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Passion in
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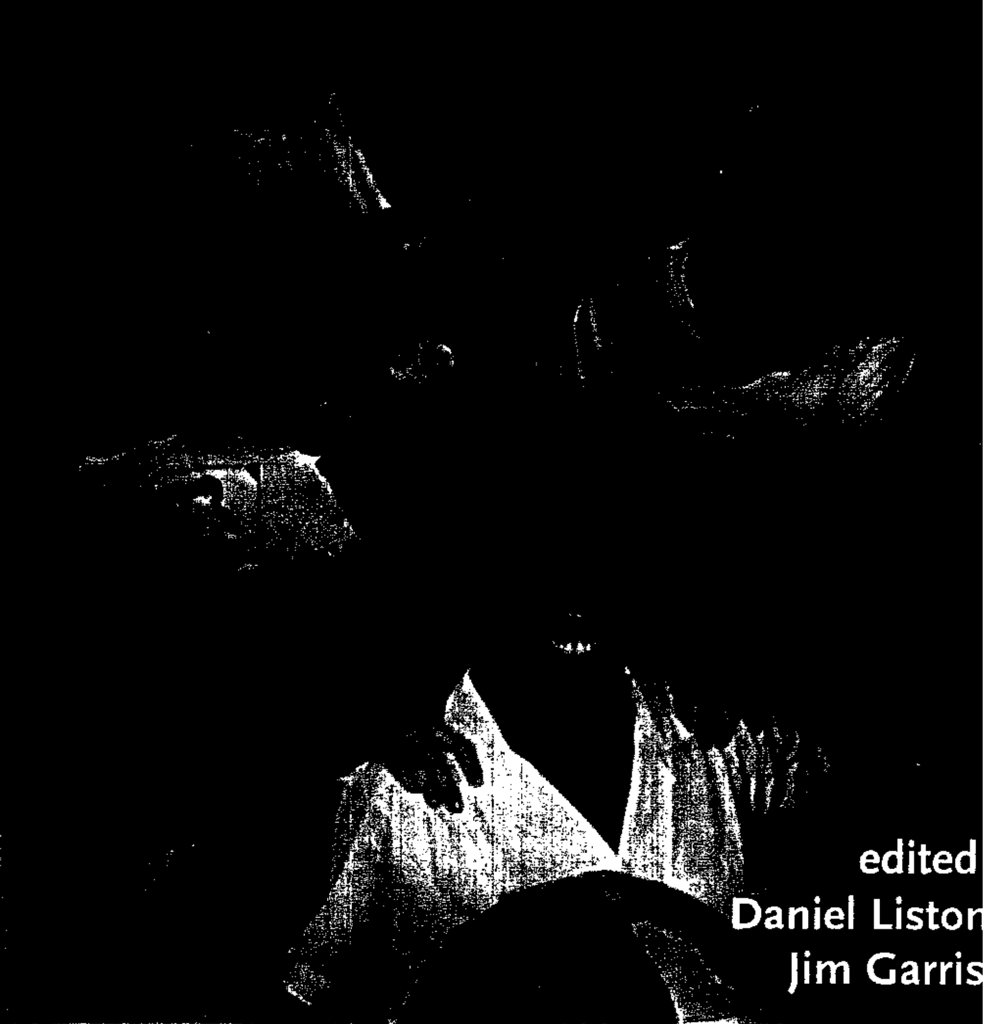

edited
Daniel Liston
Jim Garris

have no choice but to recognize the emotional contours of teaching and learning. Ignoring those dimensions won't make them go away. In learning and teaching, emotions are ever present. Ignoring or suppressing those emotions harms students and teachers alike. It's time we found some other avenues. Martha Nussbaum and Richard Brown provide us with two avenues. There are probably more.

2004

CHAPTER 7

Teaching For Hope
The Ethics of Shattering World Views

MEGAN BOLER

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there.
When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about. Ideas, language,
even the phrase 'each other' doesn't make sense.
—Rumi

Every semester while teaching a required course in social foundations of education, I engage three categories of students. There are those willing to walk down the path of critical thinking with me, who find their world-views shattered, but simultaneously engage in creatively rebuilding a sense of meaning and coherence in the face of ambiguity. Secondly, there are those who angrily and vocally resist my attempts to suggest that the world might possibly be other than they have comfortably experienced it. Third, there are those who appear disaffected, already sufficiently numb so that my attempts to ask them to rethink the world encounter only vacant and dull stares. While I should probably be most concerned about those with blank and vacant faces, I am given the hope and inspiration to go on by those who embrace the opportunity to rethink the dominant propaganda that has constituted the majority of their education thus far. However, it is often the case that the most intense emotions of suffering are experienced by both myself and the students who loudly resist having their worldviews challenged. How can educator and student make productive use out of this suffering and discomfort? What role does compassion play in helping

negotiate the minefields of ambiguity and contradiction encountered when asked to rethink worldviews?

Those of us who teach any course that emphasizes critical thinking, especially if the content has to do with issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or other cultural histories, will often find ourselves teaching students who may prefer to avoid thinking about social inequalities and institutionalized oppressions. Most public schools will have exposed students to partisan histories well documented by such books as James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me*.[1] Steeped in these nationalist myths, students may cling to the myth of the American Dream, to individualism, and to a faith in meritocracy as the arbiter of privilege. Attachment to these myths is not merely cognitive but deeply emotional: The American Dream may be a dream that offers students hope—for their own family; for themselves; or a naïve hope that others, less privileged than themselves, may improve their lot in life if they would only work hard enough.

Because the educational system does not systematically teach U.S. citizens about the histories of disenfranchised groups, students encountering social justice curricula—reading, for example, Jonathan Kozol's scathing indictment of unequal education in *Savage Inequalities*—may well experience a shocking cognitive dissonance: Can it be that the world is not as I was taught to perceive and believe? For some students, such curricula do not threaten but rather validate a worldview that may have been missing from their official schooling. Students who are hungry for untold histories indeed do not find social justice curricula threatening, but rather find resources in the readings and discussions that help shape their sense of self in positive ways. On the other hand, there are many students who, as mentioned in the opening, vocally resist attempts to suggest that the world might possibly be other than they have comfortably experienced it.

An angry, defensive response to social justice and analyses of power and oppression signals someone who is struggling to maintain his or her identity in what feels like a threat of annihilation. On an emotional level, social justice courses can make some people feel like they are the bad guy, that they have no place of belonging. And those who respond in this manner are not only white males. Every semester I encounter as well a woman and sometimes, though more rarely, a person of color who is angry and defensive, who is clinging tightly to a belief that sexism (or racism) does not exist, that everyone should stop whining because there is equal opportunity for all. To shatter worldviews—specifically, to suggest that some unfairly benefit from (white, or male, or heterosexual) privilege—can be emotionally translated into feeling one has no place of belonging. Are not angry protestations the cries of someone trying to save his- or herself from annihilation?

To develop compassion for those suffering from "dominant cultural withdrawal," as this might be termed, is a slippery slope: I do not feel that my responsibility as a social justice educator is to pamper those who have experienced a life of privilege, nor to validate desires to cling to privilege and not to recognize injustice. However, education is not effective if it is combative and alienating. The story I tell in this essay reveals to me that compassion and offering hope are important complements to a pedagogy of discomfort.

In this essay, I examine how a "pedagogy of discomfort" engages critical inquiry regarding the emotional investments that shape both educators' and students' attachments to particular worldviews. Secondly, I define and explore what I call "inscribed habits of emotional inattention," which are revealed when a pedagogy of discomfort challenges one's usual beliefs and views. The focus of my chapter is to better understand the vocal and loud resistance to rethinking one's worldview and the suffering caused to student and to the educator in this process of renegotiating understandings of how power defines social stratification. In relation to this edited collection, my focus on suffering and compassion suggests one model for understanding the dynamic relationships between educator and student. If education is a commitment to growth and change, then that change will require facing up to our investments and experiencing the discomfort of new thinking. I will discuss the kinds of compassion that are necessary to complement a pedagogy of discomfort.

Before defining a pedagogy of discomfort and its emotional vicissitudes, I wish to foreground the comments of Buddhist psychologist Mark Epstein. In a book that analyzes the overlap of Freudian psychology and Buddhist philosophies, Epstein offers important insights into the contradictory and ambiguous terrain of emotions. His comments quoted here emphasize the necessity of moving beyond binaries and instead recognizing the ambiguities of experience and meaning.

In Buddhist psychology emotions are classified as "skillful" or "unskillful." The "afflicted" ones of anger, envy, pride, worry, agitation, and greed are opposed by their counterparts of love, compassion, humility, patience, tranquillity, and generosity. The model is a simple one: Two opposites cannot occupy the same psychic space. Anger impedes and occludes love and vice versa. Turn one down by cultivating the other. But there is another way of understanding this model, one that is more attuned to the ambiguities of contemporary psychoanalysis. In this view, these skillful and unskillful emotions are opposite because they are part of a single dialectic. Anger is a perversion of love, transformed in the crucible of frustration. Anxiety is restricted excitement. Envy is a contracted form of apathy, since both spring from the capacity to know another's experience.[2]

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The dialectic model understands, then, that the angry resistance of those who feel threatened in our classrooms is also a complex cry for recognition and care. This highlights to me that suffering and compassion are not mutually exclusive. Specifically, in teaching, by "following the affect" rather than the words people actually utter, one can begin to see how emotional investments reflect both individuals' willingness to grow as well as the embedded quality of dominant cultural values. Epstein emphasizes the value of becoming conscious of what I call "inscribed habits of emotional inattention" as a means for creating "space" where once there was rigid habit:

> [I]n our desire for freedom, we imagine that we have to eliminate unwanted aspects of ourselves. My understanding does not support such an approach. Change will happen naturally as we open to the truth. The more we bring our attachments into awareness, the freer we become, not because we eliminate the attachments, but because we learn to identify more with awareness than with desire. Using our capacity for consciousness, we can change perspective on ourselves, giving a sense of space where once there was only habit. Discipline means restraining the habitual movement of the mind, so that instead of blind impulse there can be clear comprehension.[3]

Epstein's insight underscores a pedagogy of discomfort's key aim—to disrupt emotional habits and equilibrium in search of reevaluating attachments to rigid notions of self and world. However, to engage in dissecting the comfort of a familiar worldview can involve a kind of "shattering" emotional experience. Compassion may be called for as a crucial element of a pedagogy of discomfort so that students are able to move from fear and anger to what Epstein described as "clear comprehension"—comprehension of the historical and cultural reasons for the attachments that one has to particular worldviews.

A Pedagogy of Discomfort

I now turn to define a pedagogy of discomfort that offers context for the story of conflict between myself and Sam, which shall follow. As its name suggests, a pedagogy of discomfort emphasizes the need for both the educator and student to move outside of their comfort zones. In the final chapter of *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*,[4] I introduce a "pedagogy of discomfort" to describe how I engage students in a process of critically analyzing cherished beliefs and assumptions such as that of the American dream and pervasive individualism. In that work, I contrast "spectating" vs. "witnessing" to outline how students can engage critical reflection and take social responsibility in the act of reading texts and films and, more generally, in looking at the world.

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The "comfort zones" we inhabit are inscribed cultural and emotional terrains that we occupy less by choice and more by virtue of dominant cultural values, which we internalize as unconsciously as the air we breathe: "Hegemony refers to the maintenance of domination not by the sheer exercise of force but primarily through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific sites such as the church, the state, the school, the mass media, the political system, and the family."[5] The comfort zone reflects emotional investments that by and large remain unexamined, because they have been woven into the everyday fabric of what is considered common sense.

A pedagogy of discomfort recognizes and problematizes the deeply embedded emotional dimensions that frame and shape daily habits, routines, and unconscious complicity with hegemony. The purpose of attending to emotional habits as part of radical education is to draw attention to the ways in which we enact and embody dominant values and assumptions in our daily habits and routines. By closely examining emotional reactions and responses—what we call emotional stances—one begins to identify unconscious privileges as well as invisible ways in which one complies with dominant ideology.

One should not make the mistake of assuming that a pedagogy of discomfort seeks only to destabilize members of the dominant group. A pedagogy of discomfort invites not only members of the dominant culture but also members of marginalized cultures to reexamine the hegemonic values inevitably internalized in the process of being exposed to curricula and media that serve the interests of the ruling class. No one escapes hegemony. Those born in the United States as well as those who immigrate to this nation absorb, consciously or not, common sense beliefs about what it means to be an "American." Of course, every individual will have their own idiosyncratic experiences of discomfort. Heterosexuals, for example, may as a group tend to experience discomfort when asked to think carefully about their views toward lesbian and gay people. White people may be more "uncomfortable" discussing racism than are people of color. However, there are moments in which it is uncomfortable for a gay person to consider his or her own internalized homophobia or for a person of color to reflect on his or her own internalized racism. In short, no one escapes internalizing dominant cultural values despite the fact that these values take different forms in different individuals.

To engage students in sophisticated critiques of difference requires unlearning the myth of neutral education. As Donald Macedo writes in the Introduction to *Chomsky on MisEducation*,

> Given the tendency for humans to construct "satisfying" and often self deceptive stories, stories that often damage themselves and their groups, particularly

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> when these deceptive stories are rewarded by the dominant social order, the development of a critical comprehension between the meaning of words and a more coherent understanding of the meaning of the world is prerequisite to achieving clarity of reality. As Freire suggests, it is only "through political practice that the less coherent sensibility of the world begins to be surpassed and the more rigorous intellectual pursuits give rise to a more coherent comprehension of the world."[6]

To gain a "clarity of reality" requires particularly close attention to those stories that naturalize themselves through common sense or familiar cultural myth. The story I share below illustrates how a pedagogy of discomfort reveals what I am calling inscribed habits of emotional inattention. I believe that critical pedagogy benefits from attending to these emotional habits as a means to excavate the internalized effects of hegemony.

I propose *inscribed habits of emotional inattention* as a way to describe the embedded, cultural habits of seeing and not seeing. These habits come to feel like one's chosen self and identity, but are in fact as much social and cultural as they are personal. Habits of emotional inattention offer an explanatory concept that integrates the difficult notion of the "unconscious" with the notion of hegemony. Such habits of belief—for example, a belief that each person is individually responsible for his or her own destiny—usually reflect dominant cultural ideology but are internalized by individuals and in turn become part of a person's sense of self. This process describes hegemony: Dominant ideology enforces itself, not necessarily through violent means, but through people's agreement to abide by and value a status quo that benefits institutionalized powers.

This emotional selectivity some philosophers call "patterns of moral salience." Like Aristotle, John Dewey analyzed "selective emphasis" and argued for the ethical importance of seeing the "whole context."[7] To attend carefully to the relationships we create with our students as we each engage the painful process of recognizing habits is a process of encountering suffering and developing compassion we may not have known we had.

The emotional fallout of hegemony for those who do social justice education is that we encounter individuals who are so deeply invested in the dominant cultural values that these values have defined their sense of identity, and to question these values feels emotionally like an annihilation of self. Thus one faces loud and vocal resistance to rethinking the world as it is hegemonically constructed: "But the American Dream does come true for some people, so it is not a myth!" "If those children just worked harder, or if their parents made an effort to help them more with their homework, they could get to college!" And sometimes the resistance is more than ideological: Students denounce our courses, write bad evaluations, refuse to engage written work as assigned, become generally unhappy and angry in

our presence—thus posing genuine challenges about how a pedagogy of discomfort requires compassion in order to recognize the suffering of some students and often of the educator, as I shall describe in what follows.

Impasse: Resistance and Suffering

One result of this pedagogy is that I frequently have the opportunity to witness students' intense emotional reactions and resistances to rethinking cherished assumptions and worldviews. Lately, I have also been forced to reevaluate the costs and benefits of my own emotional investments in students' willingness to change. I am learning to accept that *people will not go where they don't want to go*. For understandable reasons, students may not welcome the invitation to rethink their worldviews in ways that disrupt and shatter their comfortable status quo. Inevitably, each semester, I find myself encountering my own emotional investments and reactions to students who dig in their heels and blatantly refuse to engage in critical thinking. For example, my own serenity was "shattered" by one particular student who, as a result of his vociferous resistance and the large amount of space he inhabited in our classroom expressing his anger, was, as they say, living rent-free in my head far too much of the time.

My irritation and obsession began during the fifth week of that semester when, at the end of a class in which we were discussing white privilege, the said student ended the class nearly shouting, and visibly shaking, proclaiming "My name is Sam [pseudonym]! I am a human being! I am an American! None of this history, race, or anything else has anything to do with my identity. The fact is the world is divided—someone has to clean the toilets!" I took a deep breath and asked, as calmly as possible, why it was that brown and black people are primarily the ones cleaning toilets? His face reddened as his body tensed with great physical agitation and anger, while the other fifteen students squirmed uncomfortably in their seats in part because of their own discomfort with his emotion. He retorted in loud and harsh tone, in clear defiance of the previous five weeks of readings and discussions, "They *choose* to clean toilets! That is their *choice*!" These words shocked me. Somehow, despite the fact that I know that individualism and choice are perhaps the hardest discourses to critically challenge, to hear this explicit rationalization of social injustice took me aback. We had spent five weeks dissecting the myths of the American dream, and most had been willing to engage and accept some of that critical thinking. The clock signaled the end of class, and I was left with a shattered sense of my own investments and vision of "transformational educational process."

Following his highly emotional—and in many ways vulnerable and courageous expression of his visceral feeling that he does not possess white

privilege, a sentiment no doubt shared albeit not voiced by some of his colleagues—I struggled with whether or not I should say something to him. What was the ethical response as an educator? Should I say, "Thank you for being so bold and courageous, I appreciate your courage in expressing these views"? My worry was that if I said anything, I would be simply affirming and condoning his right to refuse to rethink his position of privilege. I did not want to say something that would give him the impression that his refusal to be open-minded is an acceptable educational stance. Nonetheless, from a "caring" place, I was aware that he had made himself vulnerable, and that his expressions had, no doubt, reflected feelings and thoughts that others in the class likely shared.

After much internal deliberation, my lingering discomfort regarding the fact of his emotional outburst and secondly, my concern to reiterate how white privilege is embedded in our society pushed me to change the agenda slightly the next week. I began the subsequent class by acknowledging the courage it had taken to share such strong feelings. I reiterated that, while members of the class held very different opinions, I hoped that we could each listen with an open mind and that we would each make an effort to reevaluate our views.

However, despite my best intentions, I actually believe that my having publicly acknowledged him in this way simply fueled his fire. To address his insistence that we should all just be "Americans," I screened a 15-minute excerpt of a video called *The Color of Fear*. The 90-minute video documents a highly emotional weekend workshop of discussion among nine men of different ethnic backgrounds regarding the effects of racism. *The Color of Fear* documents a group of nine men of Anglo, Asian, Black, and Hispanic descent who, during a facilitated weekend retreat, confront issues of racism through an ongoing dialogue. The film portrays an unusually intimate and politically charged scenario, in which the viewer has the opportunity to witness emotionally harrowing and poignant conversations. The video has some very heated moments; in particular, one in which the most articulate man in the film, Victor, who is African American, confronts David, the quintessential White Liberal. The heated exchange reveals David's privileged denial of racism. In effect, David's position as a privileged white male can be characterized as follows:

> I am not racist. I employ Mexicans. I am very friendly to them. I do not know why you colored people are so angry. You should not be angry. The white man does not want to stand in your way. If you are having trouble making progress in the world, you are standing in your own way.

This video clip that I selected for class directly illustrates why it is difficult for persons of non-European or non-Anglo heritage to claim the identity "American" in any simple way. The men of color in the video explain to a "resistant" white man that because the dominant cultural norm of identity in North American culture is that of a white Anglo-Saxon middle-class male, and because being an "American" in a melting pot requires assimilation, to identify oneself simply as "American" is in many ways to "pretend to be white." In the video, the men of color express the profound frustration and anger they feel living in a racist society and the anger and frustration they experience precisely because white persons in this society can afford to be ignorant about the cost of assimilation for people of color.

During the discussion following this video excerpt, Sam proceeded to railroad the conversation with assertions that entirely missed the points voiced by the men of color in the video. When he began angrily demanding "evidence" that he has "white privilege," I responded by shifting the class discussion to examine statistics I had prepared for our discussion about gender issues and education. The statistics detail degrees conferred nationwide and illustrate the radical gender disparities between fields such as engineering, which is predominantly male, and those such as education, nursing, and social work, in which women are over-represented. My hope was that he would be able to translate this evidence of "systemic inequality" of male privilege to understand white privilege as an interlocking system. It did not seem to work. Apparently, no amount of statistical evidence or rational persuasion is effective in the face of this particular kind of defensive and angry investment and the fear of allowing one's worldview to be shifted.

I regret to report that my suffering regarding this student's anger continued throughout the term to take up far too much space in my own emotional world. I found myself describing the experience to friends and colleagues, clearly encountering my own experience of discomfort. The day after the just described class I attended a remarkable lecture by a leading African-American female scholar. My students are required to attend cultural events during Black History month and Women's History month. The auditorium was packed full of students, as well as community members, an unusual occurrence at this campus. During the first 45 minutes of the lecture, I found myself distracted, picturing whether or not my belligerent student might be convinced by this charismatic speaker. As she echoed what I had been teaching in my class—namely, that racism is alive and well and secondly that we all need to take responsibility for the contemporary privileges and costs of racism—I found myself obsessively wishing that the student could be hearing these words from someone other than myself, who might possibly push him to change his intransigent position. Ironically, 45 minutes after her talk had begun, I happened to see him walking into the auditorium. My heart leapt: I was at first thrilled to see

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him arrive. But then, I spent the last 15 minutes of her talk furious that he had disrespectfully missed the majority of her lecture and therefore missed the opportunity to be transformed. My obsession continued: I found myself thinking, when he turns in his two-page synopsis of the cultural event to receive his five points, why should I give him five points when he didn't hear the whole talk? (And indeed, lo and behold, he turned in a most bizarre response in which he said, "I have heard her speak before so I won't summarize. Let me just say how irritated I was during the talk that 50 students were going in and out of the lecture, being disrespectful and distracting and not attending the whole event even though they will write up a report for credit."!!!)

Suffice to say, my form of caring about his emotional and educational growth was not particularly effective. I began to think that it was not effective because I was the one who was suffering. And the suffering, while valuable for my growth, was showing me my own sites of attachment to another's change, which in fact is, quote, beyond my control. It is only months after this experience, as I reflect back on what occurred next between Sam and myself, that I also see that there is a need for compassion as part of the pedagogy of discomfort. A particular compassion might be required for those who feel their "self" is being annihilated and who are angrily protesting, not necessarily because they cannot see how power operates but because they need something to replace what I am threatening to take away from them.

An Unexpected Shifting

Toward the end of the semester, I happened to present an early version of this paper at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference. During the discussion following our session, someone asked if I thought Sam would change. I answered unequivocally, "I have no hopes that we will ever reconcile our differences nor that he will ever love me!"

One can imagine my surprise when, two days later having returned to campus, after our class he asked to meet me during office hours. I found myself quite fearful and left my office door open when he entered—even asking a colleague to keep an eye out, as I feared a belligerent exchange. Sam perched on a chair, clearly nervous and fearful. I began to invoke my compassion: I smiled and consciously breathed in and out, recognizing his discomfort and mindfully making myself present. He then blurted out an apology for his behavior throughout this semester. He had come to realize, he confided, that he was acting out his frustrations with "this system of oppression" on me, but that he realized his anger needn't be directed at me. I took in this information still smiling, trying to breathe deeply in the face of both of our discomfort.

Rather struck by what seemed a significant change of heart on his part, I asked him if there was anything about the class or my conduct that I might change to make students like him feel more engaged and less resistant to my curriculum. He told me that the material "felt cold." He said that he had also been upset because I didn't seem to state in class that all these screwed up things in the world could possibly change. He said he wished I had told the class that "just by virtue of you sitting in this class, things can get better."

I responded by thanking him for the feedback. I replied that perhaps I hadn't said that because I don't necessarily believe that things will get better simply by people sitting in my classroom. I did reply that I would try to be more encouraging of the fact that I do believe people can choose to advocate for social change and can thereby make a difference.

Finally, he told me that the other action that had significantly changed his feelings was that when he came into my office, I had smiled at him. "You don't smile a lot in class," he reported.

In the ensuing months, I feel I have learned quite a lot from Sam's two comments, the significance of which have taken time to settle into my consciousness. His first comment was that he wished I had told him that there was "hope"—even though the world is so screwed up.

For those who do not feel threatened by the course content, reading about social inequality itself can offer a kind of hope or validation: Their perceptions are perhaps being validated in many cases for the first time. But for people like Sam, who had held so desperately to an identity carved through illusions of "we are the same" meritocracy, course content may well need to include clear delineation of what will replace the sense of self lost. I detail some ideas on this replacement in the discussion of critical hope below.

Sam's second comment, that the simple act of my smiling when he came into my office enabled him to reevaluate the appropriate object for his anger, makes me think about how compassion facilitates change. As discussed in this essay, for those who feel significantly threatened by course content, something needs to be offered to replace what feels like loss or annihilation. Smiling is in part a way of recognizing the other as he or she is, of communicating a compassionate acceptance. I do not think this act need mean "You can go ahead and refuse to rethink the world and maintain your privilege." Rather, it means that compassion is especially crucial for those who feel they are out on limb.

It is worth noting, considering issues of gendered emotional labor, that for a man to ask a woman to smile more is also a complicated request. In my office I recall smiling at him quite intentionally, practicing what Buddhists call tonglen and maitri, or lovingkindness. I have, during the ensuing months following his comment, made an effort to smile more during engagements with students. I confess I feel torn about the implied admonition to "smile more," because I have no doubt that part of the [illegible]

this smile is a demand for a form of gendered labor. I am positioned by this young man as distinctly female, and his request for my smile is in part a request for a nurturing mother. Is it the educator's duty to smile as part of the emotional work of seducing students into social change? Political analyses can indeed come into conflict with simple calls for compassion.

To return, however, to Sam's request that I tell him there is "hope" when I am simultaneously asking him to recognize the rather overwhelming inequities of our society: Rather uncannily, his comment about hope reflects something I had previously written about—critical hope versus naïve hope. It is only in the process of writing this essay that I saw the connection between Sam's request for hope and my own previous intellectual analyses of critical hope.

Beyond Discomfort: Critical Hope

As one recognizes inscribed habits of emotional inattention and disrupts these tenacious habits, one may cry out for something new to hold on to. Between utter despair, which may come about with the dismantling of worldviews, and the denial that typifies hegemonic mystification is a middle ground. While "shattering" may occur with a pedagogy of discomfort, one lifeline is to build "critical hope." Here I will describe first a framing of critical hope, drawing on concepts from Maxine Greene and Paulo Freire. I will then briefly suggest some specific curricular directions that might offer critical hope to someone like Sam.

What does Sam want when he asks me to tell him that "even thought the world is screwed up, your being here in this classroom, Sam, will make a difference?" What I don't want to offer to this request is naïve hope, which stands in stark contrast to how I shall define critical hope. Naive hope may be defined as those platitudes that directly serve the hegemonic interest of maintaining the status quo, particularly by espousing humanist rhetoric. These platitudes include the rhetoric of individualism; beliefs in equal opportunity; the puritanical faith that hard work inevitably leads to success; that everyone is the same underneath the skin.

In contrast to naive hope, critical hope recognizes that we live within systems of inequality, in which privilege, such as white and male privilege, comes at the expense of the freedom of others. A willingness to engage in in-depth critical inquiry regarding systems of domination needs to be accompanied by a parallel of emotional willingness to engage in the difficult work of possibly allowing one's worldviews to be shattered.

Critical hope entails a responsibility—a willingness to be fully alive in the process of constant change and becoming. Maxine Greene emphasizes this throughout her writings. "When habit swathes everything," she writes, "one day follows another identical day and predictability swallows any hint of an opening possibility."[8] In an astute description of the interrelationship between habit, sense of self, and what we do and do not wish to see or feel, John Dewey writes

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> Habit reaches . . . down into the very structure of the self; it signifies a building up and solidifying of certain desires; an increased sensitiveness and responsiveness . . . or an impaired capacity to attend to and think about certain things. Habit covers . . . the very makeup of desire, intent, choice, disposition which gives an act its voluntary quality.[9]

Critical hope directly challenges inscribed habits of emotional attention and signifies a willingness to exist within ambiguity and uncertainty. One knows, for example, that there is no assurance of justice, but one is yet willing to fight for justice. As Greene notes, "There are always vacancies: there are always roads not taken, vistas not acknowledged. The search must be ongoing; the end can never be quite known."[10] Similarly, Freire writes: "What makes me hopeful is not so much the certainty of the *find*, but my movement in search."[11]

Freire's emphasis on process resonates with the Buddhist emphasis on the difficult process of change. One can see the distinct resonance between the two in this previously quoted excerpt from Epstein:

> Change will happen naturally as we open to the truth. The more we bring our attachments into awareness, the freer we become, not because we eliminate the attachments, but because we learn to identify more with awareness than with desire. Using our capacity for consciousness, we can change perspective on ourselves, giving a sense of space where once there was only habit.[12]

The cliché that "change is hard" is explained when one acknowledges that critical hope can only emerge from what Paulo Freire calls our "incompleteness." Rather than being absorbed by the myth that our world is static, unchanging, and complete, we recognize that our selves and our world are in a constant state of dynamic change. In recognizing the dynamic present, we also recognize that our relations to others and the form of reality itself can be other than they are. What Freire describes in terms of love and humility as central to dialogue, I have emphasized here as compassion. Sam asked me to tell him he can make a difference. My response is to outline critical hope: There is hope if we are willing to step beyond our known selves. The educator has a compassionate responsibility to show students others who have walked down this path.

Making Up for the Loss

If I am asking students in some sense to annihilate the self as they have known it, I must be able to meet their discomfort with compassion—and with resources to help them replace the lost sense of self. Most importantly,

Sam's request for hope makes me think that critical hope requires a clear explication of what is lost and what might be gained through this suffering of loss. If a pedagogy of discomfort takes away someone's worldview, in compassion it needs to replace the vacuum with something else.

Productive "replacements" for the loss might be found in the following focus of course content. First, one might engage discussions of how the construction of masculinity or white privilege, for example, also bears a cost to those who benefit (Sut Jhally's video *Tough Guise* addresses Jackson Katz's analyses of how violent representations of masculinity are damaging to men, for example). A second approach is to make use of first-person accounts, such as Minnie Bruce Pratt's essay "Identity: Skin/Blood/Heart"[13] in which she describes her shift from not recognizing her complicity in white supremacy to becoming an anti-racist activist. A third approach is historical, emphasizing social movement history in more detail, including histories of white Northerners who came to the South during the 1950s to help do such work as enlist black people to vote.

Critical hope requires seeing one's self within historical context, reevaluating the relationship of one's privilege to others in the world. It entails as well seeing how these relations of power shift and change over time and in one's lifetime. This pedagogical relation is a negotiation of hegemonically constructed habits, internalized as attachments to particular beliefs and corresponding emotional reactions to change. But I wish to stress that this inquiry is a collective, not an individualized, process. Searching for freedom, as Greene notes,

> never occurs in a vacuum. Freedom cannot be conceived apart from a matrix of social, economic, cultural, and psychological conditions. It is within the matrix that selves take shape or are created through choice of action in the changing situations of life. The degree and quality of whatever freedom is achieved are functions of the perspectives available, and the reflectiveness on the choices made.[14]

This process of searching for freedom takes place as a collective process. Second, this process depends on learning to notice how our selves and perspectives are shifting and contingent. This collective process depends most centrally on the interpersonal relationships between educator and student and between students, interpersonal relationships shaped in a political context—in a sense, on teaching as a form of lovingkindness. To unravel the complex emotional fabric of relationships, often fraught with heated differences of perspective, entails, as I have described, a particular compassion or lovingkindness for the suffering that may be involved in this rethinking of oneself and the world.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,[15] Freire writes that dialogue requires love, faith, and humility. Humility is in part the ability to listen to others as we

forge connections and the courage to recognize that our perspectives and vision are partial and striving and must remain open to change.

Conclusion

I have explored how a pedagogy of discomfort reveals one's inscribed habits of emotional inattention, a process that may well cause suffering for educator and student alike. By introducing critical hope, I have tried to outline how educators may take seriously the ethical implications of shattering someone's familiar and comfortable worldview. What can we offer to replace the sense of self and values that may be threatened and displaced through a pedagogy of discomfort?

I have suggested critical hope as an approach that takes the cry for help seriously and that recognizes with compassion the need for something to hold on to as the world is made to seem ambiguous and chaotic when learning to see differently. By recognizing the other's suffering with compassion, one is pushed to smile, even in the midst of conflict. One is pushed to offer blueprints for roads that lead to hope, "even though the world is screwed up."

Struggling for social justice is rarely easy work. Unlearning one's habits of being and thinking, and one's inscribed habits of emotional attention, can be painful labor as well. In the midst of this discomfort, compassion suggests an attitude of lovingkindness. Compassion means developing a patience for my own shortcomings. It means developing patience and respect in the face of the other's suffering, no matter how painful it may feel to be the object of another's anger.

Rumi's words offer a description of the space of dynamic interaction that exceeds our words and thoughts in educational encounters: "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and great doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about." To meet the other in this field beyond ideas of right and wrong asks us to open ways of understanding that do not rely only on words. Compassion is one bridge between those suffering a pedagogy of discomfort and those who have invited new ways of being fully alive into a world replete with imperfections.

Chapter 7. "Teaching for Hope: The Ethics of Shattering World Views"

1. James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong.* New York: New Press: Distributed by Norton, 1995.
2. Mark Epstein, *Going On Being: Buddhism and the Way of Change.* New York: Broadway Books, 2001.
3. *Ibid.*, 71.
4. Megan Boler, *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education.* New York: Routledge, 1999.
5. Peter McLaren, *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education.* New York: Longman, 1984/1999.
6. Noam Chomsky, *Chomsky on Miseducation.* Donaldo Macedo (Ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000, 10–11.
7. Jim Garrison, *Dewey and Eros: Wisdom and Desire in the Art of Teaching.* Teachers College Press, 1997, 109.
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11. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: The Seabury Press, 1973, 106.
12. Mark Epstein, *Going On Being: Buddhism and the Way of Change.* New York: Broadway Books, 2001, 71.
13. Minnie Bruce Pratt, Identity: Skin/Blood/Heart. *Yours in Struggle.* Elly Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt,and Barbara Smith (Eds.). New York: Longhaul Press, 1984.
14. Greene, *The Dialectic of Freedom*, 30.
15. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.*

Part 3 Introduction: "Love's Losses and Love Regained"

1. Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992, 11.

Chapter 8. "Grief as a Gateway to Love in Teaching"

1. Naomi Naierman, Reaching out to grieving students. *Educational Leadership* 55 (1992), 62.
2. Based on the commonly known model of grief developed by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying.* New York: Macmillan, 1969. In Kubler-Ross's text, the identified stages were: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.
3. Liz Sunnyboy, mimeographed copy, no date.
4. Personal communication.
5. Liz Sunnyboy, mimeographed copy, no date.
6. Naierman, 62.
7. Personal communication.
8. Please see the website www.jennadruck.org for many resources for families and students, including "The Compassionate Classroom" and the Teen Grief Curriculum for teachers and counselors created by Scott Johnson, MA, Child Bereavement Specialist.
9. Interview with Ken Druck, 9/11/02.
10. Please see my Web site for information on methods and training that support teachers creating safe and respectful community in the classroom where feelings can be shared: www.mediatorsfoundation.org/isel

Chapter 9. "The Place of Reparation: Love, Loss, Ambivalence, and Teaching"

1. Deborah P. Britzman, *Lost Objects, Contested Subjects.* Albany: SUNY Press, 1998, 20.
2. *Ibid.*, 47–8.

3. See, for examples, Paulo Salvo, The Teacher/Scholar as Melancholic. *Journal of Curricu Theorizing* 14 (1998): 15–23; and various essays in Sharon Todd (Ed.), *Learning Desire: Pers tives on Pedagogy; Culture, and the Unsaid.* New York: Routledge, 1997 and also Jane Gal (Ed.), *Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 19
4. Helen Humphreys, *The Lost Garden.* Toronto: Harper Flamingo Canada, 2002, 182.
5. Richard Johnson, Grievous recognitions 2: the grieving process and sexual boundar *Border Patrols: Policing the Boundaries of Heterosexuality.* Deborah Lynn Steinberg a Richard Johnson (Eds.). London: Cassell, 1997, 234, 235. See also Richard Johnson, Exe plary differences: mourning (and not mourning) a princess, *Mourning Diana: Nati Culture and the Performance of Grief.* Adrian Kear and Deborah Lynn Steinberg (Eds London: Routledge, 1999, 15–39.
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7. Madeline Grumet, *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching.* Amherst: University of Massachuset Press, 1988.
8. Todd, *Learning Desire*, 5.
9. Alice Pitt, Judith P. Robertson, and Sharon Todd, Psychoanalytic encounters: putting peda gogy on the couch *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 14 (1998): 3.
10. Britzman, *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects*, 41.
11. Lawrence O'Toole, *Heart's Longing: Newfoundland, New York and the Distance Home* Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1994, 133.
12. E. Annie Proulx, *The Shipping News.* New York: Touchstone, 1993, 34. Proulx won numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize, for her Newfoundland-based novel. A film based on the novel—and enthusiastically endorsed by Proulx—was released in late fall, 2001.
13. Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, 20.
14. William F. Pinar, Curriculum as social psychoanalysis: on the significance of place. *Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis: The Significance of Place.* Joe L. Kincheloe and William F. Pinar (Eds.). Albany: SUNY Press, 1991, 165–186.
15. O'Toole, *Heart's Longing*, 67.
16. Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation*, 333.
17. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Thinking cultural questions in "pure" literary terms *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall.* Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Grossberg and Angela McRobbie (Eds.). London: Verso, 2000, 344–5.
18. Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation*, 319–20.
19. Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, 230.
20. *Ibid.*, 110–12.
21. Jeanette Winterson, *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1995, 157.
22. Jen Gilbert, Reading colorblindness: negation as an engagement with social difference. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 14 (1998), 33.
23. Britzman, *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects*, 134.
24. Pinar, Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis, 177.
25. Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation*, 330
26. Britzman, *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects*, 111.
27. *Ibid.*, 112.
28. Rinaldo Walcott, Pedagogy and truama: the middle passage, slavery, and the problem of creolization. *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma.* Roger I. Simon, Sharon Rosenberg, and Claudia Eppert (Eds.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000, 139.
29. *Ibid.*, 148, 149.
30. *Ibid.*, 147–149.
31. Humphreys, *The Lost Garden*, 50.
32. Alice Miller. *The Drama of the Gifted Child.* Trans. Ruth Ward. New York: Basic Books, 1997.
33. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *A Dialogue on Love.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1999, 217.
34. *Ibid.*, 169.