

**WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?!: TEACHING AS A
'LABOUR OF LOVE' AND ONTARIO'S 2012-13 LABOUR
DISPUTES**

by

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Abstract

The following entails a “historico-critical” (Foucault [1984] 2010:46) analysis of the connection between teaching and love encapsulated in public, political and media discourses during the 2012-13 education labour disputes in Ontario, Canada. Examining the history of teaching as a ‘feminized’ profession within a capitalist, patriarchal, settler-colonial state, I suggest that discourses constituting teachers as *selfless carers* are intimately linked to visions of motherhood and white supremacy. Furthermore, I suggest that the concept of *selfless* love operates as a tool for depoliticization, used primarily against women and *others* within a society subsumed by neoliberal rhetoric. Ultimately, thinking outside of and working against this conception of love as something inherently *selfless* can help us elaborate a more egalitarian vision of love which values both autonomy and collectivity through an acknowledgement of Levinasian selfhood.

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List of Abbreviations

AEFO – Association des Enseignantes et des Enseignants Franco-Ontariens

AFOCSC – Association franco-ontarien des conseil scolaires catholiques

ETFO – Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

EQAO – Education Quality and Accountability Office

ERC – Education Relations Commission

MoE – Ministry of Education

NDP – New Democratic Party

OCSTA – Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

OECTA – Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

OPSBA – Ontario Public School Boards Association

OSSTF – Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

PDT – Provincial Discussion Table

RCL – Royal Commission on Learning

TRC – Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Chapter 1

Introduction

It should be possible to articulate a series of terrains that the theme of love can open in the field of political science: love as the free expression of bodies, as intelligence plus affect, as generation against corruption. But there is an enormous cultural weight that makes it difficult to develop such a political concept of love. We need to free the concept of love from the confines of the romantic couple and strip it of all its sentimentality. We need a completely materialist conception of love, or really an ontological conception: love as power of the constitution of being. – Hardt and Negri in Brown and Szeman 2005:386-7

Love, and other drugs

On March 20, 2013, Steve Paiken, host of “The Agenda,” a current events program on Ontario’s public broadcasting network, sat across from a panel composed mainly of teachers to discuss the decision of Ontario’s largest teachers’ unions to advise teachers to suspend their supervision of ‘extra-curricular’ activities. Near the beginning of the discussion, Paiken suggested that it might be beneficial to begin paying teachers for organizing these activities (a common practice in the province’s private schools). The suggestion was not well-received. “Students...realize that the teachers that are doing extra-curriculars are putting their time into it,” (Agenda 2013) was the reply of one teacher, “if you start to go down that road where you are going to remunerate people for doing extra...I think the kids, the students, are going to sense something different. And I think that’s kind of important. It’s kind of hidden underneath the whole conversation but I think it’s there” (ibid.). In the words of the show’s host: teachers did not want to look like they were “*doing it for the money* as opposed to for the *love* of the thing” (ibid.).

Two months earlier I had drawn attention to this dispute while leading a tutorial on labour relations for first year sociology students. I expected a debate, but I was unprepared for the emotional nature of their response. They wondered why people who are supposed to *care* about children were choosing to *hurt* them in this way. I listened to stories about potential missed proms and class trips and reminiscences about high school. I was relieved when one student raised his/her hand to suggest that teachers were not all terrible; however, my relief proved to be short lived as s/he explained that a lot of teachers did care about students, but were being stifled by a union that only cared about money. They were genuinely hurt. Suppressing my own emotions and attempting to perform my TA duties in a way that fought against a critical appraisal of their (sometimes venomous) comments, I tried to suggest other ways in which we might approach the issue: Why were teachers expected to love their work in a way that other professionals were not? Why do we talk about the performance of care as if it is mutually exclusive with compensation? Should I be teaching you extra tutorials for free? What will happen to my colleagues if I do this? Hearing these questions slide from my lips in front of people with whom I shared this strange, turbulent pedagogical relationship made me question the implications of what I was saying. Was I really making an argument for the increased commoditization of human interaction? How could I reconcile the fight against capital with the language of emotional labour and fair compensation? Most of all, why did I feel the weight of this collective angst: this pain at the very idea that our state-sanctioned agents of socialization might not *really* care for us, for our children. Why did I sense such conflict between the affection I felt for this room full of onlookers and the

knowledge that the connections between us were transient, at times superficial, and ultimately part of an elaborate economic exchange? Furthermore, were my feelings of *care* for these students even pedagogically *positive*? – were any teacher’s?

This work will examine the ways in which teaching was depicted as a labour of love within political, public and media discourse during the 2012-13 disputes between teachers and the Ontario government. Where conceptualizing teaching and love as selfless relates to a neoliberal agenda reinforcing a gendered divide between public and private, my argument is that this love as a selfless act must be problematized in order to advance a radical, anti-oppressive feminist politic in contemporary public labour debates. This project will contribute to larger conversations surrounding philosophies of care, anti-capitalist critique, labour relations, pedagogy, and austerity in education. Problematizing the relationship between teachers as public sector workers and their *responsibility* to the children of Ontario allows for a discussion of the ways in which Western society, and Ontarians in particular, understand care, and perhaps even love, as fundamentally selfless. This in turn, connects to a larger discussion of emotional labour, care work, and the commoditization of human emotion as well as concerns about the appropriateness of ‘love’ as pedagogical tool, and the ways in which the concept of *selfless care* can burden relationships between teachers and students by enacting a paternalistic *othering*. A critique of *love* can also be applied to larger debates surrounding ‘motherhood,’ parenting, and the position of women within hetero-patriarchal capitalism; this is especially relevant given that teachers in Ontario, particularly in elementary schools,

have been, and are, disproportionately female¹. Inasmuch, competing discourses of professionalism and affection are significant when related to the feminization of teaching and the development of teachers' unions. Teachers' unique position as both employees and *representatives* of the state further complicates teacher 'care' as an aspect of statism. Finally, the seemingly disproportionate reaction to the prospect of commoditizing (or exposing the commodification of) teachers' affection and investment in their students, hints at the position of the teaching subject as a pseudo-'parental' figure: alienating desire within the nexus of state capitalist oedipal complacency.

After establishing the prevalence of discourses constituting teaching as a *labour of love* and examining the interplay between competing definitions of teaching subjects in contemporary Ontario, I will explore the possible implications of the fetishization of teacher care, in terms of both pedagogy and politics. Finally, I will try to enunciate possibilities for reconceptualizing the teaching subject – exploring possibilities for a politico-pedagogical ethics based on a conceptualization of love that acknowledges one's socially constituted selfhood.

The remainder of this chapter will examine the conceptualization of teachers as *caregivers* and attempt to situate the work teachers do within the context of a world largely subsumed by capitalist empire, demonstrated through the hegemony of neoliberal discourse. The goal here is to begin a conversation about *what teaching is*, in order to engage in a larger discussion of *what it could be* – to address the tensions inherent in

¹ For this reason I will be focusing on elementary school teachers. As I will discuss later, high school instruction is more often performed by men and associated with prestige, based on its lack of corporeality and historically higher levels of education among teachers.

current conceptualizations of teaching subjects as representative of a larger web of interconnected discursive formations regarding statism, capital, and desire in general. First, I will elaborate upon the notion of *care* and teaching as a *labour of love*. Then I will examine the growth and expansion of neoliberalism as a way of life in relation to the caricature of teachers in key debates surrounding teachers and their unions throughout the recent crisis in Ontario. I will briefly define and describe the movement of thought I label ‘neoliberal’ throughout the course of this work – highlighting some of its chief antagonisms and fundamental concerns. Chapter 3 will begin with an elaboration of neoliberalism’s effect on education in general, and in Ontario, specifically. Subsequently, I will examine how teachers’ responsibility to *care* for Ontario students in certain socially defined ways was represented within various news articles, political speeches, and public commentary on news websites. Chapter 4 will discuss how current Canadian strains of neoliberalism are related to neoconservatism, and, essentially, sexism, classism, and racism, through an examination of Marxist feminist and autonomous Marxist explorations of capitalism and the subordination of women and ‘traditionally feminine’ work (such as caregiving/teaching) within a public/private, production/reproduction divide. Specifically, I will attempt to connect the devaluation of ‘reproductive’ and ‘caring’ labours as ‘labours of love’ to the devaluation of teaching as it relates to what Sara Ahmed has called a ‘politics of emotion’ emphasizing the necessity of a type of selfless love in relation to ‘the child’ as a nationalist colonial signifier. I will then explore the ineffectiveness of our current conceptualizations of teaching and love in both a pedagogical and political sense.

Chapter 2

Methodology, Theory, and Literature

Everything I do is done with the conviction that it may be of use. – Foucault
[1980a] 2000:295

On Theory and Method

The methodological nature of this project is difficult to conceptualize within a concretized program of standard analysis. Admittedly the simple path would be to contend that my work should fall under the broad and oft-abused label of ‘discourse analysis’, while ignoring the messy initial signification of ‘Foucauldian’ or ‘Critical’: both embodying their own limitations – the former marred by a seeming ever present distancing from its namesake and the latter ontologically problematic. Discourse analysis seems to have become something of a floating signifier: ready to entail and be whatever the researcher desires. Furthermore, the nature of this particular project leaves me uneasy with regard to claiming its Foucauldian heritage, since it seems unrealistic to suggest that I can create an adequate archive or provide a truly extensive genealogical analysis within the boundaries of a master’s dissertation.

Thus, the socio-historical analysis that I offer here will be genealogical in nature, but does not presume to present itself as ‘a genealogy.’ Although, this is not to say that it might not act as a prolegomena to some future genealogy of care. As such, I will label it a “historico-critical” (Foucault [1984] 2010:46) analysis, directed against “reality” (Foucault [1977a] 2010:93), “identity,” (ibid.) and “truth” (ibid.). This analysis will operate with the intention of “analysing and reflecting upon limits” (Foucault [1984]

2010:45): “push[ing] the masquerade [of identity, history, reality] to its limit” (Foucault [1977a] 2010:94), and compelling “our ‘unrealization’ through the excessive choice of identities” (ibid.). Of course, this is not for the purpose of discovering “the roots of our identity” (ibid.:95) but through a commitment to “its dissipation” (ibid.). Therefore, this project will seek to expose the *radical contingency* of discourses constituting teachers as *carers, professionals, etc.*, exposing the “violence, of the power relations through which that instituting act took place” (Laclau, cited in Day 2000:17).

You say: ‘Tomato’ – Foucault says: ‘Ethics’

Following Foucault, I intend to explore the “mobile, polymorphous and contingent techniques of power” (Foucault [1978] 1990:106) actualized in the discourse surrounding teachers and their affective responsibilities to students during Ontario’s recent labour disputes. Conceptualizing power as a multi-faceted system of power-relations, as a force that exists immanently in social relationships (ibid.:94), will allow me to remain open to various discursive connections without being limited to one structural perspective. Rather than a quest for origin, truth, or meaning (Foucault [1977a] 2010), this analysis will expose “the hazardous play of dominations” (ibid.:83), the multiplicity of contingencies, contradictions and eruptions inherent in the formation of discursive regimes. As Foucault suggests: “Neither the dialectic, as logic of contradictions, nor semiotics, as the structure of communication, can account for the intrinsic intelligibility of conflicts. ‘Dialectic’ is a way of evading the always open and hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton” (Foucault [1977b]

2010:56-57). That being said, I should also stress that I do not adhere to the apolitical reading of Foucault that ignores his acknowledgement of the very real existence of “states of domination,” (Foucault [1984] 1997:292) where “power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom” (ibid.). Furthermore, I see the critique of such blockages as a vital element of analysis. Being aware of the danger involved in the exercise of power (Foucault [1979] 2000:452-453) and its potential to evolve into domination suggests a constant vigilance in terms of exposing problematic power relationships/domination/techniques of government while at the same time attempting to avoid imposing a moralistic evaluation of said relations on others: “to be respectful when a singularity revolts, intransigent as soon as power violates the universal” (ibid.:453). Foucault’s anti-strategic ethics, suggests an analysis that embodies an appreciation for agency, freedom and intersectionality, without producing an asocial individualistic existentialism or reifying the subject.

Unfortunately, Foucault’s emphasis on freedom ([1984] 1997:292) is all too often unknown or ignored within discussions of his work. Hence, I tend to hear him characterised as a theorist who offers little “room for maneuver by the individual within a social discourse or set of institutions” (Alcoff [1988] 1997:338). Yet Foucault is clear that resistance is an integral dimension of power relationships ([1978] 1990:95). Individual agency begets power relations: “in relations of power there is necessarily the possibility of resistance because if there were no possibility of resistance (of violent resistance, flight, deception, strategies capable of reversing the situation), there would be no power relations at all” (Foucault [1984] 1997:292). We are not “doomed to perpetual

defeat” (Foucault [1978] 1990:96): limited to passivity. It is our ultimate freedom that allows us to analyse “what we are willing to accept in our world, to accept, to refuse, and to change, both in ourselves and in our circumstances” (Foucault [1980] 1993:224) and to seek “the conditions and the indefinite possibilities of transforming the subject, of transforming ourselves” (ibid.). When dealing with power relationships, we are *never* completely impotent (Foucault [1984] 1997:292). There is always, as I read Judith Butler, a psychic excess capable of creating space for disruption amid the continual re-constitution of subjectivities (Butler 1997:312).

Foucault is quite clear that exposing discourse and/or changing the *self* can be subversive; it is just that we should never presume to know how we might change things. Foucault’s acknowledgement of contingency allows for an ethical commitment that continually re-evaluates its own priorities and recognizes the fluidity of contextual power relationships (Foucault [1984] 1997:292). Essentially, the “ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger” (Foucault [1983] 2010:343). This entails what Foucault labels a “hyper- and pessimistic activism” (ibid.) that focuses, not on a larger system of changes to be hegemonically imposed in order to bring about some perceived end of history, but rather on the battles that need to be fought in the present, and again, the fluidity of these challenges.

However, although I agree with Foucault’s view of the work of philosophers/academics as that which exposes the connections, history, and problematics of discourse in a way that allows others to decide how to engage ethically with this information as opposed to offering a doctrine of moral political action, I would like to

push at the boundaries of Foucault's anti-strategic method in order to ultimately emphasize some possibilities for future explorations and reconceptualizations of care, teaching, relationality, and love while attempting to avoid any type of determinism. In this way, while I fully embrace contingency and the nature of genealogical inquiry, I would like to explore possibilities conceptualized by others: potential lines of flight and future pedagogical positionings. I see this as commensurate to the "critical ontology of ourselves" (Foucault [1984] 2010:50): "An attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life, in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them" (ibid.).

Furthermore, upon identifying discursive formations we must always ask ourselves: "What does it do?" (Foucault [1978] 2007:58); what are "its objectives...the strategies that govern it, and the program of...action it proposes" (ibid.:59): "The question, therefore, is not whether the status of women, or those on the bottom, is better or worse, but the type of organization from which that status results" (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987:210). It is not necessarily my intention to decide whether the constitution of teachers as *carers*, *workers*, *mothers*, whatever, is superior to that of any other interpellation; however, it is my ethical responsibility to expose the effects that I deem to be connected to a given discursive regime – to accentuate "key points" (Foucault [1978] 2007:18), "lines of force" (ibid.), "constrictions and blockages" (ibid.), and "tactical pointers" (ibid.) that the reader may use in his/her own ethico-political struggles.

Critique...should be an instrument for those who fight, those who resist and refuse what is. Its use should be in processes of conflict and confrontation, essays

in refusal. It doesn't have to lay down the law for the law. It isn't a stage in a programming. It is a challenge directed to what is. (Foucault [1980b] 2000:236)

My focus then, will be on highlighting the discursive and material consequences of how some Ontarians talk about, categorize, and conceptualize teaching as identity and performance. Yet this is always done with the goal of pushing at limits, opening up lines of flight and possibilities for deterritorialization – for subversion.

...as soon as people begin to have trouble thinking things the way they have been thought, transformation becomes...entirely possible...[The intellectual's] role...is to see how far the liberation of thought can go toward making these transformations urgent enough for people to want to carry them out and sufficiently difficult to carry out for them to be deeply inscribed in reality. (Foucault [1981]2000:457)

As I write this I have just finished marking response papers meant to teach students the virtue of critically reflecting on one's discursive positionality. As such, it seems that I would be remiss not to take a moment, after the heady pace of beginnings, to explain, to the extent that I can, my position with relation to the idea of teaching as 'love' – of care as something inherently selfless – and the relation of all these things to my understanding of my own understandings.

This is not at all to suggest that the ideas in this work cannot be applied by other people to their unique discursive embodiments. Additionally, I have no desire to other my fellow subjects via my acknowledgement of difference. Rather I want to stress that I understand and acknowledge the specificity of this discussion – particularly the fact that this struggle between selflessness and self-valuing care is an issue that remains particularly relevant to the philosophical discourse surrounding/of white, middle class women (see Eugene 1989). Undoubtedly, my position as a white settler woman, raised in

a middle class household where distinctions between self and other were continuously stressed, where the discourses of liberal feminism and individualism were expected to mediate our interactions with others, and where care was viewed, primarily, as sacrificial – as the antithesis of self-actualization – leads to much of my inherent confusion with regard to these philosophical entanglements. While I will address this consideration at various points in this work, I think it must be stressed that many people likely do not need to hear what I have to say on this matter, and that this has, within the bounds of less prominent theoretical-political discussions, been dealt with, or, has never been an issue (ibid.). As such I realize that my appraisal of these ideas and the tension I feel between my own performances and affective cognitions of care, connection, remuneration, slave mentality, and capitalism, are specifically mine; although, to a lesser extent they may resonate with other humans who exist/work within a similar theoretical-political discursive paradigm and may be of some interest, nonetheless, to those who do not. This may seem self-evident, but, given my focus on the problematic nature of care that ignores the needs of the cared for, I feel that it is necessary to limit the extent to which this thesis can be read as a patronizing volume of self-righteous white feminist proselytizing to the converted, or, more specifically, to those who were always already there ideologically. I hear you and I respect that you know this, but, as with the nature of such things, I must speak from where I stand, and hope that those who are miles ahead of my late-coming epiphanies will understand my intent and will not feel patronized by the embodiment of sociological care through which I tell them what they already know.

Additionally, as a teaching assistant, an elementary school teacher, and the wife of a teacher, I feel a strong affective commitment to validating our work (which, no doubt, can also be situated within various hetero-normative notions of care). Therefore, while I try to embrace this tension and follow my thoughts through to their conclusions, I have no way of knowing if my intimate connection to the teaching profession in some way mitigates my commitment to this process. Perhaps I am not radical enough. Perhaps I can go further – circumvent the system in a more significant way. Perhaps, due to my privilege, to my desires and affections, I am blind to these options, and I will leave this to the reader to consider (and, if you do come to some conclusion, please let me know).

Defining Care, Emotion, Affect, and Love

In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed suggests that emotion does not reside in “individuals, and their interior states or character, nor with the quality of objects” (2004:194) alone. Emotions are not necessarily *possessed*, but “are produced as effects of circulation” (ibid.:8) within *affective economies*. Within Ahmed’s formulation, emotions are intensities that *stick* to objects, as they are circulated among people (ibid.:11). Emotions viewed as relationality to objects and others as opposed to possessions, can be seen as creating subjects and objects through the creation of boundaries and bodily surfaces (ibid.:10). As objects and signs accumulate affective value through sociality: “‘feelings’ become ‘fetishes’, qualities that seem to reside in objects” (ibid.:11). Like commodities, the history of human action that created said object is lost. The task of my analysis, then, will be partially to locate which emotions seem to

be sticking to objects like ‘the teacher’ and ‘the future child’ and how the variety of these emotions work together and were/are produced through a Canadian public sentiment based on a specific relationship to capital and the state.

One of the problems in studying, well, anything, is that in many instances our most fervent debates consist of various people applying different definitions to the same term, or each using their own term to describe the same general concept. Therefore, it seems necessary, at the outset, to both attempt to outline a general way in which words like *care* and *love* are being used within this work, while acknowledging that in many cases, the use of these terms are idiosyncratic to the various authors I will include and will likely need to be redefined throughout. In the interest of creating a starting point – a working definition – let us assume at the outset of this chapter that *care* is attention, and attending: both what we could call mental or emotional labour and the physical performance of attending to the material needs of another. Within Western cultural hegemony colloquial (and various academic) understandings of the word *care* tend to focus on attention given to another, while *love* should invoke a certain adoration – a type of sexual or non-sexual desire to do and give and be for the other. Care is always an aspect of love, but *love* need not be an aspect of care – although it often is. So in some instances care is simply the level of affection under love, but it can occasionally be used in a way that is completely synonymous with love. Therefore, when I use the term *selfless care* it can usually be replaced, in a pinch, with *love*.

However, we also see love as enjoyment. The people we love are enjoyable to us in that we find pleasure in being around them – in imagining good things happening to

them. While important, this pleasurable element is also problematic in that it allows for the type of rhetoric we see in discussions of teachers – the idea that the pleasure they derive from doing such work should be *sufficient* – that the rewarding nature of their work means that what they are paid matters little. If we *love* doing something, we want to do it. Reconciling this conflict within the linguistic options available is difficult as it seems to require one of two possible maneuvers on my part: I can accept the societal convention that assumes love is *the enjoyment of selflessness* – the willingness to do something and expect nothing in return – which, in its *caring* form, I will refer to as selfless care – and attempt to separate teaching from this signifier; or, I can reconceptualize the way I am using *love* in order to imagine a different type of love – one founded on mutuality, consensuality and reciprocity – a love that is never done *to* another, but *with* them. Ultimately I will try to reconcile both of these tasks. Initially, I will suggest that the association between love as colloquially defined and teaching is harmful, but in an effort to avoid doing what I see as a somewhat disingenuous trick of simply claiming that some other synonym (such as *care*) can be added in the place of *love*, I will try to imagine a new way of thinking about activities and people that we enjoy – to use *love* to signify something different, something more *affective* in the Spinozean sense.

Affect itself has an interesting position in this piece, as it is used in various works as a catch-all for every type of emotion, feeling, relation, etc. Although, it is also used in the Deleuzeo-Spinozean sense as the capacity to act and be acted upon (Hardt 2007) – while still related to emotion. I will try to differentiate between each form.

“Are you my mommy?”: teachers, care, and the pertinence of gender

So what does teaching have to do with care – with love? And, what do we mean by *love* and *care* in the context of education? Most literature suggests that teachers’ care-work involves that which takes place outside of obligatory classroom instruction: “study after study reveals that the more personal the relationship between teacher and student, the more caring a teacher is perceived to be” (James 2012:166). *Love*, while sometimes used in a more colloquial sense, seems to take on a similar meaning (Acker 1995; Goldstein and Lake 2000). Barber (2002), for example, suggests that *care* is oriented towards “the child’s general wellbeing as opposed to academic progress” (386). James (2012) suggests a similar conceptualization of *care* as something that propels teachers to give of themselves beyond regular school hours and responsibilities (see also: Acker 1995). Love and care are, in essence, compulsions toward excess – desires that move outside the bounds of rules and timelines, a fact that is not lost on those further up in the educational hierarchy:

...the superintendent said, “If we really care about our students, I wouldn’t think we’d mind giving a little extra time after school to see that they get home safely.” Another teacher in the room added, “Right. Do we only care during our contract hours? Most of our kids need far more care than we can give them between 8 and 3:30 anyway. We should be happy we have many of them until 5:30 or 6:00 at night. (James 2012:165)

For James (2012), *care* as demanded of teachers, is based on a notion of “the overwhelming need of students” (166) and the necessity of fulfilling these needs through “great sacrifice” (ibid.) on the part of teachers.

The application of care to teaching is described, perhaps most famously, in Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools* (originally published in 1992). Noddings' work builds off of Carol Gilligan's exploration of the differences between male and female children's responses to Kohlberg's moral reasoning scale. Gilligan suggested that the failure of many girls and women to achieve what Kohlberg would call advanced reasoning, was based, not on an actual lack of morality, but rather on Kohlberg's conceptualization of higher level moral thought as that based on abstract universal principles as opposed to care for others and social relationships. She suggested that women tend to see "a world comprised of relationships rather than of people standing alone, a world that coheres through human connection rather than through systems of rules" (Gilligan 2005a:697). While most feminists today would react strongly against the essentialist association between women and care, it is important to note that Gilligan and her adherents make a clear distinction between *self-less* care, based on an "opposition between relationships and self-development" (Gilligan 1995:122) and relational care, based on an understanding of human interconnectedness. Relational care, or what Gilligan calls the *feminist ethic of care* (ibid.), problematizes the distinction between self and other, and, conceptualized in this way, the notion of relational care has been used by many to criticise patriarchal discourses of individualism, rationality, and justice, while theorizing possibilities for more egalitarian social arrangements (Craig and Scambler 2006; Gilligan 1995, 2005a, 2005b; Glenn 2000; Held 2002, 2010, 2013; Kittay 2005, 2011; Sander-Staudt 2008; etc.). From this perspective, the problem is not women's association with care in and of itself, but in the connection between women and *self-less*

care: “Girls’ initiation into womanhood has often meant an initiation into a kind of selflessness, which is associated with care and connection but also with a loss of psychological vitality and courage” (Gilligan 1995:124).

Thus Noddings stresses the relationality of caring:

In order for the relation to be properly called caring both parties must contribute to it in characteristic ways. A failure on the part of either carer or cared-for blocks completion of caring and, although there may still be a relation – that is, an encounter or connection in which each party feels something toward the other – it is not a caring relation. (Noddings 2005:15)

Noddings’s *care* involves an experience of openness and “receptivity” (ibid.) on the part of the carer. Care is successful when it is received and accepted by the cared-for, garnering a positive response (ibid.:16). Although Noddings acknowledges that critics have denounced the burden placed on the carer, she suggests that this burden is minimized via the mutuality and reciprocity of a mature caring relationship (ibid.). Yet is this mutuality *really* possible via the transient relationship of teacher and student? I will address this question via the work of Madeleine Grumet in the final chapter of this work. Regardless of Noddings’s and Gilligan’s assurances, their conceptualization of care is still largely viewed as selfless (see James 2012:166).

In “A Special Duty of Care,” Tracy Barber (2002) suggests that the need to *care* is part of the institutional habitus at certain schools – particularly those attempting to cater to low income students. She also suggests that while men and women both *care* for students, men talk more about how interactions with students benefit them, whereas women emphasize children's *dependence* on them. In this way, male teachers are “free to enjoy the pleasures of caring for students without carrying so great a weight of

responsibility as that of the female teachers” (Barber 2002:393). This is similar to many projects focusing on parenting roles, which suggest that female parents often spend more time performing ‘emotional/mental labour’ (such as worrying, etc.) with regard to their children (Walzer 1998). Since teacher's roles are often constructed as parental (James 2012; Grumet 1988), it would follow that gender divisions within families would be reinscribed in the school system as well. Teachers “experience and enact their caring responsibilities within our society's ideal of the caring teacher” (Barber 2002:384) similar to the way in which mothering is enacted with reference to societal expectations and criteria delineating strict boundaries between *good* and *bad* mothers. In fact, teachers frequently model their performance of caring for students on their own experiences or idealizations of *maternal* care (James 2012:172; Toshalis 2011:6; see also: Acker 1995).

Of course, the connection between ideal visions of teaching and mothering is hardly incidental. In the same way that “[a]n analysis of teaching cannot ignore teaching’s association with femininity” (Grumet 1988:46) we can hardly ignore the commonalities of expectations regarding ‘motherly’ love, and teachers’ affections for their students. Of course, the association between teaching and mothering lessons as the age of students increases. In late 19th and early 20th century Ontario, Kindergartens, for example, quite explicitly enacted “a ‘pedagogy of love’ which naturalized relations between teachers and children as a form of mothering” (Dehli 1994:196). However, it was seen as unlikely that women would be able “to handle” (Reynolds and Smaller 1996:50) older children (Dehli 1994:200). Teaching was initially seen as a male art, a way to instill “manly virtues” (Smaller 1994:208). In 1850s Toronto, small numbers of

well-compensated male administrators were hired by the city-wide board to supervise schools staffed by large numbers of poorly paid women (Reynolds and Smaller 1996:44). This was, of course, a highly effective method of keeping teaching costs low (ibid.). However, teaching was also attractive to women as one of the few employment opportunities available (ibid.; see also: Sager 2007). Additionally, the stigmatization and later banning of married women from the profession offered “a socially acceptable means to opt out of heterosexual family structures, up until the late 1930s and early 1940s” (Cavanagh 1998:para3). Thus, ironically, the growing association between mothering and teaching actually allowed many young women “to escape the passivity and dependency that the feminine ideal and the cult of motherhood conferred upon its daughters” (Grumet 1988:48) at least for a time. By 1875, there were an equal number of men and women in the teaching profession (Dehli 1994:199) and “from 1880 onward, the disciplinary regime of the affective classroom became associated with feminine virtues and with women as teachers” (ibid.). Women came to be seen as the ideal teachers for younger children based on notions of their ‘natural’ knowledge of children – their “unlimited capacity for empathy and love” (ibid.:201) and “self-sacrificing femininity” (ibid.:204).

Of course, sacrifice in the name of care need not be felt as such. The feeling of affective closeness and connection with students is cited as a rewarding aspect of teaching careers (Goldstein and Lake 2000:862). However, this notion of care does become problematic when it changes from an element of self-directed affective action and becomes an expectation used to shame teachers into working beyond their means and against their best collective interests. Within this context, even the most exuberant and

heartfelt care becomes a form of alienated labour. With this in mind, the next section will examine the socio-economic context in which teacher care is enacted in Ontario. Within Canada, neoliberalism has had a profound impact on caregiving; specifically, it supports an agenda which privatizes care within the home – situated as “personal responsibility” (Luxton 2010:164). Neoliberal discourses, in turn, coalesce with what Wendy Brown and Meg Luxton term the ‘New Right’ and what I will refer to, in the final chapter, as neoconservatism. This mixing of free market ideals and traditionalism (read: sexism, racism, classism, etc.) fosters an environment which seeks to squeeze as much labour as possible from teachers through reference to a nationalist conservative imaginary that valorizes *sacrifice* as the ideal of care and love, and portrays enjoyment as something incompatible with compensation. Therefore, in order to further problematize notions of love and teaching, we need to know more about the socio-economic climate in which these ideas exist.

Everything you always wanted to know about Neoliberalism (but were too busy defaulting on your mortgage to ask)

2012 ushered in a Canadian political climate thick with panic over supposedly exorbitant public sector salaries. Following the global financial crisis and recession of 2007/2008, anti-union sentiment rose in many parts of North America (Cantin 2012) and, within Canada, there was a noticeable push for back-to-work legislation and a vilification of public sector unions on the part of both federal and provincial governments. However, this pattern of hostility toward unions generally, and those in the public sector,

specifically, should not be seen as a simple reactionary manifestation on the part of private sector workers and opportunistic politicians. Although opportunism, jealousy and misplaced anger based on financial crisis no doubt contribute to the rise of anti-unionism, we can also view these things as part of a larger trend in the spread of a neoliberal discourse that has been growing since before the Reagan-era.

For a significant period following the Second World War, Canadian public policy, like that of many Western democracies, was generally organized around Keynesian economic discourse (Basu 2004:622); although, various elements of Keynesian theory had been implemented prior to this, particularly in Roosevelt's New Deal in the United States². For a brief period in capitalist history, capital was forced to capitulate, if only superficially, to some of labour's demands:

Unions were allowed to exist and to fight for improvements in the lot of workers, in return for which corporations received a guarantee that strikes would occur only under ritualistic and tightly controlled circumstances. The state acted as an intermediary between these two hostile camps, taking money from the corporations in the form of taxes, and providing public services to both corporations and the workers. (Day 2005:7)

For Negri, this accommodation is intimately linked to the Russian Revolution:

The land of the Soviets stood as a point where the working class antagonism was now structured in the independent form of a State. As such, it became a focus of international political identification for the working class internationally, because it was a present, immediately real, objective class possibility. At this point, socialism took the step from utopia into reality. From now on, theories of the state would have to take into account more than simply the problems involved in the further socialization of exploitation. They would have to come to terms with a working class that had achieved political identity, and had become a historical protagonist in its own right...At every level of capitalist organization there was

² Although the extent to which New Deal policies lived up to Keynesian theory is imminently debatable (Negri [1967] 1994:47-48)

now a deeper, more threatening and contradictory presence of the working class: a class that was now autonomous and politically consistent. (Negri [1967] 1994:24)

In this way, Keynesianism gained traction amidst a climate of reactionary concern over the potential of the working class as a revolutionary subject. As such, in what Lazzarato calls ‘a socialism of capital,’ “elements of ‘class struggle’” (2009:123) were integrated “into the regime of accumulation through concessions to aspects of ‘socialism’” (ibid.). Neoliberal hatred of the New Deal, then, and by extension the welfare state in general, can be seen as “a class hatred for a counter-power that had encroached upon the sovereignty of capitalist money” (ibid.). Although this is only one of many factors influencing the gradual decline of the welfare state. For one thing, with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the West entertained no more illusions as to the viability or ‘autonomy’ of a revolutionary proletariat. Market democracy was seen to have won “a total and definitive victory” (Pleyers 2010:17).

While the election of several famously neoliberal politicians such as Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, and Bryan Mulroney in the late 1970s and early 1980s marked a significant turning point in Western politics (Harvey 2007:23; Pleyers 2010:17), Pleyers situates the emergence of neoliberalism as a discourse in the 1940s. By the late 1960s, global capitalism was descending into a state of crisis (Pleyers 2010:27). The following period saw a steady rise in unemployment, inflation, deindustrialization and globalization – all undermining the discourse of ‘full employment’ and the expanded welfare state (Basu 2004:622; Harvey 2007; Martinez and Garcia 2000:1). It was not difficult to see that “[t]he embedded capitalism of the postwar period, with its heavy emphasis on an uneasy compact between capital and labor brokered by an interventionist state that paid

great attention to the social (i.e., welfare programs) and individual wage, was no longer working” (Harvey 2007:27). However, Harvey elaborates a slightly more insidious element at play in the Right’s renewed focus on the free market:

Discontent was widespread, and the conjoining of labor and urban social movements throughout much of the advanced capitalist world augured a socialist alternative to the social compromise between capital and labor that had grounded capital accumulation so successfully in the postwar period. Communist and socialist parties were gaining ground across much of Europe, and even in the United States popular forces were agitating for widespread reforms and state interventions in everything ranging from environmental protection to occupational safety and health and consumer protection from corporate malfeasance. There was, in this, a clear political threat to ruling classes everywhere, both in advanced capitalist countries, like Italy and France, and in many developing countries, like Mexico and Argentina. (Harvey 2007:27-28)

Within a few short decades, reactionary discourse had switched from a narrative of integration, to one of destruction.

During the 1970s, with the expansion of corporate control over political parties, Canada’s left and right wing politicians shifted their support toward the market (Basu 2004:622; Robertson 2008:15). By 1992, Francis Fukuyama was ready to declare the end of history, thanks to “the growth of liberal democracy, along with its companion, economic liberalism...the most remarkable macropolitical phenomenon of the last four hundred years” (Fukuyama 1992:48). Meanwhile, in the province of Alberta, Ralph Klein’s ‘revolution’ initiated a process of aggressive deficit reduction based on stripping the welfare state of many of its previous obligations such as health, education, and, well, welfare (Basu 2004:622). In Ontario, 1995 brought the election of Mike Harris and his infamous *Common Sense Revolution*, rife with highly fashionable rhetoric regarding the need to protect voters against the onslaught of ‘big government’ and superfluous public

sector entitlements in the name of efficiency and tax cuts (ibid.:623). During the 1990s neoliberals “began to use the language of improving social welfare, of advancing democracy” (Robertson 2008:17), a shift that World Bank Chief Economist Joseph Stiglitz calls the “Post-Washington Consensus” (Stiglitz 2002, cited in Robertson 2008:17). Of course, tying ‘democracy’ to ‘progress’ and ‘capitalism’ is hardly new (cf. Truman 1949), and the market remained central (Robertson 2008:17).

Theories of the State for a Stateless World

In the simplest sense, neoliberalism can be described as a discourse advocating unrestricted market freedom and “the ongoing globalization of capital, as well as the intensification of the societies of control” (Day 2005:6). On the surface, this connection between ‘freedom’ and ‘control,’ seems counterintuitive, but it exists as the cornerstone of neoliberalism’s influence: the ability to expand in the name of constriction – to wave a ‘mission accomplished’ banner heralding the death of the ‘state’ as it transmogrifies into a more virulent form of *empire*.

The development of the neoliberal State did not lead toward a ‘thin’ form of rule in the sense of the progressive dissipation or disappearance of the State as social actor. On the contrary, the State did not become a weak but rather an increasingly strong subject...The neoliberal State thus did not act to reduce the structures of the Welfare State, but rather to redirect and restructure them. (Hardt and Negri 1994)

While neoliberalism embraces traditionally liberal “ideals of personal freedom and *possessive* individualism” (Robertson 2008:13, emphasis added), it relies on a symbiotic relationship between capitalism and the state form in which the state accepts responsibility for defending “the freedom of the market, the right to free trade, the right

to choose, and protection of private property” (ibid.). Thus, the neoliberal state should not be seen as a step towards some type of libertarian ideal, as the rhetoric of ‘common-sense’ and ‘small government’ would have us believe. Not necessarily *diminished*, the welfare state continues in zombie form – re-organized, all-consuming, self-mutilating – a force *for* force: the violent puppet of a utilitarian axiomatic. The purview of state responsibility shifts, but domination remains. The freedom of the market must be maintained by the selective minimalism of the state (see Hardt and Negri 2005; Brown 2006:694). After all, someone has to target labour unions, restructure policies to aid the market, implement taxation systems that benefit the rich at the expense of the poor, deregulate, and privatize everything (Robertson 2008:14; see also: Brown 2006; Armstrong and Connelly 1999).

The neoliberal state, as a discursive formation – a project to which all of us collectively contribute – “lives chiefly as a repressive power [though it] also has some purchase on maintaining a degree of ideological hegemony over...‘the multitude’” (Aronowitz and Bratis cited in Giroux 2004:106). In this way, as Henry Giroux suggests: “neoliberalism is more than an economic theory: It also constitutes the conditions for a radically reconfigured cultural politics” (ibid.:107). The idea that we are all entrepreneurs, useful only in the sense that we are able ‘produce’ wealth, is one that I have heard entirely too often from my own students. This phenomenon is described quite famously in Foucault’s *Birth of Biopolitics*. Foucault views American neo-liberalism as a historically specific discourse that constitutes the individual as a depository of human capital: an “ability machine” ([1979] 2008:226). The neo-liberal subject is essentially “an

entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings” (ibid.). Giroux has also thoroughly explored what I might loosely term the *cultural*³ impact of neoliberal hegemony on what he calls the dominant *public pedagogy*.

...a powerful ensemble of ideological and institutional forces whose aim is to produce competitive, self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain. The culture of corporate public pedagogy largely cancels out or devalues gender, class-specific, and racial injustices of the existing social order by absorbing the democratic impulses and practices and impulses of civil society within narrow economic relations. (Giroux 2004:106)

For Wendy Brown, this amounts to the creation of a very specific political subjectivity:

the undemocratic citizen (2006:692):

This is the citizen who loves and wants neither freedom nor equality, even of a liberal sort; the citizen who expects neither truth nor accountability in governance and state actions; the citizen who is not distressed by exorbitant concentrations of political and economic power, routine abrogations of the rule of law, or distinctly undemocratic formulations of national purpose at home and abroad. (ibid.)

Brown’s conceptualization of subjectivity under neoliberalism relies on four main pillars of neoliberal thought: 1) the denigration of political autonomy, 2) the depoliticization of ‘personal’ problems, 3) the submissive consumer-citizen, and 4) as I addressed previously – statism. While individualism remains an important tenet of neoliberal thought, personal political autonomy is significantly changed through what Habermas calls “a normatively diminished conception of the person” (cited in Brown 2006:703).

The neoliberal subject maintains its private autonomy, but this is an autonomy that

³ And I do mean *loosely*, because here I am making a completely arbitrary distinction based loosely on the modern term ideology, for lack of a way to better indicate the elements of this discourse that apply to the things we do that are/were to some people, non-economic.

consists of property rights, consumption, and security (Brown 2006:703). Rights to participate in public legislation and self-regulation are minimized (ibid.). In Deleuzean terms, the neoliberal subject is *moral*, but not *ethical*. The depoliticization of personal problems entails the replacement of public and social solutions with consumption practices:

bottled water as a response to contamination of the water table; private schools, charter schools, and voucher systems as a response to the collapse of quality public education; anti-theft devices, private security guards, and gated communities (and nations) as a response to the production of a throwaway class and intensifying economic inequality. (Brown 2006:704)

Thus, while the individual is the primary neoliberal unit, they are responsible for choices among pre-determined options, usually driven by the private sector – and this is what Brown means by “the production of the consumer-citizen” (ibid.:703). Citing Foucault, Brown suggests that the proliferation of choice only furthers the possibilities of governance for subjects within neoliberal statism, which affirms my previous discussion of the necessity of the state as part of a neoliberal system; through the proliferation of non-subversive choice, it limits actual potential for truly radical action, and, as such, supports the domination of the market and elitist values.

And so...

The following chapter will begin with a brief consideration of neoliberalism’s effect on education both generally, and in Ontario, specifically. Following this I will examine selected examples from *political*, *media*, and *public* discourse surrounding the education labour disputes in Ontario from February 2012-2014. In this way, I will

explore how ‘truth’ is constructed through “political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media)” (Foucault [1977b] 2010:73) as well as “political debate and social confrontation (‘ideological’ struggles)” (ibid.). What I am calling *political discourse* can be broadly understood as the rhetorical strategies embodied in the oral and textual contributions of Ontario’s governing Liberal Party, as well as the response of politicians from both opposition parties (Conservative and New Democratic). Political discourse will thus be analysed through an examination of overtly polemic debates regarding negotiations with teachers in the Ontario legislature, as well as then-premier Dalton McGuinty’s infamous YouTube address.

My analysis of media and public discourse will involve two articles from four of Ontario’s most widely read newspapers: *The Toronto Sun*, *The National Post*, *The Toronto Star*, and *The Globe and Mail*. Although online sources provide a fairly new supply of qualitative data, they will extend the analysis beyond official documents, reflecting what Comack and Bowness have called “public discourse” (2010). To this end, I have chosen to also critically examine reader responses to the above mentioned news articles contained in the ‘comments’ sections of each paper’s website. While many have noted that comments sections, and internet engagement in general, is a phenomenon that is largely skewed in the direction of white, male, affluent participants – at the very least those with relative power, who feel that they have the inherent right to speak – attempts will be made to partially mitigate this effect by seeking out voices that seem to work against the dominant narrative through either opinion or stated positioning or identity. Furthermore my analysis will seek to invoke the response of, at the very least,

academics who operate and exist outside of these frameworks of power; although, I will openly acknowledge that this is less than optimal, and that a later or more extensive analysis should ensure a more diverse assortment of voices.

Also, although posts on news websites can very clearly be accessed by anyone, I will be treating this, again publically available, data as if it was interview data, in order to ensure the privacy of those who may not understand the full implications of internet engagement. Therefore, while I will quote directly from these public comments, I will be changing screen names and will not be providing links to these pages in order to be extra-vigilant in the protection of human dignity and the support of ethical interaction with members of the public.

Chapter 3

“What Happened?”

What is this nothing that makes something happen? – Deleuze and Guattari
[1980] 1987:193

There’s no business like school business

So what impact does this proliferation of neoliberal rhetoric have on education? For our purposes, I would suggest that we can divide the results of neoliberalism’s influence on schooling into a few main themes: privatization of services; attempts to reduce, or at the very least freeze, teacher salaries; the orientation of pedagogy to private sector⁴ values such as rationalization, standardization and competition, and a renewed focus on education as something that produces *workers* as opposed to citizens, humans, or even intellectuals. Of course, this division is rhetorical, as all these elements work symbiotically to construct the essence of an appropriately neoliberal education.

The inevitable neoliberal shuffling which moves state funds out of public education, healthcare, and so on and into the support of both the private commercial sector and the very rich in the form of tax incentives and tax breaks results in a shortfall in education budgets, which encourages private sector involvement in public education and puts pressure on school boards to minimize teacher salaries. For many schools this has meant the privatization of custodial, food and counselling services (Davidson-Harden et al. 2009:55; Robertson 2008:14) as well as public/private sector partnerships

⁴ Read: capitalist

(Davidson-Harden et al. 2009; Kuehn 2008:55; Robertson 2008:13) and the increased commercialization of schooling. For instance, in a 2006 survey 32% of Canadian elementary schools reported the presence of advertising in and/or on school property and this number almost doubles in high schools (Canadian Teachers' Federation et al 2006:7). Such advertising can take the form of an exclusivity contract with a specific corporation (often Pepsi or Coke) or the distribution of branded learning materials. Corporations specializing in educational technology are increasingly involved in school funding and private/public ventures (Robertson 2008:15) – as in the case of a local school that ‘won’ a ‘partnership’ with a software company, in which the company provides said school with technological resources in exchange for *information on how students use educational technology*.

Teacher salaries are also an attractive target for those hoping to reduce education spending and merit pay is frequently proposed under the guise of the desire to create a more equitable, meritocratic system, where teachers are paid for ‘results’⁵ (Robertson 2008:14; Steensen 2008;) as opposed to “education and...experience” (Artuso 2013:1). However, in regions where teachers’ unions are firmly entrenched in the political landscape, governments have turned to alternative routes to promote “differential wages” (Robertson 2008:14) for teachers while supporting neoliberal public demand for increased *choice* in public education (see Kuehn 2008:57). In the United States and Canada this has meant a focus on Charter Schools – in the UK, City Technologies and

⁵ Read: grades

City Academies (ibid.) – where teachers have significantly less ability to negotiate (ibid.). In Latin America, this type of austerity has forced some teachers to obtain secondary employment (ibid.).

According to Davidson-Harden et al., the lens through which governments and populations view teachers has also changed with the incorporation of neoliberal rhetoric in education. Teachers were once understood as part of a “collective” (2009:62) and changes to education were often directly focused on improving their working conditions (ibid.). This was the responsibility of the government. However, the neoliberal fetishization of individualism has led to an increased emphasis on individual teachers as “the main ‘problem’ in education” (ibid.). Political rhetoric in both Canada and the United States, now focuses on the “‘need’ for increased professionalism”⁶ (ibid.) – meaning that “individual teachers themselves, need to be more carefully selected, trained, directed, evaluated, tested and controlled” (ibid.). The results of said training are meant to be evaluated based on student success on various standardized tests (ibid.:63).

This renewed focus on ‘results’ is an element of a larger incorporation of neoliberal values such as competition, rationalization and standardization into public schooling. Of course, as is usually the case, the meritocracy of ‘fair competition’ operates under the assumption that racism, classism, sexism, ableism, and so on are no longer relevant to the experience of children in Fukuyama’s neoliberal utopia. Increased

⁶ Although, as I will discuss later, ‘professionalization’ discourse has been part of discussions surrounding teachers for over a century now. However, if one remains cognizant of the *way* in which this particular discourse functions, one will see that it has, historically, been used to protect privilege and deny workers of all kinds various rights.

standardized testing promotes a culture of private sector-like competition between school boards, schools, and teachers (Robertson 2008:14; Kuehn 2008:58), leading, just as it has in the non-education world, to the stigmatization and neglect of schools in lower-income areas (Robertson 2008:23; Steensen 2008:45) and praise for schools that manage to extract exceptional test results from the children of parents with exceptionally high incomes. This discrepancy is heightened with the introduction of the above mentioned charter schools. In Canada's wealthiest province, Alberta, provincial funding of alternative schools has led to a noticeable decline in the number of students from families making over \$100 000 per year attending public schools (Davidson-Harden et al. 2009:54).

This type of development reflects a shift toward the figuring of the parent and student as education "consumers" who ought to be offered a choice between public and private avenues for education, with both receiving public support. Because charter schools are not prevented from charging tuition, whereas public education systems are premised on the idea of universal and free access, this development reflects a move toward social stratification in access to education... (Davidson-Harden et al. 2009:54)

Educating *workers* involves teaching the kinds of intellectual and behavioural competencies favoured by the economic sector.⁷ In many cases this is linked to the adoption of the above mentioned neoliberal values as part of a silent social curriculum proliferated within school communities (Hill 2009:5); however, it can also mean a fairly explicit focus on preparing students for specific positions within the capitalist workforce (see Grumet 1988:23). In many parts of Mexico, for example, this has meant a

⁷ Read: corporate and political elites

proliferation of publically funded technical colleges aimed at producing appropriate workers for foreign-owned factories (Rincones et al 2008). In Denmark, social sciences are no longer included in teacher education curriculums (Steensen 2008:44). Nor, your humble author is sad to report, are they accepted as teachables at many Canadian faculties of education – a fact that I would suggest speaks to the prolific nature of opinions such as that of our current prime minister, who famously stated that the aftermath of a catastrophic event was not the time to “commit sociology” (see Fitzpatrick 2013).

Of course, if one is educating workers in today’s global market place, one must necessarily teach some elements of critical thinking, lest the Global North lose its dominance in terms of higher paid, *creative* jobs. And innovation is privileged, in some cases, within specific confines. Thus, the job of teachers in the Global North is now “to develop efficient, creative, and problem-solving learners and workers for a globally competitive economy” (Robertson 2008:13) while demonstrating the extent to which they have done so through standardized testing (ibid.).

Collective bargaining and ‘standards’

Within Ontario, the proliferation of neoliberal values has meant a steady move towards increased standardization and rationalization since the 1970s. Teachers’ associations only attained legal collective bargaining rights in 1975 with the enactment of Bill 100. Prior to this, the standard for negotiation (like that of most public sector associations) had been *association-consultation*, allowing teachers and school boards to

consult “on matters of mutual interest” (Rose 2012:200). Under this model, interested parties would negotiate *informal* arrangements with few mechanisms for dispute resolution in the event of a breakdown in negotiations (ibid.). Teachers had been required to belong to one of five professional associations since 1944: Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA), the Association des Enseignantes et des Enseignants Franco-Ontariens (AEFO), the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF), Federation of Women Teachers’ Associations of Ontario (FWTAO), and the Public School Men Teachers’ Federation (PSMTF)⁸, which “focused on accreditation and professional development” (Sweeney 2013:123) but also consulted with local school boards. In the years leading up to the passing of Bill 100, negotiations between associations and school boards became increasingly tense and unproductive (ibid.:201): “The focal point of these disputes was teachers’ attempts to extend negotiations to include other working conditions, most notably pupil-teacher ratios” (ibid.). In 1970, the government appointed the Reville Commission to assess the viability of such negotiations; however, the results of this report were found unfavourable by both parties primarily based on its recommendation of compulsory arbitration as opposed to the right to strike (ibid.).

In 1975, Davis’s Conservative government passed Bill 100, the *School Boards and Teachers Collective Negotiations Act*, likely to avoid appearing ‘anti-union’ during an election year (Roberts, cited in Rose 2012:201). In addition to the right to strike, the

⁸ The latter two merged in 1998 to create the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO) (Sweeney 2013:123)

bill made issues like class size and teacher student ratios formally negotiable and created the Education Relations Commission (ERC), designed “to administer the law, to train and appoint third-party neutrals such as fact-finders and mediators, and to oversee and monitor bargaining” (Rose 2012:202). Negotiations remained local and un-centralized. The years following 1975 witnessed an increase in wages as well as improved class sizes and teacher-student ratios.

In 1993, Bob Rae’s New Democratic government created the Royal Commission on Learning (RCL) which presented a report in 1994, appropriately entitled: *For the Love of Learning*. Based in part on the recommendations of said report, the subsequent government created the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) in 1996, which remains a body that regulates testing, standardization, and performance in Ontario to this day, as well as the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) which acts as a professional regulatory and disciplinary body. For Joseph Rose, this development is evidence of a growing concern that Ontarians were paying for a “high-cost, low performance’ education” (2012:205).

Quality concerns were reflected in various performance indicators, for example, low graduation rates and deficiencies in literacy and numeracy skills...In order to meet the demand for a highly educated and skilled workforce, the province would have to reform its education system. (Rose 2012:205)

In this way, Rose stresses that “flagging public confidence in education” (2012:205) and governmental desire for increased control over education had been a developing element of political discourse since the early 1980s and therefore should not be seen as an area of concern specific to Conservative Governments (and by this he means the infamous Harris government of the later 1990s).

However, despite Rose's tactfulness, while this narrative regarding the need to "get one's money's worth" out of public education may not be limited to a specific political party or even one side of the conventional right/left dichotomy that supposedly shapes political discourse in this province and country, I believe that it *can* be situated with regard to a certain type of philosophico-politico-economic discourse. As one might suspect, this discourse is the neoliberal narrative discussed extensively above. It is hardly surprising that conventional political parties, regardless of whether or not they have the word *socialist* in their charters, will likely operate in a way that both constructs and coincides with a neoliberal emphasis on rationalization, standardization, and utilitarianism. Clara Morgan describes a more cynical interpretation of the events leading up to the creation of the RCL:

During the late 80s and early 90s there was a shift in the way we speak about education. Ontario's educational system came to be viewed as 'in crisis.' More specifically, the public reacted to the media's reports on how poorly Ontario's children were doing on international standardized tests (Gidney 1999). Against this backdrop, Ontario's political parties were vying for dominance. In 1986, after 30 years of Conservative rule, a Liberal Government came to power in Ontario led by David Peterson. It was defeated shortly afterwards by the New Democratic Party (NDP) in 1990. The NDP responded to the public outcry on education... (Morgan 2006:129)

As we shall see later, teachers are often effective scapegoats in times of political turmoil. Political attacks on teachers offer an opportunity to appear just anti-worker enough to gain some approval from capitalists and just anti-elitist enough to impress workers and many of the people who would usually advocate for unionization and workers' protections – the perfect balance of 'fiscal responsibility' and 'folksy common-sense.'

Professionalism, Austerity, and Centralization

Since the 1990s, governments of both left and right wing dispositions have contributed to a process of centralizing teachers' wage negotiations (Sweeney 2013:121) as well as the general enactment of neoliberal policies. However, this trend has been more or less evident depending on the political rhetoric of those involved. In 1995, Mike Harris's Conservative government replaced that of Bob Rae and the New Democrats. While the NDP had traditionally been viewed as Canada's pro-labour party, the Ontario NDP government's attempts to pacify the business community through increased austerity and attacks on collective bargaining coupled with a recession, lead to a loss of support among both left and right wing voters in the 1995 election (Walchuk 2010). The Harris Conservatives were elected based on a platform of 'common sense revolution,' wherein they promised to slash government programs, social assistance, and taxes as part of a hard-right neoliberal agenda (ibid.:35). As one might expect, this attack on public services quickly focused on public education, most notably in 1996 when lawyer Leo Paroian released a report, commissioned by the Government, urging the elimination of teachers' right to strike (Rose 2012:207). In lieu of this, Paroian recommended that teacher negotiations should fall under the labour relations act, as opposed to Bill 100, eliminating fact-finding and compensation during work-to-rule campaigns (Rose 2012:206-7). Paroian also emphasized the necessity of placing control over working conditions such as class sizes, etc. in the hands of school boards (ibid.:207), operating on the principle that "professionalism and collective bargaining" (ibid.) were "incompatible" (ibid.).

This supposed ‘incompatibility’ connects to a larger discursive distinction between ‘workers’ and ‘professionals’ within Ontarian society. Definitions of professionalism are particularly fluid. However, professions have historically been associated with the collection of fees (see Dorros 1971:413) as opposed to wages. Within the context of capitalism, fees, by definition, recognize labour time and compensate individuals on the basis of such. Whereas wages allow employers to extract surplus by paying for labour power. Therefore, at least during the majority of the 20th century, ‘professionals,’ were not seen as ‘workers’ and benefitted from the material and cultural (status) privileges that this entailed. We can see the consequences of this division in Dorros’s 1971 definition of professionalism:

1. Concern for the welfare of society above the personal interests of members of the profession.
2. Command and application of a body of specialized and systematized knowledge and skills.
3. Control by practitioners of admission to the profession, standards of preparation, and performance of its members.
4. A high degree of autonomy in making decisions about how to perform one’s work.
5. A strong professional organization which enables the group to meet the above criteria, to achieve satisfactory conditions of work, and to advance and protect the welfare of its members. (414)

Here, Dorros, likely unintentionally, articulates a divide between stigmatized low-skill labour and ‘professional’ activity associated with the ‘knowledge,’ ‘standards,’ and ‘morals’ through which the bourgeoisie asserts its ‘superiority.’ In subsequent chapters, I will discuss the way in which this distinction has adjusted due to changes in the requirements of ‘work’ within North America. However, despite these changes, the characterization of *professionals* as middle-upper class individuals whose skill and knowledge has granted them autonomy over their work and *workers* as unskilled, low

status labourers is still recognizable in much of the commentary I will examine in the following section.

Tensions regarding what it meant to be either a ‘professional’ or ‘worker’ for teachers within Ontario’s public education system were hardly new. Although the first teachers’ unions gained bargaining rights in 1975, unsuccessful attempts at union formation were made before the beginning of the 20th century. In 1885, following a period of “economic depression” (Smaller 2004:79) that led to general “social unrest” (ibid.), and “industrial disputes” (ibid.), a group of teachers working in Perth County, Ontario, met to discuss the formation of a teachers’ union: “As a result of the ‘enthusiastic’ gathering, ‘it was resolved that a union be formed’, which would, among other things, provide material assistance, ‘protect one another as regards salary’, and aid in establishing unions in other counties” (ibid.). Within a few months, several teachers’ organizations across the province began to discuss the prospect of unionization (ibid.:80) and eventually, discussions shifted from the prospect of smaller, local unions to the development of a larger coalition representing teachers throughout the province (ibid.). Within the discussions surrounding this prospect, we can see traces of a presumed distinction between *workers’ job action* and *professionals’ responsibility to serve*, the remnants of which are still visible within the discourse surrounding Ontario’s teachers in their present state. At one meeting, a prospective member attempted to bridge this divide through his pointed confirmation (after referencing the great benefit of strikes to the working class) that refusal of work was hardly the purview of *workers*: ““When a lawyer refused to plead a case unless he was paid a certain fee, he struck”” (cited in Smaller

2004:81). The Ontario Teachers' Association, a province-wide association of various members of what Smaller has called the "educational elite" (ibid. 2004) (i.e. various upper-level educators, administrators, and agents of the state) was notoriously against the plan and several members utilized professionalization discourse to argue against the union movement or at least lessen its power by adjusting its mandate to follow that of a more traditional *professional association*: controlling "examining, licensing and entry into the ranks of teaching" (Smaller 2004:82-83). One such member was George Dickson, the president of Upper Canada College:

While taking up the language of the previous evening's meeting – "a brotherhood of teachers" and "a grand union of all teachers" – his proposal was quite different indeed from the one which the Educational Society was developing, and he took special pains to disparage any organization "savouring too much of trade unionism". After all, he pointed out, "teaching is something more than a trade . . . it is, or should be, a real vocation or mission . . . a ministry". Furthermore, he claimed, "no one now questions the right of the State to impose a rigorous supervision of the teachers' work." (Smaller 2004:82)

Although we cannot rightfully call this comment 'neoliberal' in the modern sense, it is interesting to see the early entanglement of capitalism and the state in Dickson's speech. We can see a hint of the type of capitalist zeitgeist that will develop over the next hundred years in this allusion to professionalization. However this comment operates not only within a discourse of teacher professionalism, but, furthermore, employs the notion of teaching as *calling*, *mission*, and *ministry*. This pseudo-religious conceptualization of teaching is, of course, related not only to a fairly direct attempt to maintain powerlessness through flattery, but given the weight of female representation in the teaching profession,

it is also the depiction of *women's* work as *natural*⁹, ephemeral and immeasurable and expected for nothing. Surely one cannot really focus on money when one's profession is a *calling* ordained by God, can they? We will see this again in anti-teacher comments in the following section, where members of the public fail to see why teaching should be considered a *real job*, much less a profession.

Dickson's speech also plays into the socialization of teachers by appealing to both the narrative of *love for children* and the ephemeral nature of their craft, as well as the assumed class distinction between 'professionals' and mere 'workers' which continues to confuse educational labour negotiations (Murphey 2008:75-76). Concerns over 'worker' identities as antithetical to 'professional' status was a main reason why secondary school teachers began the process of unionization later than their elementary school counterparts (Smaller 2004:78). The necessity for secondary teachers to have attended university meant that many of them were likely from a higher class background (*ibid.*) and that those who were originally less privileged had effectively become part of a higher class community via their educational and vocational status (*ibid.*). This status differential was likely compounded by the association between female teachers and younger grades: "Notions of femininity and masculinity were taken up, not just as discursive categories in educational writing about pedagogy, but as organizing principles for a gender division of labour in teaching. In this division, women were overwhelmingly concentrated in the lower grades of elementary schools" (Dehli 1994:200). We can see the perpetuation of

⁹ natural and supernatural being, within hetero-patriarchal discourse, part of a similar trajectory of classification, as both exist outside of the *real* world, the *public* world – the world of male production.

this 'status' differential today, in the pay (and gender) disparity between elementary and high school teachers.

The idea that teachers are *above* unionization is recognizable in the rhetoric of one of the period's top education journals, which stressed that unionizing to "lead to an improvement in salaries" (Educational Weekly, cited in Smaller 2004:85) would "supply a 'lack of professional honour'" (ibid.): "Teachers are too well educated, and too well informed generally, and too independent in their opinions and habits, to form strong associations for purposes other than educational." (ibid.:84). Of course, this statement also makes a claim as to the superiority of teachers' *individualistic* natures.

Smaller (2004) suggests that the elite/government-led push for an *association* was most likely a "red herring...allowed to float only so long as it was useful in drawing attention and support away from a much more radical concept [of unionization]" (89).

By the late 1880s, the Ontario government had already granted powers of professionalization to some groups of workers (doctors, lawyers, etc.) and had already begun...some accommodation with labour unions...Teachers, it would seem, were not to be allowed space in either sphere. Once again, we are left to speculate as to whether their very special role in socializing future citizens was too important, and too sensitive, for state officials to allow any dilution of its own power and control over the agents of this process. (ibid.:90)

For Smaller, the Harris government's creation of the OCT is similar to the 1885 government's interest in a *college of precepts* – type association. In 1996, the Conservatives argued that "teachers had finally achieved full "professional' status" (ibid.:91):

It would be controlled by teachers themselves, and its existence would ensure that the teaching "profession" would be encouraged to engage in the "professional" learning and development needed to ensure the "efficiency"

purportedly needed for this newly restructured education system. To be sure, this legislated “professional autonomy” was something which teacher union leaders in Ontario (like their predecessors in the nineteenth century) had been advocating for years, and when the announcements were first made a significant majority of them applauded these steps. (ibid.:90-91)

However, as with earlier attempts by state capitalists to placate teachers, “government-appointed representatives would dominate this body. (In fact, the ultimate protection of state interests would be guaranteed by an additional section in the legislation which requires this board to enact, under penalty of law, any request made by the Minister of Education!)” (ibid.). This foray into history shows the continuity of the connection between teacher ‘professionalism’ and romantic notions of altruism, utilized by the capitalist Ontario state to limit radicalism and encourage worker subordination.

In 1997, Ontario’s Conservative government passed Bill 104, which greatly reduced the number of school boards and trustees and created a separate French language school board, and Bill 160, which gave the government the ability to extensively regulate teachers’ working conditions, centralized school funding, eliminated school boards’ abilities to control property taxes, and placed teacher negotiations under the *Labour Relations Act* (Sweeney 2013:124). This led to a two week strike and various forms of labour unrest during subsequent rounds of bargaining over the next six years (ibid.).

The election of Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals in October 2003 was partially based on a promise to end labour strife within the education sector (Shilton 2012:234). While repealing much of the previous government’s most controversial legislation, the new government showed “no interest in repealing the keystone of the Harris-era centralizing reforms: central control of education and funding, reflected in the provincial education

funding formula” (Shilton 2012:235). While collective agreements were formally negotiated between local school boards and teachers’ unions, the government of Ontario held Provincial Discussion Tables (PDTs) in 2004: ostensibly ‘informal’ conversations between the province’s teachers’ unions, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association (OCSTA), the Association franco-ontarien des conseil scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC) the Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA), and government representatives. 2004 negotiations went smoothly, likely based on the government’s desire to prove their ability to bring about labour peace and the availability of a sizable funding package (ibid.).

In 2008, education minister Kathleen Wynne, who would later become premier, initiated PDTs involving school board associations, unions, and local school board representatives. According to ETFO, these discussions were presumed to be voluntary, as they had been in 2004 (ETFO 2012a); however, in an effort to incentivize centralized bargaining, the Ministry of Education (MoE) stipulated that a penalty of 2% salary reduction would be incurred by any union unable to come to an agreement by November 30th. (Sweeney, McWilliams, and Hickey 2012:255). Both OECTA and AEFO managed to reach agreements with their respective employers’ larger representatives. OSSTF began negotiations with local boards and was involved in a PDT in mid-November, coming to an agreement before the end of the month. All boards except one managed to meet an extended January 31st deadline for local ratification (ibid. 256). ETFO, however, was unable to come to such an agreement based on OPSBAs demands that their “members...attend more meetings after school, provide 100 minutes more supervision

time each week and relinquish their control over some preparation time to the principal” (ETFO 2012b). They also claimed that OPSBA lacked the “legal right” (ibid.) to bargain and create a valid contract with the union. This was, technically, an issue, since OPSBA did not have “formal authority” (Sweeney, McWilliams, and Hickey 2012:259) to implement agreements at the level of local school boards. In fact, PDT agreements merely stipulated that the school boards’ umbrella organization and unions would “‘actively promote the adoption and implementation’ of the terms of the PDT Agreement into local collective agreements” (Shilton 2012:236) and led to some conflicts between those set forth in centralized agreements and terms previously negotiated between local school boards (ibid.:236-7). Following PDTs, ETFO attempted to negotiate with local school boards, but was clear that offers such as those tabled by OPSBA would not be accepted (Sweeney, McWilliams, and Hickey 2012:256). The government had suggested that local negotiations might be the best strategy for ETFO in its quest to maintain prep time (Shilton 2012:236). However, Shilton suggests that both the union and government “knew this would be futile; unless the point was conceded and funded at the central table, local boards would simply not have the money to pay” (ibid.). Subsequently, ETFO advised that they would be unwilling to negotiate with OPSBA in the future (ETFO 2012a). Notably, the final agreement was produced by the MoE and presented to OPSBA and ETFO; however, it was announced to the media first, as a way of putting pressure on ETFO (Sweeney, McWilliams, and Hickey 2012:256).

The Public Sector Union at the End of the Universe

The 2012/13 dispute between the Ontario government and the province's public school teachers played out at the intersection of governance, affect, and economics. In early 2012, Ontario's Liberal government began negotiations with teachers' unions in advance of their August 31 contract expiration. However, Ontario's newly re-elected Liberals were now faced with a very changed political environment. In the wake of an election plagued by the spectre of economic uncertainty – epitomized by a near-default in Greece and a damning report on government spending (see Drummond 2012) – the government began teachers' contract negotiations seemingly eager to prove that they were ready to make serious cuts to public sector spending. Although, the aforementioned report did explicitly warn against attempting to reduce the deficit through public sector wage freezes (Drummond 2012:367). Furthermore, many have suggested (see Bisson 2012:3291) that upcoming by-elections with the potential to turn a large minority into a majority government provided the impetus for McGuinty to engage in the populist, anti-labour rhetoric that had worked for Harris.

On February 22, 2012, the government initiated a PDT in which it tabled a proposal stipulating that the discussion would need to be limited by parameters such as a complete wage freeze, including a halt to movement within the currently negotiated grid based on experience or qualification upgrades; a total of six paid sick days per year; and the elimination of banked sick days for those boards to which this applied. ETFO representatives were also disappointed by the government's decision to send private sector lawyers as their representatives, particularly ones who seemed to have little

knowledge or experience with the education sector (ETFO 2012c). When initial discussions proved unsatisfactory, the government returned to its 2008 tactics by posting a video on YouTube in which the affable ‘education premier’ asked teachers to “do their part” (McGuinty 2012) to create a “brighter future, full of opportunity for our children” (ibid.) by helping to eliminate the deficit: “Balancing the budget means making choices. Our government’s choice is to protect the classroom. To ensure our children get what they need...to reach their full potential...ensuring our future economic growth” (ibid.). Note that the government is *protecting* the classroom – not from the ‘terrorists’ of neoliberal rhetoric in the early 2000s, but from unions, from *teachers*: fellow citizens who, we are meant to feel, might not have *our* children’s best interests at heart. This message connects teachers’ lack of political cooperation with a lack of concern for children, and ultimately, selfishness. Also note the patronizing tone in McGuinty’s ‘explanation’ of how *budgeting necessitates making choices*. Furthermore, he hints at the position of children within the capitalist imaginary of an ever-distant future (which I will discuss later). The state is clear that it wants to help *its* children as part of a larger economic strategy where the province’s prosperity depends on its supply of human capital.

While OECTA, the Association of Professional Student Services Personnel (APSSP), and the Association des Enseignantes et des Enseignants Franco-Ontariens and AEFO managed to settle before the August 31 deadline, OSSTF and ETFO did not. On their website, ETFO states that the decision to leave PDT negotiations was based on a

lack of ground rules, the government's austerity demands, and a lack of trust for any agreement negotiated with OPSBA (ETFO 2012c).

Tensions rose with the signing of Bill 115, or the "Putting Students First Act," circumventing negotiations between teachers and local school boards by imposing contract details and removing teachers' ability to strike. Using the language of neoliberal austerity, Bill 115 promised to "encourage responsible bargaining and to ensure that collective agreements and individual employment contracts contain appropriate restraints on compensation" (*Putting Students First Act*, Bill 115 2012:3, emphasis added). In response to the bill, unions implemented rolling strikes and advised members to abstain from extracurricular activities. Although this type of 'work to rule' campaign is hardly uncommon within the context of education sector negotiations, a public controversy ensued.

Love is the new asceticism

During the labour disputes of 2012/13 the rhetoric of those arguing against teachers frequently focused on teachers' *responsibility* to children and their supposed lack of *care* for the youth of Ontario. Of course, as with earlier neoliberal interventions in education, concern over the 'quality' of instruction was a popular theme among populist and political sentiments alike:

Ontario youth deserve much better education for the mega \$'s being paid by the taxpayers (our deficit lenders will stop financing an inferior education system run by spoiled teachers!). (Rickhappy, commenting on Caplan 2013)

Every one of those teaching jobs could be filled by another qualified person tomorrow. If anyone wishes to claims [sic] these current bums are so valuable,

why is it that kids graduating today can't add, subtract, spell or read!?' (Danny Confetti, commenting on Alphonso and Hammer 2013)

However, while many Ontarians agreed with the teachers' unions and their right to protest Bill 115 as an attack on unions in general and public sector workers specifically, public and media support was largely centred on teachers' positions as caregivers and carers. Pro-teacher sentiments focused on teachers' affection for students and their attempt to fight *for* them. The discourse surrounding both sides of the debate involved highly provocative discussions of which group (teachers or the government) *cared* more for children. Of course, austerity measures would negatively affect teachers. However, discussions of money, or even job satisfaction were usually dismissed as *selfish* concerns by those on both sides of the dispute:

Many of them could make more money doing something else but they love teaching, they love the children and I think they love the results of their work...No teacher in Ontario is seeking an increase in their wages, and that has to be fundamentally made clear—not one of them. Not one union, not one teacher has stood there and demanded a wage increase...They [teachers] intend to be at work and they will be at work, whether this bill passes or not, on September 4, because they believe that much in the children they are teaching and the families in Ontario. (Prue 2012:3289)

In the comments section of one Globe and Mail article, GoToronto, claims to have “no respect for teachers any more” (commenting on Alphonso and Hammer 2013): “They are *self absorbed* [sic], *self centred* [sic] and *really do not care* about their pupils. It's all about 'me' (ibid., emphasis added).

Of course, many commenters tried to defend teachers against this slight:

That seems like a bit of a blanket statement there. Do you really think most teachers “don't care about their pupils” or did you post a little too hastily? (Jack Strong, commenting on Aphonso and Hammer 2013)

...I don't think the teachers care a sod about your lack of “respect” for them. They have enough to contend with the “all about me” parents that they have to deal with every day. (Alwaysnew, commenting on Alphonso and Hammer 2013)

Some even managed to combine these pro-teacher sentiments with misogynistic vitriol:

Oh please. I hear the same dumb thing said by ignorant woman who think that all men are arrogant, sexist and uncaring. This is just a heartless attack on ALL teachers when there are plenty of *caring and hardworking* ones whom my children have greatly benefited from... (uhoh23, commenting on Alphonso and Hammer 2013, emphasis added)

However, as per the above, pro-teacher comments from a variety of sources emphasized the importance of teachers’ care for students and unconditional devotion to their work:

...I VOLUNTEERED AS I LOVED WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE. There was NOT A MONTH in the year in which, like many teachers, I was NOT involved in “extra curricular” [sic] activities; some months 2 & a few 3... (Smartie, commenting on Alphonso and Hammer 2013)

I drop my kids off at school every morning. They are the most precious things that I have in my life...I know you feel the same way, Madam Minister, and so does any good parent, godparent, step- parent, *anyone who minds children* in this province. We trust...that the teachers who are there *are not only going to teach them*, of course—that is their job—but they’re going to protect them, they’re going to challenge them, they’re going to *love them* and help them and push them. (Natyshak 2012:3296-7, emphasis added)

Teachers’ own unquestioned assumptions that they should care for their students in culturally dictated ways were used *against* them by the very people to whom they were trying to prove their worth:

...one of the things that I’m really concerned about is that I see this as purely political posturing right now, and I disagree with this totally. Is it about the kids? Are they really making it about the kids? I don’t think so. I think they’re really making it about their unions, the union bosses, their union buddies, and yet they’re trying to come down tough on this. I just have some really serious concerns. We, as the PC caucus, want to put some amendments to this particular bill to really give it legs. Right now, it’s a bill without legs, as we see it. Again,

we are concerned about the kids of Ontario. (Nicholls 2012:3292, emphasis added)

My favorite is when anyone questions their absurd pension and inflated salaries they always come back with “think of the children”. Makes me sick! *They don't even care about the children* they just want to live like fat cats off the backs of the taxpayer! (Downwithtaxes, commenting on Alphonso and Hammer 2013, emphasis added)

...they'll [teachers will] snivel about how hard their job is, and we just don't understand (even though we've seen them in 'action' and we have friends that teach). Oh, and then they'll whinge *about loving the children while holding them hostage for their union demands.* (BrilliantOne, commenting on Walkom 2013, emphasis added)

As in the above, *the child* maintained an unsurprisingly central place in political and public debates. References to teachers 'holding children hostage' were plentiful:

I do not understand public service unions....elitists [sic] who seem to enjoy having the power to hold populations, including children, hostage. (Jimmy, commenting on Stinson 2012)

Parents just want their children to do well in school. They want some stability and they don't want to constantly have their children held hostage to this. (Wilson, quoted in Blizzard 2012)

This very well may be a fight between labour and the boss but the teachers unions have hindered their cause by *having students be the collateral damage.* It's a heavy handed move by a powerful union with well paid [sic] members against *powerless students*, that is a bad PR move and does not garner sympathy as it would if hotel and garment workers were involved. Like employers and right wing governments who flex their power with enthusiasm, the teachers unions have done likewise because they can. (Billy Brian, commenting on Walkom 2013, emphasis added)

At a considerable sacrifice [sic], we opted to educate our children in private schools. There were a number of issues that drove this decision including political correctness to the extreme, liberal propropaganda [sic] that teachers were passing on to students [sic] and most important, the willingness of teachers and their unions to hold children hostage all for their own personal gains. (Racer3, commenting on Blizzard 2012)

...maybe next time and there will be a next time, “ETFO” don't walk away from the table!!!! and [sic] hold the students hostage for what!!!! MORE MONEY, MONEY, MONEY!! (Dan J, commenting on Ferguson 2013)

Teachers work 9-3, get a great summer, benefits, pension etc. etc. They are overpaid, you only ever get a few good ones in school, and the ones who care about students, extra curricula's, sports, etc. aren't the ones who complain that they aren't allowed to cash in their unused sick days at the end of their run. They aren't the ones who do all the complaining and *hostage holding of our children* and extorting and the list goes on and on. BUT they are the ones the majority holds up as the average to justify their own greed and entitlement. (Umph, commenting on Hopper 2013, emphasis added)

Concern over teachers' poor treatment of students was also common among traditionally leftist personalities (or those professing traditionally leftist views). For example, after criticizing the Liberal exploitation of “anti-teacher sentiments,” (Caplan 2013:para3) Gerald Caplan, a long time New Democrat, worries that teachers will “continue to squander their moral influence by refusing to restore students' extra-curricular activities” (ibid.:para6). He refers to teachers' refusal to perform volunteer extra-curricular activities as teachers “continuing to victimize their students” (ibid.:para9). Caplan intimates a clear link between *moral* authority and publicly perceived *altruism*; while this is not a strange position for a professed leftist, the political and popular traction of such an idea *is* strange, when measured against the prevalence of neoliberal individualist rhetoric. As we shall see in the following chapter, the idea of *goodness* as that which demands no compensation and thinks only of others is applied selectively in neoliberal society. Glorified self-interest is for men and the rich – not women and workers.

Furthermore, teachers were infantilized in a way similar to that which we see in misogynistic portrayals of women:

You've [teachers have] lost the respect of most of the province, and you won't get anywhere by continuing your public temper tantrum. (BrilliantOne, commenting on Walkom 2013)

And too [sic] whine about someone else having something and crying I want it too, shows they do spend time in a school yard. (Daltonlovestheunionvote, commenting on Artuso 2012)

You poor whining entitled babies have no idea how good you have it and it is those of us in the wealth creating sector who pay the taxes to pay you. (RyanBoyle, commenting on Hopper 2013)

We can compare these statements to much of the current misogynistic commentary coming from 'men's rights' groups, as per this example from a popular anti-feminist hate site, A Voice For Men:

...while we were insisting that boys learn real life skills, girls got a different message. Actually, they got the same message that they'd been getting since birth. Namely that squawking loud enough will get you what you want. That is why that while boys your age grew into manhood, you just got older, hairier and more irritating. (Elam 2010)

The suggestion that individuals in the "wealth creating sector" (RyanBoyle, commenting on Hopper 2013) are *paying* teachers' salaries (despite that fact that teachers, of course, also pay taxes and contribute to the economy in a myriad of ways) is uncannily similar to a common misogynist trope suggesting that women need to be more appreciative of everything that men have 'given' them (culture, protection, science, art, etc.):

Harnessing men's utility can be witnessed from the erection of Stonehenge to the Roman Empire to the moon landings. Cures for diseases and vaccines to prevent them happened from the intensely intelligent actions of the human male. Exploring new territories and engineering the transport to send people to new places has changed the world, almost all of it through risk and hardship borne by men. Men have driven civilization forward since we first walked away from the African savannah. Men's blood, sweat, tears and sacrifices are the fuel rods that have always driven the big machine of our society. [Women] Conditioning men, training them to do that, was necessary. (Elam and Wright 2015)

As I will discuss in the following chapter, this link between misogynistic and anti-teacher sentiments is hardly accidental, and is, rather, a consequence of the link between patriarchy and capital.

In some cases, discussions of teachers as ‘fat cats’ living on exorbitant salaries seemed to mimic anti-capitalist sentiment:

...watch this scum slink back to the classrooms like the 1% scurry to Grand Caymen [sic]. (Popquiz, commenting on Alphonso and Hammer 2013)

While the position of Ontario teachers as a relatively privileged group no doubt adds to the vitriol surrounding their work, as some commenters suggested, there remains a disconnect between rage against so-called exorbitant teacher wages and larger excesses in the private sector:

...Greece, the EU and U.S. are in debt because of lack of bank regulation, not paying for services that all citizens benefit from. Only reason Canada was not hit as hard with the global recession is that the banks were regulated while Harper was on a minority leash. (WeAreTheMiddleClass88, commenting on Ferguson 2013)

Often, this double standard was directly linked to teachers’ position as *public sector* workers:

...all public sector contracts need to be adjusted. However, that isn’t because I’m bitter. I’m ecstatic that I’m not part of the public sector but I am bitter that an obscene portion of my salary is confiscated from me to enrich a privileged class of citizens...Public sector workers are a burden on the private sector. The public sector doesn’t produce capital... (neverendingtax, commenting on Caplan 2013)

This sentiment is particularly inaccurate in Ontario, where the public sector can more accurately be described as ‘supporting’ the private (Sweeney 2013:123):

For example, motor vehicle manufacturing expanded significantly after 1965, due to the combined impact of free trade in automobiles and related components with

the US and the inception of universal publicly-funded health care. The latter gave Canadian subsidiaries of Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler advantages in labour costs relative to their US counterparts... (ibid.)

Of course, the link between anti-public sector sentiment, union busting in general, and neoliberalism is fairly clear. Yet some commenters approached matters from a different angle, noting that teachers' work was not *real* work:

...dont [sic] be absurd! Many of us in the private sector work lway [sic] past 9-5 without overtime pay. That's because we are ADULTS not spoiled, selfish people who cannot get thru [sic] a year without [sic] 13 weeks holidays. Enough already. If teaching is so dreadful, *get a real job*. (barkvsbite commenting on Alphonso and Hammer 2013)

Poor old Teachers. Useless slugs in todays [sic] world. Want to live in the past of other [sic] who were great and just suck the life out of Ontario. *Get a real job and motivation to be a real person who contributes to society* instead of a financial drain on our government! (2dftr, commenting on Blizzard 2012, emphasis added)

I was just at the zoo with my family... watching spoiled brat teachers laughing it up and working 'hard?'... while the students threw crap all over the place... if a 21 y.o [sic] part time fill in can do the job just as easily that means 'replaceability'... (Optimoun, commenting on Ferguson 2013)

It's a regarding [rewarding?] job that many people would love do and could do. It mustn't be forgotten that the majority of people work in dreadful jobs where there's no reward other than a pay cheque. (OscarOscar, commenting on Ferguson 2013)

As I will discuss later, the idea that teaching is not really *work* mirrors the discussion of women's work in the home and childcare and care work in general as natural, unskilled, and undeserving of compensation.

In comments like those of *barkvsbite* we also have a clear example of Wendy Brown's undemocratic citizen. *Barkvsbite* accepts the absurdity of asking for more reasonable conditions for private sector workers. For them, neoliberalism is the default

setting of all political action, creating a type of apathetic anger, triggered by the possibility of *taking* something from those who demand more equitable treatment.

Further evidence of this can be seen in the second half of *neverendingtax*'s comment, where they pre-emptively defend their use of the word 'confiscated':

[v]oting doesn't count because it's been shown that an individual's vote is statistically meaningless unless it's the deciding vote which is extremely unlikely to happen. I'm not downplaying the intrinsic value of public sector workers but they're [sic] wages are literally obscene. The public sector is the only industry where the employees tell the employers (taxpayers) what they want in salary and benefits. It's such a farce. (commenting on Caplan 2013)

Interestingly enough, much of the rhetoric surrounding teachers' moral failures was directed towards their neglect of a specific *type* of child:

...in *my son*'s school there were a lot of children that didn't read, write or speak English so the Teacher [sic] had to focus on them so the *children born here* (sorry if that sounds rude) got left out, I however spent a lot of time with my son and he did well in school. I volunteered at the school and helped out with the kids that needed the help. It was actually the teacher that told me that he was going to leave at the end of the year because he can't do the job he had to do because he was spending too much time baby sitting [sic] kids that couldn't understand him. (Ontoc67, commenting on Blizzard 2012, emphasis added)

Those who did show concern for racialized and/or marginalized children, often referenced the necessity of public education as an agent of cultural assimilation. We can read this discursive connection between education as an instrument of 'advancement' and assimilation in Michael Prue's pro-teacher statement criticizing Bill 115 in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

I have always thought that teachers and support workers give of themselves in such a tremendous way in order not only to help the societies in which they live, but generally to help those who are the most marginalized, whether that be through poverty, through racism, through lack of opportunity, or more recently in the Canadian context of those who are newcomers to Canada and who may not

understand one of the official languages or may be unfamiliar with the cultures they find here. (2012:3288)

In drawing attention to Prue's statements I do not wish to minimize the potentially positive impact of those in the teaching profession on the racialized or marginalized among us. Clearly, as I will discuss later, good education can provide tools to aid students in overcoming society's inequalities. However I believe that we must be attentive to the way in which the idea of 'education' remains an important aspect of nationalist pride and the idea of 'Canadian culture' as something into which 'others' can and should be assimilated.

In this chapter I have detailed the events leading up to the educational labour disputes of 2012-13 as part of a larger trend towards the neoliberalization of education. Discourses of 'professionalism' and 'care' have helped to further this neoliberal political agenda. Although these discourses are sometimes contradictory, both were utilized in the late 20th and early 21st century to suggest that teachers should accept lower wages and poor working conditions in order to adhere to a neoliberal vision of altruism. Within the public discourse outlined above, the necessity of teacher *altruism* is continuously invoked in ways that mimic the societal focus on women's duty to children as well as 'the nation' as a settler-colonial entity. In the following chapter I will examine the intersection of neoliberalism, hetero-patriarchy, and colonialism in the discursive connection between teachers and selfless care. That is, I will examine the ways in which discourses surrounding teaching in Ontario enact selfless care as a form of control in the quest for a highly skilled but generally compliant neoliberal workforce. Following this I will

examine the potential for teaching relationships that subvert this relationship between state and corporate control as a method of liberation.

Chapter 4

Analysis

What counts is that love itself is a war machine endowed with strange and somewhat terrifying powers. – Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987:278

(Not So) Strange Bedfellows: Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism

So why, in the context of a neoliberal discursive formation, do we witness this pushback against the idea of teachers doing their jobs, not out of some sort of natural affection for other people's children, but as a way of using their own human capital to obtain as much compensation as possible? How can I reconcile the hegemony of a discursive formation steeped in the language of 'freedom' and 'individualism' with the ardent social conservatism with which it is so often associated? As Wendy Brown (2006) asks:

How does a project that empties the world of meaning, that cheapens and deracinates life and openly exploits desire, intersect one centered on fixing and enforcing meanings, conserving certain ways of life, and repressing and regulating desire? How does support for governance modeled on the firm and a normative social fabric of self-interest marry or jostle against support for governance modeled on church authority and a normative social fabric of self-sacrifice and long-term filial loyalty, the very fabric shredded by unbridled capitalism? (692)

The coalescence between 'market' and 'traditional' values is hardly intuitive (Apple 2006:21). Unlike neoliberalism, neoconservatism is an essentially moralistic political project defined by "an overtly avowed power drive...angst about the declining or crumbling status of morality within the West, and by a concomitant moralization of a

certain imaginary of the West and its values” (Brown 2006:697). Neoconservatives promote the superiority of “older forms of family life, where women occupy themselves with children, cooking and the church, and men take on the burdens of manliness. They see in war and the preparation for war the restoration of private virtue and public spirit” (Norton cited in Brown 2006:697). However, it would seem that the neoliberal ‘market’ should have little concern over whether money being spent on lavish weddings comes from a queer couple or a straight one, whether children are being taught about contraception in schools as long as they are becoming productive workers, etc. Yet within Canada and the United States, Conservatives and Republicans seem able to market themselves as the parties of wealthy entrepreneurs *and* people who claim to adhere to a philosophy that suggests serving God and money are mutually exclusive (Christianity).

Of course, Weber provides us with an initial explanation, but the Protestant work ethic can only take us so far. Today’s capitalists seem to have little patience for asceticism and the gospel of prosperity seems to gain more popular traction with each financial meltdown. Within Canada, Porter (2012) suggests that neoliberalism may create a “social vacuum that provides fertile ground for the development of neoconservatism” (28). This certainly fits with Giroux’s assessment of the public sphere under neoliberalism. The steady, neoliberal attack on social programs creates the necessity of having non-state institutions pick up the slack, and, when it is impossible to exclusively utilize the private sector, this task usually falls to ‘the family’ (ibid.:27; Braedley 2006:215; Luxton 2010:163-164). Notably, this usually involves an effort to situate the private (domestic) sphere as the exclusive location of legitimate care (Porter 2012:27).

Brown, however, questions the legitimacy of viewing neoconservatism as simply addressing problems created by neoliberalism (Brown 2006:702). For her, while each represents a distinct discursive positioning in its own right, the combination of the two creates “a new political form, a specific modality of governance and citizenship” (ibid.). By undermining democratic and social protections against authoritarian impulses, neoliberalism allows for the proliferation of a type of neoconservatism that situates responsibility within the individual, while creating subjectivities predicated on anti-democratic and submissive impulses (Brown 2006). In this way, while she doesn't specifically say that she views the neoliberal/conservative chimera as a discourse, her assertion that it goes beyond the guise of ideology in creating a specific type of de-democratized subject sounds relatively Foucauldian. The neoliberal/conservative subject, then, is not duped by a type of superior power obfuscating the path of poor, working and middle class people to realizing their own interests. It is a way of being and thinking that constitutes subjects in particular ways. Of course, this leaves would-be revolutionaries and reformers in a difficult position, namely one of accepting that there is no false consciousness to work against, but a fundamental incompatibility between the types of subjects produced within late capitalist North America and the type of democratic imaginaries envisioned by some on the far left. Importantly though, this does not mean that education, while often conflated with ideological indoctrination, has no place in the constitution of subjects or in the fight to re-envision more radical subjectivities. The way we think about teachers and their approach to students says a great deal about the way said students will come to understand themselves as subjects and, as such, makes radical

and anti-oppressive pedagogies fundamentally important in terms of positive pro-social change.

Of course, the connection between capitalism and the maintenance of a strict, gendered, public/private divide is hardly new. Marxist feminists have been highlighting the problematic connection between women's work within the home and the possibility of industrialized labour for years. For one thing, the industrialized proletarian workforce of the late 19th and early 20th century necessitated a group dedicated to the reproduction of workers in order to keep wages sufficiently low. Female subordination within the home can also provide an outlet for male workers subordinated by rigid hierarchies within the workplace (Hartsock [1974] 1998:24) – an expression of dominance within the private realm which allows workers to further repress feelings of insecurity and domination experienced within the public sphere, helping to maintain worker docility and compliance (ibid.). Furthermore, some have suggested that capital required the population of ostensibly 'unemployed' housewives in order to create pressure on workers to accept lower wages (Hartsock [1974] 1998:23; O'Brien 1981:202; Armstrong and Armstrong 1990:80). Conservative emphasis on the heterosexual household with its *ostensible* connection to reproduction also contributes to the production of workers incentivized to accept whatever they can get in terms of wages and treatment:

Family relationships structured in "acceptable" ways act as a stabilizing force for the economic system as a whole. Economic dependence of several people on one wage earner (male or female) and wages so low that both parents must work to support their children are useful resources for capitalism. As one manufacturer pointedly remarked, he prefers married women, "especially those who have families at home dependent on them for support: they are attentive, docile, more so than unmarried females, and are compelled to use their outmost exertions to procure the necessities of life. (Hartsock [1974] 1998:23)

From this perspective, the link between patriarchal neoconservatism and neoliberalism appears far less spurious. I also have to wonder about the motivations of many companies who have happily joined the pro-gay rights bandwagon, provided, of course, that these ‘rights’ are enacted through ‘traditional’ marriage based on monogamy and childrearing. The gay (and straight!) couples gracing the glossy pages of Ikea’s catalogue tend to neglect any mention of polyamory. Unlike some Foucauldians I am not going to deny the possibility of any of these connections; rather, I think they all contributed, among other less ‘meaningful’ things to the development of capitalism in its current form. However, I do not believe that this prohibits capitalism from working outside of these terms – they simply provide fertile ground for the development of neoliberalism as we see it now.

In turn, capitalism and gendered divisions of labour create an atmosphere which devalues caring, affective, and emotional labour based on a marginalization of such concerns as both *feminine* and *private* (Hartmann [1981]1997; Hartsock [1976-1977] 1998:45; Hartsock [1983]1997; Nicholson [1985]1997). As Linda Nicholson ([1985]1997) argues:

if in capitalist society such activities as raising children, or nursing the sick had been as easily conducive to making a profit, as did become activities concerned with the production of food and objects, we might in turn believe that the manner in which human societies raise children or nurse their sick structures all other life activities in which they engage. (135)

In 1999, Paula England and Nancy Folbre used the term ‘care penalty’ to describe the wage gap between jobs involving some sort of face-to-face interpersonal interaction and other jobs involving similar skill levels. This trend seems to have continued into the 21st century (Folbre 2012:xi). Hochschild ([1983] 2012) uses the term *emotional labour* to

describe something similar to what England and Folbre would call 'care work': This type of "labor requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (7); most importantly, this performance can be "sold for a wage and therefore has *exchange value*" (ibid.). Jobs requiring workers to "perform personally for someone else" (Sennett and Cobb cited in Hochschild [1983] 2012:171) are seen as less prestigious: "A bartender is listed below a coal miner, a taxi driver below a truck driver" (ibid.). As Sennett and Cobb suggest, there seems to be a stigma amidst denizens of the West, against people whose "functions are felt to be more dependent on and more at the mercy of others" (ibid.). Hochschild suggests that this is due to the fact that women are more likely to perform service jobs (Hochschild [1983] 2012:171). I agree. Yet I think there is more going on here than simplistic misogyny.

Hochschild's analysis also links the denigration of service work to a larger cultural (read Western) pattern of class socialization. She suggests that middle class children are routinely reminded of the importance of their feelings: "'Your feelings count because you are (or will be) considered important by others'" (Hochschild [1983] 2012:159), while working class children are told the opposite: that their lack of import means their feelings will be ignored (ibid.). While both groups of children are told to 'manage their feelings,' only middle class and wealthy children receive the message that their feelings, regardless of their need to be hidden, should be valued and respected by others (ibid.). For those of us who have grown up in bourgeois homes where 'emotion' was something that 'other' people did, this need not necessarily ring untrue; if bourgeois

feelings are the only ‘important’ feelings, then the feelings of others, when expressed, are necessarily conspicuous. Here, emotion and care is further degraded as that done by classed (and *racialized*) others. This, of course, mirrors the general neglect of emotion within androcentric philosophy that feminists have been speaking against for years – Enlightenment Man’s critique of female hysteria repeated ad infinitum under the veil of *rationality*. Fittingly, neoliberalism situates itself perfectly within an ethics of rational utilitarianism.

Hence, a feminist critique of capitalism (and neoliberalism) must involve an attempt to redefine the parameters of which human actions we deem collectively *valuable*: “Feminism insists that ‘value’ is not exclusively an economic category, but an ethical, affective and genetic one... feminism presents and represents a fundamentally different experience of the relation of people and nature than that posed by male dualism” (O’Brien 1981:166). The materialist feminist project with which I would ultimately like to engage envisions a world of work which moves beyond the realm of *necessity* (see Hartsock [1976-1977] 1998:45). Of course, the patriarchal capitalist vision of work as “by definition something we cannot enjoy” (*ibid.*), is another striking component of the discourse surrounding teachers who so many claim *should* really *love* their jobs enough to do them with no thought to compensation. The very association of labour with a lack of enjoyment is itself a consequence of capitalist thought: “because of the perverted shape of work in patriarchal, capitalist society, we have forgotten that work is a central human activity, the activity through which the self-creation of human beings is accomplished” (*ibid.*:47). Hartsock suggests, following Marx, that work has become

something which separates us from others via “roles, status differences, and hierarchies” (ibid.). Collective ties are severed via the necessity of committing to individualism for the purposes of survival (ibid.:46).

Although I will suggest that this association is further problematized by the fact that it is very rarely enacted in discussions of the rich and otherwise powerful among us. Wall Street brokers and movie stars are wholeheartedly expected to love their work and be paid. So there is an important class/privilege distinction between how this expectation of work as drudgery is used politically and how it attaches itself to certain subjects like teachers who perform the type of work traditionally associated with women: “Patriarchy and capitalism work together to define ‘women’s work’ as suited only to creatures of limited talent and ambition; the sex segregation of the labour market ensures that women’s work will be especially dehumanizing” (Hartsock [1976-1977] 1998:47).

Classroom instruction in North America, especially at the elementary level and despite the surplus of men in positions of relative power and control as principals and consultants, has statistically been performed by women, and it continues to be devalued based on its connection to so-called private/feminine concerns. Hence, situating teachers within a 'post -modern/industrial/structuralist' conceptualization of 'labour' necessitates an examination of the complicating factors related to teachers’ positions as public sector employees within an increasingly, economized social field. While much has been written on immaterial, academic, intellectual and care labour (all of which are, in some ways, trans-subjective redefinitions of the same general concepts), my argument is that elementary school teachers occupy a unique position in that their affective labour entails

both intellectual privilege and denigrated ‘body work.’ Thus I will attempt to situate teaching within the post/autonomous Marxist discourse surrounding labour and its various incarnations in the late 20th and early 21st century, in order to position my analysis within a larger discussion of radical anti-capitalism in the post-Fordist era.

On the one hand, teachers enjoy the privilege of intellectual work, which can be viewed (I think, rightly) as wrapped within a bundle of class privilege and cultural capital (see Hartsock [1976-1977] 1998:51). However, elementary teachers belong to and identify with a variety of subject positions and also perform highly physical labour. Their care and affect, while sometimes similar to their counterparts in retail, higher education and high tech, is embodied, responsive, ultimately associated with mothering, and consequently abjection and misogyny. Therefore, these teachers represent a group that is at once privileged, while at the same time denigrated to the role of doing that which, within neoliberal socially conservative discourse, should be done in the home.

In this sense I am locked within a particularly aggressive internal conflict. On the one hand I want to defend the (sometimes excruciatingly) hard work of some of my favourite people – and, in reality, my own work – against accusations of ‘lazy summers’ and entitlements. Especially in elementary school, teaching is labour that demands constant vigilance which cannot be fathomed by those of us who are not air traffic controllers or emergency room nurses. I also cannot ignore the material and cultural privilege enacted through work of this kind. Yes, Gramsci’s organic intellectual can and does exist, but this does not mean that we can stop checking our privilege, and this is why there needs to be a nuanced appraisal of teaching as labour within a globalized economy.

I cannot in good faith, as a self-respecting member of *The Left*™, deny the intersectional nature of teaching or deny the resonance of viewing the *new proletariat* as workers of the Global South to whom all our *dirty work* is now exported. So there is an element of me that wants to stand up amid this talk of emotional labour (as one of my friends did recently) and ask why we are ignoring poverty and real *material* oppression in order to focus on the problems of a relatively elite group. My answer to myself lies in my faith in the value of interactions – of the art of living one’s life ethically in a way that helps to disrupt the currently dominant discourses about teaching, working, love and care, in a way that allows ‘us’ to reconceptualize our relationship to each other *and* ourselves as inherently free beings engaging in moments of association based on mutual consensuality as opposed to slaves of a larger hegemonic regime (left or right). This is the faith based part of what I offer here – the hope that orientation can make a difference, and that the affinities created between teachers, students, humans, semio-material entities will produce the love that can possibly save us from the neoliberal dismantling of key components of social being, including education.

Hardt and Negri are useful here in how they reconceptualize the relationship between teachers, states, and capital. As mentioned above, they emphasize the way in which the postmodern state expands its *control* while being increasingly more *controlled* by capitalism as a globalized entity: “sovereignty has taken a new form, composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule...Empire” (Hardt and Negri 2000:xii). The expansion of Empire re-organizes, but does not negate, the nation-state or the state form as an idea or way of being: “Nation-

states remain extremely important but their functions have been transformed” (Hardt and Negri 2001:238). The importance of this will be discussed further, but for now, Hardt and Negri can help us to understand what teaching *as labour* represents within a larger analysis of heterotopic capital.

According to Negri, post-1968 capitalism in the Global North shifted from an economic system based primarily on “dequalified” ([1991] 1996:155) labour to one centred on “social workers” (ibid.:156). Of course, Marx had covered the sociality of production (hence the whole ‘relations of production’ thing) but Hardt and Negri expand on this, emphasizing the uniqueness of capitalism in its post-Fordist state. Put simply, “the central role previously occupied by the labour power of mass factory workers in the production of surplus value is today increasingly filled by intellectual, immaterial, and communicative labour power” (Hardt and Negri 2000:29). For Hardt and Negri, the current state of capitalism represents a culmination of the growing abstraction of labour that had been taking place since the industrial revolution (Negri [1991] 1996:156). A great deal of 21st century labour is performed by unique, non-interchangeable actors (Hardt and Negri 2000:395), perhaps representing the moment when Marx’s much earlier invocation of the master-slave dialectic begins to seem somewhat reasonable:

...where labour in which a human being does what a thing could do has ceased. Accordingly, capital and labour relate to each other here like money and commodity; the former is the general form of wealth, the other only the substance destined for paltriness [*Naturbedurftigkeit*], and thus creates the material elements for the development of the rich individuality which is as all-sided in its production as in its consumption, and whose labour also therefore appears no longer as labour, but as the full development of activity itself...This is why *capital is productive; i.e.an essential relation for the development of the social productive forces*. It ceases to exist as such only where the development of these productive

forces themselves encounters its barrier in capital itself. (Marx [1939-41]1978:249)

“[P]arasitic postmodern capitalism” (Hardt and Negri 2000:397) has no ability to create wealth of its own accord – that is, without the multitude: Hardt and Negri’s postmodern revolutionary subject (ibid.:402, etc.). The cooperative social labour of the multitude promotes sociality and a general commonality (affinity perhaps?), while, “on the other hand, what is common becomes singularized” (Hardt and Negri 2000:358). This *either/and* construction of proletarian subjectivity allows for the investment of desire towards a larger sociality without imposing upon the autonomy of its constituent parts. The multitude avoids universalism by situating itself within the realm of Agamben’s *whatever*. Thus Hardt and Negri construct, based on a reading of Foucault similar to my own, a vision of “humanism after the death of man” (ibid.:92): the idea of commonality through the singular creative action on the world that Marx envisions as labour, elaborated to include formerly ‘reproductive’ elements of human activity, which are usually overshadowed in more patriarchal interpretations of his work – a *posthuman ethics*.

Hardt and Negri’s focus on current labour as increasingly based in social cooperation initiated and maintained *by* workers themselves effectively updates Marx as it integrates his previous critique to the best extent possible within postmodern capitalism, allowing us to include Ontario teachers, a fairly privileged group within the scheme of global inequalities, into a potentially subversive, not exclusively industrial, proletariat (Hardt and Negri 2000). In this way, Hardt and Negri describe a new revolutionary subject in a burgeoning millennium rife with nihilism following decades of

seemingly successful capitalist cooptation of various revolutionary movements¹⁰, subjectivity, and ethics. They offer a way to use the poststructuralism of Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari for something more than the artistic liberalism with which it is so often connected: “we believe that the Marxian thematic of the industrial working-class subject has been surpassed—even though we develop the conception of exploitation, analyze its extension in time and space, and so forth. We search for new bases for the will to revolt, the will to a form a counterpower” (ibid.:237). As faith in Marx’s ‘working-class’ subject becomes increasingly rare, and as lines between classes become increasingly blurred, Hardt and Negri offer us a “new figure of the collective political body” (ibid.:30) involving all humans who reject various pieces of the neoliberal pie¹¹.

So Hardt and Negri open up the revolutionary subject to include teachers, but can their theory adequately conceptualize teaching in elementary and high schools in a way that explains the targeting of teachers as neoliberal scapegoats in order to enact austerity measures? Initially, I am optimistic, as Hardt and Negri are quick to reject their *autonomia* compatriots’¹² focus on the “intellectual and incorporeal aspects” (Hardt and Negri 2000:30) of *new labour* – social work – at the expense of “the productivity of bodies and the value of affect” (ibid.). They suggest that the divide between productive and reproductive labour is undermined by the lack of separation between ‘work’ and ‘non-work’ now endemic to postmodern capitalism (ibid.:402-403).

¹⁰ Admittedly they reject the idea that this cooptation has been successful (Hardt and Negri 2000:394)

¹¹ a recapitulation of Deleuze and Guattari’s recapitulation of Sartre’s *subject group*

¹² Lazzarato, Virno, etc. (Hardt and Negri suggest Virno and Hardt’s *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* as a good collection of these thinkers.)

In the biopolitical context of Empire, [...] the production of capital converges ever more with the production and reproduction of social life itself; it thus becomes ever more difficult to maintain distinctions among productive, reproductive, and unproductive labor. Labor—material or immaterial, intellectual or corporeal—produces and reproduces social life, and in the process is exploited by capital. (Hardt and Negri 2000:402)

I would suggest that this shift in philosophy is more than the logical outgrowth of neoliberalism. As we have seen, numerous feminists have been working to problematize the distinction between public and private life for over 40 years¹³. Regardless, the key idea here, is that we now have the opportunity to change the organization and meanings of production, reproduction, surplus, in a way that better defines the new relationships inherent in immaterial production.

Examining the nature and possible emancipatory function of immaterial, intellectual, and affective labour adds, without a doubt, to expanding an anti-capitalist critique of global neoliberalism. However, what women, and those who do affective labour, gain in their inclusion in this larger emancipatory discussion, they may lose in the lack of specificity with regard to their own ends. While there are undoubtedly many differences between them, the subjects of our present study (elementary teachers) are not linked, in terms of dominant media/government discourses, to the university and college professors who seem to fit more clearly into Hardt and Negri's immaterial labour categorization. If we view teaching, at least in its current 21st century Ontarian incarnation as a trajectory from kindergarten to graduate school, as a graduation from the affective to the intellectual which loses the bulk of its incorporeal nature on par with the

¹³ This perhaps inadvertent erasure of feminist (and largely women's) analysis contributes to the overall devaluation of feminist theoretico-political thought and should be exposed whenever possible.

advancing age of students, then we also envision a ghettoization of emotional labour that focuses on those who deal with younger children and whose days revolve around extra changes of clothes, snot, and little people hanging off of one's clothing. In this way, it is difficult for immaterial labour to adequately account for the penalty imposed on those whose corporeality is intricately combined with their wage earnings

For this reason, I want to explore teaching as connected, not only to work traditionally associated with women, but as work that rests precariously on the edge of *reproductive* labour. As Mary O'Brien (1981) argues, explaining the value of work without attention to gender is insufficient. In traditional Marxist accounts of women's labour under capitalism: "Household activities are abstracted from the private realm to see if they can be bent to the forms of market relations... There is absolutely no conception of the need to understand the product of reproductive labour, the child, as anything other than a potential source of labour power" (O'Brien 1981:164). O'Brien argues that the "structure of separation and alienation of public and private" (ibid.:167) significantly predates modern capitalism. She envisions a dialectic of *reproduction* rather than one of *labour* (ibid.). Within this formulation, value is produced by all human labour, productive and reproductive" (ibid.:199). In this sense, value is not determined by virtue of some future exchange of human capital but through the existence of children (life, and history) "as the product of human labour" (ibid.).

However, is even an ostensibly leftist depiction of children as products that parents (and teachers) shape into appropriate human capital for the benefit of the economy not, in itself, an extension of neoliberal thought? Does it not "extend the

penetration of the market mechanism into the one area of society which has...resisted it” (O’Brien 1981:165)? We are then, of course, struck with the notion that this differential between public and private – of home and *the child* as the ultimate noncommodity – is also reinforced through capitalist discourse: “Capitalism does not, as Marx and Engels say in *The Communist Manifesto*, rip the family from its ‘sentimental veil’. It creates that veil.” (ibid.:177). Thus we are presented with two sides of our current discursive climate seemingly in conflict: one pushing for the commodification of everything (neoliberalism) and the other (neoconservatism) holding up the family as the ultimate ‘haven in a heartless world.’ My contention is that these two ideas remain compatible through the invocation of *race* and *othering* culminating in an insistence on personal exceptionalism. To begin to explain this we need to explore the importance of race within this discussion of capitalism and sexism. As Meg Luxton (2006) suggests, “the transnational, trans-regional locus of social reproduction and capital’s mobility mean that capitalist expansion is foundationally racialized and predicated on differences and divisions” (38). Therefore, I would suggest that “imperialism, racialization, and racism” (ibid.) should be taken into consideration within any foray into feminist political economy.

What stands to be disrupted through the desires of women and teachers is not the family per se, but a very specific formulation of such, tied to various economic and racialized imaginaries:

Situated in the center of "family values" debates is an imagined traditional family ideal. Formed through a combination of marital and blood ties, ideal families consist of heterosexual couples that produce their own biological children. Such families have a specific authority structure; namely, a father- head earning an adequate family wage, a stay-at-home wife, and children. Those who idealize the

traditional family as a private haven from a public world see family as held together by primary emotional bonds of love and caring. (Collins 1998:62)

For Patricia Hill Collins (1998), visions of *the family* can work to idealize and legitimate inequalities inside and outside the private sphere by reconciling “the contradictory relationship between equality and hierarchy” (64). The so-called ‘traditional’ Western nuclear family enacts gendered divisions of labour and gendered (and age-based) hierarchical control in the name of *care* and *love* (ibid.). In turn, this ideal mirrors and is mirrored by the world outside the family unit: divisions are seen as necessary, hierarchy is embraced as protective and safe, and gendered and ageist assumptions of ability are embraced (Collins 1998). As Anne McClintock suggests: “the family image came to figure *hierarchy within unity* as an organic element of historical progress, and thus became indispensable for legitimating exclusion and hierarchy within nonfamilial social forms such as nationalism, liberal individualism and imperialism” (McClintock cited in Collins 1998:64). Additionally, Collins (1998) suggests that family, enacted on a larger scale, becomes race, and, in addition, racial hierarchies function as de facto parent/child relationships: “portray[ing] people of color as intellectually underdeveloped, uncivilized children” (65) and “construct[ing] Whites as intellectually mature, civilized adults” (ibid.).

Collins (1998) also suggests that the focus on division between families and the need for *personal, private* space reifies private property relations (68). Hartsock ([1981] 1998:24) makes a similar connection between capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy, stressing that racism helps to create tensions between workers, allowing some (white workers) to subordinate others foiling possibilities of collective resistance (24).

Furthermore, since white workers are able to take on a larger range of jobs, minority workers make up a larger “reserve labor force” (ibid.:25). Hartsock suggests that the racist targeting of black women as responsible for an envisioned lack of correspondence between black and white middle class families via a myth of “black matriarchy” (ibid.:24) creates divisions within black communities which detracts energy from struggles against white supremacy, sexism and capitalism (ibid.).

For Andrea Smith (2011) settler-colonialism and patriarchy are inherently linked: “the notion that we can separate gender justice from sovereignty struggles does not take into consideration the fact that it is precisely through gender violence that colonialism and white supremacy works” (65). Historically, the relatively egalitarian nature of indigenous societies created a distinct problem for colonizers, posing “a threat to the ability of white men to continue their ownership of white women because they belie patriarchy’s defense of itself as ‘normal’” (Smith 2003:77). In this way, native *women* become particularly problematic to patriarchal settler-colonial societies, based on their ability to expose the discursively constructed nature of patriarchal gender roles, “demonization of Native women, then, is part of white men’s desires to maintain control over white women” (ibid.). Hardt and Negri envision similar connections between neoliberal thought and gendered and racialized divisions; although for them, both elements are part of a larger empire, a re-vamp of Deleuze and Guattari’s capitalist axiomatic which utilizes divisions in order to further its power.

That being said, I should stress that, like Collins (1998), my goal here is not to suggest that our focus should be on eliminating *the family*, but on “recasting

intersectional understandings of family in ways that do not reproduce inequality” (68). Clearly, family life provides happiness for many (including me!), and can be especially important within many minority communities as a place of protection and defense against a hostile, racist public sphere (Eugene 1989:56). What I would like to do, is to draw attention to the danger of one particular iteration of family via our collective social and political discourse which bases its power on colonial white supremacy and exclusion – a vision of the family which reifies problematic notions of love and care, and works in tandem with neoliberalism to naturalize a continual deferral of gratification, blocking social subversion. In order for neoliberalism to survive its focus on individualism despite the destruction it entails for those in the lower and middle class, it must rely on a continuous deferral of results – a populous belief in the possibility of the future despite all lessons of the past. In this way neoliberalism and neoconservatism work as the ultimate exemplar of Lacan’s exegesis of desire that would rather not attain its object. The continuous prolonging of neoliberal success is intoxicating. Additionally, a focus on individuality does not lead to the uprising of individuals seeking their own autonomy, but in an exceptionalism predicated on notions of difference and superiority built into the fabric of Canadian society. The *other* who fails is inherently raced, gendered, and classed, just as the vision of neoliberal possibility and perfection is raced, gendered, and classed. As the next section suggests, this personal and racial exceptionalism is highly recognizable within our collective Canadian *idea of the child*.

Who Cares for Children?: Troubling ‘the child’ as settler-colonial ‘redeemer’

Given that Ontario is a colonial entity, its education system is necessarily linked to a history of settler-colonialism, cultural genocide and white supremacy. How then, does the rhetoric surrounding teachers’ responsibility to the children of Ontario fit within the context of ‘Ontario’ as part of a neoliberal nationalist settler project? For whose children are we really concerned, and why? Why are children seemingly the one societal group against which all adults must be inherently selfless? Within my analysis I will suggest that the fetishization of children contained in the rhetoric surrounding education is not merely an element of some natural desire to take care of those among us who may be the most vulnerable, but linked to a larger neoliberal colonial project in which children are representative of a white, middle-upper class Canadian future. This section will explore the way we talk about children, education, and the future as part of a racialized vision of nationhood.

As an introduction to her 1997 essay collection, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City* Lauren Berlant suggests that “in the process of collapsing the personal and the political into a world of public intimacy, a nation [the United States] made for adult citizens has been replaced by one imagined for fetuses and children” (1). Within the pop-cultural images of late 20th century America, Berlant recognizes “a public rhetoric of citizen trauma” (ibid.:2), a “mass national pain” (ibid.), a reaction against *otherness* in the visibility of sexual, gender and racial diversity (ibid.). Within this climate, those who had previously enjoyed the privilege of being ‘unmarked’ suddenly feel that they are burdened with the weight of an identity, “when it used to be just other people who had

them” (ibid.), a feeling sometimes revealed in anger at those who they perceive to have created this change (i.e. groups struggling for equality), or recourse to the imagined realm of a long lost *nation* (ibid.). Berlant suggests that neoconservatism in the United States is marked by the idea of *intimate* citizenship: “scarce and sacred, private and proper, and only for members of families” (ibid.:3). However, this is not the blurring of lines between private/and public that I will advocate. Berlant’s vision is of a *privatized* citizenship: one where “critical energies” (ibid.) are directed toward “sentimental spaces of an amorphous opinion culture, characterized by strong patriotic identification mixed with feelings of practical political powerlessness” (ibid.). Intimate citizenship is a citizenship conceived within a clearly demarcated private sphere. In this context:

[T]he nation’s value is figured not on behalf of any actually existing and laboring adult, but of a future American, both incipient and pre-historical...perhaps the last living American, not yet bruised by history: not yet caught up in the processes of secularization and sexualization; not yet caught in the confusing and exciting identity exchanges made possible by mass consumption and ethnic, racial, and sexual mixing; not yet tainted by money or war. This national icon is still tacitly white, and it still contains the blueprint for the reproductive form that assures the family and the nation its future history. This national icon is still innocent of knowledge, agency, and accountability and thus has ethical claims on the adult political agents...most important, the fetal/infantile person is a *stand-in* for a complicated and contradictory set of anxieties and desire about national identity...what gets consolidated now as the future model citizen provides an alibi, or an inspiration for the moralized political rhetorics of the present and for reactionary legislative and juridical practice. (Berlant 1997a:6)

This idea of the infantile citizen as a national symbol pervades both American and (I would suggest) Canadian popular culture, and its positioning within rhetoric surrounding reproduction has a profound effect on how we envision the people who care for, and perhaps, love, our children – people who, traditionally, have been women and mothers. Similarly, Madeleine Grumet (1988) traces the idea of the child as *redeemer*

from the Old Testament, to Huck Finn, to his/her current status as the one who will absolve us of all our ills:

Schools...requiring order and stillness, replacing touch with the exchange of performance for grades, are dominated by the images of adulthood and childhood and organize their curricula to mark the developmental space between them. The child redeemer is thriving in that space, where we expect him to absolve us from racism, poverty, drugs and pollution. His education brings him from sentimental kindergartens and authoritarian classrooms to sun-dappled commencements where we exhort him to make the world a better place.” (Grumet 1988:157)

Here, Grumet also illustrates the absurdity of the “self-deception” (ibid.:156) at work in this attempt to foist our generational problems on the backs of the next: those without the requisite tools or power to actually effect change (ibid.). The coming citizen of neoliberalism must expound and feel political agency as a “fact (the nation exists)” (Berlant 1997b:50) but never a ‘thing’ (something one might actually *use*) (ibid.). The neoliberal worldview requires this redeemer, predicated as it is on an eternal procrastination – the exhortation to ‘just wait until...’ The hegemony of neoliberalism, and its focus on the always later future moment of realization subordinates any imagining of a “positive sense of the present or the future of the adult” (Berlant 1997c:143) to the extent that “social-welfare policies can be justified only for the sake of ‘the children’” (ibid.). Berlant sees this as indicative of “the absence of a sustained critical national political culture” (ibid.). This makes sense, if we agree with Wendy Brown that neoliberalism produces and is produced by a dedemocratized apolitical subject.

For Sara Ahmed (2004), love for one’s nation is consumed by this sense of waiting: the extension of an investment continually intensified through its failed return (131). Investment in one’s nation (and, now, by default, neoliberalism) is the investment

in a future return of a “good life” (ibid.:131). The “white Aryan child” (ibid.) is representative of the future generation in which the promise of this investment will be fulfilled (ibid.). She suggests that, in a Freudian sense, this “ideal white subject” (ibid.) represents a shared ego ideal (ibid.:130). Within this schema, racialized others (and perhaps, in our case, teachers) inhabit the role of the ‘obstacle’ that assures lovers of the potential of their love’s return – *‘if only it weren’t for...’* (ibid.:131). Pertinent here too: if this cathexis leads to the ego’s identification with the ideal child as citizen/subject, does our anger towards teachers then emanate from a deeper imperative, not just to protect and reinforce the value of our own offspring, but to reinforce the value of ourselves?

Additionally, the fetishization of childhood innocence within the rhetoric surrounding narratives of a national future is linked to several other neoconservative narratives – quite noticeably, those surrounding abortion: “The pro-life image of the nation as parent with a compelling interest in its children/citizens has produced an image of the autonomous fetus” (Berlant 1997c:129) which “erases other images: of specific maternal bodies, of adult women in their contexts of domestic and public work, women who act in history and have value beyond their specific place in the sacred national temporality of reproduction” (ibid.). And it is within this *sacred national reproductive temporality* that we also find teachers, mothers, early childhood educators, and all of those that we task with caring for the youngest members of our community.

Like the ‘bad mother’ who aborts her child or neglects it, public affect is tied to an idea of teaching as a nationalistic symbol, which in turn is linked to a racialized colonial understanding of a motherhood based on racial propagation and ‘purity.’

Although such views are obviously less openly stated today, during the late 19th and early 20th century “reproduction was generally seen, by feminists as well as anti-feminists, as inextricable from racial and imperial politics” (Valverde 1992:4): “Women did not merely have babies: they reproduced ‘the race’” (ibid.). First wave feminists in Britain, Canada, and the United States used the phrase ‘mothers of the race’ to refer to the importance of women’s inclusion in the fight against moral and racial ‘degeneration’ (Valverde 1992): “reproduction, and therefore sexuality, were not only individual choices, but collective and, more particularly, racial problems” (ibid.:5). Although the use of ‘race’ as category wavered between references to Anglo-Saxon Protestants and the human race in a more general sense, the “ambiguity of the term...provided a space in which silently (or not so silently) to deploy the racial privilege of women seeking gender justice” (ibid.:4-5). Racialized women were seen as and treated as children: “too victimized or too corrupt to qualify as real mothers” (ibid.:11). Although most mainstream political parties and moderate Canadians would balk at the suggestion, I will suggest that the discourse surrounding *education* exemplifies a current use of similar symbolic ambiguities to “legitimize and at the same time obscure the mechanisms of racial and imperial power” (ibid.:5), by building upon a narrative of state saviourhood and racialized superiority in order to conflate teachers’ responsibility to students with tension over a presumed inability of various racialized and classed *others* to appropriately reproduce neoliberal Canadian ideals. In her work on the history of early Canadian feminist movements, Valverde illustrates how issues of class and racial privilege intertwined to create a focus on reproductive labour as the privilege and duty of white

women (ibid.:7), whether they contributed to reproduction or additionally to “moral reform and education” (ibid.:10).

Of course, these ideas and the discursive tendency to conceptualize non-Europeans as maternally and parentally deficient in the name of *care* or *love* was linked to a larger narrative on the importance of assimilation epitomized in the creation of residential schools meant, ostensibly, to shield indigenous children from “the terrible example set them by their parents” (Vankoughnet cited in Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) 2012:10). Hence, perhaps the most important lesson for settlers in the legacy of residential schools, is that our affective commitments to our own motivations must not be allowed to obscure the very real, material consequences of our actions (an idea that will be taken up later in my discussion of *care* and *love* as problematic ethico-political imperatives). Of course, this is not to suggest that the colonial government’s ultimate goal was not to end ‘Indian’ status in order to renege on its treaty responsibilities (see TRC 2012:11), but it does show how affective commitments like *love* and *care*, can become attached to objects, *others*, regardless of the institutional goals of states and hierarchies. This mingling of instrumentality with the successful association of some individuals (in this case, indigenous residents of Turtle Island) with certain affects (pity, concern, fear, etc.) allows ideas like residential schools to become floating signifiers and gain political traction. Similarly (of course, not anywhere near as tragically) the Ontario government’s neoliberal desire to pay teachers less unites with the sticky bodies of teachers and children as vehicles for our affective cultural, economic unease. Most importantly, here, the idea of building *the child* as building *the settler-colonial nation* is

highly visible in descriptions of the necessity of schooling as an instrument of cultural assimilation.

In making connections between attitudes toward reproduction at the turn of the last century and this one, I do not wish to be spurious or suggest that discourses surrounding such issues are static. But these associations do not disappear as *multiculturalism* becomes the popular conceptualization of how settlers think about their relation to place and others. To allow Foucault to intermingle with Ahmed: these pieces of our collective history – these affective associations with nation and race – become embedded in the discourses we use to describe and create our world. Within a Canadian settler-colonial context then, despite the fact that many Canadians are well versed in the history of residential schools, and rightfully ashamed, the ideas of *children* and *school* still retain the sticky associations of *nationhood* and *majoritarian culture*. As these signs pass through time and pass through social interaction, political campaigns, popular culture, etc., they become increasingly saturated with affect.

Even when this idea of ‘whiteness’ is adjusted to fit a public and political discourse focused on ‘multiculturalism,’ otherness is still addressed through fantasies of assimilation: “a hybrid, mobile nation that loves difference by taking it in... This ideal image [the ambiguously raced face of the new nation] can be described as a ‘hybrid whiteness’; the nation’s whiteness is confirmed through how it incorporates and is ‘coloured’ or ‘bronzed’ by others” (Ahmed 2004:136-137). This is the “sign of the nation, and the promise of the future... The mixed-race woman ‘appears’ as a fetish object; she accumulates value only given that her figure is cut off from any visible signs

of inter-racial intimacy...the nation remains the agent of reproduction” (ibid.:137; see also: Berlant 1997d).

Furthermore, the ideal of assimilation of others through children and the Canadian nation as ‘agent of reproduction’ lives on in the legacy of Canada’s child welfare system, where indigenous children make up 80% of out-of-home care recipients in some provinces, despite the fact that indigenous peoples make up 5% of the Canadian population (Trocmé et al. 2004:578). When the ‘responsibility’ of caring for indigenous children shifted from the residential school system to the child welfare system (see Sinha and Kozlowski 2013:3) the rates of indigenous children being removed from their homes and placed in foster care and/or adopted rose dramatically (ibid.:4). These children were frequently placed with settler families, sometimes outside of Canada (Trocmé et al. 2004:579). Despite the enactment of policies that attempt to increase Band involvement and be supportive of children’s cultural heritage, the majority of indigenous children are still placed in non-indigenous households when adopted (Blackstock et al. 2004:902). In fact, “the number of First Nations children on reserve placed in out-of-home care increased by 71.5 percent between 1995 and 2001” (McKenzie cited in Trocmé et al. 2004:578). Thus, the child welfare system can be seen as operating as an extension of the assimilationist practices of residential schools (Sinha and Kozlowski 2013).

Like fetuses and the women who carry them, this nationalist vision has little to do with the actual material conditions of fully birthed, living children, in classrooms or outside of them, because it is the *idea*, the vision of the future that is important in their story, and every second that children exist in the material world the public narrative

becomes steadily disinterested: “the great enemy of the child redeemer is time” (Grumet 1988:156). Schools perpetuate this focus on *child as idea* through generalization (Grumet 1988), and while schooling has always been understood as an introduction to a ‘common culture’ (ibid.), neoliberal curriculum, with its focus on standardization, works to “obliterate all that is personal in favor [sic] of whatever is general, all that is actual in deference to what is hypothetical, all that is moving in deference to all that is still” (ibid.:173). Initially, this defense of ‘the personal’ might seem incongruous following my negative description of neoliberal individualism. However, the loss of the personal that Grumet laments here is not the individual of neoliberalism. It is, rather, the specificity of life as *valuable* outside of property relations and relations of production that are at stake here – what Emma Goldman (1940) might call *individuality* as opposed to individualism. This sense of the ‘personal’ is what Mary O’Brien (1981) identifies as being at stake in both capitalist philosophy and traditional Marxist attempts to transform reproduction into a masculine labour relation. While she in one sense critiques Hegel and Marx’s attempts at lumping women and reproduction within their vilified realm of ‘the particular’ (since reproduction is, essentially, *social*) (ibid.:183), O’Brien refuses this separation and normative evaluation (ibid.). She provides a fitting quote from Madame Cao, a Vietnamese freedom fighter: “collectivity which destroys the potential of the individual is not good collectivity” (cited in Wolfson, cited in O’Brien 1981:184). This is not to say that O’Brien was a champion of individualism – but rather that her thinking champions the possibility of individual *value*, by acknowledging the value of women’s reproductive labour. Therefore by suggesting that she values *the individual* I am not

suggesting that she values neoliberal individualism, which according to Goldman (1940) is really just “a masked attempt to repress and defeat the individual and his individuality” (para13). Individuals are the creation of collectives vis a vis social reproduction and discursive formation. They are, in fact, valuable in their specificity – a specificity which, if respected, can help to prevent well intentioned teachers and activists from falling into the role of ignorant middle class saviour. Individualism as proffered by neoliberals sublimates the individual to the demands of the powerful few. Valuing people in and of themselves, regardless of success, skill, responsiveness, difference, etc., is the essence of collectivity. As I will discuss in the next subsection, there is the need to abandon the evaluation of relationships between self and other as oppositional, but we must do so in a way that preserves the separation of some idea of self, in order to avoid engulfing others within the rush of our intentions. So, in a sense, although read in part as a reaction against progressivism, the push against teachers might also represent something of a reaction against *neoliberalism*, against the empty generalization and standardization and indifference to all singularity. Teachers can hardly be expected to *love* student numbers or test scores or “little ‘nobodies’” (Grumet 1988:171) they are tasked with inducting into the common culture – but they can love *a child*, they can love *someone*. Therefore while Ontario’s anti-teacher rhetoric seems largely to support the neoliberal agenda, progressives should not lose sight of the larger reasons for some of the angst surrounding teachers’ inability to live up to the affection the public seems to demand from them. As Grumet (1988) suggests, some of the neoconservative rhetoric that flourishes in the indictment of teachers and public education can be part of a larger solution, driven by an

angst at the world neoliberalism has created: “This is the terror that fuels the resistance of the Creationists, that motivates parental assaults on libraries. These are not value conflicts...These are custody cases” (176). Traces of such collective fear over the *loss* of *one’s* child to the grabby hands of public life are visible in comments disparaging the lack of parental *choice* within the public school system, and the dangers of teacher *influence*:

We need to instruct our kids on what they should, and shouldn't, be paying attention to when they are exposed to their teachers and we need to instruct our politicians that we need a voucher system that allows us to make a choice to remove our children from the influence of people like [Smartie (fellow commenter claiming to be a teacher)]. (Painter, commenting on Alphoonso and Hammer 2013)

For Grumet, all education is, to an extent, assimilative and representative of the passage from a private home culture, to one that is public – common: “from domesticity to public politics, from reproduction to production, from private life to public life” (1988:164). Of course, to return once again to O’Brien, the feminization of teaching presents a confusing complication for men’s precarious grasp of their own paternity. Teachers, although no doubt initiating children into the public sphere, remain partially situated within the realm of private reproduction via their connection to ‘the feminine’. In this sense, public and private combine to create an intense feeling of loss within public, male-oriented discourse, projected onto teachers along with anxieties surrounding the state, women, and otherness. In this sense, school serves as a heterotopic sphere incorporating elements of both our home and public lives in the manner in which they are currently conceptualized, and thus are both marked by this association with each – a condition noticeable in the tension over teachers’ responsibilities to students and the

seeming conflict between a vision of teachers as pseudo-mothers and that of the state interlocutor who removes children from mothers – enacting the biting universality of neoliberalism as common culture (ibid.:33).

In the mid-19th century, Grumet (1988) suggests that: “The [American] common school movement and the feminization of teaching colluded in support of a program of centralized education that exploited the status and integrity of the family to strip it of its authority and deliver its children to the state” (ibid.:39). Female teachers became increasingly popular as they, not only cost less, but represented a type of domesticity – the “vanished household in the face of industrial urbanization and the centralization of authority in the state” (ibid.). Much of this push for education was, again, based on concerns over parental deficits and the necessity of enacting “a common state paternity” (ibid.) to alleviate these concerns. A similar pattern occurred in Canada, where “state controlled schooling was seen as a means by which the children of these [working class] families could be properly socialized” (Houston, cited in Reynolds and Smaller 1996:43-44). Thus teaching became an environment where ‘feminine’ “self-sacrifice, purity, and domesticity” (Grumet 1988:40) was proudly enacted in the name of “self-reliance, freedom of choice, and independence of mind”: “The women who poured into the common schools lived out this contradiction under the banner of maternal love and participated in a process of denial that Ann Douglas has labelled ‘sentimentalism’” (ibid.:41). For Douglas, sentimentalism indicates a professed valuation of social values denied by action (ibid.). As ‘motherhood’ was shifted and disrupted via the socio-economic changes of the last part of the 19th century, so the “cult of motherhood” (ibid.)

came to replace it. Bonnie Fox (2006) suggests that the shift toward mothers as the parent primarily responsible for child care and development was predicated on the shift to an economic terrain in which middle-class “fathers could no longer guarantee the adult livelihoods of their children (e.g., by giving them land) and in which the skills necessary to success were continuously changing” (235). The solution to this intergenerational instability “involved keeping children home and out of paid work and giving them long years of informal socialization and formal education” (ibid.). Thus ‘mothers’ became ‘responsible’ for raising children, an idea that we continue to see flourish in the so-called ‘Mommy Wars’ between stay-at-home and working mothers so popular in our current media, and all manner of legislative debates surrounding child-care, divorce, and the position of women in Canadian society.

Concern over women’s participation in formal employment after the second world war led to the further fetishization of “intensive mothering” (Hays cited in Fox 2006:236). Again, the intensification of expectations we witness today coincide with a period of increased economic vulnerability: a time when having at least two adults working in the formal market place is a necessity for many Canadians (Fox 2006:237). Even before the Great Recession, Fox suggested that the recent “decline of men’s real earnings...the increased precariousness of employment,...the rise in the need for two income earners in families with children” (ibid.) and “[c]utbacks in social services” (ibid.) had made it increasingly difficult “for women to devote the kind of time [to parenting that] they might have in the 1950s” (ibid.):

Intensified public concern about ensuring women’s devotion to social reproduction is not surprising, then; nor is the development of a new ideal of good

mothering that addresses that concern and tightens the social control to which women are subject...Mothering a baby in the way that women are now expected to involves expenditures of physical and emotional energy that surpass those called for in earlier times. According to Hays (1996:8), the ideal of “intensive mothering” involves...[the] elevation of the child’s needs above the mother’s...the belief that the child is “priceless” and deserving of very special treatment. (ibid.)

The term *priceless* is interesting here, as it illustrates the conflictual nature of the role of *the child* within the discourse of neoliberalism. On the one hand, children are openly discussed as human capital, yet on the other, they represent a sentimentalized vision of a realm *outside* of capital – one that cannot be commodified. This conflict is at the heart of the discussion surrounding teachers, as these seemingly differing notions of *the child* often operate within the same narrative. This is particularly relevant when applied to our earlier discussion of the mutual growth of neoconservatism and neoliberalism: neoconservatism’s priorities become increasingly unattainable via the deployment of neoliberal policies and at the same time increasingly lauded within political rhetoric. In the following section I will suggest that this tension between the feminized self-sacrificing teacher and rationalized, instrumental school continues in education’s current iteration. The passion with which some members of the Ontario public lament the loss of teacher’s *true* affection for students follows a fetishization of selflessness in a society that consistently moves away from valuing any sort of altruism. Altruism becomes a private endeavor; we can find *love* in our homes and, particularly, with the women in our lives, and there is an attachment to the idea that teachers will continue this type of sacrificial care. However, all the while, we negate the goodwill that would support the ability to properly care through cuts to school funding and teacher

salaries. Teachers and women cannot be lumped into a grouping of reproductive labourers whose work is fetishized as purely sacrificial. In order to cultivate both a less oppressive political program as well as a pedagogical one, we need to allow for the complexity of teaching and mothering as combinations of enjoyment and responsibility. Within neoliberal discourse, ideas like self-sacrifice, while valorized, are only intended for some – *others*. Women, mothers, teachers and gendered/sexed and racialized others bear the brunt of this expectation while white, middle-upper class men’s self-interest drives the economy – makes them our ‘job creators’ and ‘visionaries’ who request only absolute silence and complicity from those who they deem worthy of the scraps from their table. In this sense, words like *sacrifice* slide metonymically between these different minority subject positions.

Love in the Time of Capital: Towards an anti-neoliberal polito-pedagogical ethics

Can love be useful, then, as either a political project or a conceptualization of one’s experience of teaching? For Sara Ahmed (2004), the utility of *love* as an ethical construct is marred by the necessity of an ‘outside’: “the idea of a world where we all love each other is a humanist fantasy...(*If only we got closer we would be as one*). Such an ideal requires that some others fail to approximate its form: those who don’t love, who don’t get closer, become the source of injury and disturbance” (140). In terms of pedagogy, Toshalis provides a similar indictment of teachers’ *love* in the form of *selfless care* based on the problem of reciprocity and difference.

In his 2012 study of student teachers, Toshalis found that many new teachers used care as a way to deflect criticism from their own possibly deficient and/or culturally insensitive teaching practices. Relations of care remain power relations. Therefore, the conflation of good teaching with good caring is dangerous in that it ignores the “symbolic violence” of caring in ahistorical, pan cultural ways (Toshalis 2011). Teacher care is not always indicative of teacher ability, especially when this caring is situated within the language of white middle-class motherhood (Toshalis 2011:6).

Toshalis (2011) describes the problematic care he sees in student teachers as *aesthetic*:

...frequently sentimental and emotive in its expression and may be comprised of gestures or phrases that appear or sound caring but fail to function as care-giving actions. This is not to say that the carer’s intentions are uncaring for they may well be heartfelt, deeply considered, and earnestly communicated despite the fact that their effects may be negative. (4)

This type of care “[i]ndividualizes students’ difficulties” (Valenzuela cited in Toshalis 2011:5) by placing the blame for students’ poor performance on individual students and their families (Toshalis 2011:19), similar to the way in which neoliberal discourse places blame for perceived failures on the individual as opposed to systemic societal failures:

“By using a rhetoric of care, the intern [student teacher] can rely on the trope of the giver who has been snubbed instead of the teacher whose methods may be flawed. The action of caring, it is presumed, marks one’s practice as above reproach” (ibid.:20).

Furthermore, such care employed a “narrow instrumentalist logic” (ibid.:5): “Caring only for students’ test scores, attendance records, tardiness, worksheet completion, adherence to the dress code, and capacity to obey the rules” (ibid.) which “can dramatically

undermine students' investment in academic achievement and the relationships that will most promote their resilience." (ibid.). In this way Toshalis suggests that the enactment of *aesthetic care* entails a focus on making up for a perceived *emotional* deficit in students' lives, while failing to offer the *tools* to help alleviate structural inequalities (ibid.:14). Within the language of Toshalis's sample we can see echoes of the colonial paternalizing discourse prevalent in Valverde's early 20th century feminists: women of colour and working class women are not considered capable of agency; therefore, white subjects must act *in their best interests*.

Also within Toshalis's study, teachers' efforts to express their care and affection for students were often focused on avoiding acknowledgement of poor work, and realigning interactions to highlight 'good' extracurricular skills and personality traits. Unfortunately, Toshalis (2011) suggests that the use of teacher affection in this way, while not necessarily conscious, worked to shift responsibility for poor performance onto the student as opposed to the teacher. The emotional performance of 'care' can work to alleviate concern over teacher performance, both on the part of the teacher, who believes they are doing what is 'best' for the student and on the part of the student, who may accept the teacher's affection in the place of positive feelings coming from 'achievement.' Although, I will stress that my interpretation of this is not to restate the conservative mantra of anti-self-esteem, pro-'drilling' education, but rather to suggest that *intent*, specifically when framed as per my description of 'love' is problematic in that it undermines the very real power relationships that exist between teachers and students and fails to appropriately consider the separation between the two, as subjects. Teachers,

regardless of how they care, do not necessarily know what is best for any given student, and leaning on claims of affection can sometimes operate as a cover for this reality (Toshalis 2011:11-12).

The prevailing issue here, is the way in which the language of *care* and *love* envelops relations of power within a cloak of emotional expression. The refusal to accept that “care is as much about power as it is about compassion and aid” (Toshalis 2011:2), leads to the “present[ation of] the carer as compassionate, personally connected, and committed while they sometimes position the cared-for as needy, deficient, and defective” (ibid.:5). In this way, if we follow Levine-Rasky in framing *whiteness* as a *practice* as opposed to a *people* (see Toshalis 2011:6), this type of care enacts whiteness through the normalization of a certain highly emotive caregiving that others the cared-for as deficient, while using emotion to distort the reality of this hierarchy. This is, of course, similar to Srivastava’s (2005) observation of how white feminists use emotion to frame anti-racist critique as *hurtful*: shifting responsibility from the accused to the accuser (see also: Ahmed 2004).

James (2012) also critiques “traditional care theory” (166), suggesting that it “fails to recognize the socio-cultural assumptions at work in the construction of care narratives” (ibid.; see also: Goldstein and Lake¹⁴ 2000):

McBride and Grieshaber (2001), for example, drawing on a case study of one early care provider in a capital city of Australia, point to the connections between

¹⁴ Goldstein and Lake (2000) suggest that professional resources promoting teacher care can fail to adequately consider “teacher background, beliefs, values, experiences” (862) which inevitably affect the way teachers enact various caring techniques.

teachers' efforts to care for students and the ways teachers themselves were mothered, suggesting that the professional work of caring is informed predominantly by our personal, familial experiences of mothering relationships outside of schools. (James 2012:166)

This “conflation of teaching and mothering” (ibid.) not only leads teachers to take inappropriate responsibility for students, but leads to one-sided caring relationships – “fail[ing] to acknowledge students as subjects in their own right” (ibid.):

...teachers are not compelled to listen with humility and caution. Instead, teachers assume they must work night and day to do for children what they assume others cannot. The unfortunate result of this lack of listening, however, is a pattern of incomplete, single-loop caring relationships. (ibid.:173)

Discourses framing teachers as surrogate ‘mothers’ “preclude...the need to listen closely to students as it privatizes the classroom space and puts the teacher in the position of moral authority over children” (ibid.:172).

Noddings’s contention that the caring relation should mimic the mother/infant symbiosis (Noddings 2005:16) becomes particularly problematic. Teachers are not mothers and students are not infants. For Grumet (1988), this invocation of what she calls *mutuality* between student and teacher is problematic in that it prioritizes “the child at the exclusion of the world” (155). She suggests that in an attempt to evade authoritarianism, some feminist teachers have turned to ‘facilitation’ or ‘dialogue,’ within their pedagogy, but have done so in a way that uncritically accepts the liberal narrative of sameness and universality. Ignoring very real power imbalances makes their deconstruction impossible and emotionally enforced reciprocity as seen in Toshalis’s study “fosters an eroticism that ensnares both teacher and student in their reciprocal gaze” (ibid.:115) leading to mutual objectification (ibid.). In order to circumvent this trap, Grumet suggests the necessity of

separating the reciprocity (potentially) possible in parenting, from that involved in teaching: “Parenting permits the ultimate reciprocity that pedagogy denies because it evolves in time” (ibid.:116). The limitations of teachers’ relationships with students should not be seen as an attempt to fetishize parenthood; rather, we need to look at what teachers do as something distinctly different from parenting and analyze the relationships between teachers and students within this context. Hence, *love*, or *care*, if based on Noddings’s conceptualization of reciprocity, cannot serve as an adequate impetus for political action or pedagogy, as it makes our treatment of and work for the other conditional, not necessarily on *what they want* or what they tell us they want, but on *how they act*, how they respond and whether or not they properly reciprocate our care and love, which can be easily skewed and undermined by power imbalances.

How then, can we frame teachers’ connections to students in a way that refuses an oppressive application of affection while at the same time refusing to accept the work/home, public/private divide that sublimates labour sold on the market as necessarily separate from *love* and household labour without advocating for the proliferation of neoliberalism? Initially, we must acknowledge that the *selflessness* described in much of the literature surrounding teacher care “is neither entirely possible nor desirable” (James 2012:166) as it denies the carer’s own positionality within the nexus of discursive power relations. For Ahmed (2004) the type of ‘love’ useful to a progressive feminist vision is one that describes “the very affects of solidarity with others in the work that is done to create a different world” (141). This affectionate reflexive solidarity could represent “an openness to difference which lets our disagreements provide the basis for connection”

(Dean cited in Ahmed 2004:141) – a *for-other-ness* that deals in intimacy and specificity in the face of neoliberal universalism. Similarly, Toshalis (2011) envisions *authentic care* as that which places a recognition of power relationships at the centre of interactions as opposed to attempting to minimize or ignore them. Similar to anti-racist acknowledgement of difference and autonomy in the face of the oft-maligned liberal claim of ‘colour-blind’ equality, it is predicated on an acknowledgement of inequality that recognizes the need for self-reflection and separation within teacher/student interactions.

For me, I see the issue less as an indictment of *love* in and of itself, but rather an indictment of the utility of *familial love* – that is, love that is private, possessive, and hierarchical – as a method of conceptualizing teachers’ relationships with students. In *Anti-Oedipus* ([1972] 1983), Deleuze and Guattari bemoan the entrapment of desire within the relationality of the bourgeois familial structure. *Desire*, for them, is an active force capable of infinite creation within collective sociality. However, the idea of family – of one’s people possessed as separate and yet against all other people – traps desire within a hierarchal closed system. Traditional psychoanalysis can complement this action by insisting that desire was and is always immersed within this familial drama, when in reality, desire is seeking to be everywhere and act on everything. The notion of a desire that breaks through the stranglehold of Oedipus – that works against subjectification, signification, sublimation – is the notion of a desire that embraces its sociality. When we rid ourselves of the idea that love, in the agape sense, must be boxed off from the world and maintained within a circuit of those we relate to (whether this be a nuclear family or

the extended familial form of a larger race) and open ourselves up to a love that is not *only* public, but which accepts no boundaries between these positionalities, we allow our desire to act freely within the socius and we set the stage for a larger, non-sacrificial communality which connects us to others and embraces enjoyment as *for-the-other-ness* as opposed to *for-our-selves-ness* which proliferates the family as bourgeois property relation (see Grumet 1988).

If we return to Toshalis, we can see *authentic care* as that which rejects relationships with students as property relationships – which respects the separation between student and teacher, attempts to reduce hierarchy but ultimately accepts the impossibility of rejecting it altogether. This is a care *or a love* which acknowledges the self. As James suggests:

...teachers who fail to recognize the presence of “self” in their constructs of caring – their experience and beliefs as they inform their work – do not even acknowledge their inability to see students clearly. The interplay of deficit and mothering discourses further clouds their vision, pre-empting a need to listen or reflect, as teacher and student are positioned as moral authority and needy “other,” respectively. (2012:173)

Visions of love and collective liberation

In “The Liberation of Caring: A Different Voice for Gilligan’s ‘Different Voice,’” Bill Puka considers the possibilities of reframing care ethics as a strategy for liberation as opposed to a developmental process. This is more compatible with my own stance on ethical action, as I am wary of moralistic valuations of ways of being as inherently better or worse based on predetermined hierarchies, preferring the notion of ethics as “a set of optional rules that assess what we do, what we say, in relation to the ways of existing

involved” (Deleuze cited in Day 2005:167). After Spinoza, my concern is with “immanent modes of existence” (Deleuze 1988:23) as opposed to a moral system based on transcendental values (ibid.): “rules of conduct imposed...through the supremacy of others” (Spinoza [1670] 2002:427).

Any action is said to be bad insofar as it arises from our having been affected with hatred or some evil emotion (Cor. I, Pro 45, IV). But no action, considered solely in itself, is good or evil (as we demonstrated in the Preface, Part IV), but one and the same action can be now good, now evil. Therefore, we can be guided by reason to that same action which is now bad, that is, which arises from an evil emotion (Pr. 19, IV) (Spinoza [1674] 2002:351).

If we accept the notion that “moral law is an imperative” (Deleuze 1988:24) with “no other effect, no other finality than obedience” (ibid.), which “does not provide us with any knowledge...At worst, prevents the formation of knowledge” (ibid.) then discussion should involve a quest for ethics as a contingent *orientation*. Thus Puka (1989) presents care ethics as a way of being in opposition to forces of control and domination: “Care ‘development’ or care *levels* then, actually represent circumscribed coping strategies, of special use to women for facing crises of sexism” (21, emphasis in original). However, Puka’s ultimate evaluation of care ethics is critical (like my analysis above) of the aspects of this line of thinking which seem to enact a *slave morality*: advocating that one “[f]erret out spheres of power for pursuing them within gaps of the established power structure” (ibid.:27). However, if we see discourse as something inescapable within the bounds of sociality, then this working *against* from *within* might be more useful than Puka assumes. If we agree with Foucault that all struggles against discourse are predicated within the original discourse, then investment in these alternative discourses can produce change, as long as we remain aware of the conditions of its creation. After all, “[w]e are in a social

formation” (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987:161) for better or worse. We must “first see how it is stratified for us and in us and at the place where we are” (ibid.) in order to be able to “find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment” (ibid.). Eugene (1989), further suggests the “Afro-American ethic of care as liberation which is regularly practiced and embodied by black women...is evidenced in the lives of those mothers and moral agents of the race whose self-initiated expressions of care have undergirded the survival of a people” (46). We cannot neglect the fact that the Western European view of love as (sometimes) counter to self-interest is contradicted by both our collective experiences of love as such, and the lives and worldviews of those operating within cultures embracing a less antagonistic view of relationality.

The version of politico-pedagogical *love* for which I advocate entails the prioritization of both sociality and selfhood. It invites the carer to embrace their innate desire to be *for* the cared-for, but with an understanding that the denial of *self* not only risks the reiteration of the status quo via an embrace of serfdom, but, more importantly, risks overwhelming the other through an outpouring of care not properly situated within the socio-cultural context of said interaction. In order to explain this connection I turn briefly to the unlikely duo of Emmanuel Levinas and Franz Fanon.

In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas ([1961] 2011) describes an ethical relationship based on an acceptance of the other in his/her absolute alterity: “The idea of infinity, the infinitely more contained in the less, is concretely produced in the form of a relation with

the face. And the idea of infinity alone maintains the exteriority of the other with respect to the same, despite this relation” (196). Encountering the face of the other produces the *same* through a non-dialectical recognition of the absolute incomprehensibility of the *self* of an *other*: “Multiplicity therefore implies an objectivity posited in the impossibility of total reflection, in the impossibility of conjoining the I and the non-I in a whole. This impossibility is not negative—which would be to still posit it by reference to the idea of truth contemplated. It results from the surplus of the epiphany of the other, who dominates me from his height” (ibid.:221). This *height*; this separation between me and the face of the other as an image of the possibility of the unknown, of ungraspable potentialities, of infinity, creates a non-maieutic experience of *selfhood* (ibid.:51, 204, etc.): “A being receiving the idea of Infinity, receiving since it cannot derive it from itself, is a being taught in a non-maieutic fashion, a being whose very existing consists in this incessant reception of teaching, in this incessant overflowing of self (which is time)” (ibid.:204). There is no self prior to one’s interaction with the other, and therefore our relationship to others is supreme in its importance to understanding our place in a temporal universe; to our *existence*. Thus, Levinas conceptualizes self-hood, not as an antagonistic struggle between competing wills, but as a construct based on a desire for the other in its otherness; for relationality (ibid.:47).

Levinas is also clear that the self is free to reject dialogue/ethical interaction with the other by virtue of its a posteriori freedom:

This egoism is indeed founded on the infinitude of the other, which can be accomplished only by being produced as the idea of Infinity in a separated being. The other does indeed invoke this separated being, but this invocation is not reducible to calling for a correlative. It leaves room for a process of being that is

deduced from itself, that is, remains separated and capable of shutting itself up against the very appeal that has aroused it, but also capable of welcoming this face of infinity (Levinas [1961] 2011:216).

Thus, our relationship with the other *allows* for oppression and murder, creating an awareness of our freedom and calling us to *ethics* (ibid.:163, 199); “goodness liberated from the egoist gravitation” (ibid.:236). This relationship to the face is not legalistic or moralistic, as the ethical impulse comes from *within* the self as opposed to outside of it. Freedom exists “on the stone of the tables on which laws are inscribed” (ibid.:241); not by virtue of laws in the sense of legalistic propositions, but in the drive to create such laws; the drive toward sociality. For Levinas, violence and oppression go against the basis of existence. Although, it should be stressed that the relationship between faces stems from an *affective* interaction as opposed to species membership: “It is my responsibility before a face looking at me as absolutely foreign (and the epiphany of the face coincides with these two moments) that constitutes the original fact of fraternity” (ibid.:215; see also 214). Conceptualizing freedom in this way helps in my attempt to reimagine my own freedom as something worth protecting in the sense that, as an entity existing *for* others, it behooves me to guard my capacity to respond *to* others against the other others who might seek to manipulate my will for unethical purposes.

As an ethical entity, I require my freedom. Therefore I arrive at an orientation that privileges *myself* in a non-egotistical sense; a sense that embraces the relationality and otherness of my own subjectivity. This renewed focus on the self, is preferable to the maligned (at least in feminist circles!) discourse of *selfless care*, which separates the idea of my *own* needs, responsibilities and desires from other people; assuming that care

is/must involve a sacrifice on the part of the carer (Gilligan 1995:122, 124). In this sense, Levinas prefigures a feminist care ethics in that he understands *goodness* as something that is fundamental to affective beings. While we may feel called to sacrifice our *freedom* for the other (Levinas [1961] 2011:300), the same does not feel this imperative as a burden. The sacrifice that Zizek (2004), for example, is so desperate to find in Levinas is predicated on a presumed opposition between self and other that is simply not there. There is no sacrifice for the other. There is only *being* for the other; a *desire* for the other which negates the notion of sacrifice in that it leads to “enjoyment” (Levinas [1961] 2011:133). If ethics is an innate state of being; *the* state of being, then our ethical relationship to others is safe from any deconstruction we might undertake: “The face with which the Other turns to me is not reabsorbed in a representation of the face” (Levinas [1961] 2011:215). This relationship is beyond signification; its transcendence allows us to maintain /defend our relationship to others, our care/responsibility for (to) others despite any discursive analysis. Maintaining the steadfastness of one's responsibility to others despite any possible rejection of morals allows for a movement beyond nihilistic cultural relativity towards ethically produced affinities.

Since the relationship between faces is continually re-enacted: “Like a shunt every social relation leads back to the presentation of the other to the same without the intermediary of any image or sign, solely by the expression of the face” (Levinas [1961] 2011:213), we need not read Levinas as a mere developmental theorist. What matters is “the inevitable orientation of being ‘starting from oneself’ toward ‘the Other’” ([1961] 2011:215) and “the priority of this orientation over the terms that are placed in it” (ibid.).

The ethicality of my actions cannot so much be calculated based on the nature of the actions themselves, as by the motivation behind such actions. This focus on personal intentionality can, of course, be dangerous in light of the tendency to oppress others *for their own good*. My engagement with so-called *selfless* or *inauthentic* care and discussion of care in racializing discourses above reminds us that one's belief in the *for-the-other-ness* of one's actions matters little when the critical reflection that initiates said actions is undermined by one's own privilege. Wanting to help others has been a common excuse for all manner of atrocities, and so I am reluctant to embrace the notion of *being for others* as an ethic without some consideration of how I might ascertain whether or not said others *want* me to be *for* them. This interpretational chasm suggests that, if the other is so absolutely separate from me, I can never really know what *another* wants, especially when our connection is mediated by something as unpredictable as language. So, perhaps, while I can try to be *responsive* to others, an orientation *towards* and *for* others is all I can claim to have, since I will never truly be able to *answer* without knowing the real question.

In this way, Levinas's insistence on maintaining the separateness of subjectivities (Levinas [1961] 2011:243) without denying the sociality of individual consciousness allows for a nuanced conceptualization of an anti-universalist, pro-social engagement with the world. Although he acknowledges that "universal norms" (ibid.) ignore the singularity of individuals, the specificity of each situation, and the *invisible* (ibid.) intentions that belie every ethical choice, he refuses to embrace an antagonistic individualism. For Levinas, *we* are made *by* and *for* others, and yet we are completely

separate from that which creates us. This separateness introduces us to the drive for ethics while simultaneously undermining our ability to *know* what the other will find ethical. True relationality then, demands an acceptance of the autonomy and alterity of the other: a refusal to make “them play roles in which they no longer recognize themselves, making them betray not only commitments but their own substance, making them carry out actions that will destroy every possibility for action” (Levinas 1961:21).

The idea that the alienation we inflict on others is greater than physical destruction echoes Fanon’s critique of colonialism as that which prohibits the colonized from truly *existing*. For Fanon, human freedom is the foremost value around which any political or social engagement with the world ought to revolve. In the most simplistic sense, humanity is freedom, and thus encroachment upon the freedom of another stops them from achieving their full humanity and relegates them to a type of existential limbo ([1952] 2008:xii). *Black Skin, White Masks*, of course, is the discussion of a very specific type of *external* determination: the continual tension between the drive for recognition within a system of colonial culture and the impossibility of ever fully achieving such based on the materiality of one’s embodied (non)existence (ibid.:118). Within this climate, the self is unable to recognize itself as, in any sense, free and is therefore forced to forfeit its membership within an existentialist vision of humanity (ibid.). In a dialectical impasse, struggle is the only way to remove this forced identification. It is not enough to attempt to elaborate a separate identity within the terms of colonialism, as this “does not allow us to understand the being of the black man since it ignores the lived experience. For not only must the black man be black, he must be

black in relation to the white man” (ibid.:90). Fanon wants to avoid creating another division *within* the colonial system and reinforcing the discourse of whiteness as centre.

However, despite his seeming psychologism, Fanon’s ethical commitments are nuanced in that he sees the quest for *humanity* as a materialist struggle: “We would be overjoyed to learn of the existence of a correspondence between some black philosopher and Plato. But we can absolutely not see how this fact would change the lives of eight-year-old kids working in the cane fields of Martinique or Guadeloupe” (Fanon [1952] 2008:295). Initially, *Wretched of the Earth*’s romantic allusions to “violence as a cleansing force” (Fanon [1961] 2004:51) seem to ignore the experiential realities of violence in favour of a quest for an abstract vision of *freedom* or *humanity*. However, despite the brutality of his prose, I see Fanon’s focus on violence as a prioritization of struggle; based, of course, on the necessity of self-definition. For one thing, quotes like the above are given more as a (however misguided) attempt at a statement of psychological fact. His decision to embrace war is hardly based on an abstract idealism or thoughtless egocentrism. Quite the opposite, Fanon sees the Algerian revolution as predicated on an ultimately material link between a group of people barred from achieving the status of fully human and the “daily incitement to murder resulting from famine, eviction from his room for unpaid rent, his mother’s withered breast, children who are nothing but skin and bone...the colonized subject sees his fellow man as a relentless enemy” ([1961] 2004:231). Fanon is fully aware of the potential consequences of violence and he makes this abundantly clear. For Fanon, the quest for humanity is a

quest for material life; a quest for existence in both the European philosophical sense, *and* in the literal sense of one's actual freedom to *be alive*.

Fanon is also clear that respect for autonomy should not disintegrate into isolationism¹⁵ or neutrality in the face of injustice or suffering. To him, we are all faced with an unequivocal responsibility to others: "I cannot dissociate myself from the fate reserved for my brother. Every one of my acts commits me as a man. Every instance of my cowardice, manifests the man" (Fanon [1952] 2008:71-72). Not only am I responsible for myself, am I responsible for the acts perpetrated by "my nation" (ibid.:72). So *leaving* others to their autonomy or, more specifically, *refusing to help* when this help is invoked by said others is clearly *bad*¹⁶ as far as Fanon is concerned.

A partial solution to my concern regarding how to be *for others* while at the same time respecting their autonomy can be found in the privileging of materiality in some sections of *Black Skin, White Masks*. On the final page of his treatise, Fanon ([1952] 2008) suggests that we "try to touch the other, feel the other, discover each other" (206). To me, this articulates a possibility of working across difference via a universal materiality. Although *discovery* has been used by proponents of a type of liberalism, Fanon's focus on physical contact precludes a descent into hollow recognition. *Touching* moves beyond the injunction to empathize with others. It involves a certain type of empathy that listens and seeks to understand and imagine the position from which the other is coming but also recognizes the incommensurable otherness of the other. It

¹⁵ And I use this term in an individual sense, not a political one.

¹⁶ In Spinoza-Deleuzean sense

refuses to let the other be subsumed under our own empathetic conceptualization of their life world and allows for connections with those with whom we will never fully be able to empathize; “to sense from the inside the despair” (ibid.:67) of the other. It is an empathy that refuses to define or fix. It privileges fluidity. Of course, it is easy to say things like this but harder to enact or conceptualize them with relation to a material world. I believe the first step is accepting others’ definitions of themselves and their situations without needing to agree with said conceptualization. A focus on allowing people their self-definition is not the same as being isolated within oneself. Trying to touch others is active, it involves wanting to work with others if they so desire it, and wanting to attempt to understand if they so desire that as well.

Obviously there is a fine line here between a care for others which invokes a non-ethical paternalism, and the genuine desire to *respond* to others’ invocations. However, if one desires an ethical relationship with the world that values engagement *and* autonomy, then being aware of the boundaries of good will and paternalism is fundamental in determining the proper course of action in each situation. Fanon ([1952] 2008) expresses something similar earlier in *Black Skin, White Masks*, when he suggests that “true love, real love” (24) is “wishing for others what one postulates for oneself when this postulate integrates the permanent values of human reality” (ibid.). While he articulates the need to determine a balance between paternalism and nihilism, said suggestion is problematic for me in that I have trouble believing that there can ever be a way to define permanent human values. I cannot follow the logic of Fanon’s faith in universals, regardless of how thoroughly we seek to liberate our “psychological agencies...from unconscious tensions”

(ibid.). However, I do believe in the possibility of negotiated intersubjective value commitments among individuals and non-mandatory groups, and in this sense, this passage illuminates the value of wishing for others what one postulates for oneself when this postulate integrates shared values negotiated between subjectivities. My *responsibility* to the other consists of an ethical injunction to do what I can for others in so much as this help is explicitly desired. However, I do not wish to misrepresent Fanon's intentions. I merely think that his sentiment here can be applicable to my specific worldview when interpreted in a way that does not allow the philosophical conventions of his time to create an insurmountable chasm between us.

Combining Levinas and Fanon I arrive at a critique of oppression that focuses foremost on the destruction of the psyche of the individual; the imposition of a forced role or forced identity upon the subject. If we view the essential problem of oppression (capitalism, colonialism, etc.) as that which makes the products of one's labour (which could include one's sense of self) appear as alien to their creator, then perhaps ethical love involves supporting that which allows others, through whatever means, to create their environment and themselves *freely*¹⁷. Of course, if we accept Levinas's conceptualization of selfhood as a joint construction between an idea of sameness and the call to ethics and existence via our relationships with others then this need not imply an individual/societal binary where the self must be created by some a priori consciousness. Rather, such a love can privilege the free action of a socially constructed self, where

¹⁷ Of course this term is inherently subjective and will have to be based on the premise that the individual is a product of sociality.

freedom denotes a freedom from the subjective feeling of the self as an *imposition*; from the aspects of sociality that do not appear to the same as internal. Perhaps this is supporting the autonomy of others. Perhaps it is supporting their freedom. At any rate, it involves responding to the desires of others in terms of their understandings of themselves, and not through the projection of one's desire onto the other, which involves maintaining an understanding of one's own autonomous socially constituted selfhood.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

*Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night. – Arnold 1867*

What's love got to do with it?!

Examining current public and political discourses surrounding educational contract disputes, we can trace metonymic connections between emotions surrounding teaching as a feminized profession, the selfless love expected from women and mothers, and the anger surrounding teachers' inability to live up to ultimately impossible standards of care, selflessness and mothering. While such anger is admittedly common in political debate, the way in which discussions of teaching are infused with such deeply personal and vitriolic associations for some Ontarians points to the position of teachers as 'objects' overburdened with the collective residue of an emotional attachment to capitalist, patriarchal, and colonial visions of femininity. The idea that teachers might *want* compensation and that their love, no matter how enjoyable it might be, is not necessarily *enough* is antithetical to a discursive formation that privileges sacrifice on the part of women and minorities in the name of capital. Thus, teachers' rejection of the Ontario

government's contract proposals is, in many cases, felt intensely by the citizen as a rejection of their children and, ostensibly, themselves.

How then, returning to Hardt and Negri's prologue, can we reformulate *love* as an element of anti-neoliberal politics and pedagogy? Our current conceptualization of love is informed so much by heterosexual monogamy and biological self-identification (Hardt and Negri 2005:351) that attempting to employ this term in a political context can seem somewhat precious. Additionally, as per the above, we know that many current ways of thinking and doing *love* as 'selflessness,' for all their talk of being *for* the other, deny the other in their very lack of attention to the self. To be clear, this is not an argument for individualism: a focus on the self to the exclusion of the other, but rather, an incitement to love the other in a way that acknowledges the other's separateness. This attention to the self as an inherently social, other-made entity, is humanistic in a sense, but this is not the humanism of essence, but a humanism of ethics. If we follow Levinas and Gilligan in acknowledging ethics as the basis of 'humanity' then we make strides toward imagining Hardt and Negri's 'new humanism' as a viable politico-ethical sentiment.

So what can be said, when faced with the inevitable question of whether we really care enough: whether we are in fact *doing it for the money* as opposed to the *love*? How can I respond to a fellow teacher candidate who describes teachers' job actions as *bullying*, to those who lament the consequences of such *immature* behavior for those students who have the least: who have suffered the most under the ravages of capitalism? For me, the issue comes to be one of *The Ontario Child* as fantasy versus *The Ontario Child* as real, lived potentiality. The Ontario child of our material reality can live without

extracurricular activities; they can live without me and my teaching, no matter how effective. What they cannot live without, and consequently what none of us can live without, is a world that adapts to work against the increasing proliferation of neoliberal devastation throughout our communities. If we allow ourselves to remain complicit in this devastation, to allow potentially self-valorizing, anti-capitalist work to be demeaned into quantified profit generation by allowing the spectre of the poor, imaginary *Ontario child* who *needs* so much in order to support the greater capitalist system guilt us into accommodating every demand of the capitalist state, then the children we profess to *love*, really do have no future. Allowing the capitalist romanticization of love to subvert collective bargaining and undermine the ways in which we come together to support *all* members of the community, whether or not they are small, vulnerable, and utterly adorable, or seemingly self-sufficient adults is a failure to engage with a love that sees beyond our colonial heteropatriarchal connection to smaller versions of ourselves.

At the end of one love and the beginning of another

And then I walk away, and months pass – ten of them – and I am a different person than I was when I started this whole thing: a different person than the one who left for teachers' college. It weighs heavily on me that in these last few pages there's a necessity to share the exact way in which I've changed – how I've grown, expanded, developed into a more keenly present version of *myself*. Yet there are no words to express the tension and elation of my first elementary teaching experiences. There are no words to explain how these ten months have formed the culmination of my thinking in

this work, and no way to succinctly define my feelings towards my dedication to my students as a dedication to alterity that is ultimately an embrace of the self – but the necessity of trying is there, and consequently I offer this.

I am different now, then how I was. How am I different? I have grown. And yet this is not the growth that comes from world weariness or ennui; I have grown in that I have expanded. The *me* of a socially constituted selfhood has been filled, as a balloon, with the joy, despair, and need of the children with whom I worked. There is no *depletion* in working to help others – for me, the realm of social reproduction is not one of *giving* or *loss of self*; for me there were gains – only an expansion of my selfhood as part of a larger community – as part of the community of classrooms, of schools, of a neighbourhood, as well as the smaller communities with each student.

In my previous thinking and writing about maternal/fetal personhood, I focused on the impossibility of categorizing female/fetus relationships within the dualistic nature of medicalized, patriarchal discourse. When I began this work I thought I was entering a completely different world – leaving behind the tension of subject/object relations for something far simpler, more concrete – but I wasn't. My experience of *love* in teaching is a love that exceeds the boundaries of self and other, and confirms, in its excess, the relationality of selfhood. It doesn't negate our alterity or relationality – but confirms our separation as an element of our togetherness. Self and other remain distinct – but only exist as such through one another.

Yes, biological parent/child relationships express this excess as well, but there is so much more that can be done with the exuberance of *with the otherness* that permeates

our acceptance of biological, familial love. Adoption, Queer Theory, Post-humanism – all of these areas resonate with the idea that humans can, and do, *love* and exist wholly, and happily *for the other* (which is really for the self) outside the biological necessities of human reproduction. We have so much more to give.

Except, it was never really giving. Although I hope my students feel I *gave* them something – there was never anything that felt like *giving* to me. There was only taking. Their attention, their happiness – the relationality of helping them was what I took from them. Of course, we're here again at the age-old argument about altruism. Can we help others without helping ourselves? But, and this is the real point, *why should we want to?* Our *selves* are our community. My students are *selves* – just as I am somebody's (well many people's!) student as well as a self. Our network of relationality ensures that the needs of all these selves matter – every single one. Individuality is not individualism because it does not presuppose a self that is separate from communality. Neoliberal individualism tells us that it is each of our responsibilities to pull up our bootstraps – that we each (as some lonely autonomous non-social being) control our destinies. But in saying this it eliminates the possibility of the *individuality* the prefix of its name attempts to honour. There is no individuality in a world where every person must be treated the same, given the same – where the equality of neoliberalism ignores the necessity of trying to achieve equity through an acknowledgement of difference. True individuality is an element of sociality, of reaction with and to and for others, and this is something that individualism cannot allow for.

What this means for Ontario's teachers, for the communities of people who come together as unions and make decisions to engage in job action (whatever the form) in order to secure their lifestyles, is that they are acting for themselves – **and that's okay!** As part of larger communities, as collectives – as societies that depend on unionism, on workers' rights, on protest to maintain the jobs that are most capable of building a collective of autonomous, self-aware, creative, relational people – teachers, in working for themselves, are working *for* our children. I do not mean that they must brand smaller class sizes, etc. as things that benefit students, as per union public relations campaigns. What I mean is that teachers *are* our community. They are our children's futures, not in the sense that they open some magic door to the future of colonial white supremacy to needy waifs – but in the sense that our children will one day *be* these teachers. They will be members of our community engaging in whatever sort of social/economic reproduction that will be necessary to continue our species, and taking away in the short term to enhance the possibilities of their futures is something I consider intensely ethical.

That being said, as a teacher, my short-term pain would be in not being involved in extra-curriculars – and I'm sure many teachers feel the same. This is the sacrifice. But I know the temporary pain of my collective action is outweighed by the necessity of me helping to create a future world in which *these very children*, the ones that I teach, will have the possibility of *being full selves*, of not being overrun by the heresies of capital. My action can help provide the possibility to teach, and love, and be filled with the joy that spending time in my community gives to me. And, of course, given the nature of this entire argument, this is again seemingly contradictory because I said that it's okay to act

for oneself – and it is. But the self one is acting for is part of something larger – something bigger than all selves. And selves are only selves in relation to this togetherness – to the ultimate collective of the multitude. Adam Smith was not entirely wrong, in the sense that taking care of ourselves, loving ourselves, is a love of others – just as loving others is an act of self-love. The necessity of maintaining our selves when relating to the other is clear when we acknowledge the racist/colonial/sexist nature of assuming the other wants what we want as well. But acknowledging this difference does not entail a lack of relationality – it entails an appreciation for the ever-present difference, both in terms of power differentials and emotional needs that run through any relationship, any community. The problem occurs when we interpret Smith’s words through the neoliberal lens of a self that exists outside the realm of the other – of a non-Levinasian self that can exist in a kind of vacuum, pretending its decisions to *harm* the other, do not, in turn, harm the self as part of a larger society.

And so I return to Madeleine Grumet, with her beautiful exposition that the “enemy of the child-redeemer is time” (1988:156), and I leave you with this in conclusion: A relationality that is aware of temporality is not impossible within the realm of teacher/student relations, but it must be intentional. I will always try to embrace teaching as *becoming temporal*. My awareness that I will not see my students grow up – that our relationship cannot be one without power dynamics – cannot be one of equality – *can* lead me to a more egalitarian relationship with them based on my attempt, my ever present drive for my classroom to *become* equal – with Levinas’s conceptualization of a

justice that sees all¹⁸ as an ever-present (and ever-unreachable) endpoint. Embracing temporality means embracing my place as an adult within the community – as the one with power in a classroom – as the only one whose positionality renders them capable of truly *redeeming* the world in the face of neoliberalism’s destruction.

Oh, love, let us be true to one another. While Arnold’s oft-maligned honeymoon tribute seems to envision a world devoid of hope, of love, and of joy – I have always imagined it as presenting something distinctly, and beautifully, optimistic. We cannot look outward to ‘the world’ for subversion, for love, or joy, or light. It is this acceptance of the self’s responsibility to be for *itself* as an element of the other that has the capacity for true subversion. This acceptance, this turning inward as a way of relating to the outside has the potential to create the positive relationality and good willed association between subjects that so many of us desire. It might seem odd that I chose to preface this section with a segment of a poem steeped in the language of heteronormative, romantic love. However, when I imagine these words, I envision them as relating not to an individual lover, but to a collective of differentiated subjects. Being ‘true to one another’ in this context necessitates a Levinasian aspiration towards the “judgment of God” (Levinas [1961] 2011:244) – an anarchistic love that embraces temporality and the boundlessness of its own desire in a responsive, irreverent way. That is the true, all-encompassing care that I know many other teachers share. *That* is love.

¹⁸ See (Levinas [1961] 2011:244)

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