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Five Pedagogies,  
A Thousand Possibilities

Struggling for Hope and Transformation in Education

By

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Open University of Cyprus and CARDET, Cyprus
For my son Orestis
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Hope, for John Dewey, is not simply an emotional state that accompanies our purposeful activities; it is rather an ability to come to terms with the unexpected changes of life and pursue goals that are in the interests of the human community in which we live (Fishman & McCarthy, 2005). This view of hope entails a political aspect in that it encourages the development of praxis which overcomes any despair. In the present context, to be hopeful and to overcome despair means not to take globalization, for example, as the only possibility, but to resist it even when one does not have a better alternative to offer. The resonance with the aims of education hardly requires any explanation, other than to express my own yearning to develop a pedagogical account that is a work of hope, of finding hope even when the echoes of despair seem unending.

This book places side-by-side a series of themes in my work which have remained relatively separate, notably the exploration of affect in the context of themes like hope and (individual and collective) transformation. As I hope is clear from what follows, I view this effort as an important political task, that is, to construct an agonistic politics of affect in the context of pedagogical spaces that are increasingly policed in various ways. These spaces are routinely praised or deplored for the feelings they (should) induce; some are regarded as caring while others are regarded as competitive. Indeed, it would be interesting if, in the future, classroom spaces were increasingly distanced from the normalizing criteria such as some of the ones I discuss in this book. My vision, then, is to sketch spaces that could inspire the creation of powerful “affective localities” (Bruno, 2002) in the classroom.

I am grateful to a number of individuals who have nurtured the intellectual and emotional yearning that has led to writing this book over the last few years. These include my wife Galatia as well as my friends and colleagues Megan Boler, Nicholas Burbules, Liora Bresler, Lynn Fendler, Michael Peters, and Charalambos Vrasidas whose ideas have provided endless resources for this project. I also want to thank my colleagues both at Intercollege, Cyprus and at Michigan State University, for supporting this writing in a variety of ways. Finally, I am indebted to Michel Lokhorst and Peter de Liefde from Sense Publishers who gave me the venue to publish this book.

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A THOUSAND POSSIBILITIES—TOWARDS A POLITICS OF EMOTION IN EDUCATION

I am moved by fancies that are curled
Around these images, and cling:
The notion of some infinitely gently
Infinitely suffering thing.

T.S. Eliot

The point of critique is not justification but a different way of feeling: another sensibility.

Gilles Deleuze

Emotions—and affect, more generally—have increasingly become the focus of analysis across a number of disciplines and professional settings, including education.\(^1\) This book is the outcome of a larger project on emotions in education—a project which has preoccupied me as an educator for as long as I can remember. It is difficult for me to imagine teaching and learning without the images and shadows of an affective terrain: images of gentleness and agony, passion and silence, fear and desire—all experiences of a self that feels. This is not an unexpected terrain, of course; over the last few decades, several educators have explored this wide landscape. However, in the last few years, emotions in education have acquired a renewed value, worth inquiring into, in the context of what has been characterized as the era of cynicism, fatalism, relativism and fundamentalism (Halpin, 2003).

During a time that is often dominated by the instrumental logic of bureaucratic rationality—one which demands teachers and students to accept various standards of social efficiency and emotional control so that they can become “emotionally intelligent” or “successful” in their professional and personal lives—an inquiry into the discourses of emotion in education render visible the various ideologies of emotion. The dominant discourse of emotion from Descartes to the present day, as it has been repeatedly argued by many scholars, describes emotion as a form of experience opposite to cognition and critical thinking (Barbalet, 1998; Boler, 1999; Lupton, 1998; Williams, 2001; Zembylas, 2005). The ideological baggage of this discourse carries a related story that requires the drawing of rigid boundaries between criticality and emotionality: it is suggested that critical subjects do not allow emotions to color their judgment.\(^2\) However, this notion implies that the challenge of engaging in learning to read the world critically is unrelated to investigating the emotional investments that underlie ideologies.

Take anger, for example. Anger is often described as a dangerous emotion that threatens rationality, social order, and constructive dialogue (Jaggar, 1989; Lyman,
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2004). Not surprisingly, there are approaches deeply ingrained in many aspects of our social and professional life that emphasize the social norm of anger management (Goleman, 1995; Hochschild, 1983). Anger management has become a widespread movement in schools, organizations and the workplace in the West and especially in the US (Morris & Feldman, 1997). The goal of anger management is to control one’s emotions, that is, repress, neutralize or even express anger occasionally but do it in appropriate ways (Tracy, 2000). In other words, anger is branded with negativity, as if it only involves bad things; the ideology of anger is bad prevails in anger management discourse and sets the agenda of what the appropriate expression of emotional behavior is.

However, the definitions of anger vary. One may consider, for instance, anger as a response to a perceived injustice—what has become known as Aristotle’s moral anger (Boler, 1999; Stocker, 1996). As Peter Lyman (1981) writes, “one can define anger as the essential political emotion” (p. 61), because it motivates people to raise their voices against injustice and can be used to inspire transformation and social change (Lorde, 1984; Spelman, 1989; Swaine, 1996). Yet, the expression of anger as a voice against injustice is often ignored, neutralized or suppressed, because anger is predominantly perceived an individual emotion that needs to be appropriately tamed. However, if we begin to understand anger in relational terms, rather than as an inner, psychological disorder or inappropriate and uncivil behavior,—as it is commonly defined—then it is possible to consider the power of anger in enriching dialogue and enhancing our ability to identify and address injustice.

Undoubtedly, anger (and violence) can be highly destructive inside and outside schools. However, how many times do educators critically consider the emotional investments of moral anger and its significance in struggles for social justice? On the contrary, it seems that the significance of moral anger in education is essentially eradicated, because more often than not all anger is deemed as socially inappropriate as soon as it makes its appearance. Admittedly, how to make a distinction between moral anger and other kinds of anger (e.g. road rage, vengeful anger) is not a simple task. However, an important aspect that distinguishes moral anger from other kinds of anger is the notion of someone becoming angry as a witness of violations of justice, humanity and dignity. Moral anger is what motivates someone to oppose injustice; thus, in anger there seems to be an element of hope for transformation of the present.

In this book, I want to draw a map of critical pedagogies which problematize teachers and students’ emotional attachments to particular ideological commitments, and use that map to suggest the creation of pedagogical spaces of “critical hope” (Freire, 1994). Critical hope inspires teachers and students to see patterns in their emotional, historical and material lives, to realize how these patterns are made and what their consequences are for maintaining the status quo, and to motivate teachers and students to position themselves critically. To put it in another way, critical hope entails a willingness to speak with the language of possibility in the struggle to initiate transformations in everyday life. This is in fact an eye-opening perspective, if one considers that the notions of hope, possibility
and transformation are what emotions are about; it is our emotions that encompass hope, passion and struggle for a transformed lifeworld that rises above injustice, discrimination and healing of past traumas.

During the last two decades, the notions of hope, possibility and transformation have provided the groundwork for educational theorists working to develop ideas and practices that are responsive to teachers and students living in these “unsettling times”—times in which political, cultural and economic forces create major changes in our societies and racial, social, ethnic and other differences raise mistrust, anxiety and uncertainty. To date, emotion and affect have largely been investigated through a range of scientific, biomedical and psychological discourses (Bolet, 1999; Lupton, 1998) that consider emotional phenomena primarily as individual and private. However, emotions are increasingly being recognized as part of everyday social, cultural and political life. Emotions in the classroom, more particularly, are not only a private matter but also a political space in which students and teachers interact with implications in larger political and cultural struggles (Albrecht-Crane & Slack, 2003). There is always something political in which teachers and students are caught up as they relate affectively to one another across the classroom spaces (Albrecht-Crane, 2003; Zembylas, 2005).

Feminist, critical, poststructural and postcolonial theories have begun to respond to some of the challenges in our times by developing pedagogical discourses that seek to engage issues of social justice, inequality, and the prospects for healing, forgiveness and reconciliation. Thinking about these theories has challenged me to sharpen my argument in suggesting that the politicization of emotions in education is not only inevitable but also desirable. I use “politics” here referring to the power relations among individuals, as part of everyday life. As various educational practices nowadays seek indiscriminately to silence emotion in the name of “emotional intelligence”—and thus, to de-politicize it—an attention to the political aspects of emotions in education is extremely valuable. Consequently, a major idea in this book is to argue that our emotional investments are central to the exercise of power relations inside (and outside) the classroom. My effort, then, joins other attempts in the social sciences and the humanities to challenge the dominance of instrumental/rational accounts about emotion and build on the notion that an affective terrain is unavoidably political.

I would like to make it clear at the outset of this book that I do not suggest specific advice and practical pedagogical tools (in a restricted sense) for teachers. Rather, I am interested in what makes possible the development of pedagogies of critical hope and how educators are estranged from them—through disabling the power of affect from both their imaginations and their everyday practices. In this context, I use the term pedagogy not to signify classroom pedagogical practices. Broadly speaking, pedagogy may be defined as the relational encounter among individuals through which unpredictable possibilities of communication and action are created. Pedagogy, then, is a site of intersubjective encounters that entail transformative possibilities.

But what exactly is the nature of those possibilities that encourage the creation of spaces in which emotional investments are critically explored and creative
affective connections are constituted between teachers and students? How do emotions move between bodies and create such affective connections, and what are the implications of these connections? Do these connections inevitably contribute to further polarization, or can they challenge injustice and inspire greater understanding, empathy, reconciliation, and praxis? On the one hand, silencing emotion because of its so-called irrationality is undoubtedly ideological; it justifies and perpetuates domination by silencing the voices of the oppressed, labeling emotional reactions as loss of control (Lyman, 2004). On the other hand, as Mary Holmes (2004b) suggests, emotional responses are not inevitably emancipatory but ambivalent, because they are part of an ongoing struggle of power relations. Thus, encouraging explorations of affective responses to injustices and inequalities can inspire students and teachers “towards new considerations of their relations with others and open up new spaces for continuing struggle” (p. 223).

Recognizing the ambivalence of emotion in education is an important step of forming a subversive analysis. Consequently, I suggest that within this analysis there is attention to emotions as sources for what Michel Foucault would theorize as resistance and Gilles Deleuze as deterritorialization or lines of flight. The theme of politics of emotions focuses on the connection between emotional practices, sociability, bodies, and power in everyday school contexts. To wrestle with the full implications of analyzing the emotional aspects of various critical pedagogies leads me to consider how individual and collective bodies are constituted in the classroom. My exploration attempts to show how power relations work through specific articulations and movements of emotions that produce new affective and embodied connections. According to this exploration, pleasure, unknowing, silence, suffering, love, desire, and passion form affective economies (Ahmed, 2004) in the classroom in which emotions do not reside in individuals but they circulate in relationships of difference. Such an argument clearly challenges the assumption that emotions are individual and private phenomena and supports the position that emotions (and affects) are political in the sense that power is an inextricable aspect of how bodies come together, move, and dwell. Affective economies may establish, assert, subvert or reinforce power differentials. Therefore, in this book, it will be emphasized that emotions play an important political role in enabling critical resistance (Hoy, 2004), something that is currently missing from many accounts of emotions in education. By critical resistance, I follow David Hoy in arguing that it involves the (affective) resistance to domination in the name of emancipation and transformation, not the resistance that has been co-opted by the oppressive forces.

These thoughts have led me to wonder whether the dominance of scientific, biomedical and psychological discourses on emotion in education, and the demonization of emotion in critical inquiry, are not in fact responses of a carefully invented absence of affect as a political force and intensity. Just as the formation of science necessitated purposeful boundaries and appropriate rationality rules to deal with non-scientific elements, so too did discourses on emotions in education, whose founding characteristics reproduce the necessity for boundaries and rules. Through carefully created omissions of the political implications of emotional
responses to injustice and inequality, one can see that a fabricated absence of the politics of emotions has been crucial to the sense of a pure and unadulterated “critical thinking.” This situation is further complicated by the fact that the habit of ignoring the politics of emotions is understood to be an “objective” gesture. My point here, however, is not to argue that this omission is bad, but rather, as Foucault says, to show that it is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. “If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do” (1983b, p. 232), and clearly what I propose here is the invention of subversive pedagogies.

On the other hand, the enforcement of an absence of the politics of emotion in education is already re-inserting its presence within dominant discourses. To begin noticing its absence is to recognize the efforts to discredit its presence—without implying, however, that it receives credibility. There are still powerful attempts under the guise of scientific discourse that contest any politicization of emotions in education. These attempts are exposed when one begins to look carefully at the protective agenda built around scientific, biomedical and psychological discourses—particularly, the carefully established polarities between private/public, right/wrong, good/bad and emotional/rational. In this book, I have purposely chosen not to disparage these discourses as it is precisely because of them that we gradually see positions that are differentiating from the dominant discourse of ignoring the significance of emotions for critical inquiry and resistance in education. Consequently, what I intend to examine here is the impact of the politicization of emotion on those pedagogies that choose to acknowledge its presence.

Undoubtedly, the scholarship that focuses on pedagogies that depoliticize emotion is valuable; but equally valuable are intellectual efforts to see what critical pedagogies focusing on the politics of emotion do to the imagination and practice of teachers and students. As an educator who struggles to deal with the ambivalence of cynicism and hope, fear and desire, apathy and passion, writing this book made me realize the obvious: we—that is, educators, students, parents and all those involved in the educational process—and the lifeworlds we invent are the ones who move and moved by provocative or complicit images and imaginations of various pedagogies. This “is an astonishing revelation of longing, of terror, of perplexity, of shame, or magnanimity,” as Toni Morrison (1992) would say; “it requires hard work not to see this” (p. 17, original emphasis). Yet, the fabrication of a culturally and politically lobotomized lifeworld is precisely what inhibits us from contemplating how affect is used in discourses on otherness, difference, criticality and transformation in education.

CRITICAL HOPE AND WITNESSING

Megan Boler (2004) points out that as one recognizes his or her emotional attachments an important implication is that one cries out for something new to hold on to after the shattering of his or her worldviews. There is, admittedly, a tragic perspective in such an endeavor, as Nicholas Burbules (1999) also observes. That is, besides the emotional suffering one has to go through, the tragic sense is
the point of tension between seeing the possibilities and limits, the hopes and disappointments of the choices one makes. At the same time, however, this tragic perspective, argues Burbules, presents a strong sense of hope in education—not a naïve hope dressed in a humanist rhetoric about progress, success, and individualism, but one “tempered by an awareness of the contradictory character” (Burbules, 1999, p. 65) of what might count as progress, success, and individualism. In contrast to naïve hope, adds Boler (2004), critical hope recognizes the tensions in beliefs about personal and social perfectability and entails a willingness to engage in in-depth critical inquiry about such beliefs along with an “emotional willingness to engage in the difficult work of possibly allowing one’s worldviews to be shattered” (p. 128).

Paulo Freire emphasizes the importance of critical hope throughout his writings. In particular, he writes that he does not “understand human existence and the struggle needed to improve it, apart from hope and dream” (1994, p. 8). Although Freire’s earlier work has been challenged by postmodernists, who question his unexamined modernist assumptions about rationality and progress, his later ideas on pedagogy of hope are more nuanced and acknowledge the complexity of tensions in various discourses. For this purpose, Freire highlights that his thoughts on pedagogy of hope are “written in rage and love, without which there is no hope,” and they are meant “as a defense of tolerance—not to be confused with connivance—and radicalness” (p. 10). Furthermore, his attempts are “to explain and defend progressive postmodernity” and “reject conservative, neoliberal postmodernity” (ibid.).

Freire sees hope as an ontological need, an existential imperative that keeps us alive. This is why, in my view, hope entails such strong emotions as love and rage; love as an ethical, critical and social stance that is open to otherness and nurtures difference, and rage as a commitment to be vigilant and to struggle against injustice and discrimination. Freire is careful not to espouse a modernist rhetoric, thus he writes:

I do not mean that, because I am hopeful, I attribute to this hope of mine the power to transform reality all by itself, so that I set out for the fray without taking account of concrete, material data, declaring, “My hope is enough!” No, my hope is necessary, but it is not enough. Alone, it does not win. But without it, my struggle will be weak and wobbly. We need critical hope the way a fish needs unpolluted water. The idea that hope alone will transform the world, and action undertaken in that kind of naïveté, is an excellent route to hopelessness, pessimism, and fatalism. (p. 8, added emphasis)

For Freire, fatalism is expressed not only by those who invest everything in a naïve hope about the transformation of the world, but also by those who reject any possibility of action and deny struggling because they are paralyzed by the notion that nothing will ever make a difference. Instead, critical hope is grounded in careful critical analysis and understanding of how emotional attachments, historical circumstances and material conditions have led us to the present, and signifies a
willingness to be open to the implications of this analysis. This understanding does not theorize the present as the inevitable outcome of some progress, but it problematizes how we have become who we believe we are. Thus, hope exists in the face of cynicism not because progress is an inevitable process or because God is with us or because we believe it is our destiny to fulfill a particular mission (Weiler, 2003), but because struggle and possibility are precisely what constitute our lives.

Furthermore, the above perspective does not assume that a better or more just future is either inevitable or impossible, but emphasizes the importance of struggle that emerges from the possibilities of transformation within the context in which we find ourselves. Similarly, Boler (2004), drawing on the work of Freire, argues that

Critical hope requires seeing one’s self within historical context, reevaluating the relationship of one’s privilege to others in the world. It entails as well seeing how these relations of power shift and change over time and in one’s lifetime. This pedagogical relation is a negotiation of the hegemonically constructed habits, internalized as attachments to particular beliefs and corresponding emotional reactions to change. (p. 130)

Critical hope, then, is a relational construct that is both emotional and critical. To say that someone has critical hope means that he or she is involved in a genealogical analysis of power relations and how they constitute one’s emotional ways of being in the world, while appreciating the significance of imagining a different world and persisting in efforts to care for it despite the seemingly intractable obstacles.

David Halpin (2003) also builds on Freire’s work yet somewhat diverts from it, espousing a pragmatism influenced by Richard Rorty and Anthony Giddens, which insists on a practical and realistic notion of hope. Hope, for Halpin, is the key element in utopian dreaming and constitutes an object of virtue. He sees education as an intrinsically hopeful process against the enemies of cynicism, fatalism, relativism, and fundamentalism. Halpin draws on Joseph Godfrey’s (1987) analysis of hope making a distinction between ultimate hope and absolute hope. Absolute hope is hope without an object or an orientation and thus entails a naïve faith in the future and the prospects for change. On the contrary, ultimate hope is hope for something specific, or “aimed” hope—an idea similar to Henry Giroux’s (2001) notion of educated hope, that is, a hope which is part of oppositional utopianism towards realizable possibilities of the future. Halpin follows Rorty and Giddens and argues for the importance of ultimate hope in cultivating a realistic and sensible utopia; in other words, a utopia which is grounded on what is perceived to be realizable in the light of current societal forces.

However, Ruth Levitas (2004) contests Halpin’s position and explains that claims for a realistic and sensible utopia are hidden behind a veil of empiricism built on the assumption that radical change is impossible. Furthermore, she makes two arguments that are particularly important for my own analysis here. First, a
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A sensible notion of utopia ignores the role of desire, because the essential element in utopia is not hope, but desire for a different way of being (Levitas, 1990). In other words, hope and desire are not reducible to one another; in fact, it is desire that is transformed into hope and will for change. Halpin’s notion of ultimate hope does not entail any notion of desire nor does it encourage any pedagogy of desire. Second, a sensible notion of utopia, asserts Levitas (2004), excludes from the political agenda the possibility for a different kind of society and does not enable us to think holistically about the relationship among visions, social institutions, and practical processes. These two arguments suggest that “ultimate hope” is definitely not the same thing as critical hope.

Given that I have been persuaded by the arguments of Freire, Boler, Burbules and Levitas, I return to the notion of critical hope in order to sketch how it plays out in my own attempts to describe pedagogies that approach criticality through both an affective engagement of participating individuals and a politicization of such an engagement in imagining a different kind of society. Incorporating affectivity back into discussions of hope not only addresses the previous omission of affectivity, but also acknowledges the kinds of affective connections that make critical hope possible. Thus, critical hope is what makes seeing one’s self with a critical eye, and creates feelings of connection with the Other as a result of the affective flow in the relationship that is constituted. This connectedness is precisely what makes us bear witness to oppression, historical trauma and past wrongdoings (Oliver, 2001). The relation between witnessing and the power of affect, and the political, ethical, and pedagogical implications for teachers and students who wish to bear witness to individual and social trauma, and engage in healing, forgiveness and reconciliation, are few of the challenges that are taken up in this book.

Avery Gordon (1997) reminds us of the emotionally challenging task of confronting terrible and traumatic events that “pull us affectively into [their] structure of feeling of a reality we come to know as recognition” (p. 63). Over the past twenty years, mainstream discourses of multicultural perspectives have emphasized the importance of the notion of recognition as a fundamental aspect of acknowledging the other’s human dignity and agency (e.g. see Taylor, 1994). Nor surprisingly, it is argued, the demand to witness “may produce a range of strong, ambivalent, or contradictory responses, among them, horror, sympathy, terror, relief, recognition, empathy, defensiveness, anger, resentment, and disbelief” (Roman, 2003, p. 276). However, in these times of living in a postemotional society (Mestrovic, 1997) in which manufactured, emotional confessions have become the order of the day, it is difficult to discriminate among the banal, romanticized, or voyeuristic emotional tropes, on the one hand, and empathetic unsettlement (LaCapra, 2001) or critical witnessing, on the other. Nevertheless, as I discuss in this book, some recent work on the ethics and politics of affect (e.g. Oliver, 2001, Massumi, 2002) offers new perspectives on the affective possibilities of witnessing and bearing witness to historical trauma and injustices in curriculum and pedagogy.

Kelly Oliver, for instance, rejects that recognition should be at the center of what Ana Douglass and Thomas Vogler (2003) call witness studies and argues
instead that witnessing—which goes beyond recognition—involves opening up to the possibilities of ethically responsible and politically liberating affects such as love, compassion and empathy. She points out optimistically that bearing witness to the Other means opening oneself to create affective connections with the Other. According to Oliver, critical and poststructuralist theories based on (mis)recognition fail to challenge the dichotomy between subject and the Other. As she writes, “To see oneself as a subject and to see other people as the other or objects not only alienates one from those around him or her but also enables the dehumanization inherent in oppression and domination” (Oliver, 2001, p. 3, original emphasis). The victims of oppression and torture are not merely seeking recognition, but they are also seeking witnesses to horrors beyond recognition. Witnessing is a practice that reconceives the Other as a subject, and thus requires a more radical opening up to difference than mere (mis)recognition. This opening up creates the subject and is understood by Oliver as love, affective energy and positive interpersonal affect. That is, bearing witness to otherness means being flexible enough to endorse the use of affect, imagination and sensory experience.

Similarly, Brian Massumi (who builds upon the work of Deleuze) with his work on affective politics asks us to reconceptualize affective spaces (e.g. those in a classroom) as the terrain of forces and energies. In particular, Massumi describes how affective responses are autonomous and do not simply reproduce the traces of “intentions.” From this perspective, intensities and forces precede and exceed the signifying regime of ideological systems (Spinks, 2001). Massumi and Deleuze’s attention to affect gestures to the political and ethical consequences of our images of subjectivity and otherness produced at particular moments in the classroom. We are asked to consider how teachers and students can create classroom spaces that enable productive critical and pedagogical scenes of witnessing while foregrounding the ungovernability of affects. In examining these spaces, I consider how affects are produced, erased and circulate as sites of individual and collective forces and intensities.

AFFECTIVE ECONOMIES AND AMBIGUITY

Lawrence Grossberg (1988, 1992, 1997) is one of the first theorists who has written about the notion of an economy of affect. He explains that there are many economies in society of which the affective is one among several such as capital, money, identities, meaning, representations and desires (Grossberg, 1997). In general, Grossberg’s writings attempt to explore how power operates through affect. In Deleuzian spirit, he asserts that the economic perspective “constructs a machine or space defined by the circulation and distribution of energy” (1988, p. 283). In other words, the notion of economy implies that people give and withhold emotional resources, form social relationships and differences, negotiate meanings, and constitute their subjectivities (see also Mouffé, 1993).

Grossberg’s (1992) concern is that neglected economies such as the affective are reduced to sub-functions of ideology instead of being considered in terms of their own practices and implications. He is clearly influenced by Foucault’s ideas in that
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he believes meaning is constituted through power relations (Harding & Pribram, 2004). Thus, he suggests distinguishing between “libidinal economies of desire and affective economies of mood” (1988, p. 285) as different planes on which psychic energy is organized. Grossberg justifies this by saying that affect indicates “one’s investments in, or commitments to, the world” (ibid.), that is, affect is a form of energy, a motivating force or intensity telling people “where, how and with what intensities they can become absorbed—into their work and their lives” (1992, p. 82). Therefore, affect, according to Grossberg, constitutes what matters to individuals, their passions and investments in life. This also implies that affect is one of the ways through which power is constituted, circulated and performed.

More recently, Sara Ahmed (2004) evoked the notion of affective economies to argue that emotions do not reside in a subject but rather circulate and involve relations of difference, whereby what is moved and what moves is the effect of intensities and energies. Inevitably, this circulation in communal groups (in a classroom, for instance) results in the constitution of emotional attachments and meanings, that is, emotions become attached to objects, bodies and signs—a process crucial to constituting one’s subjectivity. However, according to Ahmed, affectivity in general is characterized by the fact that it functions as an economy; it separates us from Others as well as connecting us to Others. Taking an economic understanding of hate as an example, Ahmed explains that hate does not reside within an individual but is circulated and draws other bodies together making them members of a group united by their hatred of other groups. This economy of hate works to differentiate some bodies from other bodies, a differentiation that is never resolved.

In this book, I consider the notion of affective economies as a concept that has many links to the Deleuzian analysis of affect in the sense that: (1) an economic understanding of affect allows us to see that affective connections involve movements, intensities, and energies; and (2) a theory of affect as economy involves relationships of difference and thus is a political theory that does not conceal the traces of differentiating some bodies from others. I do not agree with Ahmed (2004) that the notion of affective economies should necessarily be rooted in psychoanalytic theory, because I find that lack—a central idea on the subject and desire in psychoanalytic theory—on which she justifies affective economies is rather limiting (for more on this see Chapter 4). Ahmed fails to address the forces, energies and intensities of bodies, as those are theorized in the discourse of Deleuze (e.g. see Grosz, 2004). The Deleuzian use of desire as an “immanent principle” of creativity and movement enables a different view on affect that does not assume simple feelings but immanent becomings (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). In this manner, affect is defined as an economy of becoming in which forces, surfaces and flows of individuals and collectivities constitute the possibilities of transformative practices.

I want to take as an example of the effects of affective economies on individual and collective bodies an incident from an action research study on my own teaching practices, as part of a larger research project that focuses on the emotional politics of curriculum and pedagogy. For the past five years I taught education