to address here. And for activities like scuba diving and rock climbing, it would be absurd to say that such activities and the techniques involved can be taught solely through recourse to a textbook.

Sexual activities and techniques are, of course, a much more loaded conversation. Deirdre McCloskey, a UIC professor who has criticized Bailey in the past, said "he aims for shock over substance" (Spak). Such a view, while understandable, fails to grapple with why a demonstration of alternative sexual techniques, not to mention "traditional sexual techniques" is not considered "substantive." Is the female orgasm not an important and substantive topic that should be more engaged and thought about, especially in an age when women's rights are constantly being challenged and policed with particular emphasis on single mothers of color and teen mothers? A Northwestern parent, Lynn Simmons thinks the demonstration "does not fall under the umbrella of education. It's demeaning to women. I just thought it was completely, completely out of line." (Baca and Horng). While it is understandable that such a demonstration provoked such responses because they are rare – this being the first I have ever heard – I am not sure how a demonstration

[69] The idea of using live sex models to demonstrate sex has been utilized in various films and television shows. For two instances, see Monty Python's The Meaning of Life and the episode "Octopussior" in Comedy Central's Drawn Together.

that was fully consensual and illustrated through its very performance, a particular sexual fetish, is demeaning to women? Is it because we lack ways to "read" sexual practices and lessons outside of a paranoid position or a position that views sexuality or sex in prurient and prudish ways?

I find the demonstration and its lessons, in this context, quite liberating and educational if I refuse to read the demonstration as abusive or potentially traumatic to students. I find that it, in many ways, illustrates the issues I am concerned with in this dissertation. The demonstration illuminated and allowed for those present to see that women can 1) orgasm; 2) have control over how their body is pleasured by their partner(s) in non-normative ways that minimize the possibility of STDs, HIV, and pregnancy; and 3) produce new modes of intimacy that rely on different traditions and histories. This is not to say that women do not experience a disproportionate amount of sexual violence, but to note that it is important to recognize moments when female sexuality (and I would argue male sexuality via her partner's pleasure in the demonstration) is shown as a positive and important aspect to a fulfilling life. As Jim Marcus, one of the presenters noted, "Everyone in the room consented to be there. Everyone on stage consented to do what they were doing. No one got hurt. Everything was done in safe, sane and consensual way" (Baca and Horng). The response by the president, parents, and other scholars has, on the other hand, been irrational, maintaining the lack of knowledge about sexual practices.

This demonstration was shocking. While everyone knows students have sex on campus, it is seemingly impossible for a university campus (consisting almost entirely of those who have reached the age of consent) to actually teach a plethora of ways to experience sexual pleasure. Rather, universities can only respond to sexual violence and aggression, but even in doing that

fail quite miserably.[70] So, McCloskey is correct in stating this is "shocking" because we prefer sex to be the unspoken and are shocked when it is not. As Leibowitz reports:

> Bill Yarber, a researcher at Indiana University's Kinsey Institute and author of the widely used textbook Human Sexuality: Diversity in Contemporary America, said he's never heard of a naked woman being brought to orgasm in front of a class of students. 'There's certain boundaries of things, I think, that are acceptable and that would certainly be pushing that' (np).

Bailey's decision to allow this demonstration does in fact push the boundaries, but that is one of the purposes of the academy – to push the boundaries of thought, pedagogy, and the permeability of the body's boundary. This demonstration was a rather explicit example of a sexualized pedagogy that openly flaunts the relationship between bodies, knowledge, and sexuality. Bailey's demonstration and pedagogical spontaneity, while a surprise, challenged traditional sex education to think about the possibility of consenting live models used to educate and importantly did so relying on the BDSM sexual subculture.

The student body, however, was not outraged. They found the lesson done in a way that was safe, consensual, and informative. Yes, it engaged sexual matters, but in a way that was informative and educational to show that the sexual matters. Student Natalie Houchins said, "We all learned some things. We learned about kinky sex culture, reasons they do it. We learned how these instruments work" (Spak). And Sarah Lowe "was not disturbed by it," but was "glad that it took place in an auditorium, rather than a smaller classroom, which would have been too close and awkward." (Spak) Lowe further said:

[70] See Ms. Magazine Blog "Silence and Sexual Assaults on College Campuses"

> I was basically interested to see how it works. There wasn't anybody who was angry or expressed disgust. They asked questions about the lives of the presenters. It was very informational, I feel, about the sexual diversity that exists (np).

And to be "fair and balanced," not all students stayed for the demonstration. "For me, I'm glad I didn't see it. It was a little too explicit for me, and if I were in the class, if I would have stayed for the demonstration, I probably would have left. I know a couple of my friends did get up and leave," said Diana Lorenzini (Baca and Horng). Nowhere in this student's view, however, was the demonstration seen as inappropriate or un-educational, rather it was not up her alley - "a little too explicit."

Statements from these students illustrate that there was seemingly no harm in the demonstration. Rather, the demonstration was educational and interesting – something that I imagine is an "appropriate pedagogy" by any standard. The students who attended recognized the educational value of the demonstration and perhaps even yearned for honest and real engagements with the plethora of sexual practices and the intimacies that they produce. Bailey's class, after all, is said to always meet and exceed enrollment pointing to the curiosity and desire to engage sexuality as a intellectual topic.

Perhaps the students, who are themselves adults, in this after-class demonstration have something to teach those older adults about the value of an education. Perhaps they illustrate the need to listen to "student voices," just as Dolmancé and Mme. St. Ange listen to Eugenie. Perhaps the student's open-mindedness and general curiosity demands that the shock and awe around sexuality is outdated and in need of a makeover – challenging the prurient traditions of teaching sex. And this challenge to the "no live sex in the classroom," while too explicit for

some, is an important educational opportunity to be afforded those who are interested. Those students who thought the after-class lecture might be too explicit still maintained the importance of allowing such an educational encounter to exist. Perhaps then sex demonstrations, like rock-climbing and scuba diving, deserve a place in the classroom to help students see, not simply read, about the diversity of sexual possibilities and how to perform such possibilities in a safe and consensual manner. And, like those less "shocking" activities, perhaps such demonstrations for the time being, remain an "add-on" to the curriculum – which is better than nothing.

This case illuminates the strange territory that sex and sexuality occupy within education and the overall concerns in this dissertation. Baily's spontaneous decision to allow the fuck-saw demonstration was immediately seen by many, such as parents, community members, other faculty, and the university president, as inappropriate and potentially harmful. It was not thought about enough. Baily's spontaneity was too risky, despite it being quite the "teachable moment." It is the moment – the spontaneous, unplanned moment that is most risky and sought to be policed. And this moment allowed the students and those involved to think through what was happening and its pedagogical importance rather that merely thinking about impropriety and the potential harm. The obsessions of the administration and others to investigate proper pedagogy further illustrates a crisis in intimacy. Proper pedagogy, it seems, is not meant to be disruptive or allow students to touch or be touched by learning. Rather, learning is meant to be disembodied and "textbook" related. Yet, in listening to the students' voices, we see a genuine desire and interest to learn about such things in various manners that may be seen as inappropriate under particular norms. The students do not read the incident and its spontaneous demonstration through a paranoid lens or that it objectifies women or degrades traditional models of intimacy. Rather, they read it as offering alternative practices to think about – an offering that is, as the

controversy shows, quite exorbitant. It is this pedagogical moment that is "way over the line" that shows just what might happen if risks are taken, and taken within the pedagogical scene. Of course, such risks may have problems, but it is my belief that this moment allowed for students to have access to alternative modes of relating to the other sexually that might prompt new imaginations and new ways of relating to the sexual other.

Of course, my dissertation is not specifically about feelings. I didn't use the language of "feelings" – choosing to tell you what I "think" or will "argue" or "believe" since that is what I "feel" the academic game requires. I argued for an exploration of intimacy in education and its relationship to violence because I think it is the fear of intimacy that is in need of being addressed in more complex, less legalistic ways. I wrote because I believe there is a need for alternative ways to relating in the world and to create such alternatives I relied on queer models that offer up different relational dynamics and possibilities. These models all implicated sex as it is sex (and sexuality) that evokes, for many, the dynamic between intimacy and violence, pleasure and pain. As such, I thought through various sexualized moments not to teach "about" them, but to look through them in order to see the world through their practices. I focused on schools (and education) because it is in schools and in our educational experience that we come to relate to one another, knowledge, and ignorance BUT it is also schools where sex and sexuality are quite controversial. Sex provokes feelings ranging from the extremes and these feelings teach us how to feel toward understanding and learning about sex.

It seems to me that the possibilities of relating in schools and education are or perhaps always have been rather limiting. But, to cross the boundaries of such limitations is fraught with complications. We have become so frightened of relating, so fearful of intimacy in education and schools that we have cut ourselves off from having to relate and deal with the material bodies of

others. This, I feel, can be seen in the violence that exists in schools. Students cannot relate intimately – because of no-touch policies, because relating to particular bodies allows them to be labeled something they are not willing to claim, because they do not know how to relate intimately to others, because the curriculum fails to address the diversity of the world – leaving students to relate to the other through violence; this, so that they can at least "feel" something that mimics intimacy. We saw this in the scandals that erupt when teachers sleep with students - always reading such relationships as an 'abuse' of power, rather than remaining open to the possibility that such a relationship was consensual, amorous, and beautiful. My proposal in the final chapter was a return to or really a turn to the Marquis de Sade in education. Of course, Sade is not seen as appropriate for schools. He makes those who read him feel many different things – horror, anger, excitement. Sadism (and masochism) are often seen in negative light as a "dark sexual underground" and therefore not a set of practices or subculture that education should inhabit. BDSM makes us feel different than the normative images of sexuality allowed into mainstream media. Yet, as I hoped to have shown in that chapter, a sadistic pedagogy may be **an** answer to broadening relational possibilities.

BDSM is a highly ethical and regulated sexual subculture. It requires consent and recognizes the relationship between pleasure and pain. It is also a form of sexuality that avoids sexual difference preferring, as Foucault aptly noted, the possibility to de-genital sex and the invention of new pleasures and bodies. This is, I think, what education should be about - it should be about inventing new pleasures and bodies, rather than re-inscribing old pleasures and bodies understood under traditional identity categories.[71] It is the possible "deconstruction" of student identities that allows for new possibilities – of course not a simple task by any means.

[71] See Youdell for an engagement with this educational project.

Subjection is not an easy, voluntaristic endeavour, but one, as Butler taught me, fraught with difficulty.

> Subjection is a kind of power that not only unilaterally acts on a given individual in the form of domination, but also activates or forms the subject. Hence, subjection is neither simply the domination of a subject nor its production, but designates a certain kind of restriction in production. (*Psychic Life* 84)

Schools are one particular space and time where this "kind of power" exists – not in isolation of course. Schools struggle with allowing for a heterogenous production of subjects – limiting itself to those subjects more recognizable or least controversial. This, I believe, contributes to the boring and unpleasurable state of schooling. The most pleasure that students and teachers experience is in the transgression of the rules, in subverting the rules to "do" something wrong that takes them off the path and into other possibilities. Yet, such actions are often met with discipline and punishment – straightening the student out. There is immense pleasure for students in not doing what they are told, in not learning. Learning has accomplished what we might think impossible, to recall Foucault's thought, by becoming unerotic but the resistance to such learning – the uptake of ignorance – is perhaps the space where new possibilities emerge for the body of education.

Sade, as we saw, refused to allow for a pedagogical encounter that did not engage pleasure and pain – merging theory and practice – as his co-instructors, invited guests, and student fuck around - with learning and with bodies experiencing, as the epigraph at the top of that chapter said, "ectasy." I dream of an ecstatic education – not one that involves students and

teachers having sex to learn (although I am not opposed to that as I explored above) – but an education where students and teachers have their minds blown and feel what it means to be "touched" by learning. This is no easy task, especially as education is under attack by the masters of standards and accountability – privatizing and scripting the curriculum so that no joy is possible, only automatic transmission of knowledge or more so the "received" facts. I am afraid engaging sadism in education or thinking through sadism to create new educational practices is rather unintelligible to many. The possibilities that exist in the sadistic scene might be too disturbing, too challenging for the conservative and reactionary enterprise of education. Yet, I shall continue to feel my way through this possibility and perhaps come to an understanding of education that might imagine a different horizon for the there of a queer future that learns from sexual subcultures outside its ivory tower and in the bathhouses and backrooms.

This may be an attempt to live the phrase "Fuck Tradition" I have heard shouted at various queer marches or events. My own work here perhaps toys with "fucking tradition" in an attempt to change attitudes around and towards queerness and difference. I, of course, think the word fuck can be over-used, admit that I have over-used it in my own graduate career, and warn the reader here at the outset of the end that my use of this word will be over-used in the coming paragraphs, but please bare with me, I find mild pleasure in doing this. I also do this, in part, because of Sade's use of the work fuck where one of the lessons Eugenie receives is "fuck, in one word, fuck: 'twas for that you were brought into the world" (220). And it is Sade who fucked the traditions of his time and in doing so provided provocative insights into knowledge, pedagogy, politics, and bodies.

Fuck is a rather harsh word. It is quite "in your face." Its status as a "cuss" word or as a profanity puts it into a special category of words that is, for the most part, inappropriate and

uttered often for effect or in extreme moments of pleasure ("Fuck Me") or pain ("Fuck, that hurt"). In schools, fuck is not a proper word and when uttered usually results in some form of punishment or disciplinary action. Fuck, in writing, is often disciplined, losing its last three letters to the asterisk (F***) becoming the "F" word – a word that dare not spell itself. And fuck is a euphemism for sex, but usually touches upon a rather aggressive or violent form of sex. Fuck is fucking complicated and controversial as such. It is hard to deal with.

Tradition is a nicer word. Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* believed in tradition and taught me that "without traditions, our lives would be as shaky as...as... as a fiddler on the roof!" Traditions seem to give us something to stand on; they ground us in a community and make our actions recognizable to those within such traditions.[72] Yet, tradition can be a rather dangerous term if one does not fit into or understand the traditions of a given community. This is most problematic for those persons who cannot fit in or understand such traditions due to any number of characteristics (skin, clothing, language). When such traditions come into contact with one another, misunderstandings, conflict, and violence can erupt...although it does not have to play out in that way…I hope or dream.

When I hear "fuck tradition" in queer contexts, the tradition that is being referred to, I assume is the heteronormative or heterosexist (and I would like to hope, the misogynist, racist, able-ist, imperialist) traditions that have inflicted violence on queer populations in various ways. The desire is to fuck such traditions "up" so they can no longer assault the queer body. Fucking, in this way, is violent and destructive with the belief that destroying such traditions, queer

[72] One of my favorite traditions is the handkerchief code utilized in the gay male community – more so in the past – where men wore different colored handkerchiefs to "speak" their pleasures and find their match. During the *Queer Bonds* Conference in 2008 at the University of California Berkeley this tradition was utilized out of a sense of nostalgia as the attendees explored "queer bonds" and where I began to think about the queer bonds possible in schools.

traditions may exist without fear of aggression. One might read my dissertation as a desire to "fuck traditions" in education that deny the possibilities of queer traditions, practices, and bodies. The beginning of this dissertation so many pages ago after all did start with the anger of the early 90's anonymous queers toward education. The traditions I "fuck" in my dissertation are the narratives and fantasies, perhaps homophobic, that construct the queer or queerness as victims or as inappropriate with the hope that doing so will allow those queers and their queerness the possibility to survive and thrive. Or, put differently, I "fuck" in an attempt to give an attitude adjustment.

Yet, I also have come to think that the tradition that is being referred to in chants to "fuck tradition" as the queer tradition or traditions that are being called upon in such fucking. Fuck tradition, in this context seems to imply that the traditions we are fucking are the traditions that sustain and provide pleasure for us – hence why after protests, I imagine, a fair amount of fucking occurs as participants are turned on and ramped up from their activism. Fucking, in this way, is joyous and explicit. This fucking occurs with the belief that in doing so, queer traditions might be transmitted to others and those "fighting the good fight" able to experience contingent intimacies with other queers. One might then also read my dissertation as a desire to "fuck traditions" – those queer traditions that offer insights and alternative traditions to open up different models of relating and becoming in the world. Or, put differently, I fuck in order to enjoy those diverse bodies and practices I find inspiration from.

The chant to "fuck tradition" appears to offer a double movement where we simultaneously seek to destroy the traditions that have violated or limited possibilities while relying on the traditions that sustain us to do so. We fuck tradition using our own traditions to do so, creating a rather queer exchange in this fucking encounter. It would seem that in fucking

tradition there is always the potential for all involved to become infected by the other - queer traditions become infected by traditional traditions while traditional traditions become infected by queer traditions. Such perversity is inevitable it would seem and I think it is this perverse transmission in fucking tradition that the complexity of a queer ethics (and politics) is seen because all involved – straight, gay, lesbian, black, white, conservative, progressive – in their complex positions are faced with the voices and existence of others. Often, of course, in such instances there is down right cruelty and anger as those "in" power use these affects to maintain their traditions while those "out" of power use such affects to transform their and other's relations and practices of living. What I can hope occurs for some in such moments is the recognition of shared humanity and the very possibility that there are multiple ways to exist and become in the world. I might hope that in fucking we come undone to be remade over and over again in beautiful and fabulous ways.

Coda: On the Implications of Queerness

I want to end thinking about the implications of this dissertation project. I would be lying if I did not admit that I find writing about implications rather strange, yet it is a discussion of implications that is necessary here for a variety of reasons. Implication emerges out of Latin - *implicātiōn-em* - meaning entwining or entangling. According to the OED, it is a "noun of action" meaning:

> The action of involving, entwining, or entangling; the condition of being involved, entangled, twisted together, intimately connected or combined OR the action of implying; the fact of being implied or involved, without being plainly expressed; that which is involved or implied in something else.

To think about the implications of this work asks that I explore what (e.g. curriculum) and who (e.g. teachers and students) are "intimately connected" to these ideas, along with paying attention to what it is I have "implied" throughout this dissertation (e.g. purposes of schooling, equality). It would be rather dishonest to not recognize that various subjects – in the various senses of the word – are implicated in what I have written and that I have often implied things without paying extensive attention to them. So, it is in the coming pages that I lay out the implications of this work as I see them. I assume however that you, my reader, will come up with any number of other possible ways subjects are implicated by my work here. I offer these final thoughts to

challenge myself to think in a different register – one might say "empirical" – as opposed to the "theoretical".

My dissertation involved a number of parties in education – most significantly, in my opinion, teachers and students. I wrote about issues of intimacy, queerness, and queers to connect such ideas with the contemporary scenes of education that have become steeped in ideas of measurement, assessment, and accountability – becoming more scientistic and less artistic. Making an argument or imagining a different story for education at this time, for some, may appear irresponsible as I did not take up the crisis in education as discussed in the headlines and political rhetoric. I did not write about test scores, failing schools, poor teachers, and bad students. Rather, I wrote about queer models that I proposed opened up space and time to imagine education that contested the normative – both the hetero- and homonormative. This contestation was not to create a new dominant order – a queer order one might say – but to embrace the contingent, the ever-changing world to make more possibilities possible, recognizable, and inhabitable. I did this in the hope that embracing such queer models and queerness these "dark times" might see some light (and some humor) to get on with the impossible task of education in a different, perhaps pleasurable way.

It may sound banal to say that everyone is implicated in this dissertation project. While most of my work involved the representations of students and teachers, everyone (politicians, parents, non-parents, etc.) is implicated in these ideas. So, I think it bears being said that these ideas implicate and impact everyone. The task is to engage these different positions to specifically think through how these different subjects are implicated in relation to their own purposes, needs, and desires. No one can escape the normative drives and desires within contemporary society, but simply saying so does not allow for a nuanced engagement with how

such drives impact/influence/constitute different subjects. As such, I focus on schools because schools are the particular social institution that has historically sought to produce subjects that fit into the national mode of living, producing, and consuming. It is within schools that struggles have been fought and continue to be fought over the purpose or more likely purposes of such an institution and its connection to broader social projects. Should schools be a place where a common culture and understanding of the nation and world are professed? Should schools be a place where cultures come together to contest and create a pluralistic understanding of the nation and world? Should students be allowed to explore OR should students be taught a prescribed curriculum that creates a homogenized student body? Whatever the answers to these questions might be, they implicate all involved. However, I will discuss teachers and students, along with the curriculum rather than, say, policy and politicians in order to think further through the ideas I develop and espouse in this project.

This current dissertation project utilized queerness and queer models to imagine education and schooling to be a place of pleasure and pain. It grounded itself in theories of queerness that shone light on the subject(s) of sexuality and their implications on the world. In bringing queer theories to bear on education, I sought to implicate pleasure (and pain) as a key purpose in education; a purpose developed and complicated through the relationships between and with the self and other. Students and teachers are central to the development and living out the cultivation of pleasure as a central purpose to education as it is their relationships that can make or break a classroom experience. To create and explore such ideas, I drew upon the sexual – both as an analytic and experience – to produce provocations that might stir something in the reader to look for and imagine how schools and education broadly construed might be different. This was done in the theoretical register – as opposed to the empirical – with the very basic

purpose to get my reader thinking in different, startling ways. Some may ask “Why queerness?” “Why Sade?” “Why pleasure?” “Explain!” I ask, why not? Why not engage Sade and pleasure to see where such explorations might lead.

To engage the question of “why not,” I would like to turn to the empirical. Empirical meaning not “experimental” as often defined within the sciences, but as relating to the observable, to the senses. I did not do any experiments. Nor did I collect data to make empirical claims. However, I have taught and tried to play with these ideas as I developed them. I did so never asking why. I only asked why not, allowing myself to remain open to surprises and new insights. In such a mind-set, I have observed and sensed how such ideas are taken up or refused by students and colleagues. It is these moments, my own pedagogical moments, that I will discuss not as prescriptions of “what to do,” but as examples that readers might utilize to further develop these ideas to their own particular contexts and practices.

There were three essays in this dissertation project. Each essay engaged somewhat differently possible ways to think about "growing queerly" in order to theoretically think through a different purpose for education and the development of student subjects. To grow queerly is not to abide by the logic and developmental notions of “growing up” but to try thinking about growing in different, strange ways. These different, strange ways I assume rest on and create different experiences of pleasure and pain. Schools are one particular place where growth occurs – intellectually, socially, and physically – and it is this growth that creates tensions and awkwardness. To grow queerly in the school space has most often been met with violence as schools or schooled subjects “straighten out” those growing queerly. One of my ideas in this dissertation was quite simply though that while schools have been a space that has historically violated "queer" bodies – queer defined quite broadly – it is possible to imagine and do

something to counter-act such violence that does not negate growing queerly but embraces its strange trajectories. Subjects that have grown queerly – queer role models – might offer insights into alternative ways to conceive of and do education – hence my focus on historical figures like Sade and NAMBLA. To counter-act violence is not to eliminate pain. Rather, it is to more carefully disintricate pain that leads to or emerges via pleasure *from* pain that emerges via violence. I have no delusions that education can be free of pain. I do have the hope that violence in education can be minimized or eliminated if attention is paid to the complex interactions, thoughts, and relationships allowed or disallowed in the space and time of education.

One idea implicated in this dissertation, though not explicated until now, is that "homophobia is wrong". Homophobia is rather apparent in contemporary schools as seen in the national attention given to bullying and youth suicide related to LGBT students. It is a form of relationality that is based on fear and expressed through violence. Responses to homophobia, I would argue, recapitulate that very violence seen in the reliance on legal remedies (e.g. juvenile detention) and zero-tolerance policies. Or, responses push the issue aside seen most often when teachers simply tell students to not say “that’s gay.” Such responses maintain a separation between bodies, rather than grappling with the pain of learning to live with the other. Zero-tolerance policies and legal remedies violently remove and shame students who are perceived as “homophobic” so they do not have contact with the other while silencing the use of “gay” censors students ability to not only use language but also disables them from paying attention to the complexity and ever-changing uses of language.

Homophobia or actions/statements perceived as homophobic are not about homosexuality per se. Rather, they are about a fear of intimacy, about the inability for particular bodies to relate to other bodies because of any given number of norms around bodies, particularly masculinity

and femininity. Homophobia is wrong, but the ways that education has engaged the wrongs have been limited – as my own approach is sure to be. My approach, as I see it, is one that seeks a resolution to the fears by allowing students – both bully and bullied – to come together to struggle, painfully I imagine, and work through the issues to create potentially unimaginable alliances or solutions. This obviously takes time and requires students to experience the pain of recognizing the other as deserving of respect and dignity. Yet, it is through working through the pain – dare I say trauma – that resolution might be possible.[73] Such an approach is not necessarily new. Theories of restorative justice and conflict resolution propose similar ideas that bring involved parties and a third neutral party to the table to work towards a solution. Doing so is challenging, in part, because it asks that all parties are open to the negotiations and willing to imagine new ways of relating to the other – the other often one who has committed some form of violence against the self.

To place the bully and the bullied together alone to work through their relationship might open up the possibility for more harm to be done. Yet, it is also possible that doing so might create new possibilities adults (e.g. teachers, administrators, and parents) could not fathom or imagine because of their own limitations. Responses to bullying have become rather prescribed. It is perhaps those immediately involved and impacted that if allowed, might create solutions that are less violent and more generative than the quick fixes that dominate the imagination. A beautiful example of this can be seen emerging in Fox's high school drama-musical *Glee* where gay student Kurt Hummel (Chris Colfer) is bullied by fellow classmate David Karofsky (Max Adler). While the initial responses are for the bully to be suspended and for the bullied to transfer

[73] I am reminded here of a lesson from Judith Butler in *The Psychic Life of Power* who argued that it may only be through re-living or re-experiencing trauma that we might find ways through the trauma. However, doing so is much more difficult and time consuming that quick-fix legal remedies.

to a different school (his choice), such reactions later turn out to be inadequate. In the second season Kurt asks that he speak with his bully alone without the presence of adults, allowing the two students to discuss issues openly that were not possible to engage with adults present. This process ends with Kurt returning to McKinley High and Karofsky taking lead in a new school initiative against bullying. We see through this representation of bullying and its complexities the possibility that students – victimized and perpetrator – if provided with the space and time to think through their actions might come up with solutions unimagined by adults who have been granted, more often than not, the belief that they act "in the best interests of the child." Such a belief however operates under a logic of inequality between adult and child, foreclosing the possibility, and I would argue reality, that the child's life experiences allow for new possibilities to emerge that create new worlds. These worlds of course challenge or contest the worlds of adults, making them uneasy – uneasy because they lose their assumed power and the belief that adults know best or that the worlds of adults are the best or most appropriate.

While such an approach might be unacceptable to many, it relies on the assumption that those immediately involved may have the most to offer in thinking through next steps. It assumes that students – victim and perpetrator – have the capability to come up with solutions. My ideas on such an approach were developed, in part, as I developed the exorbitant or reparative habit of reading (and thinking) I utilize throughout my work. Such reading strategies counter, although do not replace, the dominant habit of paranoid reading. How teachers, administrators, and students respond to bullying is contingent on the context. My proposal here is simply to open up and allow for multiple ways such responses might occur. It is a task of the imagination. We must look out for homophobia, but we must also be able to look at ways to engage homophobia that move us out of the violence that pervades it due to the responses that have come to dominate the

discourse around bullying. The implications of developing this habit of mind is to have a heterogeneous way of reading the world and move from immediately judging or condemning queer practices to being open to thinking through and hearing from those involved. This is quite simply to allow for the development of relationships and understandings that are less violent than current reading practices that constantly suspect and expect the worst in instances of queerness (e.g. the gay rights movement toward being "good" gays that disavows negative attributes associated with gays such as promiscuity) or responses to queerness (e.g. gay bashing).[74] This is not to negate the potential pain such practices might cause, but to leave open the potential for the pleasures of relating to something or someone unexpected. This requires teachers and students to encounter the stereotypical or the disparaged with an eye to what such stereotypes or disparaged positions allow to be seen or felt. It is a move away from what I might say the immediate feelings of revulsion or disgust "queerness" often provoke to inhabit such feelings to see how they allow for a thinking through the world in different ways.

This habit of reading and thinking is not something that comes naturally to us. But, then again, neither is the paranoid habit of reading and thinking. Criticality is something that we are trained to do – either professionally in the academic world or experientially through life. However, the ways of being or doing critical work are limited due to our own limitations and the privilege granted to some modes of critical thinking over others. The purpose of utilizing the reparative or exorbitant habit of reading and thinking is to create space for multiple ways of reading and thinking about the world while inhabiting that very world. Developing different reading positions is, I contend, important to engaging the complexities and contradictions that exist within ourselves and the worlds we inhabit. It is my contention drawing upon Sedgwick and

[74] Queerness here refers both to gay students but also to the bully who is produced as "strange" or not normal for his/her/hir reactions to the other in this time of heightened attention to bullying.

Gallop that the reparative or exorbitant positions have been under utilized and marginalized in thinking about the multiple ways critical projects might be imagined and engaged. This is due to the assumption that such positions are naïve or lacking in intellectual rigor, but also because such positions contest the assumptions that underlie the paranoid position.

Since I work in Teacher Education, what this means for teachers or those training to become teachers is important to comment on for it is the teacher that, more often than not, trains students or teaches them to read – both literally how to read a book and figurally how to read the world. Critical reading and thinking skills – an important but elusive concept in education – are (sought to be) developed so students can become critical citizens of their worlds and in becoming so able to relate to the diverse bodies that inhabit their worlds. As this process has played out, critical thinking has taken up the paranoid position. Students have been taught to look at the world and expose that which is hidden and out to get them. Yet, often what is exposed is not surprising. Racism exists, sexism is ever present, capitalism is inhumane. At the collegiate level courses in multicultural issues have trained students to see how practices or structures are out to oppress particular groups allowing them to read the world and the word to recognize injustice and work against such things. This is important and necessary work. It challenges, contests, and perhaps destroys unjust structures and practices.

However, teachers must also be invited to develop habits of reading that allow themselves and students to read in ways that are not paranoid. This is not simply about reading different books, although I imagine that might be one technique. Rather, it is about developing an ability to read the world and word in ways that are counter-intuitive or against the grain of both the paranoid reading and the, let's say, "mainstream" reading. This is done, as I see it, to create alternative ways of being and becoming in the world utilizing what is present. Let me provide a

quick example that I experienced and have thought about from my own teaching of multicultural education courses.

One area that I have found to be dominated by paranoid reading involves engaging stereotypes. Stereotypes are often disparaged in school settings. Within pre-service teacher education, stereotypes are the topic of conversation quite often in my experience. I cannot count the number of times a particular representation of any given group has been met with the statement "that's stereotypical, not all 'x' are like that." This statement is not false by any means. No two people are alike, even if they are classified as such. Yet, as novelist Chimamanda Adichie states, "the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete". It is the story that surrounds representations and the ways in which we *are or are not* allowed to read such representations. In this current project, I offered ways of engaging stereotypes about gay men to illustrate what this might look like and allow us to think about in different ways. Rather than rejecting the negative stereotype or representation, a reparative reading embraces that negativity to see what might be produced or imagined from such positions. For example, embracing the stereotype that gay men are promiscuous might allow students to see the pleasures and responsibilities of such a lifestyle. This adds depth to the stereotype to make it inhabitable as opposed to flattening the complexity of homosexuality. Adding this complexity allows us to imagine that what emerges out of this disparaged practice when embraced allows for alternative modes of relating to the self and other to become visible. Such a stance allows for the stereotypical to become inhabitable both for the population that is associated with the particular stereotype and for those who now see new possibilities in those practices previously disparaged.

This different habit of thinking matters; in fact, it matters greatly yet it is not something one can prescribe. Rather, it is something that we feel towards. We contest, offend, make

mistakes as we reach for ways to engage the complexity of the world. Because the paranoid habit is rather ingrained in our notions of criticality, developing another reading position will at first feel quite strange. As I developed and continue to develop this manner of reading (and writing) I cannot help but feel I should be doing something else, something paranoid so I can be viewed as "doing" critical work. Yet, in developing this dissertation and engaging colleagues and friends with my ideas, I found myself feeling that this, I might say, intervention was interesting and useful. Colleagues and friends, while initially uneasy upon discussing, say student-teacher sexual relationships, found my ideas and arguments to be compelling and provoked them to think differently about intimacy and education.

The Marquis de Sade was the figure that drew the most attention and interest from readers. Initially Sade seemed quite perverse to bring into education. His sadistic imagination and pornographic novels are so disturbing that it is difficult to move beyond such a state. Yet, it is precisely moving with and through Sade's disturbing novels that I found an opening to challenge contemporary education. The pedagogy that I proposed reading *Philosophie* is not a pedagogy often imagined when "sadistic" is uttered in education. "Sadistic" often alludes to an education heaped in violence against the student body. I could argue that contemporary education is sadistic in many ways if I abide by this common understanding of sadistic. Schooling is filled with violence against student bodies as they are disciplined in any number of ways – from corporal punishment, shaming and expulsion to constant surveillance. Schools force students to take exams that allow their "insides" to be explored and teachers to figure out what students have taken in from their teaching. Students are forced to sit in uncomfortable desks, in bland spaces, for hours on end listening to the master drone on about topics that have no relevance to their daily lives.

Contemporary schooling, as I hope to have imagined, can also be seen, at times, as espousing a Sadean pedagogy. Sadean pedagogy emerges out of my re-reading of Sade's work and recuperating his radical insights about knowledge, pedagogy, and bodies. Contrary to a sadistic pedagogy, what I explored is a Sadean pedagogy—a term I use to illustrate the difference between the traditional notions of sadisim (as violent and cruel) and the actual pedagogy advanced by Sade. Sadean pedagogy is, as I wrote earlier, a good pedagogy. It is a pedagogy that listens to student voice, that seeks to move away from coercion or manipulation, and that explicitly engages both the pleasures of learning and its attendant pains. Sadean pedagogy is not violent. While one might read Sade and associate his work with violence, the pedagogical space represented in *Philosophie* is not filled with violence. It is a contested space between student and instructors as all parties involved experience education – both in pleasurable and painful ways. This pedagogy I propose might be seen as a democratic classroom or as espousing the insights of Montessori and Dewey. Yet, I utilize Sade, sex, and sexuality to dream a different dream than Dewey and Montessori. It might not be opposed to them, but it seeks a different philosophical orientation. This orientation orients one's idea about the purpose of education towards the cultivation of pleasure – a cultivation that by definition requires an experience and engagement with pain so to develop the ability to discriminate between pleasures and unpleasures.

Reading Sade and the other objects in this dissertation, I emphasized sexuality and sex for particular reasons. Most significantly because one of the first lessons I try to teach my students – almost all entirely students learning to become teachers – is a lesson I learned from Michel Foucault that itself emphasized sex and pleasure. In an interview Foucault notes, and I quote him at length

> The first thing one should learn – that is, if it makes any sense to learn such a thing – is that learning is profoundly bound up with pleasure. Certainly, learning can be made an erotic, highly pleasurable activity. Now, that a teacher should be incapable of revealing this, that his job should virtually consist of showing how unpleasant, sad, dull, and unerotic learning is…an incredible achievement. But it is an achievement that certainly has its *raison d'etre.* We need to know why our society considers it so important to show that learning is something sad; maybe it's because of the number of people who are excluded from it. ("Talk Show" 135-136)

He continues:

> Imagine what it would be like if people were crazy about learning the way they are about sex. They would knock each other over in a rush to get into school. It would be a complete social disaster! However, if you want to keep the number of people with access to learning at a minimum, then you have to present it as this perfectly disagreeable thing and induce people to learn solely by means of such social perks as the ability to compete and high-paying jobs at the finish line. I believe however, that there is an intrinsic pleasure in learning, a *libido sciendi* as it is called by scholars. ("Talk Show" 136)

Like Foucault, I believe there is an intrinsic pleasure in learning and because of Sade I believe

there is also an intrinsic pain in learning. Pleasure and pain are intimately bound up with one another. Sexuality and sex as analytics challenge education to recognize this and I hope move beyond both the prudish and prurient ways sexuality and sex are most often engaged.

Most often when I bring up such an idea in my own courses, I am met with nervous laughter. I bring up this idea at the beginning of my courses by having students speed date as a way to get to know one another. I utilize the idea of speed dating to put students in the mind set of being on a date where one wants to potentially seduce a potential other for any given purpose (e.g. a relationship, a hook-up). Students often look at me thinking that I am joking until I explain the logistics of the activity. Upon finishing our speed dating, I then ask my students to think about why I might utilize such an "ice-breaker". And most of the time, students express the similarities between "dating" and teaching – the awkwardness, the enjoyment, the pain, the pleasures, the need for caution, and the need for openness. Yet, while we, as a class, discuss such ideas, it takes much longer for us to further think through and about the idea that education might be pleasurable. Such an idea is simply too absurd for those schooled to believe education must be mundane and steeped in violence. In means time is necessary to learn other ways to think about schools and their purposes.

To imagine education as pleasurable, utilizing the language of sex, brings out the vulnerabilities and insecurities we experience as sexual beings brought up in a prudish culture. Sade's pedagogy emerging in the boudoir exposes instructors and pupil to one another in a way where nothing can be hidden. Standing stark naked, this pedagogical experience refuses to leave any place untouched or unexplored. It refuses to cover anything up and I would argue rests on a belief in equality. Yes, the instructors might have more experience, but this experience does not lead them to simply explain what to do, how to do it, and why. Rather, it opens up space in the

boudoir for instructors and pupil to pay attention to their own wants, desires, and needs. The pedagogical space is not about a master explaining, but about the master and pupil finding space to experience education and their own will to learn. They experience what it means to pay attention to their own wishes, wills, interests, and intellects.

Traditional schooling does not allow such a space. Rather, schooling rests on the notion that teaching is about explaining, where the teacher – the one with knowledge – explains to the student – the one without knowledge – ideas seen as too complex for the student. This installs the idea that students are unable to learn or understand on their own. They always need some other more educated subject to teach them.[75] My proposal in this dissertation sought to challenge such a tradition by resting on the idea of equality, where student and teacher are equal in intelligence. I implicate equality believing that equality is central to transforming schools to be more than mundane factories. Students – be they privileged or oppressed – do not need some educated teacher to explain to them their own life whether it is one of privilege or oppression. Rather, they need the ability to "pay attention" to their lives and give voice (or language) to their lives in ways that allow them to create new ways of relating to the self and those others in their world. This is, of course, an ethical and political stance. To look to Foucault, we can think about the ethical component as a development of self-care. But, following Ranciere, we might recognize that this "politics is not made up of power relationships but of relationships between worlds" (*Disagreement* 42). Students emerge into and create different worlds that come into contact in the school space. This space is more often than not quite contested. Power is ever-present. The task is no longer simply explaining such power relationships, but doing something about the worlds that are present and forever being created in such a space.

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[75] This is seen in Paulo Freire's argument about the banking model of education. See *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.*

This contested space is not meant to be overcome as it is often fantasized in multicultural discourses for "safe spaces." Multicultural education often asserts that with the appropriate knowledge students will recognize the other as an equal being. Such equality is, as Ranciere has illustrated, always deferred and thus never achieved (*Jacques Ranciere*). As I imagine it, this contested space must be attended to so that those involved can create new possibilities for their worlds as they become subjects. This must be done under the assumption that all those present are equal and able to speak to the complexities of the world – a world that is already unequal.

This is rather frightening to imagine. It refuses to grant teachers authority over knowledge, instead asking them to see themselves as equals to their pupils, responsible for providing space and time for students to develop their own will to learn and explore the world. As such, students cannot be seen as docile bodies that are taught through explanation. Rather, students must take responsibility and initiative to develop their intellect and ways of engaging their worlds. Such challenges to our understandings of "student" and "teacher" further challenges the idea that adults know what is best for children. It provides children with voice and responsibility for creating not only themselves, but also the worlds they want to inhabit. It focuses less on particular content, but on the very vision of education and all it involves. As I wrote earlier,

> I dream of an ecstatic education – not one that involves students and teachers having sex to learn (although I am not opposed to that as I explored above) – but an education where students and teachers have their minds blown and feel what it means to be "touched" by learning.

Such an education does not happen constantly, but occurs in moments as students and teachers explore the world, interacting in new ways heretofore unimaginable. Just like sex that has moments of pleasure and ends in orgasm, requiring time to recover, education that is ecstatic is intense and has those moments of orgasm where one comes upon understanding in new ways. We usually call such moments "ah-ha" moments. These moments though cannot be given to students. They must be achieved through the intimate relationship between student and other – the other being a book, a teacher, a peer.

This achievement of pleasure – a pleasure in knowledge – is quite simply then the easiest way to sum up the entirety of this dissertation. Imagining, exploring, and experimenting with ways educational spaces and times might be inhabited is the task in a profession that is always already impossible (Freud). Embracing this impossibility and the ever-changing context of education requires not solely looking out for the injustices or inequalities of the world. But also requires imagining alternative ways to engage this process. Returning to those scenes that are viewed as inappropriate, that have been disciplined out of the pedagogical space, is one way to see how schools have limited the possibilities for students to form themselves as subjects. The implication of this is that the world and the assumptions the world rests on are in need of being queered. And in being queered again and again, my hope is that that new subjects are made possible, new pleasures created, and democracy forever in its contested, deliberative state made visible, livable, and thriveable.

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