

THESIS

INITIATING THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN EMOTION STUDIES AND  
CRITICAL MEDIA PEDAGOGY

Submitted by

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY LAUREN SEVILLE ENTITLED INITIATING THE DISCUSSION BETWEEN EMOTION STUDIES AND CRITICAL MEDIA PEDAGOGY BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

### INITIATING THE DISCUSSION BETWEEN EMOTION STUDIES AND CRITICAL MEDIA PEDAGOGY

“Initiating the Discussion between Emotion Studies and Critical Media Pedagogy” addresses the problematic absence of emotion studies (also referred to as affective theory) in the realm of multiliteracy in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. Specifically, I argue for emotion studies’ incorporation within the narrowed multiliteracy facet of critical media pedagogy because of the latter’s explicit objective that “education must meet the dual challenges of teaching media literacy in a multicultural society and sensitizing students and publics to the inequalities and injustices of a society based on gender, race, and class inequalities and discrimination” (Kellner 158). I argue that critical media pedagogy is one of the most crucial areas emotions studies should meet with because of its objectives, which largely imply affective shifts taking place (“sensitizing” and “empowering” students) while relying on traditional critical literacy methods that have no concern for emotion. Additionally, because of critical media pedagogy’s malleable tendencies and willingness to grow and change, it is a prime facet of multiliteracy to begin this discussion.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The first time I daydreamed about sitting down and having an imaginary exchange with a writer was immediately after finishing Judy Blume’s *Just as Long as We’re Together*. In that initial reverie, we’re sitting – Judy Blume and I – across from each other at a diner; she has a coffee, I have a milkshake, and my fifth grade legs dangle from the lofty red-colored booth. It’s dim, and I can’t make out her features, but I can feel my intense desire to reveal my affection for and enthrallment with her book – to go through each and every chapter of my now well-worn, crinkly-spined, teardrop-stained paperback copy and show her exactly where her characters made me laugh out loud, the warmth that came through her writing, and which pieces of her story connected with my ten-year-old soul. I don’t say anything, though. I just sit, avoiding looking at her, wanting but being unable to speak yet about to erupt with jubilation and appreciation for her pages. Finally, after several false starts and some sips of my milkshake, I’m able to anxiously eek a few words out of my taut, trembling lips: “I get your book, Judy Blume. I get it. And I love it. Thank you.” And with my proclamation, Judy Blume gives a sort of nod, slides out of the diner booth, and disappears into the surrounding dimness.

After my Judy Blume experience (that I was an odd child is not contested here), I continued having similar illusory encounters with the writers whose compositions were significantly inspiring, stimulating, electrifying to my life – the ones I *got*, the ones that,

like, totally changed me. Though these musings weren't too frequent, the events were much the same: we (the writer and I) would sit, somewhere – the dim diner, a coffee shop – or run into each other in a hallway, and we'd face each other, and there was silence and tension and shifting and eye contact avoidance and that same sense of constrained elation and it took all that I had to not leap at them and shake them and shout right into their faces "I got your book! I *got* it! I loved it! It changed me! Thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you!" But that last bit never came to pass in the daydreams. I always held myself back and merely uttered an awkward (eternally awkward) statement of appreciation and acknowledgement for "getting it" and "loving it" and "it changing me" (whatever "it" was at that time and space of my life). I recall daydreams featuring Margaret Atwood, Robert Pirsig, and Sylvia Plath.

At times I've had encounters with concepts, rather than individual writers. The first of these concepts was pedagogy, which I became aware of about a year and half through my undergraduate English major. With many of my core requirements completed, I switched my concentration from Literature to Education and everything changed – I not only became more passionate and serious about the study of English, I had a new obsession to explore: the art of being a teacher. I couldn't get enough of it. I was captivated. What I learned seemed practical and applicable and I was anxious to march full force into a classroom and put my carefully constructed lesson plans and units into practice. For this sense of duty and action I wanted to grab pedagogy and hug it and sing the same awkward praises to it as I had my imagined writers. I envisioned my engagement with pedagogy differently, though; rather than a one-on-one meeting, I faced an amorphous crowd of those who had presumably helped construct and nurture the

concept and (because they did not fit in a diner booth or coffee shop or hallway) they stretched out across a hazy realm.

The second concept I imagine-encountered in a similar manner was feminism, having embraced it after weeding through the stereotypes and the misconceptions and feeling the same as I had when finally grasping pedagogy as well as reading the words of those individual writers: I was changed, somehow, but it seemed a natural change, like I'd been waiting to know about it and enact it (though I wasn't yet aware that it could inform my teaching).

Most relevant to the purposes and scope of my project here, class experiences in the past year and a half of my graduate program have garnered two additional imaginary awkward appreciation and "you changed me!" love-fests with differing entities: the first being a group of writers and the second being an individual writer, both of which have led me to additional works and concepts I want to imagine-embrace as well (that I'm an odd adult is also not contested here).

During Fall semester 2008, in two separate classes, I read The New London Group's<sup>1</sup> "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures," published in Spring 1996 in the *Harvard Educational Review*. The article, a collaborative "programmic manifesto" that was later developed into a book,<sup>2</sup> stemmed from The New London Group's initial one week meeting in 1994 to reflect on the current (at the time) position and potential future of literacy pedagogy (Cope and Kalantzis 1). They determined that the focus of a multiliteracy pedagogy is to prepare students for designing their social

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<sup>1</sup> Members of The New London Group include Courtney Cazden, Bill Cope, Norman Fairclough, James Gee, Mary Kalantzis, Gunther Kress, Allan Luke, Carmen Luke, Sarah Michaels, and Martin Nakata.

<sup>2</sup> *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*.

futures by participating in and adapting to varying “modes” (print-based, electronic, and face-to-face) of their literacy and social contexts (Anstey and Bull 21). Since that first meeting, the members of the New London Group have continued to meet annually at the International Conference on Learning to discuss the practice, promotion, and expansion of their pedagogy of multiliteracies, which has shifted and grown to accommodate the shifting and growing of technology and the world surrounding it. The original article, however, fastened me onto their ideas and transformed my thinking about what has the potential to be accomplished in classrooms – K through 12, college, and graduate alike – regarding literacy. It got me excited. It made me want to do a happy dance. It made me feel like it was something to believe in and draw from and embody if I wanted (as I so desperately did and do want) to be an effective educator. And it made me want to squeeze all ten members of the New London Group (or at least high-five them) while emitting ridiculous amounts of gratitude – but instead I just had my usual imaginary encounter.

During the following semester, it struck again. This time, the writer was Megan Boler, author of *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*, read during an Emotion, Culture, and Rhetoric course I took in Spring 2009. The text combines the discussed concepts of pedagogy and feminism with affective theory and practice, a subject and focus of the class that I was still struggling to understand. The concept of affective theory – also known as emotion studies – I refer to is the endeavor Boler and others have pursued in analyzing “how historical, political, and cultural forces and difference shape emotions” and the implications therein for pedagogy and social progress (which will be discussed at length in the following chapter) (Boler xxi). At the time, I was having a hard

time “getting” it. But because of my previous experience studying (and having imaginary encounters with) pedagogy and feminism, Boler’s text made emotion studies more accessible (and, honestly, absorbing) with its amalgamation of these three elements. Once more, I had a daydreamed encounter with my modified self, largely because I was in awe at how my notion of what was possible in classrooms expanded through her text; more and more, pedagogy became something beyond the practicality of “how to teach.” I knew all along the things I planned for the classroom – the texts (diverse!), the activities (collaborative!), the discussions (totally deep!) – mattered. But there was an ever-growing cognizance that the theories I was so taken with – feminism, multiliteracy, emotion studies, and critical literacy – could and should greatly inform the goings-on of a classroom – and each other.

It should be noted that neither the authors nor the concepts have ever verbally responded to me in my reveries (though that should, I hope, go without saying in regards to the latter); they spoke to me only through their written words, and I clearly had difficulty speaking back to them. But it’s time that changed, as I believe it imperative to initiate a conversation with multiliteracy and emotion studies; the discussion is one that is not occurring and should be. What I noticed from reading Boler (and others involved in emotion studies) were some substantial issues with multiliteracy’s aims – particularly in the focused area of critical media literacy – and methods.

Ultimately, I argue that the exclusion of emotion studies from the focused critical media pedagogy area of multiliteracy (elucidated below) is particularly problematic because it has “created a gap between what students and teachers experience in the academy and how we talk about our experiences” and fundamentally limits critical

thinking, writing, and the conceptualization of alternative ways of being (Vogel 10). What follows is an overview of critical media pedagogy's definition and its objectives (which are based in social justice and student agency). I will also discuss the shifting and modifications within the pedagogy that have exposed the gaps there and the attempts made to meet the objectives more readily. This discussion will lead into my next chapter – an overview of relevant aspects of emotion studies pertinent to this project – as an argument for continuing additional shifts and modifications to critical media pedagogy that include emotion studies. I believe this melding of the two needs to take place for critical media pedagogy to do what it aims to do. (Judy Blume, however, will be sitting this one out.)

### **Critical Media Pedagogy: Definitions, Objectives, and Gaps**

In delving into the developing concept of multiliteracies, there are often statements of assurance that *this* type of pedagogy, *the* practice of multiliteracy will bring educators supporting the concept closer to their aims of social justice, progress, and equality. Richard Van Heertum and Jeff Share, in “A New Direction for Multiple Literacy Education” state that a multiliteracy pedagogy must be candidly political, attending to issues of power and empowerment, while endeavoring to examine and produce with “the voices, experiences, and discourses of marginalized and underserved populations” (251). This sentiment is echoed in the various forms of multiliteracy pedagogies, from new media to media studies, hyper/intertextuality to critical media literacy. As stated, it is the latter on which I decided to concentrate this thesis as it both resonates with my pedagogical interests of media texts and social issues and holds

explicit aims for education that match with those of affective theorists, which are also aimed at social progress.

According to Douglas Kellner in “Technological Revolution, Multiple Literacies, and the Restructuring of Education” from *Silicon Literacies: Communication, Innovation, and Education in the Electronic Age*, critical media literacy explicitly demands that “education must meet the dual challenges of teaching media literacy in a multicultural society and sensitizing students and publics to the inequalities and injustices of a society based on gender, race, and class inequalities and discrimination” (158). This position is a response to a criticism multiliteracy has endured, which is that implementing technology in the classroom is not enough to democratize and sufficiently reconstruct education (Kellner 156).

The notion of critical media literacy Kellner defines above has previously been explored in *Intermediality: The Teachers’ Handbook of Critical Media Literacy*, a collection of critical media concepts and practices edited by Ann Watts Pailliotet and Ladislaus Semali. In their expansive introduction to the text, Pailliotet and Semali offer guiding principles and theoretical bases for intermediality and critical media literacy, speak of technology and social context, and review key concepts of teaching toward a critical media pedagogy. Most compelling in their introduction is a discussion of linking reason to the everyday where intermedial instruction is based on connecting analytical skills to social, lived contexts (Pailliotet and Semali 9). They state that “through questioning, reflection, and action, students get to know their social context, evaluate it, and plan action to make changes” (Pailliotet and Semali 11), adding to Kellner’s definition by promoting students as agents of social change.

Interesting here is their emphasis on “analytical skills” and evaluation of social context where earlier they delineate the processes for evaluating and producing texts, where “students identify their mental, sensory, and emotion positions” (Pailliotet and Semali 6). The prominence of textual analysis and evaluative skills remain throughout the duration of *Intermediality*, and their brief touch on “emotion[al] positions” is never discussed further. In *Feeling Power*, Boler states that “as a result of Western cultural discourses, which on the whole do not value emotions, even the most radical social theories tend to overlook this most silenced terrain of social control and resistance” (xx). What makes the pedagogical theory of critical media literacy in Pailliotet and Semali’s text compelling is that there is not complete neglect of the “silenced terrain” of emotion; there *is* an acknowledgement of the concept, but no additional interaction within the remainder of the text. According to the affective theory I am working with as positioned by Boler and others, it is problematic for there to be this separation between rational evaluation and emotion, and a subsequent privileging of rationality.

This separation is not uncommon in the theory and practices of critical media literacy due to its evident association with traditional critical literacy that operates under the same analytical premise. This is demonstrated in Semali’s practices in “Still Crazy After All of These Years: Teaching Critical Media Literacy” from *Unauthorized Methods: Strategies for Critical Teaching* where he lists a step-by-step approach to analyzing the visual representations of the “noble savages” in the film *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. His approach includes the following five questions for “Critical Pedagogy about Media Representation” in *The Gods Must Be Crazy*: What is the issue? How is the issue/event defined? Who is involved? What are the arguments? What is taken for

granted? (Semali 142). These questions and the succeeding sub-questions show meaning-making as a process of the evaluation and identification of the elements in the film.

Semali's approach follows the long established use of text for critical pedagogy purposes, and he draws from Peter McLaren, Henry Giroux, Ira Shor, Alan Luke, Norman Fairclough, and Colin Lankshear who maintain the approach of judging, evaluating, and comparing based in vigilant analysis (Semali 138). But while these methods stemming from critical literacy practices have been historically implemented, they've also been historically questioned.

One example of this questioning is found in Elizabeth Ellsworth's "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy." Ellsworth argues that educators who have based classroom practices in "analytic critical judgment can no longer regard the enforcement of rationalism as a self-evident political act against relations of domination" ("Why Doesn't?" 304). She cites evidence<sup>3</sup> for which the falsehoods of the ultimate, universally rational person have been oppressive to those who are not "European, White, male, middle class, Christian, able-bodied, thin, and heterosexual" ("Why Doesn't?" 304). Though discussion on critical media literacy appeared some years after her 1989 text, I posit Ellsworth's response to traditional use of critical literacy has the same implications for the proponents of critical media literacy. The inclusion of media as text has not altered the privileging of rationalism in pedagogical practices, despite its promises and proclamations as a revolutionary, socially-concerned pedagogy.

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<sup>3</sup> Amassed by literary criticism, cultural studies, post-structuralism, feminist studies, comparative studies, and media studies.

But that's not to say that there haven't been attempts to alter the implementation of critical media pedagogical practices from its more conventional execution. Donna Alvermann and Margaret Hagood take the position (similar to Boler and other affective theorists) that educational discourse has a tendency to mandate that curricula remain straightforward, efficient, and without the incorporation of diverse perspectives and "a range of emotions" by teaching "the official knowledge accepted by the dominant culture" (Alvermann and Hagood 200).

They explicate the notion of identities and subjectivities shaped in relation to discursive methods and values of discourse and report – again, quite reminiscently of emotion studies – that dichotomous ways that teachers practice critical media literacy are standard and value mind over body (Alvermann and Hagood 200). They even go on to describe Ellsworth's reasoning from *Teaching Positions: Difference, Pedagogy, and the Power of Address* where the continual mind/body split values comprehension and rationalization "so much so that teachers go to extremes to prepare lessons that eliminate or minimize anything that addresses the messiness of everyday life, the emotive experiences that exceed the intellectual" (Alvermann and Hagood 201). Returning to my original argument, this minimalization or elimination has created a disparity between the experiences of teaching and students in the classroom and how we address those experiences (Vogel 10). These are incredibly similar postmodern sentiments expressed by affective theorists, and yet neither Alvermann and Hagood's article nor Ellsworth's book includes any mention of affective theory. Ellsworth's response to her position is the practice of a concept she calls "mode of address" which focuses on the "space-between"

of film (or other media) and audience as “volatile” and in need of “manipulation” (*Teaching Positions* 38).

Similarly, Carmen Luke, as described in Alvermann and Hagood’s article from her piece “Feminist Pedagogy and Critical Media Literacy” has also taken on supplementary practices as a response to the privileging of rationalization in critical media literacy by incorporating feminist standpoint theory. The implementation of feminist standpoint theory Luke discusses provides an alternative that allows for the discourses, experiences, and voices of the marginalized (Alvermann and Hagood 202). And the mentioned Van Heertum and Share also combine feminist standpoint theory with critical media literacy, terming the combination “critical media literacy education” which they argue inspires those enacting critical media literacy to ensure that it actively works toward “engaging students in the struggle to transform the world for the better” (257). These efforts are pointing to the inclusion of emotion studies, which deals with “space-between” and progressively active students, but there hasn’t been solid theoretical engagement yet.

Again, those endorsing critical media pedagogy have the explicit aims to teach media literacy to a multicultural society while sensitizing students to social inequalities and empowering them to make changes in their world – it’s about learning about power structures and value judgments as displayed through media, and imagining and enacting alternative ways of living. And though there have been gaps identified in the approaches to critical media pedagogy and efforts made to fill these gaps, I believe that the inclusion of emotion studies into the realm of critical media pedagogy will bring its objectives closer to being achieved.

The reason I am focusing on melding critical media literacy and emotion studies (rather than, for example, any form of critical literacy and emotion studies) is found in Kellner's explanation that "critical media pedagogy is in its infancy; it is just beginning to produce results, and is more open and experimental than established print-orientated pedagogy" (160). He further asserts that the current technological revolution makes the "radical reconstruction and restructuring of education and society" possible (Kellner 155).

In short, multiliteracy education – including the focus here on critical media literacy – privileges its malleable tendencies and, like the prevalent technological aspect within it, is ever-changing, resulting in a prime opportunity for the inclusion of emotion studies. And despite this possibility for the restructuring of education that practices of critical media literacy (and other forms of multiliteracy) ostensibly bring, the above discussion on the privileging of reason and the continued support of dichotomous pedagogies makes it apparent that there has not been a radical change in education or approaches to social reform apart from the insertion of media in the classroom; without the inclusion of emotion studies, this will serve in reproducing the same reason/emotion binaries being upheld in service to the dominant culture.

In the following chapter, I will outline a discussion on emotion studies that further portrays *why* the inclusion of affective theory in critical media pedagogies would move the latter closer to its stated objectives of social progress and student agency. As stated, the discussion surrounding critical media literacy hasn't been completely devoid of mentions of the importance of emotion – but there *has* been a considerable lack of follow-through through these claims and an absence of affective theory in critical media

literacy. I devote the remaining chapters to not only continuing the discussion of that initial query, but also to exploration of *how* the inclusion of affective theory in critical media literacy would move the pedagogy closer to its stated goals.

## CHAPTER 2

### THERE/NOT THERE: A BREIF OVERVIEW ON EMOTION

In the Emotions, Culture, and Rhetoric course, we often referred to emotions as being “there, but not there” during our discussions of emotion’s “place” in Western culture: relegated to the fringes, where it is something to be controlled, ignored, or deemed wholly ineffectual in relation to valid, intellectual *rational* thinking/work/beliefs. While there is recognition of people “having” emotions at work, in school, or as part of the human experience, where emotions are *supposed* to be is out of the way (or only expressed by the right person in the right way),<sup>4</sup> shunned to the private realm, and having nothing to do with how we learn what gets valued lest they corrupt Reason’s steadfast dominance. Above all, emotions should not be talked about or acknowledged as being significant to reaching a greater understanding of the world around us – especially not in schools, where they might get in the way of students’ *actual* learning, or worse, turn the classroom into a group therapy session. So, emotions are there, but not there; present, but not allowed to be recognized. “Yet,” says Laura Micciche, in *Doing Emotion: Rhetoric, Writing, Teaching*, “this view hardly begins to capture the nuanced ways in which emotion contributes to meaning-making, judgment formation, and communication” (1): all things we, in Rhetoric and Composition – perhaps particularly when employing critical media pedagogy – are deeply concerned with.

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<sup>4</sup> See the discussion of Allison Jaggar’s concept of “outlaw emotions” further in this chapter.

Though there are many fields that have laid claim to various aspects of the study of emotion, including psychology, physiology, neuroscience, psychopathology, biology, and others, the purview of emotions I am concerned with is that concentrating on the discourse-centered and pedagogically-focused study of affect. This is a concentration where emotion is seen not as a corrupter of logic but rather as an inextricable element to “how we become invested in people, ideas, structures, and objects” (Micciche 1) and thereby “integral to...persuasion, and attachments of all sorts, and to notions of self and others” (Micciche 24). In effect, it is a concentration where emotions *matter* – to how and what we think, who and what we value, what we can and cannot articulate about ourselves and others, and how we view the world.

Those pedagogical, cultural, feminist, critical theory, and composition scholars informing the domain of emotion studies pursue the question “what do emotions do?” rather than “what are emotions?” and by doing so make a distinction between the study of the bodily processes of emoting and that of “*rhetorics of emotion*, or emotion as a performative that produces effects” (Micciche 1). They follow feminist approaches that challenge the notion that emotions are universal, individualized, and natural and call for an examination of how political, historical, and cultural influences and differences shape emotions (Boler xxi). They shirk the established reason/emotion binary (with emotion being the obvious subordinate, associated with “irrationality, manipulation, essence, and of course, women” [Micciche 16]). And they recognize that our emotions are both limited and made possible by society’s semantic resources<sup>5</sup> (Jaggar 151). And though

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Ahmed discusses the “inside out” model of emotions (a “crucial” model for psychology) which supposes that “I have feelings, which then move outwards towards objects and others, and which might even return to me” (Ahmed 9). An “outside in” model of emotion is also described, which also assumes “the objectivity of the very distinction between inside and outside, the individual and

they do not deny the biological or psychological experiences of emoting, there is an assertion that “how we make meaning of these experiences is shaped by societal norms” (Vogel 8). For example, Elizabeth Vogel, in “What We Talk about When We Talk about Emotions: The Rhetoric of Emotion in Composition,” provides a “culturally constituted” emotion via Alison Jaggar: the feeling of betrayal caused by infidelity. Affective theorists such as Vogel and Jaggar argue that the experience of feeling betrayed because one’s partner has been unfaithful would not exist without the current cultural meaning assigned to the occurrence; it is not an innate, naturally occurring response, but one mediated by societal norms.

Jaggar elaborates on this social constructivist view of emotions in her 1989 article “Love & Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology,” and because the view of emotions Jaggar explores therein provides a theoretical basis of emotion that has influenced and/or is echoed by many of the scholars I reference throughout this thesis – including Peter Stearns, Sara Ahmed, Lynn Worsham and the aforementioned Micciche, Vogel, and Boler – I would like to use her piece as a starting point for introducing some aspects of emotion studies that I believe critical media pedagogy should incorporate. But before moving into Jaggar’s discussion, it’s important to address the obstacles of talking (or in this case, writing) about emotion.

### **Terms and Definitions**

Though pervasive in every facet of our lives, the concept of emotions is difficult to define. Jaggar cites two of these difficulties, the first being “the variety, complexity,

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the social, and the ‘me’ and the ‘we’” (Ahmed 9). These models of emotion, which suppose that emotion is a psychological state, rather than to be regarded as “social and historical practices” (Ahmed 9), are evident in the commonly used language we use to describe emotion “based on the presumption of interiority”; we turn inward to ask: “What do I feel?” (Ahmed 8).

and even inconsistency of the ways in which emotions are viewed” and the second being “the wide range of phenomena covered by the term ‘emotion’” (147). As Vogel explains, because the term “emotion” is unstable, producing language to discuss it is challenging; however, she urges that we need to try to discuss emotion in any way we can (5). But because of the vast and interdisciplinary emergence of the critical study of emotion, there are few consistencies even within common terminology; “emotion,” “affect,” and “feeling,” are the most frequently employed terms, but vary in connotation among scholars. For my purposes, I use “emotion” as my key term, but will also use “affect” and “feeling” for vocabulary variance; with the use of each term I will always (unless otherwise noted) be referring to a culturally mediated response. The meaning of this use is captured by Worsham, where emotion/affect/feeling is “socially and historically constructed and bodily lived...bind[ing] the individual, in complex and contradictory ways, to the social order and its structure of meaning” (“Going Postal” 232). I acknowledge that the definitions and explanations of these terms and the concepts they represent aren’t complete, and will often be more complex than I am able to capture (which speaks to how the critical study of emotions warrants further development to create new language and discourses on emotion). Nevertheless, heeding Vogel’s advice, I will try to discuss the issue in the ways that I can, using the scholarship available by the above scholars and others, and will begin with Alison Jaggar.

### **Setting a Foundation**

As stated by Micciche, emotions contribute to meaning-making, judgment formation, and communication in intricate ways – ways that have largely been discounted as valuable for engagement and consideration in, for instance, family, the workplace, and

– my concentration – the classroom. Jaggar’s epistemological approach to analyzing emotion lays a foundation for investigating some of these intricacies, beginning with a brief history of the reason/emotion dichotomy in Western epistemology. I review this history below to show that notions of emotion aren’t presocial or innate – the way we currently (dis)engage with emotion isn’t simply the way it’s always been.

Jaggar begins her epistemological inquiry by introducing the concept of emotion held by the Greeks and medieval philosophers where, though reason was viewed as more significant than emotion, emotion was not completely barred from the domain of reason. She cites an allegory of emotions in Plato’s *Phaedrus* portrayed where emotions (in the allegory referred to as “horses”) were thought of as not needing to be stifled, but rather directed by reason (“the charioteer”). For example, it was perceived as irrational and foolish not to be afraid in legitimately threatening situations; there, fear is regarded as “providing indispensable motive power that need[s] to be channeled appropriately” (Jaggar 152). So there was not an absolute split between reason and emotion (a point I will develop further in the following chapter regarding Aristotle and rhetoric). Or, in other words, a charioteer’s skill would be useless without horses to guide.

Jaggar continues by explaining that the gap between reason and emotion widened in the seventeenth century, which redefined reason as “a purely instrumental faculty” (Jaggar 152). The Greeks and medieval philosophers linked reason with value as it afforded access to “truth” (considered both morally justified and natural), but the upsurge of modern science separated value and nature, and nature was thus recast as being valueless, an “inanimate mechanism of no intrinsic worth” (Jaggar 152). Values, on the other hand, were repositioned as within human beings, based in emotions and personal

preferences. This separation of “supposedly natural fact” from “human value” denoted that reason had to remain uncontaminated by values if it was going to be a dependable source of reality, and the authority of rational deductions was thought separate from individuals’ attitudes; ergo, reason became universal and neutral (Jaggar 152).

This reconstitution of reason then necessitated a redefinition of emotions as well, which were subsequently depicted as illogical compulsions: something people endured rather than enacted. British empiricism, prior to nineteenth century positivism, solidified the use of empirical testability in the natural sciences with “rules of inference” whose implementation with raw data led to specific courses of knowledge. Positivism then dictated that “true” scientific knowledge must be able to lead to intersubjective substantiation, and because emotion and value were conceptualized as individual and unpredictable, it was (and still is) thought that “real” knowledge is only found where emotion is not (Jaggar 152). And while there have been epistemological challenges to this positivist view, Jaggar explains that her aim is to focus on the unexplored gap between knowledge and emotion with the suggestion that emotions are helpful and “necessary rather than inimical to the construction of knowledge” (Jaggar 153) – a point that largely connects with Micciche’s designation of emotions being important to meaning-making, judgment formation, and communication – the knowledge for which is acquired, among other places, in schools.

Jaggar’s focus therein leads to her discussion of emotions as social constructs on several levels, challenging the notion that emotions are innate, presocial, and determined biologically. This is indeed a complicated notion to challenge because of our experiencing of emotions as largely private, involuntary responses which are not as

instantly perceivable by others as they are by us when we're experiencing them (Jaggar 157). So on the basis that emotional experiences have this "individual and involuntary character," they have been categorized as being inherent; however, Jaggar argues, this is not the case.<sup>6</sup> Jaggar states that the best example of socially constructed emotions is seen in children who are intentionally taught the culturally appropriate responses to particular situations ("to fear strangers, to enjoy spicy food or to like swimming in cold water"). Additionally, though not taught as deliberately, children also acquire emotional expression in culturally appropriate ways (Jaggar 157). And though there are similarities across cultures in the expression of emotions, there is also plentiful deviation in what has been established as expressions such as anger, grief, and respect. More profoundly, though, cultures create differing conceptions of what emotions are. Jaggar provides an example of English metaphors and metonymies being said to expose a theory of anger "as a hot fluid contained in a private space within an individual" with the potential for public eruption ("he exploded with rage"). Conversely, the Ilongot, a people of the Philippines, seemingly do not conceptualize the individual in a public/private distinction, and therefore don't experience anger as an inner explosion going outward; rather, it is a shared, communal phenomenon (Jaggar 157).

Jaggar goes on to explain another level from which emotions are socially constructed, focusing on mature emotions. She posits that, because emotions involve judgments, they require concepts which are "socially constructed ways of organizing and making sense of the world" and, because of this, they are concurrently restricted and

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<sup>6</sup> Jaggar describes, however, that "although probably true that the physiological disturbances characterizing emotion (facial grimaces, changes in the metabolic rate, sweating, trembling, tears, and so on) are continuous with the instinctive responses of our prehuman ancestors and also that the ontology of emotions to some extent recapitulates their phylogeny, mature human emotions can be seen neither as instinctive nor as biologically determined" (Jaggar 157).

made possible by “the conceptual and linguistic resources of a society” (Jaggar 157). In our language and conceptions of emotion, then, the descriptions and definitions of feeling sad, ashamed, joyous or offended are entrenched with cultural standards and beliefs. If we express anger, for instance, there is a presupposition that we are viewing ourselves “as having been wronged, victimized by the violation of some social norm” (Jaggar 159). So though emotions *are* individually experienced, they are also socially experienced, and those experiences reproduce predominate standards and values of society (an example of the enactment of this concept and those discussed below follows on page 22).

The consequence of this reproduction of predominate societal standards via language and conceptualization of emotion is that it upholds an emotional hegemony that benefits dominant groups. As a result, our learned emotional constitutions are contrary to concepts that critical social theories engage with because of those ingrained constitutions. Jaggar explains: “whatever our color, we are likely to feel what Irving Thalberg has called ‘visceral racism’; whatever our sexual orientation, we are likely to be homophobic; whatever our class, we are likely to be somewhat ambitious and competitive; whatever our sex, we are likely to feel contempt for women” (Jaggar 165). So when we’re prompted to examine the functions of race, sexual orientation, class, and gender, as critical social theories call us to do, our emotional constitutions may be resistant. This ideology is so entrenched in us that its success, according to Worsham in the Afterword to *A Way to Move: Rhetorics of Emotion and Composition Studies*, “depends on a mystification or misrecognition” of it happening (162).

The ideological functioning of discourses of emotion also helps dominant cultural, social, and political groups (in Ellsworth’s terms: European, White, male,

middle class, Christian, able-bodied, thin, and heterosexual) maintain power in their association with reason, while marginalized groups (people of color, homosexuals, women, etc.) are linked with emotion and thereby viewed as “more subjective, biased, and irrational while at the same time, in an ideology-confirming practice, they may be required to express emotions more openly,” contributing to their own subordination (Harding and Pribram 415). I am reminded here of the confirmation hearings of Supreme Court judge nominee Sonia Sotomayor in Summer 2009 where her “objectivity” was repeatedly called into question on the basis of her gender and ethnicity (specifically by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell); the hearings reaffirmed suspicion and disdain associated with emotion (tied to women/people of color) and shows that the white male views do not need to be called into question because they are seen as inherently neutral/acultural.

Furthermore, emotional hegemony upheld in the dominant values embedded in our affective responses perpetuates the notion that such responses are naturally occurring and consequently “blinker[s] us theoretically” by limiting the potential for alternative ways of existing (Jaggar 159). Maxine Greene expands on this idea: “when oppression or exploitation or segregation or neglect is perceived as ‘natural’ or a ‘given,’ there is little stirring in the name of freedom” (9). But Jaggar’s explanation of emotional hegemony is thus far incomplete, because people, of course, don’t always react according to emotional conventions so “the hegemony that our society exercises over people’s emotional constitution is not total” (Jaggar 160). However, conventionally inappropriate emotions are still evaluated through social norms. So if someone were to feel unhappy at an event commonly associated with joy (a wedding, for example), it requires some sort of

justification or further explanation; if a suitable (i.e., culturally [hegemonically] appropriate) explanation cannot be provided or is not evident, the person is perceived as irrational or even pathological (Jaggar 160). These culturally inappropriate responses – which Jaggar calls “outlaw emotions” – are often expressed by those in subordinate positions because “the social situation of such people makes them unable to experience the conventionally prescribed emotions” (Jaggar 160) and they are regularly reprimanded as a result.

As a lived example of these discussed effects, I lucidly recall a common occurrence in my high school and early undergraduate days where I, as a young woman in an inferior position, was often derided and told to “settle down” when expressing offense at a sexist joke or comment. In these cases, I wasn’t expressing a socially “correct” emotion, which would either be amusement or a cool indifference, the second being particularly fitting for the United States where “the most acceptable method of dealing with emotions is repression” (Vogel 8). In other words, I wasn’t following what Peter Stearns calls “feeling rules”: the “norms by which people are supposed to shape their emotional expressions and react to the expressions of others” (2). My outlaw emotion of outrage, therefore, was evaluated as an inappropriate response according to the feeling rules that maintain the dominant emotional constitutions of those who were chuckling, encouraging, or hip and disengaged (mostly male, but females too) in response to the sexist remarks. I was seen as being oversensitive – too emotional, that is – to have the rational faculty to comprehend the comments were “just a joke” or “not a big deal.” I was therefore in need of correcting. “Loosen up! “You’re overreacting! And “What? I’m *just kidding*” was all code for: your affective response is

unnatural/irrational/inappropriate according to dominant emotional constitutions and therefore unfounded/irrelevant/worthy of chastisement.

I was usually alone in my offense during those times – in isolation, as many who express outlaw emotions are. I continually doubted my reaction because I was the only one expressing it and was “unable to name [my] experience” (Jaggar 160). For long intervals of time between my outlaw emotion “outbursts,” I employed “correct” feeling rules by staying quiet (or even expressing faked amusement) when sexist jokes or comments were uttered so as to fall in line with the status quo, despite my individual discomfort (Jaggar 160) – a clear example of how emotions are both individually and socially expressed. In this way, the emotional constitution I was upholding produced performed, bodily effects: I almost literally fell in line by conforming to emotional hegemony. However, it is evident in past social movements (Civil Rights, the first and second waves of feminism, gay rights) that “when certain emotions are shared or validated by others...the basis exists for forming a subculture defined by perceptions, norms, and values that systematically oppose the prevailing perceptions, norms and values” (Jaggar 160).

By constituting the basis for a subculture,” Jaggar continues, “outlaw emotions may be politically because epistemologically subversive” (160). So when I “found” and began participating in the current feminist subculture<sup>7</sup> during my later undergraduate years, I no longer doubted my conventionally unacceptable responses to sexism and have since stopped participating in upholding a dominant emotional constitution (though if this can be achieved fully is doubtful, given that my affective relationships to sexism are so rooted). Of course, I still get eye rolls or scoffs thrown my way when I express outlaw

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<sup>7</sup> Though clearly not a static, solidified movement, I participate nonetheless.

emotions, but I no longer question my sanity or abilities to reason, and so am in a subversive position to enact social change.

Importantly, Jaggar draws a correlation between outlaw emotions and critical social theory: “at least some [outlaw emotions] are necessary for developing a critical perspective on the world, but they also presuppose at least the beginnings of such a perspective” (Jaggar 167). Because her focus is on feminist theory and outlaw emotions, Jaggar then calls on feminists to be aware of how to utilize outlaw emotions in the construction of feminist theory and consider “how the increasing sophistication of feminist theory can contribute to the re-education, refinement, and eventual reconstruction of our emotional constitutions” (Jaggar 167).

I would like to take inspiration from Jaggar’s call above for the re-education, refinement and reconstruction of our emotional constitutions and apply it to my focus in critical media pedagogy, precisely because of the connection between outlaw emotions and critical social theory Jaggar makes. Engaging emotion studies in a critical theory pedagogy such as critical media literacy – which is concerned with “sensitizing” students to structures of power and “empowering” them to take action – is particularly important, because such a pedagogy is saturated with affective relationships that have been untheorized (or under-theorized, as my Chapter 4 discussion on empathy and multiculturalism will show). As Worsham argues in “Going Postal: Pedagogic Violence and the Schooling of Emotion”:

if our commitment is to real individual and social change...then the work of decolonization must occur at the affective level, not only to reconstitute the emotional life of the individual, but also, and more importantly, to restructure the feeling or mood that characterizes an age. To be sure, our most political and pedagogical task remains the fundamental reeducation of emotion (233).

This seems such a mighty task, even when approaching it within a focused area of critical media pedagogy in composition studies. I think about challenging the learned and profoundly ingrained emotional constitutions of students and teachers, and the difficulty of translating theory into practical day-to-day happenings of the classroom where efficacy reigns. I think about the intricacies of asking for the examination of the ideologies that “bind each individual to the social world through a complex and often contradictory affective life that too often remains, for the most part, just beyond the horizon of semantic availability” (“Moving Beyond” 162), or simply proposing a curriculum where emotions *matter*. I think about these issues, and I balk. I feel scared and hesitant and sometimes wish I could go back to thinking of pedagogy just as “how to teach!” rather than something that helps ideologies organize individuals’ “affective relations to...[hierarchical] locations, to their own condition and subordination, and to others in that hierarchical structure” (“Moving Beyond” 162). I do so because I know there will be resistance and skepticism precisely because of how we’ve learned (not) to engage with emotion and because it doesn’t fit with what “should” be happening in classrooms.

But then I remember that my task is not to bring emotions *into* the classroom, because they’re already there. My task, instead, is to consider that the meanings we make, the judgments we form, and the modes of communication we participate in are influenced by emotion – and there are tangible consequences to continuing to ignore this influence. And although what I’ve presented above only touches on the larger field of emotion studies, I hope to expand on these ideas in upcoming chapters and further explicate why it is vital that critical media pedagogy and emotion studies become part of

the same conversation I'm initiating here. Again, I believe that critical media pedagogy is one of the most crucial areas emotions studies should meet with because of its objectives, which, as discussed in the previous chapter, largely *imply* affective shifts taking place ("sensitizing" and "empowering" students) while relying on traditional critical literacy methods that have no concern for emotion. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 1, because of critical media pedagogy's malleable tendencies and willingness to grow and change, it is a prime facet of multiliteracy to begin this discussion.

Like the affective theorists throughout this thesis, I believe emotions matter, and will present in my next chapter why outlaw emotions in particular should be a part of critical media classroom, and what it might look like when they are.

## CHAPTER 3

### ANNE WYSOCKI'S AFFECTIVE COLLISION

In the chapter “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty: On Some Formal Relations in Teaching about the Visual Aspects of Texts” from *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*, Anne Frances Wysocki describes her response to seeing an advertisement<sup>8</sup> from an October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2000 page of *The New Yorker*: “I think [the] advertisement is a lovely piece of work, but it also angers me” (149), she says. The ad she is referring to was for an exhibition entitled “Peek,” a collection of erotic photographs from The Kinsey Institute featuring a partially clothed (if wearing only thigh-high leather boots and black gloves can be deemed partially clothed) woman viewed from the side, the “clear visual hierarchy of elements in [the] layout” directing readers of the advertisement to the woman’s round, white posterior (Wysocki 150). The affective contradiction of “what gives rise to [Wysocki]...seeing beauty and feeling angry” (Wysocki 149) when viewing the layout is explored throughout the remainder of her piece, where she draws on this collision of emotion as an impetus for critical analysis which results in an affective shift that has significant implications for her teaching, learning, and composing of design. Wysocki ultimately argues that “the approaches many of us now use for teaching the visual aspects of texts are incomplete and, in fact, may work against helping students acquire critical and thoughtful agency

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix A.

with the visual, precisely because these approaches cannot account for a lot of what's going on in the Peek composition" (Wysocki 149).

From the conclusions drawn from her collision of emotion, Wysocki outlines two fundamental problems with the existing, omnipresent approaches to reading visual texts explicated by scholars in the realm of visual composition, graphic design, and visual communication. The first issue is that the approaches treat form and content as being separate, and subsequently emphasize form so singularly that content is dealt with as something "unremarkably disembodied" – "a very bad thing when the 'content' is a particular body," she notes. The second is, as a consequence of the privileging of form, the approaches imply that the sole purpose of visual text is to generate objects that hold sight, rather than be constructed to shape reciprocal communication between text and reader (Wysocki 149). In response to finding these existing approaches problematic, Wysocki ends her piece with a set of activities for her classroom where form and content are not treated as separate entities (and therefore form is not privileged over content), and provides a concentration on "the social and temporal expectations of visual composition" – the latter, as will be discussed later in this chapter, places the lessons Wysocki creates in the category of critical media pedagogy (Wysocki 172). Unfortunately, the affective element just doesn't transfer into the proposed activities for students; they are devoid of discussion or analysis of the emotional engagement she designates as significant for herself and other educators when considering the social and temporal influence on reading and creating visual compositions.

In looking at Wysocki's chapter through the domain of emotion studies, I also experience a contradiction of emotions. I feel excitement when considering her piece that

is both driven by and discusses the critical potential of emotion (outlaw and otherwise) in academic practice. I also experience disappointment that the regard for emotion does not appear in the activities Wysocki outlines for her students, leaving affective engagement and its importance once again on the fringes of pedagogical practice. So in following this collision of excitement and disappointment, I seek here first to draw out the connections between Wysocki's analysis and emotion in summarizing her passionate implications for visual composition, essentially contextualizing the chapter through the lens of emotion studies (which, it should be noted, she does not reference in her work). I do so by expanding on the discussed concepts of Jaggar's outlaw emotions and Stearns' feeling rules, and with the introduction of additional concepts from Micciche, Ahmed, and Boler to illustrate these theories as embodied and having tangible effects on meaning-making, judgment formation, and communication of visual design and rhetoric. Additionally, I will explore the disappointing, yet, as will be shown, understandable, disconnect between Wysocki's learning experience (where emotion plays a vital and recognized role), and the one she designs for her students (where it does not), by providing a more focused discussion on the overlooking of the value of emotion in Rhetoric and Composition's pedagogical approaches. I will then conclude my chapter with a set of activities for tentative use among Wysocki's proposed lessons, where emotion explicitly operates among the objectives she designs for the visual composition classroom as a significant entry and proponent for learning, providing a reply to the question: what might look like when emotions *do* matter in a classroom?

## Emotion and “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty”

As stated, in “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty,” Wysocki questions the systematic approach to teaching visual rhetoric and design, where applying a hierarchy of visual elements supports the notion that the woman in the Peek layout should be regarded as no more than an abstracted body in the design – an object that bears no significance on a reader/student’s thinking or habits other than enacting a learned process for rationally and efficiently evaluating the form of the layout. For example, Wysocki discusses how a guide she uses in her teaching – Robin Williams’ *The Non-Designer’s Design Book* – highlights four design principles (contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity) that provide a tidy visual hierarchy of elements that, when applied to the Peek layout, makes apparent the object meant to hold sight as visually important: “a woman’s lovely in-soft-focus-so-as-to-almost-glow white ass” (Wysocki 151). The principles, Wysocki explains, give cause to why the layout would meet the measures of value that Williams ascribes to visual elements, with the design being “professional, organized, and unified” as well as “consistent” (Wysocki 150). So the “successful” arrangement of the layout allows for (or at least contributes to) Wysocki feeling pleasure when viewing the ad according to Williams’ principles and values of design: it is the “correct” response.

Wysocki takes issue with Williams’ approach, which supports a notion that the principles “are not contingent,” can always apply everywhere, and have little effect other than the production of a methodically organized layout (Wysocki 151). And though the principles are useful for helping Wysocki teach her students that design and visual layouts are “rationally organized and can be formally analyzed,” the principles, being imparted without context also imply that they are timeless and neutral. “**Instead,**”

Wysocki says, “**the values that underlie Williams’ principles have both history and consequences**” (emphasis in original) (Wysocki 151). In short, by valuing form as abstract – “unconnected to time and place” – “bodies and histories are not called into sight or question” (Wysocki 152).

Wysocki also pulls from other visual composition principles in her teaching of design, like those from Rudolf Arnheim’s *The Power of the Center* and Molly Bang’s *Picture This: Perception and Composition*, in an attempt to embellish Williams’ abstract, formal principles (Wysocki 153). But the approaches within still fail to regard the designed objects as “conceived to exist in a circuit of social and cultural relations” – they are unrelated to the establishment of relations between reader and text and thereby reader and others (Wysocki 157).

Again, there are myriad layers of affect at play in Wysocki’s analysis. Primarily, Wysocki recognizes that the pleasure she feels in viewing the design as a “successful” one according to the values and principles designated by Williams, Arnheim, and Bang (among others) is a mediated reaction, rather than a natural response by a “character-less self...without culture, race, class, gender, or age” (Wysocki 157). These design texts are essentially designating feeling rules with regard to form, in a classically (until challenged by Wysocki) veiled manner, hiding under the guise of neutrality. Their principles, in effect, operate in an affective dismissal by upholding the reason/emotion binary where form is logically evaluated by the “character-less” reader, without regard to content, nor the inextricability of form and content, nor the relationship between reader and text. Readers and text are neutral (unconnected to time and place) and the methods with which to analyze form (and form alone) are too: these are the mediating feeling rules of

Williams, Arnheim, and Bang. However, Wysocki goes on to explain, form (just like the “logic” it’s linked with) isn’t neutral. She states:

if it were simply that the formal approaches to the visual I described so far are neutral, that they don’t discuss gender (or race or class or culture or economies or...) because they have nothing to do with the constructions of gender (or race or class or culture or economies or...), I could stop my writing here (158).

Wysocki argues that the formal principles of design discussed also “arise out of and then in turn help shape our senses of who we are and what we are capable of doing (or not) in the world,” so it isn’t so simple as to teach visual design principles and “augment” that teaching with lessons on questioning how the content of layouts or photographs “teach us about gender and race and class and...” because that would further perpetuate a separation of form and content – a separation that has a history itself.

Wysocki traces this separation of form from content to Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, which she describes as a “specifically gendered” distinction in academic history (Wysocki 159). Though room does not allow for a thorough treatment of Wysocki’s stimulating discussion of Kant, there are several significant implications that his development of aesthetics has for emotion studies. I take Wysocki’s own summary of Kant’s “structures of beauty” here:

- For Kant, we are always to shape the particulars of emotion and bodily sensation according to universal principles
- When we shape emotion and bodily sensation in accord with those principles, our motivations are not directed towards ourselves or others; instead, we are to act with disinterest, to act on judgments that could be (ought to be) made by everyone, everywhere

- When we judge something to be beautiful, it is because beauty is formally inherent in the object (Wysocki 164).

This approach to formal beauty by Kant again solely values the side of reason in the reason/emotion binary by “ask[ing] us to think of form as separate from the content of the senses” (Wysocki 168). Additionally, it upholds the notion that emotions are universal, preexisting entities. And finally, according to these principles of Kantian aesthetic judgment, not only are the emotions and bodily sensations toward formal beauty shaped through universal principles, disinterested, and decontextualized, they in this way teach us “to pull away...be in our selves away from others, from Others” (Wysocki 166).

Both Wysocki and affective theorists see the danger in viewing emotion for the purposes of judging “inherent” beauty in this manner, operating instead in the theory that “emotions are inseparable from actions and relations, from lived experience” (Boler 2) and therefore not universal or disinterested or decontextualized. But that is not what Wysocki or you or I have likely learned – instead, “we have learned to think form should [be abstracted and generalized], and we have learned to expect that form should do this” (emphasis in original). And when it does not meet our ordered expectations (i.e., the feeling rules we’ve learned and enacted) “we denigrate it, or try to lay (or force) perfect form upon it, or try to erase it” (Wysocki 168) and in doing so tangibly enact supposed neutrality.

Another way of considering Kant’s notion of universal emotions and bodily sensations through emotion studies is looking at said principle as circulating in what Ahmed refers to as affective economies.<sup>9</sup> In affective economies, “affect does not reside

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<sup>9</sup> Ahmed describes affective economies as how affect, in its “circulation between objects and signs” increases and moves as it works as capital: not “resid[ing] positively in the sign or commodity,

in an object or sign, but is an effect of the circulation between objects and signs” (Ahmed 45). In Kant’s universal judgments, the affective value circulating between reader and text is the disinterest or learned lack of affect when judging form (which is neither inherent in the reader nor text). This disinterest has gained value and continues to circulate. Wysocki challenges the feeling rules of this affective economy by becoming angry: an outlaw emotion that produces affective shifts and generates change in how she makes meaning of, judges, and communicates about design.

Wysocki spends much of her work explaining the pleasure aspect of the pleasure/anger pair in relation to the feeling rules of beauty and form as espoused by Williams, Arnheim, Bang, Kant, and her own teaching. Wysocki returns to anger at the end of her work, stating:

It is easy to articulate a particular and well-known kind of anger about the Peek layout, about the layout being just one more in the endless pile of painted, photographed, and drawn representations of women shown as only sexual and also now used for selling so that we all – men and women – are pushed to see women only as sexual objects, as objects serving as the means to the ends of others. **But what my analysis here shows me is that we should see this objectification – and the violence against women that can follow from it – as inseparable from the formal approaches we have learned for analyzing and making visual presentations of all kinds**” (emphasis in original) (168).

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but...produced as an effect of circulation” (Ahmed 45). She gives the example of “bogus” versus “genuine” asylum seekers in the UK – the former whose potential incoming presence was described by a former UK Conservative Party leader, William Hague, using language like “flood” and “swamped” thus creating “associations between asylum and loss of control and hence work by mobilizing fear, or the anxiety of being overwhelmed by the actual or potential proximity of others” (Ahmed 46). By being unable to differentiate among bogus and genuine asylum seekers, any arrival can be “read as the cause of an injury to the national body...an anticipation of future injury” (Ahmed 47). So, bogus asylums seekers are figures of fear and hate, but are “detached from particular bodies” and therefore, because of the unfeasibility of appointing fear to any particular body (as they may or may not be genuine) fear and hate are allowed “to circulate in the economic sense, working to differentiate some others from other others, a differentiation that is never ‘over’, as it awaits others who have not yet arrived.” The affective economy consequently continues to accumulate and “justifies” the hostility toward asylum seeker’s bodies, “in the name of protecting the nation” (Ahmed 47).

This “well-known kind of anger” Wysocki refers to is an example of anger as an outlaw emotion, prompting subversion by changing the way she thinks about and teaches design and by doing so forms a connection between the personal and public spheres. It is also what Boler describes as an “anger of indignation,” and one familiar to (perhaps most obviously) feminists (Boler 191). “Anger,” Boler states, “is understood as a ‘moral’ emotion, one of the ways we measure transgression and injustices” (Boler 188). So in the reciprocal communication occurring between Wyoscki and the Peek layout, where affect circulates, Wysocki’s anger is produced via her belief in the problems of the feeling rules she’s learned, enacted, and taught regarding the evaluation of formal beauty.

Ahmed expands on this moral emotion and makes the point that anger is not “simply defined” in relationship to an occurrence in the past, but as an opening of the future. So, Wysocki’s opposition to the feeling rules of evaluating form doesn’t end with just opposition. “Being against something is also being for something,” Ahmed states – usually something that isn’t articulated yet – and warns that we turn away from the future if we transform anger into inaction or silence, or are afraid of it (176). Again, Wysocki’s anger does not end with her responding negatively to the formal principles and judgments of beauty: it opened up the future of teaching, learning, and creating visual composition by shifting the objectives for students learning the principles of design in her classroom. And because it is a “well-known” outlaw emotion, it is thus subversive, and she recognizes it as such, as shown through her call to other visual rhetoric educators: “we should look on these formal approaches with anger, and we should be working to change them” (Wysocki 169). For her students, however, outlaw emotions are still out of the learning experience.

My purpose for contextualizing Wysocki's chapter within the realm of emotion studies is to display how infused with affect her meaning-making, her judgments, and her communications are about pervading design principles and values. The circulating affective economies have had a part in shaping those relationships with the feeling rules that coincide with them, and so too will affective economies have helped shape the social and temporal attention she calls for in reimagining how we regard content and form in visual compositions. And though emotion cannot account for all of what is going on in the Wysocki piece, it *is* an integral aspect of it. But from her wonderful analysis and passionate implications for teaching and reading visual text, Wysocki does not shift the value of emotion into her classroom activities following her analysis – an “oversight” that is entirely expected.

I've spoken broadly of the insufficient treatment of emotion in education, and also argued for it more specifically in critical media pedagogy. But before moving on to amending Wysocki's lessons to include affect, I want to take an interlude here and resume the historicization of emotion started in Chapter 2 as applied more locally to the Rhetoric and Composition field. By briefly looking at where we've been and where we are now, it will be apparent why Wysocki's dismissal of affective engagement for students *is* so expected at this time in Rhetoric and Composition – and why it's necessary to change that expectation.

### **Rhetoric, Composition, and Emotion**

It would be an obvious mistake to postulate that emotion has not held a significant place in rhetoric, positioned in the familiar appeal of *pathos* which, though delineated from *logos* and *ethos*, is essential to the *pisteis* where Aristotle posited that all three are

essential to effective persuasion. When positioning Aristotle in the view of emotion studies, he is often perceived as “an indispensable predecessor for acknowledging and working with rather than against emotion in rhetorical education” (Quandahl 11), particularly regarding his social view of emotions. Micciche cites Aristotle’s definition of emotions from Book 2 of *On Rhetoric* as “those things which, by undergoing change, people come to differ in their judgments...” (Micciche 11) and regards this definition as a demonstration of the “social concept” of emotions.

This is significant because it suggests that Aristotle’s conception of emotion is experienced reciprocally between people in a particular context and embodied through language, vocal and physical gestures, and intention (Micciche 12). The idea that emotions are embodied – “expressed by, experienced, and perceived through a body located in time, space, and culture” – supports emotions as not naturally located within individuals as universal, preexisting entities (Micciche 12) but rather as circulating and forming boundaries through what Ahmed refers to as “sites of personal and social tension” (11).

Though Aristotle distinguished “the mind (reason) as separate from the body (emotion),” he did not disregard emotion (Vogel 26). “Our mistake,” Vogel states, (referencing the Rhetoric and Composition field) “is that we’ve erased [his] nuances, simplified what [he] had to say” (26). Gretchen Flesher Moon exposes this simplification through examining the treatment of *pathos* in composition textbooks, where many do not mention emotion at all and others “denigrate appeals to emotion and implicitly dismiss emotion in judgment” (33). For those that do include discussion on *pathos*, it seems often begrudgingly, as though it’s bothersome that they have any role at all in considering

one's audience for an argumentative appeal to affect. Additionally, emotion is almost always presented as something to be exceptionally wary about and thereby best to be suppressed, as textbooks "routinely advise against diction that is too emotionally powerful, or that falls too far from affective neutrality" (Moon 36). So affect is something that needs attending to, but not too much engagement with, and should always be used as a "sidekick" for reason, being something separate and superior.

Micciche also questions this positioning of emotion as "less than," asking: "isn't the very process of deliberation already an emotioned one, already bound up with attachments we have to a way of seeing or conceptualizing an issue?" She goes on to explain that how we conceptualize what is considered valid justifications and evidence for argument – that is, how we determine what warrants argument in the first place – is "already shaped by our emotional investments in how things ought to be" (Micciche 3). So how did we get here – this point of pathos simplification and disassociation with emotion – and why should we change things now?

Micciche explains "this absence is understandable given the centrality of logos to establishing composition's research agenda" (Micciche 2). Citing the work of composition scholars such as James Berlin, Lester Faigley, and Maureen Daly, Micciche explains that the growth of qualitative research methods during the 1970s and 1980s made "systematic studies of writing processes" possible that went beyond individualistic, experimental studies of writing processes in an attempt to legitimize composition as a field that was capable of producing empirical evidence about the teaching of writing (Micciche 2). These approaches, however, were soon critiqued when political and social perspectives on the writing process came about in the late 1980s and early 1990s. There,

the revival of ancient rhetorics as essential resources for writing instruction provided “another logos-centered boost” to the field’s scholarly agenda of the field’s research by demonstrating that epistemological frameworks for teaching writing “have a basis in ancient articulations of rhetoric”; thus, scholars established further credibility to writing as an intellectual, rhetorical activity (Micciche 2).

Worsham expands on this historical narrative, and reviews that after rapidly adopting theory in the mid-1990’s, English studies has since appropriated the language of radical pedagogy as a way of “claiming a key role for itself (and writing instruction) as a revolutionary agent of change” in an “anxious effort to travel the circuit from ‘nobodiness’ to ‘somebodiness.’” However, she continues, English studies has thus far pursued a “uncritical relation” to pedagogy, the study of which she credits as a “boom subject” that has benefited the field. This has resulted in composition studies asking “too few questions” because the field has thus far been “content to capitalize on the terms of political vision and to translate them into the more lucrative tokens of professional self-interest” (“Going Postal” 234).

And of course, there’s the issue of proposing the use emotion as a category of analysis because of the academic and popular affinity for “collaps[ing] emotion with all things feminine, a marker that, at least in the history of academic discourse, has signaled a tendency to be weak, shallow, petty, vain, and narcissistic” (Micciche 3) – why would Rhetoric and Composition, after all of the effort to legitimize itself, want to associate itself with those concepts? Micciche argues that despite the historical and gendered reasons for doing so, the field has reached disciplinary status (“although teaching writing continues to be identified as service rather than intellectual work”), and it is judicious to

“consider what narrative threads within composition’s story remain unattended to as a result of logos-heavy explanations” – the rhetorical and pedagogical attention to emotion studies is one of these threads (Micciche 2).

And indeed, the layers of affect at play in Wysocki exploring her affective response to draw out and historicize what makes the Peek layout garner such a combined reaction – one where “the anger...is inseparable from the pleasures” – is a powerful example of the significance for doing so (Wysocki 168). The driving force behind the Wysocki’s piece is her “reconceiv[ing] emotion as a rhetorical resource – a source from which to draw out meaning, interpretation and careful thinking” (Micciche 57). It almost seems obvious – and yet it’s still so rare – this explicit use of emotion as a generative category of analysis (Micciche 49), this treatment of emotions as *there*, and as *mattering* to learning and change.

The previously unattended thread is being examined and argued for as relevant to our field but has thus far largely focused (as follows with this thesis) on providing solid theoretical background on emotion and offering justification for the *why* of treating emotion in pedagogy differently, rather than the *how*. And so I intend next to follow that strand of emotion studies through the manageable area of Wysocki’s lesson plans as critical media pedagogy.

### **Reviewing Implications**

To review, Wysocki discussed several implications for design principles resulting from her affective shift. First, the values that motivate the principles have history and consequences; second, the abstraction of formal beauty that objectifies (particularly female or other aestheticized) bodies is inseparable from the approaches we’ve learned

for analyzing and creating visual design; and third, our learned ideas of what is beautiful are “dangerous for women and any aestheticized others” (Wysocki 169). In sum, she concludes that this

desire for abstract formality... separate[s] us from our histories and places, and hence from each other. If we believe that to be human is to be tied to place and time and messiness and complexity, then, by so abstracting us, this desire dehumanizes us and our work and how we see each other (169).

Wysocki moves into actions that should take place for modifications in the field to address changing the dehumanizing practices. She states that if we want to change how we regard any group of people who are wrongly treated by our learned visual practices, it’s not enough to “push for magazine covers and advertisements and catalogues and TV commercials that show (for example) women with fleshy and round and imperfect and aged flesh” – we must also understand and be critical of the formalized methods we have “inherited” for reading visual design, and experiment with alternative layouts that do not universalize or abstract (Wysocki 169).

It is the latter practices (the criticizing and rethinking of those formal categories) – as well as creating approaches to reading visual compositions as a “reciprocal recognition” that ties us to our place and time – that Wysocki focuses on in the activities provided for students. She aims to impart a classroom experience for her students that will help them “think of the experience of beauty as coming out of the day-to-day necessities of our social existence – an ‘experience of community and shared values,’” and one that challenges them not only to see design as made to fit our formalized expectations, but to also learn that “if design is to have any sense of possibility – of freedom – to it, then it must also push against the conventions, the horizons, of those expectations” (Wysocki 172). These objectives certainly connect to the notion of critical

media pedagogy introduced in Chapter 1, where “through questioning, reflection, and action, students get to know their social context, evaluate it, and plan action to make changes” (Pailliotet and Semali 11).

But as is shown through Wysocki’s own analysis, the motivation to “push against,” to see oneself “capable of making change” is complex and inundated with affect that, when translated for students, is left untouched. It is not that the activities and adjoining goals Wysocki outlines for her students don’t address questioning, reflecting, and acting on reimagining the evaluation and designing of visual composition; indeed, she focuses greatly on guiding students to “see how different design strategies encourage different values in the relations among audience, composition, and composer” (Wysocki 183). This is also not to say that Wysocki’s activities, because they do not highlight (or even include much about) emotion, should somehow be dismissed as reinforcing the same (learned) approaches to evaluating and privileging form that she wishes to dispel.

In fact, it is not my intention, as a much less experienced teacher and scholar, to criticize Wysocki or her proposed activities whatsoever, because what she does propose for students at the end of “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty” is brilliant and exciting (and will be discussed in more detail below). It is just striking to see that the learning experience she designs for her students is so different from the learning experience that propelled her to question, reflect on, and take action for change, and the disparity between the two experiences speaks greatly, I think, to how emotion has been so shunned from academic discourse. It *is* my intention, though, to explore what it might look like if aspects of Wysocki’s experience of analyzing emotion were included among her student activities. I move forward in doing so tentatively, as it is admittedly intimidating to

conjure solid lessons with affect in the classroom – there just aren't many examples to work from, and they are particularly absent in the new media facets of Rhetoric and Composition. So because there are not many examples of tested practices, I aim to do what those that *have* treated emotion as mattering in the classroom have done, which is to offer my additions to Wysocki's activities not as complete, sound lesson plans, but rather elements to try that will undoubtedly need refinement in practice.

### **Adding to Wysocki's Activities**

There are seven activities that make up the final pages of Wysocki's chapter, all designed to work toward students learning the following:

- There are social and temporal expectations in visual compositions
- Design principles of those expectations are neither universal nor neutral, and can (and should) be pushed against
- Reading and designing visual compositions is reciprocal and shapes ourselves and others by “bind[ing] form and content, composer and audience, together”

(Wysocki 173).

Depending on the activity, Wysocki designates her lessons as being for first-year students, undergraduate students, or graduate students – usually some combination of the three – with a requirement that students must have some visual text experience, or, as is the case with Activities 5, 6, and 7, they must have some familiarity with building basic Web pages.

The student level for the activity sequence I propose follows Activities 1 and 2, where the students are first-year, undergraduate, or graduate students, where the only requirement is having some experience with visual texts. Additionally, the activity is for

students who would be taking a visual composition course currently, where critical engagement with emotion would be a presumably foreign task. Because of this, students will not be explicitly introduced to emotion studies theories or texts, but they will be participating in using emotion as a rhetorical resource when viewing visual compositions. What I offer is an activity sequence that highlights emotion as having importance to reading and designing visual compositions and contributes to the above learning objectives outlined by Wysocki.

Because my activity sequence is scaffolded on Wysocki's first two activity sequences, it presumes the participation of students in the class sessions and homework of those activities, and references some of the happenings therein. I will summarize the elements of Wysocki's activities below for reference. I then follow with my activity sequence, the layout of which follows Wysocki's presentation.

#### *Wysocki's Activity 1 – "Rhetorical Observations"*

In this activity sequence lasting 6 – 8 class sessions, students collect 50 print-based visual compositions, examine the differences and similarities among them, and create their own categories of design for which they assign provisional principles and compile them as a "Design Principles" sheet. They then use their Design Principles sheet to analyze additional layouts, draw principle connections among categories, and question the uses/deficiencies of "official" design principles. Discussed during this activity sequence are issues such as visual design tied to advertising in our culture, how layouts have a propensity for simplifying their respective audiences, how layouts instruct us about what is desirable/appropriate behavior/how we should look, etc., and how visual strategies are used to make certain appeals. In the last topic of discussion, an example of an emotional

appeal is discussed in regards to layout for nonprofit organizations, which, with their tendency to use an individual looking at the reader, induces empathy – so here they talk about what layouts are *supposed* to make them feel, which is useful for my upcoming activity. Additionally, for a homework assignment where students have to write 500 words in response to published design principles (from Williams, for example), students are instructed not to use default settings and “lack-of-choice choices” of academic writing (12-point, Times New Roman or equivalent font, double-spaced, on 8.5 x 11 paper) but rather present their writing so form and content are not separated (Wysocki 182).

*Wysocki’s Activity 2 – “How Does Design Work Elsewhere?”*

This activity sequence, lasting 20 – 30 minutes of class discussion time per discussed layout and one homework assignment, is designed for students to connect effective design strategies to time and place, to see how various design strategies promote various values in composer, composition, and audience relations, and to continue with acquiring compositional strategies outside of the print-based visual compositions they compiled (Wysocki 183). The instructor brings copies (or has available at the computer) layouts from different times (Victorian, for instance) and places (like modern day Japan) and begins a discussion on the tone of the layout. She asks how the tone is conveyed, letting students come up with elements such as color, object placement, and photography. She also implores them to talk about the meaning they see in the design, and how and where the layout is prompting their eyes to move. She then asks students to write down the visual strategies they detect and if they can use those strategies, without modification, for an audience they currently know. For homework, students receive a layout form a

different time or place, and use the strategies in the layout to “support a line of thinking or acting connected to students’ present lives” (Wysocki 184).

### ACTIVITY 3

## (UN)INTENDED EMOTIONS

### TEACHER NOTES

#### DESCRIPTION

Now that students have participated in activities to promote awareness of the reciprocal communication between audience and text via design principles and the awareness that design strategies are tied to time and place, students will seek out a design that causes contradictory emotions and analyze the design principles and potential social and temporal expectations causing the contradiction of emotions.

#### GOALS

In the course of the activity, students will:

- Continue practices that consider the relationships visual texts build with audiences through design strategies.
- Identify contradictory emotions upon viewing visual texts and examine what strategies are employed to evoke intended emotion for the audiences (already discussed in the “Rhetorical Observations” activity) and simultaneously evoke *unintended* emotion.
- Write an analysis piece on what has caused this contradiction of emotions.
- Write about how the layout could be revised in a way “that is responsive and respectful” of the audience (Wysocki 192).
- Get additional practice with the concept that form and content cannot be separated.

#### TIME

This activity takes place over 6 – 8 class periods.

#### LEVEL

Under the assumption that students will have followed Wysocki’s “Rhetorical Observations” and “How Does Design Work Elsewhere?” activities, this activity is for first-year or graduate students (or anywhere in between).

#### SEQUENCE

1. Ask students to bring back their Design Principles sheet to class with the accompanying design examples.
2. Ask for students to share any examples of their design principles for their category that have to do with intended emotion – how was the audience intended to feel upon viewing this particular category of design? (For example, in the “Rhetorical Observations” activity, Wysocki gave examples of “pages that are supposed to make you feel frightened so that you will use the financial service being advertised” [Wysocki 175] or that nonprofit organizations “often show a single person –and often with a full body – who looks directly at the viewer with a serious expression as to evoke one-to-one connection and empathy” [Wysocki 176]).

3. Again, draw from the “Rhetorical Observations” discussion and reinforce the points of visual design tied to advertising in our culture, how layouts have a propensity for simplifying their respective audiences, how layouts instruct us about what is desirable/appropriate behavior/how we should look, etc., and how visual strategies are used to make certain appeals.
4. Also reiterate that the mix of the following points – the use of different strategies for visual appeal, the simplification of audiences, and being “taught” what makes these strategies appealing – can lead to the consequences of oversimplifying audience, i.e., people.
5. Show the attached Dolce and Gabbana<sup>10</sup> advertisement and ask students to consider the layout of the advertisement. In groups, they should determine the audience and create a list of design principles that speak to what this advertisement reinforces to that audience about what is fashionable/beautiful/sexy/cool using the questions:
  - What does this ad assume about its target audience?
  - What visual strategies are used to make this ad appealing to that audience?
  - How is viewing this ad *supposed* to make its audience feel?
  - What does this ad teach us/its audience about being fashionable/cool/beautiful/sexy?
6. Share with the students that although you find this ad visually appealing – because of many of the design strategies they’ve listed and because you are part of the audience (white, a woman, subscriber of the magazine the ad was in) – the ad also makes you angry. Ask students to surmise why this might be. Shift the conversation to how the same strategies that make the advertisement appealing also:
  - Reinforce unattainable beauty ideals
  - Make gang rape/domination of women fashionable/cool/beautiful/sexy

Discuss that this contradiction of emotion is something to pay attention to, because it tells us the audience not simple, and that it is possible to be provocative without reinforcing irresponsible messages.
7. Have students complete the Collecting Visual Design Garnering Contradictory Emotions homework.
8. In groups, have students discuss the smaller collection they’ve compiled for homework and their accompanying contradictory emotions.
9. Have students complete the Comparing, Categorizing, and Challenging Design homework.
10. Students will informally present their contradictory emotions in class using their homework as a guideline.
11. As a final piece of this activity, students will complete the Redesigning Design essay.

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix B.

(UN)INTENDED EMOTIONS HOMEWORK

**COLLECTING VISUAL DESIGNS GARNERING CONTRADICTORY EMOTIONS**

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS ASSIGNMENT**

This assignment asks to you to seek out a visual design that promotes contradictory emotions when observing the form and content of the design to show that they are inseparable and to analyze the potential social and temporal causes of said contradiction.

**WHAT TO DO**

Collect several (3 – 5) design samples where you are the intended audience (apply the same definition of “design” used in the Collecting Visual Designs search where there is “a mix of words and images on paper that you can tell was intended by the designer to stand alone, to serve some particular purpose” [Wysocki 178]) that evoke a contradiction of emotions. There could be elements of the layout that you feel are beautiful, that make the design visually appealing, and you feel a sort of pleasure in looking at it – but there should also be a contradictory response to the former appeal, perhaps about what the strategies used are “teaching” us. This response could be anger, resentment, confusion, offense, or some other opposing emotion.

Bring your small collection to class and be prepared to have some initial discussion about your contradictory emotions regarding the visual designs you’ve collected.

## (UN)INTENDED EMOTIONS HOMEWORK

### COMPARING, CATEGORIZING, AND CHALLENGING DESIGNS

#### THE PURPOSE OF THIS ASSIGNMENT

This assignment asks you to put into words the observations you've made about one layout in your current (un)intended emotions layout collection and to apply your previous knowledge of categorization and design principles to that piece. It also asks you to critically analyze the contradictory emotions you have about that design.

#### WHAT TO DO

Pick one of the designs in your collection and conduct an analysis of the design principles used to appeal to the audience (question in italics are from "Comparing and Categorizing Designs" homework [Wysocki 179 – 180]):

- *What kind(s) of typeface is/are being used? What do you notice about the placement of the words?*
- *What colors or use of gray is being used?*
- *Does the design use a photograph, illustration, drawing, or...?*
- *Does the design use white space?*
- *What kinds of phrases or words are being used?*
- *Is there a similar proportion of words to other elements?*
- *Are words treated graphically or not, across the designs?*

#### ***If there are people in the layout:***

- *What is the facial expression?*
- *Where is the person looking?*
- *How many people?*
- *What sort of person: strong/tough, healthy, beautiful, tall, young, no skin blemishes?*
- *How much skin/hair/legs is/are showing?*
- *Is there some kind of innuendo in the layout or photo?*
- *What's the race of the person?*

#### ***Other things to note:***

- *What is the quality of color: hard, soft, bright?*
- *What is the main focus of the layout?*
- *What kind of word choice is there?*
- *How much text is there?*
- *Is humor used?*
- *How much visual ambiguity is used in the layout or concerning the product? (Can you tell what the product is, in other words?)*
- *Are metaphors used in the layout?*
- *Is there a headline? A slogan?*
- *Is the main textual information at the bottom?*

Now, type up what you have done for your analysis. Add a paragraph to this speculating on why what you have analyzed could be deemed “appealing” to you as an audience member in our time and place.

Then, conduct a critical analysis of your emotional response to the layout. Speculate on the potential causes of your discomfort/anger/other emotions of non-appeal at the design. Are there societal expectations you’re reacting to? What about your background or values might cause this? This analysis should be 500 words.

(UN)INTENDED EMOTIONS HOMEWORK

## **REDESIGNING DESIGN**

### **THE PURPOSE OF THIS ASSIGNMENT**

This assignment asks to you to consider the design principles that make up the form and content of your visual design that has caused contradictory emotions and to consider how to change the principles of that design to make a design “that is responsive and respectful of audiences” (Wysocki 192).

### **WHAT TO DO**

Write an essay describing how you would change your design to make the layout appealing to you as a complex audience member. This should be 750 words and, following the “Other Categories for Design” essay, please “present your writing so that you cannot separate form from content” (Wysocki 182).

## Conclusion

After I presented an initial draft of this chapter and the accompanying activity sequence to a group of peers and Rhetoric and Composition faculty members, one of my peers approached me and asked if I *really* thought it was a good idea to mandate emotion as part of an assignment. He said that he was convinced the activity I proposed above would only garner students faking a contradiction of emotions to get a good grade which would therefore invalidate the assignment and render it ineffective.

There's a lot to unpack regarding such a comment (how about a little faith in students?) but it did make me think about the whether or not the objectives that Wysocki put in place and that I continued through my activity sequence would be met should there be any faux emoting – would it be “worth it”? My answer is yes. First, I feel that in some way or another, all assignments we give to students have the potential to slip into a going-through-the-motions-to-get-it-done-and-get-a-grade, simulated activity – but that doesn't mean that through those “just getting it done” motions something isn't learned. Even if students were to feign a contradiction of emotions for the purposes of the assignment, the process of using emotion as a rhetorical resource would prepare them for future contradictory affective engagements, which they've had the practice of analyzing and linking with active change. And what of those students who do not fake the contradiction? Would it not still be worthwhile, through the student presentations of their analyses, for peers to hear about each others affective response to how they are represented as audience members?

Furthermore, the parameters of my proposed activity are purposefully broad – I don't know what kind of contradictory emotions students might analyze or what kind of visual

compositions they'll respond to – and I welcome that openness. Again, my aim is to offer an activity sequence that highlights emotion as having importance to reading and designing visual compositions and contributes to the learning objectives for students outlined by Wysocki. It is a mere introduction to emotions mattering: to meaning-making, judging, and communication about visual compositions in a critical media pedagogy context.

I continue my discussion of emotion and critical media literacy in the next chapter by considering what happens when an emotion *does* overtly matter to a pedagogy's objectives.

## CHAPTER 4

### COMPLICATING EMPATHY IN MULTICULTURAL MEDIA EDUCATION

In the previous chapter, I explored how Anne Wysocki's analysis of her affective collision caused her teaching objectives to shift to sensitizing students to the social and temporal expectations of visual compositions and empowering them to push against the non-neutral, non-universal formal expectations, aligning her soundly with the imperatives of critical media literacy. I then argued that the inclusion of emotion was an important aspect of her goals, and offered a provisional activity sequence to her lessons for doing so. Wysocki's classroom and my additional lessons were concerned with the subject of visual composition, which is only one of the many areas that critical media pedagogy can and has converged with. Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share, in "Toward Critical Media Literacy: Core Concepts, Debates, Organizations, and Policy," affirm the flexibility of the pedagogy, stating that "developing critical media literacy involves perceiving how media like film or video can be used positively to teach a wide range of topics" (372). One of these topics that they – and other educators – readily (and rather naturally) affix with critical media pedagogy is the rare pedagogical variety that actually does acknowledge the importance of a specific emotion for its aims: multicultural education.

Kellner and Share posit that since multicultural education advocates for sincere diversity and curriculum expansion, it is vital for groups marginalized from the media and through the media to learn about their own culture and for dominant groups to be

exposed to the voices and experiences of oppressed and minority groups in the media (372). When groups that are mis- or under-represented in media examine the ways they are portrayed and become composers of their own representations, education “becomes an empowering expression of voice and democratic transformation” (Kellner and Share 372). In this way, with a focus on media content, methods of critical media literacy advance multicultural literacy, the resulting blend often referred to as “multicultural media education” (a term I will employ for the purposes of this chapter).

This complementary combination – stemming from critical media literacy being so closely “tied to the project of radical democracy” that multicultural education is concerned with – piqued my affective curiosity because of the particular emotional response multicultural (media) education explicitly seeks to develop (Kellner and Share 372). It is the emotion that Boler denotes as the most widespread for educators, philosophers of emotion, and politicians in “cultivating democracy”: empathy (Boler 156). Indeed, it is this specifying of empathy that is the most apparent distinction between the aims of multicultural education and critical media pedagogy, each being concerned with not only “what to teach?” (diverse texts) but also “whom to teach?” (an increasingly diverse student population) (Dohrer 95) for student empowerment and social transformation. Because of this “vital” and common combination, I believe it important to complicate the empathy multicultural media education seeks to produce – thus far vastly untheorized and undiscussed by those promoting it – and ask: what kind of empathy is being produced? Who and what does it serve? And is it helping multicultural media education achieve its objectives?

To explore these questions, I will further discuss empathy in multicultural education (the objectives of which transfer to multicultural media education). Then, I will discuss Boler's problematizing of empathy and analyze a multicultural media course through Boler's approach. Finally, I will offer alterations to a multicultural media education course based on Boler's response to a more complicated notion of empathy: "testimonial reading," which requires students to examine their own subjectivity and may serve to better achieve the objectives of multicultural media education.

### **Multicultural Pedagogy and Empathy**

Boler states that "in the last fifteen years of Western 'multiculturalism,' empathy is promoted as a bridge between differences, the affective reason for engaging in democratic dialogue with the other" (156). She cites John Dewey and Louise Rosenblatt as the "forerunners" of this optimistic initiative, as Rosenblatt describes the potential for the social imagination – partially constituted by literature – which permits the reader to possibly identify with the other and consequently develop "modes of moral understanding thought to build democracy" (Boler 155).

These sentiments of democracy-building through identifying with the "other" are echoed greatly through the breadth of pro-multicultural<sup>11</sup> discourse (with who the "other" is being dependant on the educational context of reader and text). Lester Friedman, for example, believes the chief ambition of multicultural education is for students to go beyond their personal experiences and "grasp the realities of another person's existence" (5) while Gloria Gibson-Hudson's view of multiculturalism ends with "embracing difference in [our] day-to-day lives" and moving us "toward producing a more diverse

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<sup>11</sup> Multiculturalism is an oft-contested pedagogical practice; for a discussion of the common opposition surrounding it and potential solutions, see Stephen May's "Multiculturalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Challenges and Possibilities."

and inclusive democratic society” (138). And though the objectives of multicultural education (discussed below) are vast, much of the discourse surrounding multiculturalism is either suggestive of or directly points to the production of empathy toward the other as a, if not *the*, main objective for “bridg[ing] between differences” (Boler 156) – a practice, as will be discussed later, Boler designates as cultivating “passive empathy,” the effectiveness of which she greatly questions.

But how does multicultural education work toward cultivating this empathy in students? As with any pedagogical form, there is no one definition or set of techniques for teaching and learning multiculturalism. Kellner and Share define the pedagogy as students “understanding and engaging the heterogeneity of cultures and subcultures that constitute an increasingly global and multicultural world” (372). I turn to James A. Banks in *An Introduction to Multicultural Education* to elucidate this dense definition, as he is among many who seek to stabilize and “develop a higher level of consensus about what the concept [of multicultural education] means” (40). He has outlined key, though expansive, objectives, which include:

- help[ing] individuals gain greater self-understanding by viewing themselves from the perspectives of other cultures,
- provid[ing] students with cultural, ethnic, and language alternatives,
- provid[ing] students with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed to function within their community cultures, with the mainstream culture, and within and across other ethnic cultures,

- reduc[ing] the pain and discrimination that members of some ethnic and racial groups experiences because of their unique racial, physical, and cultural characteristics,
- help[ing] students to acquire the reading, writing, and math skills needed to function effectively in a global and ‘flat’ technological world, [and]
- help[ing] individuals from diverse racial, cultural, language, and religious groups to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively within their cultural communities, the national civic culture, their regional culture, and the global community (Banks 2 – 5).

The above goals are summed up by Banks when he states that pedagogies aimed at “foster[ing] multicultural literacy should help students **to know, to care, and to act** in ways that will develop and foster a democratic society in which all groups experience cultural democracy and cultural empowerment” (emphasis added) (50).

The “caring” that Banks refers to is, indeed, empathy. And it’s this cultivation of empathy that Boler interrogates.

### **Complicating Empathy**

In her chapter, “The Risks of Empathy” in *Feeling Power*, Boler wonders who benefits and what is gained from the use of empathy as a means to identify with the other, and if the empathy-infused model discussed above (by Banks and others) is “possibly doing our social vision more harm than good” (Boler 156).

Boler defines empathy as belonging to a group of “altruistic emotions” with differing labels such as pity, compassion, and sympathy, and separated by the varying extents with which they serve to identify with the other. She suggests that pity accords no

identification, compassion and sympathy require indistinct identification (“that *could* be me”), and empathy entails a complete identification. And though there are assorted ideas, particularly among philosophers, about the role these altruistic emotions should play in “moral evaluation,” each centers on an imprecise charge of “being disposed to take *action*” in improving upon the other’s circumstances (Boler 158).

Boler designates the form of empathy used widely in multicultural education as passive empathy, “where our concern is directed to a fairly distant other, who we cannot directly help” (159). Passive empathy is a response of comfortable identification with the other, “with little self-reflection,” generates no tangible action, denies power relations, and “situates the powerful Western eye/I as the judging subject, never called upon to cast her gaze at her own reflection” (Boler 161). Boler heavily questions “our capacity to judge what is ‘really happening’ to others...to judge what ‘others need in order to flourish’” and critiques (as have post-colonial and feminist scholars and writers) the “uninterrogated” identification binary of self/other that positions the self (the reader) unproblematically as judge (Boler 160).

Boler’s questioning of this form of empathy was born from her experience teaching a multicultural curriculum, where the responses from students after reading the graphic novel *MAUS* discomfited her, and drew attention to “the untheorized gap between empathy and acting on another’s behalf” (Boler 157).

The responses from students in her years teaching the text are largely based on this (passive) empathetic identification, where students repeatedly confirm that “for the first time they [are] able to ‘identify’ with the experience of the Jewish people during the Second World War” in a relaxed affinity with the narrator Art, who tells his father’s

Holocaust story through the comic-book genre using animals symbolic of humans (Boler 162). Students write of their guilt-free reading experience, relieved that they weren't made to feel blamed or forced to pity anyone, because Spiegelman is "just 'telling his story,'" thereby allowing them to feel "relatively undisturbed, while simultaneously permitting them to easily 'imagine the other'" from a voyeuristic position of "power/safe" distance the medium provides (Boler 163). And while Boler notes that it's feasible that this sort of response might motivate additional engagement with Jewish culture and history, she is "not at all convinced that this potential benefit outweighs the risk of readings that abdicate responsibility" (Boler 163). She refers not, of course, to the responsibility of causing the Holocaust, but to the responsibility of having to reflect on or take action regarding either "the production of meaning, or about one's complicit responsibility within historical and social conditions." Students, essentially, are "let off the hook...free to move on to the next consumption" having sufficiently identified with the other as a form of action (Boler 164). Certainly, this practice does not meet the objectives of multicultural nor critical media pedagogies.

To reiterate, if we return to Banks' "knowledge, caring, action" model, students in Boler's classes acquired knowledge through reading the text, cared through their passive empathy, and did nothing more, as their identification with (i.e., consumption of) the other served as action. This melding of "caring" as synonymous with "action" is troublesome, yet appears to be upheld readily in multicultural education.

An example of this can be seen in Laura Dittmar's contribution to the widely endorsed compilation *Shared Differences: Multicultural Media and Practical Pedagogy*, an assemblage of fourteen essays consisting of course descriptions and proposed syllabi

written by university instructors and professors. “As I understand it, the goal of multicultural teaching is to analyze diversity politically, as embedded in unequal power relations,” (79) she says.

The initial phase of her course “Narrative Form in the Novel and Film” at the University of Massachusetts – Boston is dedicated to “normalizing awareness” to cultural difference (which she lists as caste, class, nationality, and gender) (Dittmar 85) by exposing students to multicultural film and print-based text. This normalizing of awareness to “difference and social marginality” is part of her larger effort in the course, which is “to unmask the ideology that informs all representations of communities” (Dittmar 84). In the texts Dittmar uses, the main tasks center around critique of the discursive practices of narratives that “frame and sustain the dominant ideology” (85). Students watch and then analyze the force of the narrative structures in order to recognize forms of misogyny, homophobia, and racism to this end. Dittmar cites a strong syllabus as the first step for devising a multicultural media course for the purpose of educators and students becoming aware of “how reading across a variety of novels and films can reach beyond the study of inequities to include empowerments latent in multicultural perspectives” (89). The second step of the class objectives is “guiding students toward extending the same kind of respect and empathy to each other” (89). She ends her course explication by stating that “when social awareness informs such respect and empathy, alternative social possibilities begin to emerge” (90).

It is the latter split between steps (the first being exposure to and critique of text, the second being students’ empathy toward each other) to Dittmar’s multicultural media education approach that appears problematic when examined through Boler’s view of

passive empathy and testimonial reading. By separating the exposure and critique of text from “guiding” students to empathy for one another, Dittmar upholds the division of reason and emotion as separate entities while seemingly privileging the analysis and critique of multicultural texts as the first step; neither the syllabus nor her explanation of the course makes explicit how a “guiding” toward empathy takes place, while the elements and texts up for analysis and critique (the “knowing” portion for Banks) are captured in detail. Additionally, this split of text analysis versus empathy toward other students positions the texts as a sort of “other” – where dominant structures are acknowledged and critiqued, without, as Boler might surmise, students “recognizing [themselves] as implicated in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles the other must confront” (166). The text as “other” serves the stated “uninterrogated identification assumed by the faith in empathy...that situates the self/reader unproblematically as judge” (Boler 160). Furthermore, there does not seem to be “self-reflective engagement” by students, but instead a potential for “heightened detachment” (Boler 163) because of the course’s heavy focus of text analysis and presumed caring as action following. Dittmar’s view seems to be that this exposure to and subsequent analysis of the ideological forces working in multicultural texts will “register the relation between the personal and political” (90) – and though it may do so, some emotion theorists – such as Boler and including Ann Cvetkovich – question the transformative power presumed by the exposure Dittmar provides in her course: “the links between personal and social transformation,” states Cvetkovich, “are by no means guaranteed” (1). Other course descriptions<sup>12</sup> and syllabi in *Shared Differences* largely follow

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<sup>12</sup> See Gloria Gibson-Hudson’s “A Different Image: Integrating Films by African-American Women into the Classroom” and Steve Carr’s “The Perfect Take: Multiculturalism in the Production Classroom.”

Dittmar's approach to multicultural media education.

### **A Response to Passive Empathy: Testimonial Reading**

Boler's response to this dilemma is a proposal calling for the practice of "testimonial reading," where "action" takes place in requiring a

self-reflective participation: an awareness first of myself as a reader, positioned in a relative position of power by virtue of the safe distance provided by the mediating text...[and accepting the task of performing] an active reading practice that involves challenging my own assumptions and world views (166).

Boler's notion of testimony doesn't assert "a static 'truth' or fixed 'certainty'" but communication "that requires the reader to 'encounter vulnerability' and the explosiveness of a 'critical and unpredictable dimension'" (Boler 168). This is achieved through varying responsibilities of the reader, described below.

The initial reader responsibility is a recognition of her position as situated in power relations, where she "plays a tremendous role in the production of truth" (which, again, is not fixed but shaped by the testimonial act). This means that reader's presence in witnessing the testimony (i.e., reading the text) is an essential part of the testimony, and in her absence, doubt, or turning away from the testimony, she effectively annihilates the other and the testimony. The second responsibility is that, though having a role in the production of testimony, she does not "become the victim" but instead maintains her position and perception, which can be a "battleground for forces raging in [herself]." And finally, the major responsibility (and "key distinction between passive empathy and testimonial reading") is that the reader "must attend to herself as much as to the other – not in terms of 'fears for one's own vulnerabilities,' but rather in terms of affective obstacles that prevent the reader's acute attention to the power relations guiding her

response and judgments” (Boler 168). So experiencing something like resentment of the text is an opening for analysis (harkening back to the use of emotion as a rhetorical resource discussed in the Wysocki chapter): might the resentment “indicate the reader’s desire to avoid confronting the articulated pain” of the testimonial? Is a dismissal of the text a reflection of the reader’s “own safeguard investment”? (Boler 169).

Of course, there are difficulties to enacting and calling for these responsibilities, where reader defensives “may interfere with carrying out the task of bearing witness” (Boler 169). These may include readers potentially retreating from participating because of the discomfort the responsibilities require (as opposed the easy consumption via passive empathy), unconscious anger at the protagonist/narrator, a numb abandonment of the experience, or “an obsession with fact-finding” that “shuts off the human dynamic” (Boler 169).

The point of testimonial reading, however, is not to mandate these reader responsibilities so that students are forced to feel guilt or shame about the oppressions multicultural curricula inherently is about (although they might). The goal, instead, is explicated by Boler (as reader) here:

Recognizing my position as ‘judge’ granted through the reading privilege, I must learn to question the genealogy of any particular emotional response. My scorn, my evaluation of others’ behavior as good or bad, my irritation – each provides a site for interrogation of how the text challenges my investment in familiar cultural values. As I examine the history of a particular emotion, I can identify the taken-for-granted social values and structures of my own historical moment which mirror those encountered by the protagonist. Testimonial reading pushes us to recognize that a novel or biography reflects not merely a distant other, but analogous social relations in our own environment, in which our economic and social positions are implicated (170).

Though I will be primarily using Boler's testimonial reading in reworking a multicultural media education course, she is not alone in questioning empathy produced via multiculturalism nor proposing change therein.

### **Another View**

Barry Kanpol, in "Multiculturalism and Empathy: A Border Pedagogy of Solidarity", offers an extended view of this multicultural education/empathy-producing issue. He sides with Henry Giroux, whose view is that, while typically about "Otherness," multicultural education is practiced in ways in which the dominant characteristics of hegemonic culture are not questioned while the "oppositional potential of difference as a site of struggle" is subdued by the failure to recognize culture "as a problem of politics, power, *and* pedagogy" (Kanpol 179). For Kanpol, the practice and theory of multiculturalism must include both "identifying and empathizing" with differences and "unifying" similarities among class, race, and gender intersections (181).

Kanpol offers a more comprehensive definition of empathy than most discussions of multiculturalism (though not as extensive as Boler's) describing a "cognitive" empathy in which individuals have a "mental understanding of the need to accept differences" versus an "affective" empathy wherein individuals "can literally *feel* difference precisely because one has been in similar situations" (192) – produced empathy in service of multicultural education must be composed of both, he claims, for the enactment of his proposed "border pedagogy." Kanpol's border pedagogy seeks to move students in a direction away from the individual as a "central figure" and more toward the direction of "a connected individual within community relations that, is his or her construction,

seriously considers the similarities within differences and empathy between individuals and groups, irrespective of color, race, or gender” (Kanpol 182).

Kanpol’s take on empathy in service to border pedagogy, with its guidance of students away from the autonomous self and more toward recognizing themselves as “a connected individual within community relations” (182) is somewhat reminiscent of Boler’s objective for testimonial reading, which requires readers’ acknowledgement of “collective educational responsibility...[in the] recognition of power relations that define the interaction between reader and text and the conflicts represented in the text” (165). Kanpol’s border pedagogy calls for students to “transfigure [their] own image[s] of the world” (191) while Boler’s practice of testimonial reading aims to “radically challenge the reader’s world view” (157). In both Boler’s and Kopol’s view, “caring” is only one step toward social change, and does not serve as a form of action toward social change.

Thus far, I have kept my discussion of passive empathy and testimonial reading as related to more traditional forms of multicultural education. The discourse surrounding and upholding this “faith” in empathy – contrary to Boler’s and Kanpol’s attempted complications of the term and its utility – has unfortunately carried over into multicultural media pedagogy despite the promise of critical media pedagogy (as with other multiliteracies) radically altering and ultimately improving educational practices for social change and democracy. Because Boler’s solution to this dilemma is testimonial reading and she states readily that she “intend[s] testimonial reading to be applicable across genres” (170), I will now explore testimonial reading as applied to multicultural media education.

## **Concentration on a Combination**

Charles Ramirez Berg's multicultural media course "Analyzing Latino Stereotypes: Hispanic Images/Counterimages in Hollywood Film and Television" from *Shared Differences* is my concentration for complicating the empathy he hopes students feel toward "the plight of the marginalized" (Berg 192). I chose Berg's curriculum because he mentions both empathy and compassion as part of his objectives for the course, and because of the heavy amount of writing that is required of his students. In the overview of his course and the alterations that follow, I surmise what a multicultural media education course might look like when students' "caring" (feeling empathy or compassion) is differentiated from their "action" (where this caring, about people or text, was counted as such). The action, instead, will be testimonial reading where students examine their own subjectivity.

Again, because it is difficult to put these concepts from emotion studies into practice, I approach my task with caution – after all, I have little experience teaching multicultural texts. And as such, I am not questioning the significant pedagogical accomplishments by Berg or other practiced professionals mentioned, and I am certainly not questioning the genuine desire for and belief in social change as delivered through a multicultural media education. My desire is to suggest that a more complicated designation of empathy and implementation of testimonial reading would supplement their already substantial material and would make it even more effective for the "action" being taken in promotion of social change.

In doing so, I take inspiration from Brenda Daly's "Taking Whiteness Personally: Learning to Teach Testimonial Reading and Writing in the College Literature

Classroom,” a narrative experience of attempts to assign testimonial reading to her students in a “Survey of Women Writers: Women and Madness” course. Her objectives for testimonial reading for her course and my objective for Berg’s course are similar: to ask students to “shift their attention from analyzing the text to examining both the text and themselves as readers” (Daly 232). I now move on to providing an overview of Berg’s course and then reimagining pieces of said course. He discusses the course in five sections: Teaching Qualifications, The Course, The Course as a Writing Workshop (where I will be particularly concerned), Film Screenings, and Class Discussions.

**Charles Ramirez Berg’s “Analyzing Latino Stereotypes: Hispanic Images/Counterimages in Hollywood Film and Television”**

*Teaching Qualifications*

Berg makes clear that ethnic membership is not a required qualification to teaching “Analyzing Latino Stereotypes: Hispanic Images/Counterimages in Hollywood Film and Television”, rather an “honest and well-prepared” approach and sincere concern about stereotyping and media representation. He notes that stereotyping in the media includes everyone as “consumers, spectators, and victims” – and that anyone is open to denigration, so teachers can demonstrate this through their own experiences, even if part of a traditionally dominant group (Berg 185).

*The Course*

Berg contextualizes the course as being for an upper-level undergraduate students where he teaches at the University of Texas at Austin with one-third of students being Latino and students of color, and two-thirds being Anglo (his preferred term, which I will

continue using). He notes that he hopes his overview of the course will help teachers in multiple contexts expand courses to focus on any marginalized or stereotyped group.

### *The Course as a Writing Workshop*

There are four writing assignments throughout the course. The first assignment asks students to “find and describe” a stereotype in the media and explain how what they’ve found represents and maligns otherness (800 to 1000 words). The second is an involved analysis of one film’s portrayal of Latino stereotypes, with a portion of the assignment dedicated to researching and commenting on published reviews of the film to get a sense of how reviewers discuss (or do not discuss) marginalized groups (1000 – 1500 words). The third assignment, found at the end of the semester when the class “can generally agree that stereotyping exists, is denigrating to the stereotyped group, harmful to the social fabric, incompatible with America’s egalitarian principles, and needs to be avoided,” is a proposal (800 – 1000 words) for the fourth paper (Berg 186). The fourth paper (2500 – 3000 words) asks students to offer potential resolutions to stereotyping in films and expound their suggestions by referring to successful examples of anti-stereotyping or providing unique ways of countering it.

### *Film Screenings*

Berg’s course serves as a historical representation of U.S. television and film, where he teaches material chronologically, starting with silent film and continuing to modern works. There are weekly screenings of the television shows or films, with an introduction of the screening occurring during the class session prior, and a discussion about the film or show in the class session directly following. The listing of television shows and films and the reasons for their inclusion is more extensive than room here

allows, but a wide range of issues are presented in the films, such as displaying obvious ignorance of Latin-American culture (*The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*), gay stereotypes (offering a different focus ) as well as Latino stereotypes (*The Mark of Zorro*), portrayals of Mexican-American women (*High Noon*), and assimilation (“Los Vendidos”). In the latter half of the semester, a documentary called *Chulas Fronteras* by Les Blank, an Anglo filmmaker, is used as a cross-cultural discussion piece (“Can a filmmaker who is not a member of a cultural group render that group honestly and accurately?”) This is accompanied by reading selections of Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* and Friere’s *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

### *Class Discussions*

Much time spent on class discussions is geared toward analyzing the weekly screened films and television shows, but there are two topics of extended discussion also held. The first, discussed during one class period early in the semester, is about personal experiences of otherness where students are asked to recount times they were “marked” as an other. The objective for this discussion is to bring up the following notions:

1. Otherness is established on many conditions and takes many shapes.
2. Though some criteria for otherness can be “overcome” (such as socioeconomic class and language), others can not (like skin color).
3. Life “on the margins” is difficult. Of this notion, Berg says: “**I try to have everyone in the class relate to – and, I hope, empathize with – the plight of the marginalized**” (emphasis added) (192).
4. The discussed normative criteria can be used to define the dominant, which we are familiar with and have internalized.

The second topic of conversation, taking place in the later course weeks over a few class sessions, is a discussion about immigration. Students are first asked to trace their family history back to the “immigrant generation,” the findings of which they share over the duration of the unit. The objectives for students in this extended conversation are as follows:

1. Position stereotyping with the more expansive separation practice of nativism.
2. Expose the contradiction of the U.S. melting pot myth (with proclamations of an “open door” policy followed by resisted incorporation by dominant groups).
3. View immigration as a “universal practice” rather than a recent phenomenon.
4. See immigrant labor as a largely invisible yet largely central piece of the economy which lowers product/production costs but “costs” workers their invulnerability.
5. Honor the first migrant generation and appreciate both theirs and today’s migrant generation’s courage.
6. Regard the U.S. as a nation of immigrants (students tracing their immigrant roots helps with this notion). Of these objectives, Berg states: “**I hope that students will look upon today’s immigrants more compassionately**” (emphasis added) (193).

Berg notes that during discussions, he does not make minority students “into a spokesperson for their groups” and that he doesn’t force anyone to contribute vocally to class conversation (193).

## Reimagining Berg's Classroom

Berg's course happenings, like Wysocki's classroom activities in the previous chapter, are exciting and inspiring. However, I take issue with his objectives of having students empathize with the plight of the marginalized and look upon immigrants with compassion (the latter, to review, requires indistinct identification ["that *could* be me"] rather than empathy's complete identification) in light of Boler's discussion of passive empathy. Essentially, by guiding students toward empathy and compassion and leaving it at that, they are free to move on without further engagement or examination of themselves as implicated in the power structures that keep the marginalized marginalized and immigrants exploited.

And though in the fourth writing assignment students do take a form of action by proposing ways to counter the stereotypes they've witnessed on screen, their interaction remains with the distanced text. I would like to propose some amendments to the curriculum so that the films, television shows, the "plight of the marginalized" and immigrants do not remain objects of easy consumption; students must continue on to testimonial reading as their form of action, so that caring and action do not remain synonymous. Because Boler's explanation of testimonial reading is expansive and complex – and because there are so few examples of it in practice – I will focus my use of testimonial reading as the distinction she makes here:

the primary difference between passive empathy and testimonial reading is the responsibility borne by the reader. Instead of a consumptive focus on the other, the reader accepts a commitment to rethink her own assumptions, and to confront the internal obstacles encountered as one's own views are challenged (164).

I am reimagining the course in the same context Berg discussed, with a student population of one-third Latino and other students of color, and two-thirds Anglo and the instructor someone who has not assigned testimonial reading in a previous class. I discuss additions in three areas: Teaching Qualifications, The Course as a Writing Workshop, and Class Discussions.

*Additions to Teaching Qualifications*

I agree with Berg here that ethnic membership is not a required qualification for teaching this course and that an “honest and well-prepared” approach and sincere concern about stereotyping and media representation is. I will add that, if planning to implement testimonial reading into the curriculum as I am proposing to do, the instructor of the course should perform her or his own testimonial reading of a text or texts in the curriculum or life event, “exploring the construction of your own racial or ethnic identity” (Daly 234). The instructor should do so no matter her or his ethnicity because of our learned affective constitutions toward even the marginalized groups of which we are members. Performing a testimonial reading will allow experience with the exercise, important for both introducing, guiding through, and responding to students performing testimonial readings. Daly undertook testimonial reading of her great aunt’s memoir, where she was “predisposed to feel pride in her story of homesteading in the Midwest in the early twentieth century” but later felt guilt and shame with the racism her great aunt showed in her writing. She goes on to unpack these affective responses and trace her “whiteness,” and I recommend using her testimonial as an example for instructors and students. Regarding being prepared for students, Daly says of her experience: “because I had engaged in various forms of resistance myself [as a white woman examining her own

‘whiteness’], I was prepared to more readily recognize the forms of resistance that students employed, such as minimizing, counterattacking, evading, or ‘universalizing’ (refusing to acknowledge differences)” (235).

*Additions to the Course as a Writing Workshop*

The course should retain the first two assignments (finding and describing and stereotype in the media, and analyzing a film’s portrayal of Latino stereotypes). I propose that the remaining two assignments be focused on testimonial reading – the first being a “primer” to the larger, final assignment.

Because Berg designates the documentary *Chulas Fronteras* as a “remarkable” film that portrays the Tejano experience many Anglos are unfamiliar with (190) and raises complicated cross-cultural issues and plentiful discussion from students in the latter half of the semester because the director is Anglo, it is the film I will use for the primer assignment (paper three). Following Berg’s process, the film should be discussed the class period before the film is screened, including the disclosure that the director, Les Blank, is Anglo. (A discussion and example about testimonial reading should also have taken place, as discussed in the Additions to Class Discussions section below.) Students should also be assigned the prompt described below due the class period following the screening:

*Please bring to class an 800 – 1000 word essay, in traditional formatting, to the following prompt, in two parts:*

*Part 1 (400 – 500 words): What is your emotional response to the fact that the director of Chulas Fronteras is Anglo? “Can a filmmaker who is not a member of*

*a cultural group render that group honestly and accurately?” (Berg 190). Are there scenes in the film that support your response?*

*Part 2 (400 – 500 words): Now, read over and analyze your response by examining what assumptions you might be making about Anglos or Tejanos that have caused said response.*

The fourth paper should be a written response to the following prompt (inspired from Daly’s testimonial reading assignment):

*Considering the approach of [the instructor’s] shared testimonial reading, write a paper “exploring the construction of your own racial or ethnic identity” (Daly 234). Reflect on a particular event in your life, “its shaping influence,” and how reflecting on the event prompts an examination of a preliminary response to a scene in one of our recently viewed films (Daly 234). The paper should be 2500 – 3000 words.*

The fourth assignment is clearly quite dense and even risky. Because the context of the class is such that the instructor does not have previous experience teaching testimonial reading, I suggest that Berg’s original fourth assignment also be offered to students as an alternative to my proposed assignment above. Though I obviously believe it important for students to examine their subjectivities, I also believe it important for there to be choice in the classroom, especially regarding assignments that may have to do with personal, potentially painful subject matter. I offer the following suggestions to help students understand testimonial reading and the testimonial reading assignment so they may make a decision between it and Berg’s other, more traditional, assignment for their final paper:

- The instructor should implement journal entry requirements from the beginning of the semester and lasting through the final assignment. Ideally, students will be able to choose between writing in a paper journal or an online journal. For their entries, students should initially be asked to just record their responses to the various texts viewed in class (300 – 500 words). As the semester goes on, prompts should ask students to reflect on those responses (similar to paper three, but in a condensed form). As students begin to write their final assignments, the journal should act as a place for reflection on writing the assignment – the difficulties, what was/is being learned, and so on. The purpose of these journal entries will be to initiate connections between the student and the texts from the start of the course so they may be more apt to delve further into those connections later, as assignments three and four request. Journal pages may be folded over – or online entries made private – should any week’s entry be something the student would rather not have the instructor read.
- After introducing Assignment 4, the instructor should define testimonial reading as designated by Boler. Then, students should be assigned to read the testimonial reading excerpt from Daly’s “Taking Whiteness Personally,” found on pages 218 – 230 and write a corresponding journal entry with Boler’s definition in mind. They should answer the questions: “Does Daly make a commitment to rethink her own assumptions about her ‘whiteness’? Where/how does she do this?” and “How does Daly confront her ‘internal obstacles’ as her views are challenged?” The instructor might also assign her or his own completed testimonial reading, or perhaps make it available as an additional example. A

class period should be devoted to discussing their responses and the testimonial readings.

- For the assignment I propose, having not previously been put to practice and still in an experimental phase, grading is a problematic consideration. I feel that Assignment 4 should be turned in anonymously (using student numbers instead of names) and be graded on a pass/fail basis, which “free[s] students from the fear of how the instructor will analyze their...writing” (Roth 335) but allows for instructor feedback. In Daly’s experience, only a few students “engaged in the rethinking of their assumptions...[or] described the internal obstacles they had encountered” (235) because of the difficulty and newness of testimonial reading. Based on her experience, I recommend requiring revision after an initial round of feedback and questions that will prompt students to “dig deeper” in their reading and writing, should they choose the testimonial reading assignment. It should be made clear to students that the instructor is there to provide feedback on their testimonial readings and *not* act as judge to their personal experiences (though, because of the implicit hierarchy between teachers and students, some students may not accept this).
- If students choose to do a testimonial reading for assignment four, they should be allowed to change to Berg’s original fourth assignment at any time (for example, it might become too distressing to talk about the construction of their racial or ethnic identity related to an personal event).

### *Comments on Class Discussions*

Regarding the empathy and compassion Berg's discussion objectives listed, I am not necessarily opposed to students "caring" in this manner in multicultural media education. Where this objective becomes problematic is when it remains just that – an objective, something to be reached, an end point. Feeling empathy or compassion cannot be the end point; or, to put it in emotion studies terms, identifying with the other with ease to move on to the next consumption can not be the end point. My inclusion of testimonial reading to Berg's objectives is a step away from that end point into action.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have examined empathy's role in multicultural media education – a pedagogy resulting from the effortless mixture of multicultural education and critical media pedagogy. As a result of this ready combination, I found it crucial to examine the empathy it was aiming for with Boler's intense conceptions, and apply her notion of testimonial reading as a different form of action.

Similar to the preceding Wysocki chapter, the amendments I proposed to Berg's curriculum above do not serve as a complete overhaul of the course, nor are they incredibly specific assignments; this allows for flexibility of what the assignment's outcome could be, and alterations will of course be made after the first attempt garners results and reflection.

I wish I could say more about testimonial reading at this point – to say that I've tried it and had students dabble with it – but I'm not quite there yet. Steve Carr, one of the contributing authors to *Shared Differences*, says that for educators like him, "talking

about a new pedagogy is one thing. Doing it is quite another” (246). Well, concerning multicultural media education and testimonial reading, I’ve at least started talking.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### Reviewing Emotion

I believe, like the critical media, multicultural, and emotion studies scholars throughout this thesis seem to, that teaching is a moral endeavor that requires ongoing study and revision to develop meaningful facilitation for confronting and changing dominant societal structures for a more just world. I don't mean to overstate this undertaking, appear overly optimistic, or imply that those in Rhetoric and Composition or English studies are the absolute bearers of this initiative. But it is undeniable that the texts (traditional, visual, or otherwise) teachers choose, and the guidance they provide to students in their thinking and writing has tangible effects in the reproduction of hegemonic thinking or the challenging thereof. In either case (not that the two are mutually exclusive), students, teachers, texts, and effects are all seeped in affective relationships with and among each other.

This thesis has focused on the problematic absence of emotion studies from critical media literacy (and the pedagogies it melds with) because of the latter's explicit objective that education must teach media literacy in a multicultural society *and* "sensitize[e] students and publics to the inequalities and injustices of a society based on gender, race, and class inequalities and discrimination" (Kellner 158). I question how a

pedagogy based on the aim of “sensitizing students and publics to...inequalities and injustices” via media literacy can do so by viewing emotion as inessential to and/or a “corruption” of the discussion therein. The relegation of emotions to the personal realm, rather than a recognition of their operation as circulating and forming boundaries through “sites of personal and social tension” (Ahmed 11) has led to the dismissal of their academic value. By continuing to operate under the reason/emotion binary, critical media pedagogy risks maintaining the ideological structures it seeks to expose in what Worsham describes as a “schooling of emotion” (“Moving Beyond” 162). It is worth quoting Worsham at length to capture the significance of this work:

What this [the “schooling of emotion”] means is that the primary work of ideology is more fundamental than the imposition of a dominant framework of meanings. Its primary work is to organize an emotional world, to inculcate patterns of feeling that support the legitimacy of dominant interests, patterns that are deemed especially appropriate to reigning gender, race, and class relations. Ideology locates individuals objectively in a hierarchy of power relations; but also, and more importantly, it organizes their affective relations to those locations, to their own condition and subordination, and to others in that hierarchical structure. Ideology binds each individual to the social world through a complex and often contradictory affective life that too often remains, for the more part, just beyond the horizon of semantic availability, and its success depends on a mystification or misrecognition of this primary work (“ Moving Beyond” 162).

As displayed by Worsham and espoused throughout my thesis, emotions are complex and work in complex ways and a lot of the time, we don’t even have the language to describe what emotions *do* – a problem for pedagogies that involve analysis of ideologies. But I’m with Micciche when she states that without considering “emotion’s legitimate role in the making of meaning and in the creation of value in our culture, we impoverish our own and our students’ understanding of how we come to orient ourselves and to one another and to the world around us” (Micciche 1). I chose critical media literacy for this initiative, not only because it is one of my pedagogical

interests, but because it is more experimental than print-based pedagogies (Kellner 160) and potentially more open to “taking on” the notions of emotion studies.

I approached my additions to Wysocki’s and Berg’s curriculum in an experimental way, offering alterations and additions to support the view that emotions matter to learning and investigation into our emotional constitutions is essential to creating change. Again, I offer my amendments with humility, and with the understanding that they are only minor steps to the larger effort to demonstrate that emotions matter everywhere, including every classroom.

But, of course, writing about these concepts and actually implementing them are different matters. I began this thesis talking about the imaginary encounters I had with various authors and concepts I was exhilarated by – the ones that changed the way I viewed the world. I recognize that this is will not be the learning experience of most students in classrooms where affectively confronting race, gender, and class is asked of them. In fact, as hinted at during my chapter reviewing emotion studies, I genuinely worry about the (immediate) consequences of doing so – as with any action that dares defy the norm, teaching the additions I have proposed to Wysocki and Berg’s courses will be inviting conflict, discomfort, and presumably varying degrees of defiance into the classroom – things that spaces for learning are not supposed to encourage.

I don’t wish to appear reckless or naïve in my proclamations for enacting the concepts of emotion studies in the classroom, as there is still much to consider in the affective terrain. One of these areas of consideration is the context of the university and the classroom. What are the emotion dynamics at play at when, as is common at Colorado State University, where I currently teach, there is only one or a handful of

students of color in any given classroom where race and ethnicity are the topics of analysis? What happens when students who are asked to examine their own subjectivity refuse? When students who feel so vulnerable and so discomforted by the subject they potentially “shut down”? And how does my position as a white, middle-class, woman teacher affect these dynamics?

I can generally hypothesize on some of these queries, but the reality is that I don't really know, and can't really know until I attain more experience teaching and continually examining my own subjectivity (both of which I absolutely plan to do, in whatever educational context I am in). One thing I *do* know, however, is that I can't let the fear of new pedagogical territory or anxiety of what “might” happen in the classroom dissuade me from implementing affective theory in the classroom. I recognize that there will be discomfort and growing pains and mistakes and that it's going to take time, but I am committed to doing so.

My commitment to this was affirmed as I recently reread excerpts from some of my major sources for this thesis – Jaggar, Micciche, Ahmed, Boler, Worsham – to ensure that I was representing their work accurately. In the middle of Worsham's “Going Postal,” it occurred to me that, in my view, the concepts of emotion studies still – still! – make complete sense and nevertheless seems, forgive the colloquialism, so *totally* out there in light of living in a country obsessed with upholding social order and the status quo. I was forced to wonder: how can the task of reimagining emotion ever come to pass?

Yet I am still dedicated to it. I need to study it more, continue contributing my voice to the conversation, enact it and teach it and revise my enacting and teaching of it, and slowly, with modifications such as the ones I've offered in this thesis, it can happen.

I hope that the interdisciplinary approaches to critical emotion studies continues to gain momentum, and that we in Rhetoric and Composition and English studies are contributing forces to that momentum. I hope that facets of multiliteracy beyond critical media pedagogy begin to incorporate affective theory as naturally as they would the various technologies used. I hope that one day the pages of texts on emotion studies are not almost entirely made up of explanations and substantiation of the theory but rather suggestions for use in classrooms. And I hope, someday, that emotions can be acknowledged as mattering, because not doing so poses greater consequences in limiting our understanding of ourselves and each other and how we making meaning, judge, and communicate about the world.

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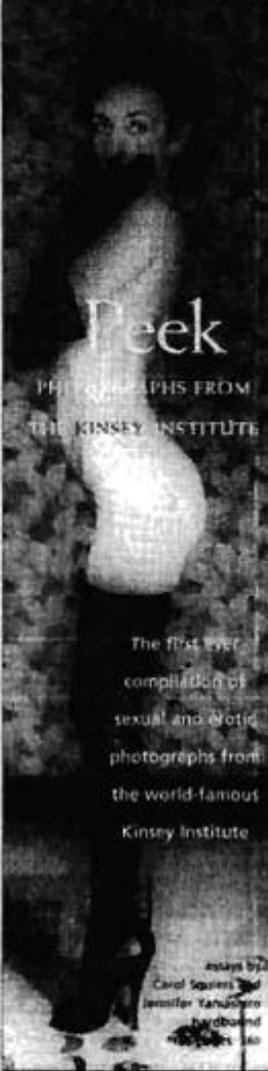
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ciations of this kind were widespread among intellectuals in that fermenting period of 1930s and the rise of Fascism in Europe. In Chicago, Saul Bellow and Isaac Rosenfeld were in an identical fever of radical world-upheaval. "Politics was everywhere," Rosenfeld recalled, looking back. "One ate and drank it." Trilling was quicker than most to fall away.

But when he advised the liberals of the forties to turn from "agencies and bureaus, and technicians," and to cultivate instead a "live sense of contingency and possibility," and when he was troubled by his complacent students of the fifties who glibly accepted antithetical ideas without resistance or perturbation—who were, in fact, bored by the subversive and the antisocial—how could he have foreseen the riotous campus demonstrations of 1968? In connecting politics with literature—the politics of culture," he called it—he was unwittingly entering the vestibule of the politicization of literature, a commonplace in today's universities. Unwitting or not, Trilling was bemused to see how the impulse of unrestraint that inflamed the modern masters—Conrad, Mann, Lawrence, Kafka, Nietzsche—was beginning to infiltrate, and finally take over, popular thought and style. These writers, he pointed out, with all their relentless countermainings, asked "every question that is forbidden in polite society." By the nineteen-seventies, no question remained that was forbidden in polite society, and no answer, either; there was little left of the concept of polite society altogether. What was liberty for Lawrence became libertinism in the streets. The bold contrariness of the moderns had succeeded so well that Trilling starchy named its dominance in the country at large "the adversary culture." Rabbitt and H. L. Mencklen's booboisie were routed. Conrad's heart of darkness—the instinctual storm that had once been the esoteric province of modernist high art—had gone public. The Comstock were astride the politics of culture.

Such were Trilling's ultimate convictions, hidden under the ornate historical scaffolding of "Sincerity and Authenticity," the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures he delivered at Harvard, in 1970. In language grown more and

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