
Anthony Krupp
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avoid simple ideology critique. Instead, he hopes to explain the relationship between cultural practices, ideology, and passion or commitment.

More specifically, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place* examines rock music and the manner in which the American right has structured its response to rock. In part I, Grossberg explores what he calls the “articulation of rock” as a form of cultural discourse and how rock music has helped to inform American culture since the 1950s. In part II, Grossberg takes up how the “rock formation” of cultural discourse has become “an apparatus of regulation of space and time in daily life” (67). Finally, Grossberg describes his view of the position of the rock formation within political (material) struggles emerging in the postmodern United States.

In other words, Grossberg examines how a passionate cultural practice of (rebellious) youth culture has evolved to reveal postmodern disillusionment and how, ironically, such disillusionment can serve the political interests of the Right. To this extent, Grossberg wants to investigate why the right (usually through the efforts of the Republican Party) has successfully appropriated popular feelings of commitment and passion even as it persistently suffers electoral defeat. Its political “defeats,” however, do not counteract its monopoly of intense feeling and its ability to defang the Left in the cultural realm.

In short, this difficult book brings up a number of very important themes and addresses them in a manner that is neither reductionist nor vague. It successfully comes to terms with postmodernism and cultural studies, and yet it still has time for politics. Although at times the theoretical terminology becomes something of a hindrance (glossary notwithstanding!), other parts of the book could serve as a critical history of rock music.

At the beginning of the book, Grossberg states that “this book is about a population (Americans) which increasingly finds itself caught within the contradictions between its own liberal ideology and its conservative commitments” (p. 13). I would argue that this contradiction, seemingly resolved under the Reagan and Bush regimes, will remain on the academic agenda for some time. American liberalism has persistently laid the foundations for genuine progressive reform, as seen in the traditions of procedural democracy, middle-class reform movements, and mild social activism. The logic of American liberalism, however, has developed such that new social regions (culture, gender equality) have begun important transformations that transcend earlier “intentions.” These areas, previously the site of conservative commitments, thereby become the site of conflict. Such conflicts, in turn, help compose social research and social theory.

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**Disclosure:** Fin de Siècle Democracy

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**Endnotes**

1 The phrase “first wave” refers to the reform cycle of middle-class radicalism that swept America, Germany, France, and Britain in the 1890s and more or less persisted until the 1920s. “Second wave” feminism therefore refers to the revival of this critical impulse in the 1960s.

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**Pedagogy Is Politics: Literary Theory and Critical Teaching**

*Maria-Regina Kecht (Ed.)*

University of Illinois Press, 1992

Reviewed by Anthony Krupp

How are “theory” and social praxis to be thought about together? What is a critic who is discontent with the pedagogical status quo, but unwilling to form allegiance with the humanisms of Bloom, Hirsch or D'Souza, to do? Several of the authors in Maria-Regina Kecht’s *Pedagogy is Politics: Literary Theory and Critical Teaching* express reserved discontent with the claims of some poststructuralist pedagogic alternatives. Poststructuralism is the common object for each of these essays. Some contributors contend that while it bills itself as the most powerful critique of the metaphysics of self-identity, poststructuralism has not yet developed its own lessons into a coherent program. In different ways, the contributors to this volume attempt to chart out the possibilities of a critical poststructuralist pedagogy. While excited by the prospects opened up therein, I’m not sure the general critique is entirely fair to all of those scholars and pedagogues who could be called “poststructuralists.” I will return to this point shortly.

After Kecht’s excellent introduction, the book’s first section entitled “Polemics”, is a “taking place” which sets it against another book, Atkins and Johnson (eds), *Writing and Reading Differently*, a supposedly exemplary poststructuralist theorization of pedagogy. While the representation of the Poststructuralist Classroom borders on the phantasmatic at times, one can isolate from it a guiding ethic: one of not prematurely celebrating “difference” in the classroom and thereby missing the social constructedness of the “same.” This section, with essays by Mas’ud Zavarzadeh, John Schilb, and Barbara Foley, offers a somewhat infelicitous beginning to the volume, as the thrust of the prose often comes uncomfortably close to a logic of scapegoating. For example, even while the Poststructuralist Classroom is criticized for “providing
the illusion of change by retreating into a ‘second’ world while the ‘first world’ (the dominant one) goes on” (39), the authors do not seem to notice the obvious point that academia is itself a ‘second’ world. It seems a mistake to confuse the pedagogic imaginary to a space of what Zavrazadeh calls “regress,” as teachers—and not just of the poststructuralist variety—traffic in the imaginary.

The treatment of “force” involves a similar self-misrecognition. While Schilb, with great sensitivity, registers internally inconsistent uses of the term “force” in Jasper Neel’s essay for Writing and Reading Differently— that one shouldn’t force interpretive models onto texts, though one can expect students to be forced to give up various dreams of beginnings and ends—he nonetheless performs such a slip himself, insofar as he concludes his essay with teachers and students peacefully and unproblematically cohabiting a single personal pronoun (“if they are to work for their own ‘freedom’ and that of others,” (64), my italics).

Fourteen pages earlier, teachers are the agents who “lead students to work for the liberation of other people” (50). In this slip, one which drops the verb “to lead” out of the discourse, one can perhaps read a reaction to a perennial problem of the cultural phenomenon called “pedagogy”, inasmuch as it has a not unambivalent relationship to the myriad as yet unthought democratic futures. I am therefore led to suspect that the main strategy (as it is the main effect) in railing against Poststructuralists is to give a name to the “bad” side of pedagogy (pedagogy as terror, as violation). Beyond prosopopeia, the next task would be to consider how force/violence work within pedagogical contexts, and how (if, whether?) they can be overcome.

Comprising the bulk of the book, the second section, entitled “Pragmatics,” does not strike me as the promised forum for “recipe sharings of how to teach writing and analyzing” (149). Even so several of the contributions to this section do offer valuable food for thought to those readers interested both in building alternative programs to “the present system of highly segregated disciplinary knowledge” (9). Additionally the essays collected here offer prospects for analyzing the mainstream dominant “process of transmitting knowledge [which] relies on inculcating our own ways of reading, suppressing alternative ways, and recruiting disciples, [such that] we certainly preserve undemocratic power relations” (8).

As with other contributors, Kathleen McCormick’s essay in-vokes Paulo Freire’s distinction between the ‘banking method’ and the ‘dialogic method’ of pedagogy as an important topos. Insofar as she alerts the reader that pedagogues must work through their own “professional unconscious” (117), she avoids demonizing Poststructuralism (in contrast to some of the other contributions). Her essay begins with a proposal to rethink the Carnegie Mellon English Department which is refreshing and thought-provoking. The common motivational denominator in establishing the proposed classes such as “Dis-

course and Historical Change” or “Reading 20th Century Culture” is this: to have students learn not “about books” or events, but rather to learn how to read, as such, direct object TBA. (in the same vein, Susan R. Horton’s article explores the possibility of a PhD in literacy.) The teaching of this skill, and the presenting of the political ramifications of this skill, are seen as ways in which pedagogues may participate in the project of educational democracy.

The Blues give Jim Merod a chance to think pedagogy as an art not only of in-structive leading but also of non-structive listening—listening to students’ desire and defense structures, for example, which would attend to (and give occasion to alter) “the practiced inattention of academic professions to the structure of desire and the structure of defense-making by students trained in our culture to read television images and popular song lyrics with an unproblematized exuberance” (157). Needless to say, this necessitates a willingness to remain open to popular culture. The Blues, Merod contends, offer a particularly valuable constellation: texts “that can evoke students’ interest and spontaneous reaction” (16), the Blues can be mobilized for analysis of “the textual, social, historical, and ideological frames and, as a consequence, on the contradictions in our society, conflicts that hegemonic ideology tries to negate” (17).

David R. Shumway and Barbara Foley express concern in their articles that literary theory and marginal writers, respectively, are currently being merely added to the existing canon, without attendant reflection upon the ensuing pedagogic machinery.

The essays in the “Positions” section of the book, work to critique existing and dominant patterns of ordering and transmitting knowledge (and the section’s heading might thus have been more felicitously named “Performances”). Peter J. Rabinowitz and John Clifford critique conventions of reading and writing, respectively. Clifford explores the ideological subtexts of norms in composition studies which favor clear theses, use of examples, argumentative closure, without laying bare how “this obsession with the necessity for concrete, specific details is used instead [in place?] of a critique of generalizations” (223). He asserts that “[t]he unavoidable lesson is that the novice subject is not supposed to be openly enquiring...but rather reinscribing what has already been approved, rehearsing the ideological givens of the discourse.” (223). The line of argumentation develops a thought attributed to Richard Ohmann, who also contributes an essay on forgetfulness and historical consciousness in pedagogy.

Reed Way Dassenbrock’s essay, “English Department Geography: Interpreting the MLA Bibliography,” analyses the stakes in the hierarchical mapping and plotting of the field called “literature” around national centers of identity.
At his own university for example, English is assumed to have no place in a Foreign Languages department. English is, rather, about "our own" literature and language. But which literature, or language, is "our own?" Dasenbrock's examination of the classificatory tropes in the MLA Bibliography shows what one might call the "archival drive" pushed to its limits, with resulting symptomatic categories such as "English Literature Other than British and American." His argument is that these inherited notions of mapping, genealogically related to the conceptual apparatus of colonialism, no longer (did they ever?) reflect the constellation of what is written. Dasenbrock points to the social constructedness of intellectual geographies as they relate to current repertoires for organizing knowledge about literature, and offers thoughts on how an "other heading" could represent writing from a place which cannot be as easily naturalized: "each mapping system will have its problems, and this means that no matter what solution we choose, we must also keep our critical distance from that solution, aware of the extent to which it can distort and misrepresent what it purports to represent." (206)

In the spirit of the pyrotechnic figure concluding Kecht's introduction: "Perhaps the strong sense of pedagogical and political responsibility that all the contributors to this collection share will strike sparks in the minds of the readers" (20). Purchase and then share a copy of this text with your local poststructuralist, theorist or pedagogue.