

Toward a Critical Rethinking of Feminist Pedagogical Praxis and Resistant Male Students¹

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Feminist teachers increasingly confront resistant male students, but neither extant theoretical nor practical literature provide much assistance in meeting this challenge. I argue that a critical theoretic analysis of masculinity that exposes its contradictions, in conjunction with an expanded concept of resistance, will help the feminist teacher develop a liberatory pedagogy for resistant male students (who are defending the status quo) by making the contradictions of masculinity visible to them; that is, by showing their position as simultaneously oppressor and oppressed.

Les enseignantes féministes se heurtent de plus en plus à la résistance de leurs étudiants masculins. Or, la documentation existante, qu'elle soit d'ordre théorique ou pratique, offre peu d'aide pour relever ce défi. L'auteure soutient qu'une analyse théorique critique de la masculinité mettant en évidence ses contradictions, de concert avec un concept élargi de la résistance, aidera l'enseignante féministe à développer une pédagogie libératrice pour les étudiants qui défendent le statu quo en leur montrant les contradictions de la masculinité, c'est-à-dire en leur faisant voir que leur position est à la fois celle d'un oppresseur et d'un opprimé.

Students bring different histories to school; these histories are embedded in class, gender and race interests that shape their needs and behavior, often in ways they don't understand or that work against their own interests.

— Henry A. Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education* (1983), p. 149

The truth of Giroux's statement is brought home almost daily to anyone who teaches a "feminist" or "women's studies" course or who employs feminist pedagogical methods in a classroom with male students. It is reinforced if that person happens to be a woman teacher and reinforced once again if her courses focus specifically on issues of gender. Pedagogical methodology and instructor's sex, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity, as well as the curriculum, can severely challenge male students socialized to the norms of masculinity and sex relations of contemporary Western, or, more specifically, North American culture. The challenge for the teacher, in turn, is to ground theoretically her understanding of the vast complex of issues and problems this situation generates, and then to develop strategies and techniques to deal with them in the classroom.

I am one such teacher who has been faced over the past several years with the challenges of teaching male students in a feminist classroom. For me this has been a period of experimentation and change in both pedagogic strategy and style, as well as in curriculum, so I will not at this point attempt to define precisely what I mean by a “feminist” classroom, but will rather draw on Alison Jaggar’s general definition of feminism as “seek[ing], no matter on what grounds, to end women’s subordination” (1983, p. 5). The generality of this definition will help highlight the commonality between my experiences and those of teachers employing a range of styles and strategies to achieve the goal to which Jaggar points. As well, it enables us to see that male students’ resistance is not an artifact of some particular feminist pedagogic technique but is instead a function of the challenge feminism poses to men socialized to this culture’s norm(s) of masculinity. This, in turn, points to patriarchal capitalist culture as the crux of the problems we as teachers encounter in teaching our male students, and indicates that culture is the appropriate primary focus for our responses to those problems.

As a teacher faced with resistant male students in my classroom, I was disappointed by the dearth of literature, both theoretical and at the practical pedagogical level, speaking to this problem. Although there is a large and rapidly growing body of literature on critical pedagogy generally, and additional extensive work on feminist pedagogy as it applies to women students, issues surrounding resistant male students in feminist classrooms, as such, have been largely overlooked by researchers and theorists in both critical and feminist pedagogy. The few, recently published, exceptions to this include Holly Devor’s “Teaching Women’s Studies to Male Inmates” (1988) and Statham, Richardson, and Cook’s *Gender and University Teaching* (1991). For my purposes a most useful and thought-provoking piece has been Magda Lewis’s “Interrupting Patriarchy: Politics, Resistance, and Transformation in the Feminist Classroom” (1990). That resistant male students in feminist classrooms have been for the most part ignored in the literature is an oversight that cannot be allowed to stand: resistant students can not learn effectively themselves and may seriously hamper the learning of their fellow students. Thus they nullify the most fundamental claim and characteristic of critical educational theory, “its claim to be *emancipatory*” (Gibson, 1986, p. 6). On this account both teaching and learning fail to meet the evaluative criteria of effective feminist pedagogy identified by Carolyn Shrewsbury as including “the extent to which a community of learners is empowered to act responsibly toward one another and the subject matter and to apply that learning to social action” (1987, p. 6).

In what follows I point to a theoretical framework for understanding, and thus working with, resistant male students. My emphasis is primarily theoretical, although toward the end of the article I offer some practical suggestions and examples. Additionally, my focus is on male students in feminist classrooms and

barriers to teaching them effectively; except for passing references, I ignore such important issues as their interactions with women students and women students' own resistance. In developing my problematic my perspective is, of necessity, located and localized and thus I begin with a description of some of my own teaching experiences. Moving to the primary part of my task, theorizing resistant male students, reveals a key to pedagogical praxis: a radical contradiction in their experience of masculinity that reveals them to be simultaneously "oppressor" and "oppressed." This then points us toward an elaboration of a Freirean dialogic pedagogy aiming for "conscientization," for those students "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1981, p. 19, n.1). In this case the primary locus of contradiction lies in male students' lived experience of masculinity.

I hope that this article will increase awareness, and open up debate and experimentation in an area of teaching that I and many colleagues find challenging and often difficult. I am aware that much needs to be done on both the theoretical and practical levels of pedagogy beyond what I offer here but I do believe that what I propose can point us in a fruitful direction. I am also painfully aware that both space restrictions and the preliminary nature of my work here mean that it must remain underdeveloped in several areas. The most important of these is the need to deconstruct "men" and "masculinity" to reveal the perturbations of race, class, and sexual orientation along the dimensions of student-teacher relations, relations between men and women students, and relations among men students. These areas call for both further theoretical and further empirical research, but at this point I can only acknowledge that need.

Two courses I have taught at York University over the past several years form much of my experiential base. Both courses are taught from a feminist perspective, employ feminist critical pedagogic techniques, focus closely and extensively on gender issues, and are critical of patriarchy in its various manifestations. Further, both courses are taught at the entry level and are aimed at students seeking to fulfil their academic breadth requirements. This distinguishes these courses from many higher-level "feminist" courses that attract mainly female students, most of whom have at least some interest in and commitment to feminism, and a much smaller number of men students, many of whom are at least nominally pro-feminist.

Although it is encouraging that York is able, in these courses and others like them, to reach a much broader range of students than might otherwise take a "feminist" course, the composition of the student body of these courses generates a unique set of problems as well as deepening the problems typical of other feminist courses. On one level, not to put too fine a point on it, many of my students, both male and female, are mad as hell at having to take the course: they resent the imposition of general education requirements, they have little or no interest in the discipline, and they are doubly incensed by having to deal with an explicitly feminist course. Many of them have told me frankly that they only

took the course “because [they] had to take a Humanities course and this was the only one that fit [their] timetable.” Clearly, some opposition to the course by students of both sexes results from their resentment at having been “forced” to take it. But, just as clearly, much resistance exhibited by male students has the character of sparks being thrown off by the clash of ideology against ideology: the feminism of the classroom against their internalized patriarchal masculinity. In this article I am concerned with the latter species of opposition, which I believe will be manifested with increasing frequency as a growing body of teachers bring a feminist perspective to all their teaching, not solely to courses designated “feminist.”

I have taught “Concepts of Male and Female in the West,” as either course director or tutor, since 1984. The course focuses on gender stereotypes, ideals of love and marriage, and critiques of and alternatives to traditional views as these are represented in art and literature drawn from the Humanities disciplines. The course tends to attract more women than men students. As with the York University student body generally, the students in this course vary greatly in terms of ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic background. Surprisingly, many students of both sexes report that they did not realize the nature of the course until after classes began in September, I suspect because they simply did not read the course description before enrolling. Many male students drop out in the early weeks of the course, and among those who remain there is a contingent clearly hostile to the course for sexist reasons. This hostility is manifested in a variety of ways, ranging from a sulky silence in class and/or poor attendance; to a superficial “going along with it,” “saying what the Prof wants to hear”; to overt anger exhibited in sexist comments, put-downs of women students, and attempts, all too often successful, to silence them. And as Lewis (1990) illustrates, male students’ resistance is as often exhibited in the more subtle forms of body language as in overt verbal behaviour; the feminist teacher must be sensitive to this level of communication as well.

“Studies in Moral Themes and Values” is a summer course offered through Atkinson College for Arts students. It draws largely on philosophical literature as well as on such works as Gilligan’s *In a Different Voice* (1982) and some fiction to compare and contrast traditional and feminist moral theories and apply them to specific issues ranging from abortion to rape to animal rights to world hunger. Over the six years that I have directed this course it has had a fairly balanced population of men and women, but the students range from entry-level to those who are taking this as their last course and hope to graduate in the fall. The significance of this is that many of these students are either so uninterested in or so intimidated by a Humanities course that they have put off taking it until the very last possible moment and are now very anxious about succeeding in order to graduate.

Many students in “Moral Themes” feel even more strongly than those in “Concepts of Male and Female” that they are being “forced” to take a Humani-

ties course and one that is “feminist” to boot. “Moral Themes” is the only summer Humanities course offered specifically for Arts students and if they are nearing the end of their programme, there is really nowhere else for them to go. In addition, many male students are hard pressed to work up an interest in what they take to be “women’s issues”—such as abortion. Finally, several issues dealt with in the course, including feminism as a moral issue and rape, can provoke extreme anger and defensiveness in men students. Although the position of the course is that the genesis of these problems lies in a culture that is patriarchal, hierarchical, and based on what Warren (1988) calls a “logic of domination,” and although this message is frequently repeated and stressed, many male students react to a perceived attack on men and, by extension, on themselves. The extent of this reaction is reflected in one man’s course evaluation, where he stated that “no man in the course liked the instructor.” In a patriarchal man’s eyes this is, of course, the ultimate put-down of a woman, that men reject her, but it is only one example of a range of expressions of anger, guilt, and resentment I have received from my male students, in class and outside it, in verbal, written, and body language, over the years.

It is abundantly clear to me that many male students find the feminist classroom threatening and employ various strategies and tactics to cope with their situation, several of which I have indicated above. To some extent the reactions of these students can be seen as quite understandable resentment at having to take courses that do not interest them and that they can not see as furthering their academic goals. But I will argue that on a deeper level many of these students’ reactions stem from the values and attitudes they have internalized as part of their masculinity and from their defensiveness about their gendered identity. A major problem for feminist teachers, then, is to theorize these students’ reactions in such a way as to not only make them understandable but to enable her to turn them into opportunities for learning.

THEORIZING THE RESISTANT MALE STUDENT

As is well known, members of the Frankfurt or Critical Theory School have faulted orthodox psychoanalytic theory for its failure to theorize the role of social, economic, and historical forces in the formation of personality. They have developed their own theories of depth psychology, largely through a synthesis of Freudian and Marxist theory. In “The Construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men’s Violence,” Michael Kaufman (1987) draws on this school’s insights to analyze masculinity and to reveal its participation in the power relations of the family and the broader society. Although Kaufman’s account can be criticized for its elision of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status and for its limited treatment of homosexuality, it does provide a general framework for understanding masculinity in the modern capitalist state as a surplus-repressive formation that both empowers and oppresses men. In doing this I believe it provides a key

for the development of a pedagogy for resistant male students in feminist classrooms.

Masculinity, Kaufman argues, is ideology, not biological necessity. He locates the formation of masculinity not in the oedipal crisis but in the malleability of human desires and in the child's prolonged period of dependency on and attachment to parental figures. In considering the malleability of human desires, Kaufman draws on Marcuse's concept of surplus-repression to make the point that in societies of domination (such as our own) the male infant's polysexuality is progressively blocked and shaped until it is narrowed down to a genital sexuality with a heterosexual norm. The import of this lies in Marcuse's distinction between surplus-repression, "the restrictions necessitated by social domination," and basic repression, "the 'modifications' of the instincts necessary for the perpetuation of the human race in civilization" (1966, p. 35). The domination and oppression of men by modern capitalist culture necessitates surplus-repression: limiting desire fits men for routinized, boring, and deadening work.

Second, a prolonged period of childhood dependence inevitably results in feelings of powerlessness, deprivation, and frustration for children of both sexes. But society presents the boy with a "great escape" in the promise of adult male power and privilege. The unconscious logic here is that he can gain access to these goods through the acquisition of masculinity by internalization of the ideal represented by his father. The price, however, is high: "Masculinity is a reaction against passivity and powerlessness and, with it comes a repression of all the desires and traits that a given society defines as negatively passive or as resonant of passive experiences" (Kaufman, 1987, p. 11). That is, masculinity demands of the boy that he repress everything society has identified as passive and feminine, including sensuality, emotional expressiveness, and the desire to be nurtured. Most importantly, he learns at an unconscious level, from the hierarchical power relationships of the family, most especially from the relationship of his mother and father, that femininity means powerlessness. Thus he represses in himself all that is identified as passive femininity, and learns to exaggerate all that is identified as active and masculine while both fearing and disparaging the feminine in himself and others. In addition, he must attempt to conform to a male identity and role not based in reality and experience but, as Chodorow (1978) points out, largely fantasized, owing to the sexed division of labour within the family and his father's consequent relative absence in his day-to-day life.

Although I have sketched Kaufman's theory of the acquisition of masculinity by the male child in the very barest of detail, this is enough to allow us to uncover some of the contradictions experienced, largely unconsciously, by the masculinized male. I will highlight two levels of contradictions over and above the fact that culturally constructed masculinity as ideological gender is so much at odds with maleness as biological sex. First, masculinity as ideology posits for the male a self-identity centring on domination, control, autonomy, and instrumental power, but his daily lived experience is radically opposite to this. In

school and in the workplace, on the playing fields and in the political arena, in social institutions of all types he must obey, comply, and subsume his individuality to the demands of a patriarchal, hierarchical, bureaucratic, and conformist society. Expressions of his masculine power are allowed, for the most part, only in sublimated forms and frequently only vicariously through mass entertainment and spectator sports or, more directly, in the “privacy” of the home.

On the second level is the contradiction between the ideologically identified activity of masculinity and the reality of its radical passivity. A “real man” personifies activity. He is a doer, an achiever, a mover and shaker, always on the go, controlling and shaping things and events to his own vision and desire. But most real men experience little such power and activity in their daily lives. And, on the deepest psychological level, as Kaufman has revealed, the acquisition of masculinity is a process of pacification of the male child, a way of rendering him a tractable worker and citizen. Perhaps nowhere is this contradiction more evident than in the realm of male sexuality. A mythology of male sexual potency and control glosses over the reality of relationships reduced through commodification and fetishism to an impersonal consumption of things, of “sex objects.” This is most clearly apparent in the phenomenon of pornography which exists for the uncritical eye as a celebration, a flaunting, of male power but that on analysis is revealed as “the most basic of passive-receptive sexual activities. . . . Viewing pornography, like the act of voyeurism, is a regression” (Horowitz & Kaufman, 1987, p. 98).

On Kaufman’s analysis of masculinity, then, we can understand the resistant male student as not only sexist, an oppressor and a disrupter of the classroom, for he is often all of these, but also as radically oppressed himself: the acquisition of masculinity is a form of “internalization of the oppressor.” It is a form, as Kaufman (1987) argues, of violence against himself. The resisting male student, then, is one who has paid a high price (all that is identified ideologically as “feminine”) for his masculinity, but he also perceives the cost of giving up masculinity as great—the power and privilege that he is promised and that he, however naïvely, believes will be his (see Weis, 1993).

On this analysis we can see that for male students masculinity is a two-edged sword: one edge is the promise it offers them. With the acquisition of masculinity comes the promise of not only escape from the powerlessness and passivity of childhood but a whole range of personal and social goods ideologically connected with this gender. This is what is threatened for boys and men when masculinity is challenged by the questioning of and rejection by feminism, and it is this, I believe, that resistance in the classroom attempts to protect.

The other edge of the sword is the price boys and men must pay for their masculinity. On a psychological level this is the surplus-repression of polysexuality and “feminine” aims, including nurturance and emotional expressiveness. Socially, it is the cultural deceit of a system promising a man authority, control, and power but denying these at almost every level of his life or, at most, paying

off in very small coin. The most glaring exception to this, of course, lies in men's domination of women and in the power relations of the family. Theorists and researchers from Woolf (1938/1986) onward have exposed the consequences of this not only for the lives of women and children but also for social and political life.

An effective feminist pedagogy for men must raise their consciousness to an awareness of these contradictions of masculinity. By naming them and making them visible in the classroom, space can be opened for both critical self-reflection and the development of a critique of patriarchy and its gendered distortions of human life. Only by doing this can true learning, learning that changes the person and thus motivates social and political action for broader change, take place. Without this level of change in our students the best we can achieve will be a superficial, rote learning, a learning that fails to change the student or to engage him in the broader struggle for social and political change.

Thus my argument is that critical education may be achieved by making visible to male students the contradictions inherent in masculinity, and, beyond this, the place of masculinity in a patriarchal, capitalist culture. One level of difficulty for the teacher attempting this is that the promise of masculinity is, in part, paid to the man by the position of power he gains over women and, to the extent that he is white, educated, and heterosexual, over other men. But, weighed against the real price he pays and the huge part of the promise that is never fulfilled, I believe that he can be shown that masculinity, in the language of the market place, is not a good deal.

DEVELOPING A PEDAGOGIC STRATEGY

I believe that understanding resistant male students through a critical theoretic framework enables a feminist teacher in at least three ways. As an essential first step, it enables her to develop a more adequate and useful emotional relationship with her students. I believe that any genuinely feminist teacher must be passionate in the sense that Barbara Du Bois has argued the feminist scholar must be passionate. To adapt her words for the feminist teacher,

The challenge for feminist [teaching] will be to see, name, describe and explain without recreating patriarchal dichotomies, without falling into the old pattern of objectifying experience, processing reality, by withdrawing from it and ourselves to a position of assumed neutrality. Our [teaching], rooted in, animated by and expressive of our values, empowered by community, is *passionate [teaching]*: necessary heresy. (1983, p. 112)

All good feminist teaching is passionate in this sense but we must also acknowledge and work with the feelings and values of both our students and ourselves. That being said, however, we must recognize that it is all too easy to fall into a destructive form of emotionalism. The emotionalism I worry about

here is not that of the “compassion trap” identified by Margaret Adams (1971) but rather the anger, frustration, and even rage that resistant male students can evoke. Without an adequate theory, the feminist teacher can be left the victim of her emotional reactions to such students, and I have seen students provoke them with a deliberation that seems nothing short of diabolical! Theory, of course, is not a universal panacea but it can, I believe, help one toward a more informed and useful response, a response that will better meet not only the feminist teacher’s own needs but those of both her women and men students. This is not to deny the validity of her anger, a necessary first step in change, but to begin to take the next step.

Second, a critical theoretic standpoint enables the feminist teacher to understand the behaviour of some male students as not merely oppositional but as resistant. While not wishing to obscure the enormous complexity of resistance theory (Gibson, 1986; Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1989; Weiler, 1988), I will attempt a rather broad distinction between what I have just designated “mere opposition” and “resistance.” Despite the complexity of these concepts, and the confusion engendered by the fact that many authors seem to, at one and the same time, use them as synonyms and wish to make distinctions between them, I think my distinction can avoid superficiality and help us toward a more liberatory pedagogy.

Behaviour is usually called oppositional when it is seen as simply defiant, recalcitrant, a refusal to learn. The use of this term is not informed by either feminist or critical analysis. Giroux helps clarify what I mean by theorizing behaviour as resistant, as opposed to merely oppositional, when he argues that, at its best, resistance theory,

redefines the causes and meaning of oppositional behaviour by arguing that it has little to do with the logic of deviance, individual pathology, learned helplessness (and, of course, genetic explanations), and a great deal to do, through not exhaustively, with the logic of moral and political indignation. (1983, p. 107)

With this understanding of resistance Giroux gives occasion for optimism in that behaviour seen as resistant need not have the consequence of implicating the student more deeply in her or his own domination. Resistance theory refuses to see the subject as passive in the face of domination; rather, Giroux maintains, “it celebrates a dialectical notion of human agency that rightly portrays domination as neither a static process nor one that is ever complete” (1983, p. 108). For the feminist teacher this has the important implication that in theorizing and analyzing the behaviour of her male students, she has “a concern with uncovering the degree to which it speaks to a form of refusal that highlights, either implicitly or explicitly, the need to struggle against the social nexus of domination and submission,” thus providing for the student “theoretical opportunities for self-

reflection and for struggle in the interest of self-emancipation and social emancipation” (pp. 108–109). A teacher who thus theorizes her student’s behaviour can see in it the energy and desire for emancipation and so may be able to facilitate this process for him.

In my appropriation of the concept of resistance and my application of it to male students in feminist classrooms, I am retooling it in a way that makes it significantly different from its classic form. The latter was captured by Magda Lewis when she wrote that

critical pedagogy emphasizes that student resistance to the experiences of institutionalized education is forged from the contradictions they perceive between the dominant discourse of school knowledge on the one hand and their own lived experiences of subordination and violation on the other. (1990, p. 471)

With this understanding the resisting student is seen as a sort of anti-hero, struggling to maintain her or his integrity in the face of an overpowering and malevolent institution. But the feminist teacher does *not* speak the dominant discourse, rather it is her resistant student who speaks from and in defense of the status quo. My use of the concept of resistance is better captured by Lewis’s more succinct formulation of resistance as “struggles against social forms that are *experienced* as oppressive” (p. 469, italics added). My usage stresses the word “experienced”: the student perceives and experiences the feminist teacher’s discourse as oppressive because it threatens important elements of his masculinized self-identity. In other words, the male student experiences feminism as a threat to the power and privilege he believes to be his by virtue of his masculinity. The work of feminist teaching, then, is to expose the root contradictions of masculinity, thus challenging the student’s false consciousness. Then the moral and political indignation Giroux identifies can be turned on the student’s true oppressor, which I have identified as a culture that is patriarchal, hierarchical, bureaucratic, and capitalist.

This brings me to the third way in which the teacher is enabled by critically theorizing both masculinity and resistance: she is now in the position to develop a Freirean dialogic pedagogy aimed at the conscientization of resistant male students. That is, she can now begin to develop a pedagogic strategy to encourage an enhanced self-consciousness in these students, an awareness of their own position not only as oppressors vis-à-vis women, children, and other less powerful men, but as oppressed vis-à-vis the social, political, and economic machinery of Western patriarchy and capitalism. In attempting this she must be well aware that she is battling a powerful and pervasive ideology that promises men, especially those who are white, Anglo-Saxon, and middle class, in Canada, not only power but wealth and status. Her task was clearly laid out by Chris Weedon when she said:

In education and culture it is necessary to challenge social meanings, values, and practices that assume as natural the existing dominant gender, class, and race relations. In order to contest power relations we must denaturalize them, make them visible and understand how and in whose interests they work. (1991, p. 49)

The ideology of resistant male students must be engaged on many fronts. A key tactic will be to reveal masculinity as not only historically and socially constructed but as antipathetic to men's genuine interests, that is, as a form of false consciousness (for limited but useful discussions of false consciousness and personal reality see Freire, 1981, 1985; Fromm, 1979; Marx, 1979).

At the risk of glossing over significant differences in both theory and our students, I find that my analysis of resistant male students has led me to a position similar to that of Patti Lather in her work with resistant women students. Lather too focuses on the desire that shapes her students and finds, as do I, three crucial features stressed in the literature,

she is both victimized and capable of agency; while she has something approximating false consciousness, that consciousness is unified and capable of Freirean conscientization, knowing the world in order to set herself free from it. Finally, a basic assumption in the construction of this subject is that it is knowledge that will set her free. (1991, p. 141)

Lather goes on to warn of the danger of being led to assume the "master's position" (p. 142) inherent in this understanding. Our goal must be to empower our students, to leave decisions as to what to believe and how to act to them, but to unsettle what Foucault calls the "effective illusions" (cited in Lather, 1991, p. 141) by which they protect themselves.

While perhaps seeing more usefulness in the concept of false consciousness than Lather does, like her I wish to shift the focus of pedagogy to "the power-saturated discourses that monitor and normalize our sense of who we are and what is possible" (Lather, 1991, p. 142). Thus a key strategy of a liberatory pedagogy for male students is to develop in them a growing awareness of what Kaufman calls "men's contradictory experiences of power," that patriarchal power is purchased at the price of considerable pain and loss. In Kaufman's words it "cause[s] a diminution and distortion of our human capabilities and capacities" (1990, p. 18).

A critical feminist pedagogy for resistant male students will aim to make their unconscious and contradictory experience of power conscious, and the subject of critical discourse. This can be done most powerfully in the classroom if it is not tackled only at the theoretical level, although theory is indispensable in presenting issues sufficiently abstractly that the student can deal with them without being so personally threatened that he will entirely reject the teaching. But at some point the student must begin to see how the abstractions apply to him or the liberatory intent of this teaching will be frustrated.

I have found that a useful intermediate step between theory and directly dealing with the individual student's personal experience, with all the ethical and personal issues that raises, is to approach the topic through fiction, such as Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple* (1982), that treats directly the contradictory nature of masculinity for men. Having men students develop an analysis of the characters Harpo and Albert in Walker's novel begins to personalize the issues and to give the students an opportunity to relate these to their own lived experience. It also allows for the development of a theoretical understanding of the function of masculinity in the lives of both men and women.

Exercises of this kind can be planned in advance and tailored to suit the needs of a particular course and its students, but often the most challenging and potentially useful opportunities to teach arise unplanned out of the classroom situation. I would like to illustrate how a critical theorization of masculinity can enhance and further learning by comparing a recent classroom experience of my own with one reported by Magda Lewis (1990). The incident Lewis reports occurred during a woman student's class presentation on violence against women. A man student demanded to know of the presenter why she did not offer "the other side of the story." Lewis comments that "My challenge was to create the possibility for students to be self-reflexive" (p. 478). Her attempt to do this is interesting and certainly on the right track: she assured the man that certainly the other side of issues must be considered and asked him to tell the class about the other side of this particular issue. She comments that,

Turning the question away from the women in the class created the self-reflexive space that I believed could truly challenge the men in the class to take up not women's subordination but their own positions of privilege. (p. 479)

However, the student was unable to answer his own question; Lewis says he was "speechless," and apparently none of the other men students came to his assistance. Lewis concludes that her treatment of this incident was salutary: it was supportive of women and provided learning opportunities for the men in the class.

Whether the young man experienced transformation or was simply intimidated into silence was something that required sorting out. I was willing to let him undertake the hard work of doing so for himself. If I had silenced him I would only hope that perhaps the experience would provide him with a deeper understanding of an experience women encounter every day. (p. 479)

It would be difficult, indeed unfair, to comment on an incident I did not witness. However, in a case such as the one Lewis describes, it seems reasonable to fear that, rather than using this as an opportunity to learn and grow, this young man's reaction might be one of anger and a deepening hostility to "feminists,"

an entrenchment of the alienation from her teaching that the student was already expressing. And I would not be surprised if, in such a situation, the student's response was shared by other men in the class. I would fear further that, although he was invited to speak, such a student would not be engaging in "dialogue" leading to "self-reflexion" and that, rather than developing a critique of the violence of patriarchal masculinity, his response might be kept on a purely emotional level.

The problem I am concerned with here was highlighted by Connell (1993) in his study of the construction of masculinity by and for young men within institutionalized education. He reports that pro-feminist and politically literate young men exposed to feminist literature tended to have one overriding reaction: "severe feelings of guilt." And guilt, like anger, tends to be counterproductive, if not simply reactionary, if it is aroused but not dealt with.

Guilt is an emotion with social effects, but in this case they are likely to be disempowering rather than positive. A young man "feeling terrible about being male" will not easily join with other men in social action. Nor can he feel solidarity (except at some symbolic level) with women. Thus guilt implies that men's personalities must change but undermines the social conditions for changing them, an enterprise that requires substantial interpersonal support. (p. 203)

Thus I argue that it is necessary for the feminist teacher to find ways both to provide a supportive environment for dealing with the inevitable emotional reactions to her teaching and to direct her student to a more useful, intellectual response.

I am interested in the example Lewis cites because it so closely parallels a recent experience in my own classroom, one I was able to handle rather differently because of the analysis of masculinity and development of resistance theory I have outlined. I was teaching Dionne Brand's short story "I Used to Like the Dallas Cowboys" (1988). In this story the Dallas Cowboys, who symbolize the violent, intellectualized masculinity of both North American men and U.S. imperialism, metamorphose into the American soldiers invading Grenada. The story traces the Black female narrator's growing awareness of the connection between the glitz and glamour of football and "that smell, like fresh blood and human grease" (p. 129) on the soldiers as they march down the streets of Grenada to kill her. One of my white male students, who was actually in military training himself, wanted the class to "look at the other side[s] of this," that is, the American and the soldiers' sides. It was clear that he wanted to defend both American militarism and the soldiers' role in it.

Because of the nature of the course I deflected the discussion from American imperialism (had there been time this theme could have been developed, thus deepening the teaching) to the soldiers' experience. I initiated a discussion of Timothy Findley's *The Wars* (1978), a novel in which a sensitive young man,

Robert Ross, is brutalized and finally dies during the Second World War. Robert's real "war" is with himself: to repress his caring and compassionate nature in order to be the "real man" a soldier is expected to be. Using this novel as a basis for discussion and comparison with Brand's *Cowboys* and soldiers enabled the class as a whole to illuminate the contradictions between the romanticized notion of the soldier as the embodiment of ideologized masculinity and the reality of one young soldier's life. It helped the class to, in Chris Weedon's word, denaturalize masculinity. It also produced an extended discussion in which the student who had asked us to look at the other sides was able to join. If my treatment of this incident was effective, then this particular male student (as well as the other students in the class) will begin to see the connections and contradictions between himself, masculinity, Robert Ross, and the American soldiers in Grenada. His consciousness will be raised and his indignation will be redirected. At the very least his response has gone beyond mere emotionalism and into the realm of intellectual understanding. And, with Connell, I believe this will begin to create the conditions for real change.

I agree with Magda Lewis that it is impossible to develop "prescriptive and generic feminist teaching strategies" (1990, p. 470) in abstraction from the classroom. The classroom is alive and each one has its own personality, a function of the individual needs, desires, interests, and commitments of its students and teacher(s). As with good personal relationships, good teaching relationships demand that one be alert and responsive to others. Incidents like the one I have just cited cannot be fully prepared for. But this is not to say that one cannot lay the groundwork for dealing with them. In this article I have attempted to develop and apply an analysis of masculinity and an appropriation of resistance theory that can serve as such a foundation.

I believe, with Kathleen Weiler (1988), that the time is ripe for a synthesis of critical theory—and especially critical educational theory—concerned with the production and reproduction of class under capitalism, and feminist educational theory, concerned with the production and reproduction of gender under patriarchy. But both bodies of theory have been, understandably, limited in their concerns. Critical educational theory has focused on male students and their class membership and interests with little more than mere mention in passing of women students. Feminist pedagogy has focused on women students and their experience in the patriarchal classroom. Neither has dealt at adequate length with male students as gendered subjects and thus as simultaneously oppressor and oppressed.

This article takes a step toward synthesis of these two powerful bodies of educational theory through showing the relevance of a critical theoretic depth psychology of masculinity for feminist pedagogy. This theorization of masculinity enables the feminist teacher to develop a dialogic pedagogy along Freirean lines that should, in turn, help the student to develop a more liberated, and consequently more liberating, consciousness. On the level of pedagogical

methodology this approach points toward, fundamentally, curricular development and analysis (see MacDonald, 1980) that will reveal the social genesis of masculinity and the ways in which it oppresses not only women but boys and men, those men whose sexual orientation has been stigmatized as “deviant,” and men of marginalized ethnicity and race. It will encourage the production and analysis of biography on a deeper and more revealing level and also a recognition, naming, and, critical working through of oppressive ideology and behaviour both within and outside the classroom. Finally, and at last, it will enable classroom projects that envision a future that is, in Freire’s sense, utopian (1985). Adapted to the feminist classroom, that means a future that includes the humanization of *all* through the radical questioning and reworking of the concept of gender.

NOTE

- ¹ This paper is dedicated to my father, Maj. James L. Miller, U.S.A.F. (Ret.), who died while it was being prepared. I thank anonymous reviewers for their many helpful suggestions, and Suzanne de Castell for her diplomacy and good advice.

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