

The Complex Case of Fear and Safe Space

Barbara S. Stengel

Published online: 2 September 2010
© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2010

Abstract Here I shine light on the concept of and call for safe space and on the implicit argument that seems to undergird both the concept and the call, complicating and problematizing the taken for granted view of this issue with the goal of revealing a more complex dynamic worthy of interpretive attention when determining educational response. I maintain that the usual justification for safe space covers rather than clarifies the logic of safe space and makes it difficult for an educator to respond to harassment in a constructive and fitting way. I also claim that calls for safe space can only be properly interpreted—and responded to—when the link between fear and safety is uncovered and deconstructed. In the process, I note that the assumption of “safety” as a “positive condition” for education is problematic and warrants careful consideration.

Keywords Safe space · Fear · Education · GLBTQ · Racism · Affect · Dewey · Ahmed

In November of 2008 the Chicago School Board considered a proposal for a new magnet school, the School for Social Justice Pride.¹ The Pride Campus was intended to be an educational space open to all Chicago students but designed specifically to protect LGBT students from bullying and harassment. Designer and principal-designate Chad Weiden claimed that the goal in creating the school was “to really push back to make sure all schools are safe, supporting and affirming for all LGBT students and all students in the city of Chicago” (quoted in Dosemagen 2008). Weiden’s call for safe space in school for LGBT students is the immediate prompt for this essay. His call is typical of a trend. Educators take for granted the need to protect students—students with darker skin, students

¹ The original proposal to add a separate Pride campus followed the model of the Social Justice School at the Greater Lawndale Little Village High School, <http://www.lvlhs.org>. A description of the proposal, decision-making process and eventual withdrawal of the proposal can be found at <http://www.365gay.com/news/anger-frustration-over-shelving-chicago-gay-school/>.

B. S. Stengel (✉)
Vanderbilt University, 4110 Nebraska Avenue, Nashville, TN 37209, USA
e-mail: barbara.s.stengel@vanderbilt.edu

with physical disabilities, students with lesser resources, students who practice a minority religion, students who are female—from apparently threatening social circumstances. “Safe space” is the code for an argument that goes something like this:

[Gay, black, disabled, poor, religious minority, female] students are regularly treated disrespectfully and harassed by other students and/or teachers. (discriminatory harassment)

That disrespectful treatment is sometimes physically and always emotionally threatening, i.e., it brings discomfort and perhaps harm to the targeted student(s). (harassment hurts)

Discomfort and pain experienced in school environments impedes learning and growth. (discomfort impedes learning)

The educator’s role is to create positive conditions for learning and growth. (positive conditions)

Therefore, educators should prevent disrespectful treatment. (prevention)

The only reliable way to prevent disrespectful treatment is to separate targeted students from potential harassers. (segregation)

Therefore, educators should separate [gay, black, disabled, poor, religious minority, female] students from potential harassers. (safe space)

At first blush, this is a perfectly intelligible argument and one that garners a lot of support among caring and competent classroom teachers, especially those who think of themselves as politically and pedagogically progressive.

It is difficult to reject the reality of discriminatory harassment in all its forms—overt and covert, obvious and subtle, individually prompted and institutionally embedded. Nor do I wish to deny that harassment often hurts or that educators have a responsibility to shape positive conditions for learning and growth. But the meaning of “positive conditions” for learning and growth is not transparent, it is not accurate to say simplistically that “discomfort impedes learning” and it is far from clear that social separation is a path to anything educational—though it may be *temporarily* useful and even necessary. Moreover, as I demonstrate below, this argument is woefully incomplete in that it scrubs clean the affective markers that make the premises make sense.

Here I shine light on the concept of and call for safe space and on the implicit argument that seems to undergird both the concept and the call, complicating and problematizing the taken for granted view of this issue with the goal of revealing a more complex dynamic worthy of interpretive attention when determining educational response. I maintain that the rational argument offered above covers rather than clarifies the logic of safe space and makes it difficult for an educator to respond to actual cases of harassment in a constructive and fitting way. I also claim that calls for safe space can only be properly interpreted—and responded to—when the link between fear and safety is uncovered and deconstructed. As we shall see, there are three ironies in calls for safe space that are rarely recognized: (1) The need for safe space for students who experience social exclusion and harassment is the result of a political economy that was intended to create safe space for others. (2) Students who are able to articulate a need for safe space often don’t need the kind of space separation offers; students who need (if only temporarily) separation, often are unable to say so. (3) “Safe space” does not always or only function to defuse fear and establish safety for students; safe space may also function to create emotional relief for adults. Finally, although this point is not the focus of this particular essay, I will suggest that the assumption of “safety” as a “positive condition” for education is problematic and warrants careful consideration.

I begin by distinguishing feeling and affect from emotion and then defending the claim that any call for safe space transforms feeling into “fear” by virtue of the separation it

establishes between persons or between a person and some facet of the world. Fear does not preexist and prompt the call for safe space; rather, the call for safe space establishes fear as the affect present. Drawing on John Dewey (1894), I outline a basis for identifying, interrogating and addressing the fears framed by calls for safe spaces, understanding those fears as the *emotional valence of context-dependent relations revealed in and by action*, rather than as subjective states of atomistic individuals that motivate action. However, though Dewey's pragmatist phenomenological view locates both fear and safety in a relational space that is always—and crucially—affectively constituted, it is silent about the play of power structuring those relations. Guided by Sara Ahmed's poststructuralist phenomenological view of *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, I make transparent the (intentional) power relations and world building at work when fear is invoked and safety is prescribed as remedy. For both Dewey and Ahmed, to interrogate fear in calls for "safe space" means to suspend the assumption that fear is present while accepting the reality of (often powerful) affect felt by educators and/or students. My ultimate goal is to expand the social imaginary that grounds and surrounds fear and, in the process, to energize educational possibility and responsibility.

Complicating the Argument

Reconsider this complicated version of the initial argument for safe space in which I highlight both *students' fear as projected by the educator* and the **affect at work in the educator's thinking-into-action**.²

[Gay, black, disabled, poor, religious minority, female] students are regularly being treated disrespectfully and harassed by other students and/or teachers. **Being [...] is tough enough without getting a hard time in school.**

If I am [...] and either have been harassed myself or see other [...] students regularly treated disrespectfully, I realize that I may likely receive similar treatment.

That disrespectful treatment is sometimes physically and always emotionally threatening, i.e., it brings discomfort and perhaps harm to the targeted student(s).

I may experience harm. Yes, you may, this happened to me (or to others of my students). I am affected by this possibility; I am feeling discomfort based on past history.

I don't want to experience harm. Of course you don't. I wouldn't want this to happen to me and I don't want this to happen to you or any of my students.

I fear this treatment. You must be feeling fear; I'm feeling fear for you.

Discomfort and pain experienced in school environments impedes learning and growth, *as does the emotional discomfort of fear.*

The educator's role is to create positive conditions for learning and growth.

Therefore, educators should prevent disrespectful treatment (*and emotional distress*).

But I don't feel confident that I can prevent this.

The only sure-fire way to prevent disrespectful treatment (*and fear of disrespectful treatment*) is to separate targeted (*fearful*) students from potential harassers. **I have to do something.**

Therefore, educators should separate (*fearful*) [gay, black, disabled, poor, minority religion, female] students from potential bullies.

² In the argument that follows, students' fears as projected by the teacher are represented in italics and teachers' feelings are represented in bold.

In this expanded argument, safety is the antidote to fear. To make the original argument work, we have to assume that teachers know their students and their students' fears—across cultural, racial and gender divides. This is not unproblematic. In addition, we assume a view of fear that is limited in ways that render it less than useful educationally. That is, we think of fear as, at root, a cognitive judgment that what one wants and what one expects are not in sync; on this view, fear of negative outcome outweighs hope of a positive outcome. We have to assume as well that fear is about danger and that fear's temporal reference is the future. Above all, we assume that pre-existing fear motivates action. However, these assumptions rest on a confusion of *feelings* that are not yet bound to action and *emotion* that is determined by action. As I develop below, any claim of fear functions to establish *power relations* rooted in *past* histories of association.

Perhaps then, safety is not an antidote to fear but a discipline that has as its goal justice in the context of educative experience. This discipline suppresses affect rather than uncovers it. The affect, that is the felt response to harassment, is constructed *as fear* (rather than, say, annoyance or anger) through practices that control affect in order to create a particular kind of world. Affect matters, not because it replaces logic, but because it *points* to logics at work that are disciplined, covered over. When affect impinges on consciousness, it reminds us to go looking for logics beyond the surface, beyond what is stated. So not only do we ask who is feeling and how and why, but we seek also to understand the designated (and socially-constructed) emotion in terms of action that is political and constitutive of worlds of relation. If fear is an *effect* of disciplinary practices of safety, we need a kind of Foucauldian excavation project here.

Calls for Safe Space

Think about where a safe space call originates. Does it come from students? It might, especially from younger students. But adolescents, even those who are tired of harassment, do not generally want to be separated from their peers. Those who have the personal wherewithal to ask for safe space often don't really need it. Those who are burdened with the weight of harassment aren't able to ask for it even if they can imagine it. Younger students just want the harassment to stop; they don't imagine that separation is an option.

Calls for safe space usually come from parents who recognize that a child or adolescent is in pain, or from adult educators who seek to head off uncomfortable feelings for both compassionate and pedagogical reasons. Sometimes that adult educator is a parent who has lived through a son or daughter's experience of harassment and self-questioning. Consider the example of a communications professor whose *magnum opus* is a nine-video anti-harassment series and a workshop that highlights the videos. The workshop "is designed to help teachers create a climate of 'emotional safety' within their classrooms" and the videos (some for educators, some for use with students) "present ideas about the teacher's role in creating an emotionally safe school environment." This father of a gay son who experienced harassment is committed to helping other students avoid culturally-based harassment of all kinds. Maybe he would have done this had his son not had that experience but there can be no question that his affect-laden experience of his son's struggles enabled him to perceive dynamics that are hidden from many, particularly those who enjoy the perks of privilege. I should note that this particular educator does not call for separation because he feels that he has provided and is providing effective means for creating a safe climate—both at home and through his teacher training video series.

In any case, a call for safe space implies either a perception on the part of the teacher, administrator or policy-maker that students of a certain kind are being harassed or a request from a parent whose child seems to be suffering or perhaps an acknowledgement from a student who feels uncomfortable in the face of peers' behavior. Someone—adult or student—is uncomfortable with the present state of affairs—real or imagined. That someone is feeling some affect that is not yet fear *until he calls for “safe space.”* By calling for safe space of a certain kind, he has defined and expressed his own discomfort as fear (with, as we shall see below, its behavioral expectation of separation and shrinkage) but rendered the felt experience of the other (student or teacher) invisible.

Here I introduce pragmatic and functional views of emotions—particularly fear—that ground what I have said above, shifting our assumptions about emotion away from an individualistic, instinctual understanding. As long as we assume that emotions are instinctual reactions of individual persons to external events (even if triggered by cognitive judgment) that prompt action, the only available analysis of emotion relies on an outmoded faculty psychology. This has the troubling effect of divorcing logic and affect in action. To remedy this, I turn first to John Dewey who effectively disrupts the individualistic tilt and limns the integrated operation of feeling, idea and action in experience, and then to Sara Ahmed whose functional (and relational) starting point directs us toward culturally reified and even institutionalized patterns of control and oppression.³

Dewey on Fear as “Organic Shrinkage”

Early in his career—in response to William James' (1983) theory of emotion, and somewhat later, in an effort to offer a naturalistic theory of human conduct, Dewey laid out a rich and challenging understanding of emotion that remains useful today as we seek to integrate philosophical inquiry with neuroscience and mind–body investigation. He makes clear his target. He is challenging the position that “feelings, dwelling antecedently in the soul, were supposed to be the causes of acts” (1922, p. 105). He argues that it is self-deception to employ “immediately organized states as criteria of the value of an act” (p. 105). Instead, predictably for a pragmatist, he insists that we look to external changes to understand an act's quality.

Remember that for Dewey, human behavior is largely habit-based—until previously useful habits fail in specific lived circumstances, kicking intelligent thinking into gear. Below we see that for Dewey, habits are not merely practices that issue from resolved thought; rather, habits *are* the resolution of idea, disposition or act, and affect. Habits hold affect in relation to act and idea.

The function of emotion, then, is the adjustment of affect and object in action (1895, p. 30), but such an adjustment is not always needed. In the case of habits that work,

³ I have been asked whether Dewey's pragmatist analysis is needed here, whether Ahmed's poststructuralist insight is enough to shed light on fear and safe space as political experiences and political concepts. For some readers, that is, for those whose theoretical worldview is rooted in the recognition that meaning (including the meaning of feelings) is discursive, invoking Dewey adds little and may be a distraction from my main point. But personal observation suggests that an individualistic, instinctual view of affect—marking emotion solely as instinctual stimulus to action—holds taken-for-granted status in everyday human behavior and needs to be disrupted before Ahmed's approach and larger point can be fully appreciated. Ahmed assumes a functional, relational and discursive starting point; Dewey clears the ground for that effort in my opinion and so I marry the pragmatist with the poststructuralist in successive moments with that in mind. I'll leave it to the individual reader to determine whether this is a distraction or a needed turn in the path of my argument.

Stimulus (idea/object) and Response (act) coordinate without friction, and there is no “emotional seizure.” However, if Stimulus and Response remain separate/distinct in understanding *and* also pull together as parts of a whole, then there is “emotional excitement” (affect or feeling in Dewey’s terminology, p. 24—and mine).⁴ Affect (“emotional seizure,” p. 29, or “emotional excitement,” p. 27) is spontaneous and pre-reflective, but emotion is *named* in a process of reflection and intention. And that naming employs socially-constructed concepts (such as fear) that bear behavioral markers.

Consider this example of affect in play in a crosscultural encounter. Sometime around 1960, I was in downtown Philadelphia with my mother. We had taken the subway into town and I expected to do the same when returning home. But for some reason, we took a bus home, a bus that tracked a route through a predominantly African American neighborhood before heading toward northeast Philly where we lived. My mother and I were the only white people on the bus. I knew a few “colored people,” as we then referred to African Americans, but lived in an Irish Catholic neighborhood and had never been the only white person in any space. I experienced a feeling that I would now describe as “unease”—until I looked at my mother who was sitting comfortably and chatting with the woman next to her. My unease dissipated. Had my mother also been uneasy, my unease could have become fear as we moved to separate ourselves physically or psychologically from those on the bus, who would then be made into the objects of our fear. As Dewey helps us to understand, it is not that fear as emotion causes us to move away from persons perceived as somehow dangerous; rather, affect *becomes* “fear” by the interpreted action of separation.

When feelings arise as doubt and discomfort in problematic circumstances—and this is, for Dewey, impulse activity—there are three possibilities for resolution, that is, three external changes that signal—quite differently—the quality of the act: (1) blind discharge; (2) sublimation; and (3) suppression⁵ (1895, 1922, p. 107).

In blind discharge, there is affect, but not emotion, as activity is without direction. In suppression—as in blind discharge, there is no experience because there is no adjustment, no reflection, but there is affect that continues to play a role in activity—affect uncoordinated with the object or activity that prompted it. In sublimation, the affect is coordinated intelligently with others in a continuing course of action. In other words, the impulse operates as a pivot for the reorganization of habit. *The body* works out the struggle of adjustment, the adjustment of habit and ideal.

Clearly blind discharge and suppression are less than optimum, if not actually destructive, resolutions of affect. Sublimation is the constructive (that is, the reconstructive and educative) alternative because, for Dewey, sublimation fosters interest: “Let the various means succeed in organizing themselves into a simultaneous comprehensive whole of action, and we have interest.” (1895, p. 30) And interest is the educative jackpot because interest powers learning. It is, says Dewey, the named emotion that arises with the completed coordination of actual disturbance and potential action.

There is, then, either divided activity (resulting from blind discharge or suppression) or directed activity (resulting from sublimation). Affect arises unbidden in reaction to a problematic circumstance in which habits of adjustment are inadequate. The affect operates

⁴ Remember that for Dewey, stimulus and response become stimulus and response by virtue of the action that renders itself a response and some idea a stimulus. Were there no response, there could be no stimulus.

⁵ Note that suppression is not annihilation. “Psychic” energy is no more capable of being abolished than the forms we recognize as physical. If it is neither exploded nor converted, it is turned inwards, to lead a surreptitious, subterranean life.

like the energy that holds an atom together. Splitting the habit releases affective energy that signals a failure of coordination even as it becomes available for new forms of action. If the energy goes unacknowledged or is immediately expressed, there is feeling but no recognized emotion. That is, there is energy present but not used constructively. To reconstruct that energy in terms of a socially constructed emotion-concept is to begin to coordinate it with potential action. Emotion is experiential in Dewey's sense, an aspect of a coordination of trying, undergoing and reflecting.

All experience has an emotional "quale" as described above, always involving (though not sequentially): (1) affect (this emotional "quale"), (2) disposition (mode of conduct/practical attitude); and (3) object/idea (about or toward something/at/on account of) (p. 18). For Dewey, the disposition is the anchor. The object and the affect are brought together in realized or potential action, thus becoming a habit. Distinguishing the three elements is only available in reflection on experience. We can determine the intellectual value (e.g., "Why don't they go back where they came from?") and affect value (suspicion, discomfort, fear), but, says Dewey, "In all concrete experience of emotion, these two phases are organically united in a single pulse of consciousness." (p. 24)

So instinctual stimulation can issue in interest (a concept that plays an important role in Dewey's theory of growth/education) or remain simple affect (emotional discharge/disturbance). It is interest, says Dewey, when "the various means succeed in organizing themselves into a simultaneous comprehensive whole of action. Interest is undisturbed action, absorbing action, unified action." (p. 31)

It is here, in my estimation, that Dewey goes astray because he fails to acknowledge the possibility that coordination is not always constructive, a failure directly linked to his general unwillingness or inability to account for power and privilege in human interaction.⁶ Fear is not a failure of coordination and interest is not coordination's only possible outcome. Emotions often considered negative (for example, fear and anger) may be quite intelligent and are not necessarily negative. Nonetheless, it is useful to distinguish affect and emotion as Dewey does and to explore the function of each and the relation between them.⁷

In *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), Dewey reinforces his view that fear is not an instinct but an experience. He analyzes fear as marked by "contractions, withdrawals, evasions, concealments" and later by "organic shrinkage, gestures of hesitation and retreat" (p. 107). However, Dewey notes that these terms only make sense in light of given environments because they are descriptions of actions toward particular persons or things. Each fear is "qualitatively unique. Each is what it is in virtue of its total interactions or correlations with other acts and with the enviroing medium, with consequences" (p. 107).

In this regard, Dewey notes that psychological schemas are of little use in interpreting affective responses, even those that are habituated, recommending instead the eye of the novelist or the dramatist who can put "the case visibly and dramatically" as "he reveals vital actualities" (p. 107). Only then will we "understand moral phenomena otherwise baffling" (p. 108). This hint that narrative and interpretation are the tools of choice for understanding emotion is instructive.

⁶ I am grateful to Barbara Applebaum for reminding me to state this clearly.

⁷ It is worth noting that Dewey, like Ahmed, is ultimately interested in the *function* of emotions in social interaction but that his analysis is limited because of his focus on the behavior of the individual organism rather than on sociocultural patterns of action as well as his previously mentioned blind spot with respect to power and privilege.

The cash value of Dewey's analysis lies in the acknowledgement that fear is not a separate instinct, not merely affective and not merely physiological. The emotions that we take at a common sense level to be causal forces are simply names that condense "a variety of complex occurrences" (p. 104); only when we realize that, can we begin to unpack and understand what is actually going on. And our investigation must involve "the whole organism" in an environment that "is never twice alike" (p. 105). In this complex transaction, action, affect and consequence are also never twice alike—and all contribute to the quality of the emotion as organic act (that is, as experience) we name fear. Thus fear is multiple, not single. "There is no one fear having diverse manifestations; there are as many qualitatively different fears as there are objects responded to and different consequences sensed and observed. But all are rendered as fear in their behavioral character as 'organic shrinkages'" (p. 107).

As noted above, the limit in Dewey's analysis is his failure to entertain and explore the possibility that the "completed coordination" of the instinctual affect may not be educative. Dewey's choices are expression, repression and coordination. I agree those are the options for response to affect, but argue that coordination need not issue in interest (as the power to learn). Fear, for instance, is a coordination of affect and idea, one that is mediated by social circumstances and relations—including relations between student and teacher. This is a political process, into which Sara Ahmed provides insight, and I turn to her account of emotion in general and fear in particular here.

Ahmed on Fear as Sociocultural Practice

Ahmed analyzes emotion as relational and socially constructed and fear as a sociocultural practice, more complex than the still dominant folk theory of emotion as instinct arising unbidden stimulating action, and more complete than the Deweyan view that fear is marked by the organism's "organic shrinkage" in response to another. Fear is, for Ahmed, "crucial to the very constitution of the psychic and the social as objects, that is, to the definition of the individual and society" (2003, p. 10). Any emotion is not a property of a person; rather, it is an *effect* of relations that set or fix persons and objects in particular relations. These effects "accumulate over time as a form of affective value" (p. 11). Thus, emotions attach us to the conditions of our material circumstances. Feelings become, in Marxist terminology, "fetishes," that is, properties or qualities that *seem* to reside in persons or things because the processes of production and circulation are erased. My project here is, in part, to recapture, with Ahmed's guidance, those processes with respect to fear and safety so that one can respond more fully to what is at stake in claims for safe space.

Ahmed moves beyond both the simplistic view of emotion as a motivating stimulus and the substantially cognitive view that emotions are judgments accompanied by physiological markers. The object of our fear, for example, is not the purely psychological stimulus we presume it to be; feelings (affect) take the shape, the meaning, of interaction, of the contact we have with the object. Whether an object is viewed as beneficial or harmful already requires that we read into the object some attribution of (emotional) significance in what Ahmed calls "reactive forms of reorientation." The reading we make of that object brings it into proximity or moves it (or us) away. Thus, an emotion constitutes a stance; it has a direction and an orientation (p. 8).

Following David Hume, Ahmed's theorizing takes the metaphor of "impression" as a starting point. The experience of "having an emotion" is, metaphorically, the effect of

pressing one surface to another. If I have an “impression” of X, then X “impresses” me. Sensation, emotion and thought are all suggested; body and mind are implicated in emotion.

Within this economy of impressions, it is clear that feelings stick to some objects and not to others? How? Why? Ahmed’s answer, in the end, is that understanding relations of power is the key to understanding why and how some feelings “stick” to rather than “slide off” objects and constitute emotions, hence her title *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. But to get there, she reminds us that both the psychological view of emotion (as an individually experienced motivational impetus) and the sociological view (as the glue that holds a social entity together) assume that emotions are something that persons have. And in that assumption is a taken-for-granted but misleading distinction between subject and object. For Ahmed, “emotions create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and outside in the first place” (p. 8). And when emotions spread—consider for example, the spread of fear under President George Bush and the spread of hope in the campaign of Barack Obama—it is not emotion that circulates, not emotional contagion. Rather it is the objects—the war in Iraq, airport security practices, the value of one’s 401 K, or powerfully moving rhetoric—that have become “sticky or saturated with affect” that circulate and recreate the experience (integrated affect and meaning) of the emotion.

Ahmed describes circumstances where feelings are apparently shared as ‘intense,’ both in the sense that feelings can seem to “thicken” a space, and also that apparently shared feelings are always *in tension* (p. 10). “Emotions in their very intensity involve miscommunication, such that even when we feel we have the same feeling, we don’t necessarily have the same relationship to the feeling. Given that shared feelings are not about feeling the same feeling, or feeling-in-common, I suggest that it is the objects of emotion that circulate, rather than emotion as such” (p. 11). This observation becomes important as we ponder teachers’ and parents’ ability to recognize and interpret when students are feeling and how they are feeling—before moving to identify *what* they are feeling, locking in the dispositions to act that accompany those named emotions.

To study emotions like fear and security requires that we attend to processes of movement and attachment of the objects of fearfulness and security, but also to attend to the “past histories of association” that caused these affects to be attached to particular objects. Ahmed employs a narrative perspective because she acknowledges that emotions are performative and involve speech acts that “depend on past histories at the same time that they generate effects” (p. 13). Narratives of causality (and in the case of fear, blame) are employed in naming emotions. Change the terms; you change the narrative. Change the narrative; you change the emotion (though *not the affect*).

If, in general, emotions “work to align bodily space with social space” (p. 69), then what is the particular function of fear? *By designating fears, we construct safe space for some and unsafe space for others*. That is, we construct the world as safe and unsafe and control the movement of fear but also the movement of bodies in that world. It is safe to interact with this person but not with that one who has become the object of fear. For example, educators who call for safe space from harassment designate harassers as fear-some, GLBTQ students as fearful and, in the process, reinscribe safe space for the bullies. Those who are harassing gain unfettered movement as the result of the (well-intentioned) restriction of the GLBTQ students to a space that is putatively safe for them. As Ahmed puts it, “fear works to restrict some bodies through the movement or expansion of others” (p. 69). It is the definition of fears, that is, the specification of objects of fear and the meaning they have, that lets others “move openly in the absence of those objects” (p. 69).

Without objects of fear—objects to which we attach uncomfortable affects, the world itself is fearsome. We need objects to draw the tension, the affect, so that we can interact with other objects.

And so we turn away from the designated objects of fear or derision as we name them as such and toward those objects of affection or respect or solidarity that are home, we, me. And in the process, those newly-constructed or newly-recognized emotions attach us to the conditions of our dominance or subordination, as we come to know ourselves as fearful or fearsome (or both at once). As affect moves from object to object, it may follow trajectories already in place within the social imaginary or it may create new linkages.

Habituated fear involves reading openness to the world as dangerous—based on often skewed narratives of past experience and association—and that danger is anticipated as a future pain or injury. For example, in the aftermath of slavery and 150 years of troubled race relations in the U.S., the white body shrinks back in the desire to avoid harm perpetrated by the black body, the constructed object of fear. Paradoxically, of course, the person inhabiting the black body has been historically subject to dehumanization and is statistically most at risk of exclusion and (physical, psychological or economic) harm. Why then is the already subordinate other cast in a fear relation? Ahmed's answer is that fear orders our world. The subordinate other provides the focus for affective tension that is unavoidable in human living. "[T]he loss of the object of fear renders the world itself a space of potential danger, a space that is anticipated as pain or injury on the surface of the body that fears. ... The more we don't know what or who it is we fear *the more the world becomes fearsome*" (p. 69).

Here Ahmed shines a bright light on a politics of mobility—not social or economic but literal and physical. "Fear works to enable some bodies to inhabit and move in public space through restricting the mobility of other bodies to spaces that are enclosed or contained" (p. 70).

Consider more ironies in the cultural politics of fear. Those who are, in fact, most at risk (people of color, gays and lesbians, the disabled, even women) are cast culturally as the objects of fear; negative affect sticks to them rather than sliding off. And, while they can separate from and avoid persons of dominant groups, they cannot do so without loss of advantage. Their pragmatic decision to remain engaged, to tolerate sometimes extreme discomfort in order to gain socially and economically masks the real nature of their emotion. Moreover, they are not able to rhetorically express their own discomfort *as fear* because the affect associated with fear does not, in Ahmed's idiom, stick to dominant bodies (white, straight, able-bodied, male).

The effect of these ironies is that we often restrict the movement of those *least likely* to cause trouble. Examples of this in educational practice abound, from the parietal rules on mid-20th century college campuses that restricted females to their dorms to keep them safe from roving males to the proposal to create a GLBT high school for the protection of those students.

By rendering some persons and things as objects of fear, we co-construct a collective world and align ourselves with it. We create the emotion of fear and the world in which fear functions meaningfully, actively investing in a set of social norms (p. 196). As Ahmed puts it, emotions work "through signs and on bodies to materialize the surfaces and boundaries that are lived as worlds" (p. 119). That which counts as fear is an effect of making a world of a particular kind. It is a world with insiders and outsiders, a world with subjects and objects, a world of surfaces and boundaries. It is the only kind of world humans have yet been able to imagine. Those persons and things that are designated as objects of fear or as fearful *are not the causes of affect*, but they serve a significant purpose

in dissipating that affect (or in Dewey's terms, resolving the affect to allow for directed rather than divided activity) so that "we" are free to move and associate with others.

Ahmed helps us to see that affects and affect-laden concepts are interesting subsets of political tools because they resist—as is their purpose—our rational control. This is why the argument for safe space with which I began this essay does not include affects, nor affects constructed into emotions, but only the conceptual entities that have been shaped by the sticking and sliding of affects.

Ahmed turns to psychoanalysis to develop her understanding of fear and interesting though this line of thought is, it runs the risk of diverting attention from the brilliance of her initial insight: that fear is not in individuals but in persons' interactions with each other and with objects, both already infused—through past histories of association—with affect intrinsic to the person's identity or the object's meaning.

We return now, not to any argument for safe space, but to the complex state of persons that precedes the argument(s) offered.

Heuristics for Understanding

The functional understanding of fear sketched above with the help of Dewey and Ahmed suggests a series of observations that can guide rich interpretations of (and in) safe space situations—whether in Chicago with respect to a gay pride high school, in my women's studies classroom with respect to conservative Christian female students, or in a local middle school where insecure adolescents regularly torment one another for a host of reasons.

- Emotions come to be and be understood with reference to relational, socially-constructed, context-dependent *experience*.
- When affect's behavioral corollary is organic shrinkage, that is, the separation and distancing of bodies in physical and social space, it is, and is understood as, fear.
- Though fear as a habit comes to be and be understood in the immediate adjustment of idea, affect and disposition, it is *reified* or habituated—that is, associated with particular objects in a seemingly instinctual manner devoid of thought—through processes of repetition; these same processes conceal the affects, relations and intentions that prompted the original separation and distancing and prevent us from feeling differently even when warranted. It is in this way and for this reason that fear resists rational control.
- Fear is a political tool more easily employed by some than by others. One posits fear—consciously or unconsciously—to control bodies in social space—including one's own, and thus create "home," safe space for some but not others.

Crucially, Dewey and Ahmed allow us to see the complexity of safe space situations. Separating non-English speaking students who are subject to harassment in the name of their safety actually creates safe space for the harassers who are free to move about without the affront of those "others." Male adolescents who harass female students—seeming to make themselves objects of fear—may be seeking to control the female's perceived power, sexual or social. Gay teachers who call for safe space for GLBTQ students risk reliving their own fear of rejection and recommending a "fix" that their students neither need nor welcome. Because affect is relational, because emotion is political, because fear is the corollary of action in relation, it is impossible to generalize what constitutes safe space.

There is no fix for this. There is only richer, fuller and more complex deconstruction and interpretation—and more fitting response. Each of the observations noted above suggests a question (or question cluster) for interpretation in the face of calls for safe space—and any other educational issue in which fear may play a role.

- To acknowledge that emotion is experiential all the way down (that is, that it is relational, socially-constructed and context dependent) means that an educator must ask: *Who stands in relevant relation within this context? How do relation and context (as already conceptualized with attendant affect) stimulate affect in interaction with individual's past histories of association? What elements shape the resolution of affect into experience?*
- If fear is the name we assign when feeling results in “organic shrinkage,” that is, the separation and distancing of bodies in physical and social space, then fear can be identified by asking: *Who is separated—and separating—from whom? By whom and how?*⁸
- If fear is resistant to rational control because it has become reified (associated habitually with particular objects), thus concealing rather than enacting the originating affect, idea and disposition, then educators are prompted to ask: *What are the taken-for-granted habits of response and classification (stereotypes) at work? (That is, what are the unnamed and unarticulated theses of our arguments?) How did these habits come to be?*
- If fear is a quintessentially political tool, a means of control, then these questions arise: *Who is afraid? Who thinks so? How does the attribution of fear benefit the fearful one? The one who attributes the fear? That is, who is advantaged or disadvantaged—who gains and/or loses space and safety—by invoking fear?*

These interpretive questions are intended to be deconstructive. And the resulting project of deconstruction enables educators to acknowledge fear as *both* a habituated affect-laden conceptual element of a specific situation that does impact interpretation and action *and* as an emotional quality accompanying judgment and action in experience. The challenge is to recognize that “fear” is present in a situation only so far as an object (thing, person or practice) previously conceptualized as fearful (that is, an object to which affect “sticks”) is present and perceived affectively. The object may be present *without felt affect*. It is in interpreted interaction that affect arises. And it is only when habits of interaction break down, that the affect becomes “seizure” and may be reinterpreted into a specific (the same or another) emotion.

What might this interpretation, this uncovering, look like in practice? Let me offer a personal pedagogical example. For many years, I taught a women’s studies course called Women and Education: Socialization and Liberation at a state university in a conservative region of southcentral Pennsylvania in the US. That course fulfilled a general education requirement for an interdisciplinary course and often attracted enthusiastic feminists from a variety of majors as well as pious Christians who are elementary education majors. Many of the self-identified feminists were intolerant of “right-wing” views and many of the self-proclaimed Christians judged feminists to be un-godly. For the feminists, the fear-laden

⁸ Note that this simple question opens the educator up to both subtle and overt forms of harassment and exclusion experienced by a full range of students. By attending to behaviors of shrinkage and separation, one may come to recognize feelings worthy of careful consideration and acknowledgement even when one does not observe either harassing behaviors or obvious expressions of emotion.

object was the judgmental brand of Christianity embodied in some of their peers. For the Christians, the fear-laden object was the very term “feminist.” In each case, I observed a behavioral tendency—in some but not all students—to separate, to shrink, to defend. It is this tendency that told me that fear was the affect present.

But, of course, there were stereotypes at work in the perceptions of each student. How have “feminist” and “Christian” come to be associated negatively? And are these two objects mutually exclusive? Which students had negative associations and which saw no dichotomy—and why? What would each student gain or lose by silencing others or by creating a space that was feminist? That was Christian?

The broader and narrower contexts in which this educational space existed privileged these students differently. In the broader social community in which this university class existed, the Christian students were socially and culturally dominant and could count on support for their construction of feminists as potentially threatening; but within the university and, in particular, within this class as a designated “women’s studies” space, the feminist students has reason to understand their own views as privileged. My explicit stance as feminist supported them as well, but was complicated by my reputation among education majors as “one of them.” There are reasons to think that both sets of students experienced both comfort and discomfort, both privilege and threat in this particular pedagogical environment.

And how was I feeling? What were my affect-laden conceptualizations of feminist and Christian and woman? How did I seek to control those bodies in space for particular personal or pedagogical reasons? My feminist intentions might have silenced my Christian students. My identity as teacher required that I engage and encourage all students. My understanding as a philosopher of education demanded dialogue across difference.

What would constitute safe space in such a situation? More important, is safety educative? Perhaps the better question is, what constitutes an educative space that is neither psychologically or socially destructive nor unfairly unsafe?

Restating the Ironies

I return for a moment to Chicago’s proposed Pride High School, the case with which I opened this essay. The educators involved in this effort are clearly caring and presumably competent; they have students’ best interests—intellectual and emotional—at heart. The opening of Pride High School would constitute evidence of their caring and probably alleviate some of their worry about GLBTQ students. And creating a separate space for GLBTQ students would benefit at least some of the students in the short run if not all in the long run. But this solution obscures rather than addresses the problem that prompted it and highlights three ironies in calls for and provision of safe space in educational settings.

First, the need for safe space for students who experience social exclusion and harassment is the result of a political “economy” that was created in interaction in order to insure safe space for others. When persons who are heterosexual-identified become aware of *feeling* while in the presence of different others who do not identify or act as heterosexual, they associate the feeling with the novel (and subordinate) object (that is, the queer persons present) as they move to separate from those different others—physically, culturally or psychically. This too often occurs without regard for whether or not the object is the *cause* of the feeling. That is, the queer person may prompt the straight person’s feeling but is not the cause of it; the feeling is a culmination of complicated histories of association both cultural and individual. The category “GLBTQ students” is nonetheless

reinforced as threatening or fearsome (since any concept carries for each person an “emotional quale,”), thus carving out safe space for me (that is, the one feeling) and for *others like me*. It is exactly this creation of straight safe space, effecting a separation from those who are queer, that creates the conditions under which GLBTQ students might need, or be perceived as needing, safe space.

The conceptualization of GLBTQ students as fearsome or threatening is passed on through multiple means of socialization. For those heterosexual students who are socialized to this understanding, the presence of a real-life GLBTQ student prompts discomfort (feeling) though not necessarily separation (fear). Whether feeling becomes fear depends on how and how well a person is able to attend to and recognize the complex roots of the feelings and to adjust feeling, meaning and action. The discomfort in fact presents an educational possibility, an opportunity to reconceptualize the world.

In contemporary American culture, reality shows like MTV’s “Real World,” talk shows like NBC’s “The Ellen Show,” network series like ABC’s “Brothers and Sisters”, and cable series like “The L Word,” are rapidly changing the socialization of many young people. The prominence of the gay marriage issue on the political horizon and the simple presence in families of some family member or friend who is “out” contribute to more complex concepts of GLBTQ persons/students. One need only point to Matthew Shepherd to make the case that GLBTQ students continue to be the target of persistent, even heinous, harassment. But at least some openly gay teens are also experiencing greater acceptance, and even better, escaping the conceptualization as “different” in any way that matters to friendship and collaboration.

In other words, one way (perhaps the most thorough-going way) to create safe enough space for GLBTQ students is to acknowledge the safety needs of those straight persons who conceptualized them as threatening to begin with, to name the straight persons as the source of the fear. This analysis applies as well to other students (of color, for instance) who are harassed or socially isolated.

The danger here (there is danger all around in this deconstructive analysis) is that attending to the (often unconscious or at least personally unacknowledged) at-risk feelings of those who are relatively privileged (the white student, the straight young man, the slender young woman, the native English speaker, the able-bodied person, even the physically larger bully) opens up the possibility of reinscribing relations of domination. As noted earlier, the person who is statistically *least* in need of protection can claim such protection if tender feelings are exposed.

This is a danger, but one to be faced if a useful interpretation and assessment is to be framed. Everyone involved in calls for safe space is feeling something, and more often than not, feelings on all sides are complex blends of negative and positive, of avoidance and attraction, of the hesitance that accompanies uncertainty and the excitement that comes with facing a challenging but interesting unknown. It is to this complicated blend that I direct interpretive attention, but with two caveats.

First, feelings, even uncomfortable ones, don’t dictate action. Uncomfortable students may well be students on the brink of some new understanding. Fearful students, that is, students whose uncomfortable feelings have been bound—by situation or by habit—to particular objects and attendant behaviors of withdrawal and avoidance, require pedagogical intervention that makes engagement possible again. That means that students (whether privileged or oppressed) have to feel *safe enough*. It does not necessarily mean comfort. Both teachers and students would do well to learn that discomfort, their own or

the discomfort of another, can be and *is often* personally, pedagogically, psychologically and even socially and morally useful.⁹

The second caveat is that attending to the privileged student's (or teacher's) feelings as well as the feelings of those who experience social exclusion takes place in the light of Ahmed's insight that he or she *is responsible* for the power relations framed by a claim of emotion, by the bodily limits placed on the one who is cast as the object of fear. This responsibility is not individual in any simple way; it does not justify blame and punishment. But it does require excavation of the "historical and political backgrounds that structure perceptions and interactions" (Mayo 2001, p. 85). And this excavation is what expands the possibilities for pedagogical action.

The second irony is that students who are able, individually or as a culturally identifiable group, to ask for safe space are likely the students who do not need separation. They *do* recognize injustice and a need for and a right to relief. They *are* looking for support and, perhaps, respite. Their own sense of self and agency, captured in the articulation of injustice, signals power to respond to harassment and exclusion constructively. They may not be able to do so alone, but inhabit a zone of proximal development with respect to useful interaction and communication that educators can take advantage of. Responding to this call for safe space requires careful and nuanced understanding of what students want and need.

But students who do not and cannot ask for safe space are a different story. These are the students who are so burdened by harassment or exclusion that they have internalized treatment that is inappropriate and unjust; they will often believe that they deserve the harsh judgment and treatment received. These students don't call for safe space. Either they have no concept of themselves as persons worth of inviolability or they have no experience of empowerment. Such students may actually need (temporary even if long term) separation not only to provide safety but also to enable them to develop a *concept* of safety by feeling safe and associating that feeling with themselves as persons and agents.

There are other harassed students who are capable of calling for safe space but do not—because they don't want or need it. They have found ways to make sense of harassment and exclusion and to resist it effectively—by reinterpreting the treatment they receive and turning it back on the harasser or by redrawing lines of exclusion through creating new patterns of interaction.

Thus, whether or not a student requests safe space may or may not reveal a need for temporary safe haven.

The third and final irony worth noting is that safe space does not always or only function to establish safety for students. It seems plausible that the creation of separate space designated as safe—a separate high school, an instructional group within a school, or an allies extracurricular group, for instance—provides at least as much emotional relief to the adults who construct it as it does to the students who populate it. As I suggested earlier in my revised, affect-aware version of the argument for safe space, educators who call for safe space do so out of an interpretation of students' needs juxtaposed with their own

⁹ It is important to note that the choice facing educators is not a choice between insuring safety and allowing danger for students. Educational experience always incorporates greater or lesser degrees of danger, sometimes even physical danger. The educator's judgment—professional judgment that must be applied relentlessly—always involves pedagogical payoff *and* personal, physical, psychological and cultural costs. And attention must be paid to the distinction between students' *feeling* unsafe and *being* unsafe. The teacher who errs on the side of too much comfort (consider the educators who insist that learning should be fun) is as ineffective as is the teacher who takes a cavalier view of the risks (consider the Robin Williams character in "Dead Poets Society").

experiences and with their responsibilities as educators. Even if we assume that female students, for example, have a need for relief from harassment, it is not clear what would constitute relief for each individual student. Is females' separation from male students desirable? Or would students themselves prefer, for instance, to have an adult (or older student) mentor who would offer "safe harbor" when storms of harassment arise?

Aristotle tells us that we can identify our own fears by determining when we feel badly for others. If he is right, then it is important to attend to the affective states of the educators who call for and create safe space for any student who suffers harassment and exclusion on account of being different. Educators who encourage and support students in the creation of a gay-straight alliance or who spearheads a separate school for GLBTQ students have reasons for doing so that involve their own as well as their students' feelings. The teacher who advocates for an all-girl class in her middle school understands the sex-gender system and the male-female adolescent dynamic emotionally; she feels the hurt that threatens her students. The African-American professor who creates African-American studies courses that will attract large numbers of African-American students—giving them a space that they control by virtue of their majority—does so because she knows what it feels like to be controlled by other majorities. And all these moves, whether or not they are educationally justifiable, whether or not they assuage the discomfort and fear of the harassed students, also assuage the empathic pain of the educators involved as they discharge their responsibility to care for their students.

These ironies apply to any students for whom safe space is invoked and to any educators who invoke safe space in the name of groups of students.

Conclusion: The Difficult Relationship between Safety and Education

I have attempted to demonstrate that it is the call for safe space itself that both instantiates and signals the emotion of fear in educational settings and that the emotion serves a function in that interactive setting. The function of the emotion of fear is the control of embodied persons, enabling some free access and other constrained movement. Thus fear—as any emotion—is a relational phenomenon with a political purpose and impact. It is not the case, as we generally assume, that an individual or group feels *sui generis* "fear" and then expresses or represents that fear through acts of shrinkage, separation and safe space talk. Rather, the act—of calling for safe space construed as separate space—constitutes the associated affect *as fear* while rendering oneself as fearful and the other as an object of fear. As a result, I maintain, calls for safe space can only be properly interpreted—and responded to—when the political relations of fear are uncovered and deconstructed.

My point is not to deny the instinctive quality of feeling or affect but to analyze more accurately the function and status of emotion in interaction in schools and other educational settings. Feelings arise instinctively in the presence of objects, persons and situations *that have been freighted*—through personal judgment, cultural socialization and systematic education—with a particular emotional *quale*. We feel what and how we feel, with little immediate control despite what we might wish or attempt. But the behaviors that determine the *meaning* of the feelings (that is, what we call emotions) and the objects and ideas with which those feelings are associated (over which feelings stick and slide) offer opportunity for personal and interpersonal control. The analysis I outline here encourages educators and students to attend to feelings, accepting and interrogating them, but avoiding the judgment that action confirms as long as possible. Staying "in" (complex) feelings before

reducing them to a (defined) emotion expands possibilities for action and conceptualization. It expands the educational imaginary.

This also raises an important question that is in the process of being explored. What is the relationship between discomfort and learning? Fear and growth? Safety may be thought of as the pedagogical antidote for which the discomfort associated with fear is the poison, but is this always educationally poisonous? Can discomfort and even fear also be pathways to growth and education? Here I offer just a promissory note.

As I have suggested, educators often speak about the importance of safety as a condition for learning as if it were a truism. And if they are talking about a least common denominator of physical and emotional security, then most would be likely to agree with them. But even this is problematic. Some children survive unimaginable physical and emotional trauma and emerge with an intelligence that works well. Other children lack the same resilience and do not develop in conditions of even mild discomfort. There is no question that students sometimes shrink and separate from people, places and things that might provoke new ways of thinking, acting and being. But recognizing fear does not automatically suggest an antidote. Nor does it automatically imply that an antidote is needed. A student trading in fear (acting in ways that represent herself and others as fearful *or* fearsome) is shrinking from interaction that *may* be dangerous, but may *also* be educative. The educator who is able to freeze the fear, suspend the shrinkage and interrogate the affect and its associations is the educator who can use that affect for educative purpose while respecting the potential danger to self and self-understanding.

Scholars—and effective teachers—are aware that the feelings that become fear are as likely to contribute to learning and growth as they are to impede it. For example, Dewey's recognition that doubt and disturbance are at the root of thinking and therefore, growth suggests that fear-like feelings might contribute to education. More recently, Megan Boler's call for "a pedagogy of discomfort" (1999, p. 19) with respect to diversity takes Dewey's recognition a step further, suggesting that educators utilize practices that instigate discomfort in order to disrupt prejudicial habits of judgment and behavior. Mayo's (2001, p. 85) brilliant deconstruction of civility as a strategy for constructing civil society and her recognition of incivility as a "a precondition for democratic decision making" that "disturbs the placid surface of already existing problematic relations to the extent that it tells us that problems cannot be ignored" supports Boler's claims. Biesta's (2006) contention that education "beyond learning" depends on a pedagogy of interruption, interruption of taken for granted ways of understanding, is congruent with both Dewey's and Boler's positions. English and Stengel's (2010) exploration of progressive theorists' views of fear reiterate the point that philosophers like Rousseau, Dewey and Freire found space in their pedagogical understanding for fear as both destructive and constructive.

While there is much more to be developed here, it seems that fear functions in complicated ways in the process of one's development. Fear (the emotion in which behavior, idea and feeling come together) is what stops us—as we shrink back or force others to shrink away. But those same feelings, divorced from the behaviors that name them fear, can also mark the way to development as a person and as a member of a culture or society. Those feelings that tempt us to retreat are the same feelings unleashed for purposes of growth. There will be no change, no development, until what is taken for granted is called into question. And that will always be accompanied by strong feelings, strong feelings that are never simply safe.

Completely safe space is not educative; thus, educational space is by definition unsafe to some degree. This does not mean that "safe space" is not a useful pedagogical tool. Novelist Alice Walker once noted that Womanists (Black feminists) are not separatists

“except, periodically, for health.” (2004, p. 11) In this way, safe space, that is, separate space, can be used “for health,” but also to create a different affective valence that can itself be uncovered and interrogated to understand the complex interaction between safety and growth. The challenge to the educator is dual and deconstructive: to interrupt cherished habits of interaction and thought thus provoking strong and sometimes resistant feelings—and then to interrogate the interpretation of meaning that the affect-laden rush to action imposes.

Safe space is not an answer to a problem; it is not the antidote to fear. Rather it is an invitation to interpret and respond. In the face of a call for safe space, the first step is the excavation of fear and the deconstruction of the social imaginary that creates and supports a world organized around distance and separation. Facing fear opens up the possibility that the energy generated in the failure of habit is energy found for, rather than lost to, educational purposes.

Acknowledgments I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Fulbright Commission, Universidade de Évora and Millersville University for the time, space and place to think through the issues outlined in this essay. I also appreciate the generous and quite helpful comments of Barbara Applebaum who reviewed this essay for the journal, of graduate students and faculty, especially Gert Biesta, at University of Stirling who responded to an earlier iteration of this essay, and of members of the Edinburgh branch of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, especially David Carr, who invited me to think through these ideas with them in fall 2008. It is a richer offering because of them.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2003). *The cultural politics of emotion*. New York: Routledge.
- Biesta, G. (2006). *Beyond learning: Democratic education for a human future*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Boler, M. (1999). *Feeling power: Emotions and education*. New York: Routledge.
- Dewey, J. (1894). The theory of emotion. (1) Emotional attitudes. *Psychological Review*, 1, 553–569.
- Dewey, J. (1895). The theory of emotion. (2) The significance of emotions. *Psychological Review*, 2, 13–32.
- Dewey, J. (1922). *Human nature and conduct*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Dosemagen, S. (2008). Chicago proposes Pride high school for gay students, Medill Reports. Available on-line at <http://news.medill.northwestern.edu/chicago/news.aspx?id=100437&print=1>.
- English, A., & Stengel, B. (2010). Exploring fear: Rousseau, Dewey and Freire on fear and learning. *Educational Theory* (forthcoming).
- James, W. (1983). *The principles of psychology*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Mayo, C. (2001). Civility and its discontents: Sexuality, race and the lure of beautiful manners. In S. Rice (Ed.), *Philosophy of education 2001*. Champaign, IL: The Philosophy of Education Society.
- Walker, A. (2004). *In search of our mothers' garden*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.