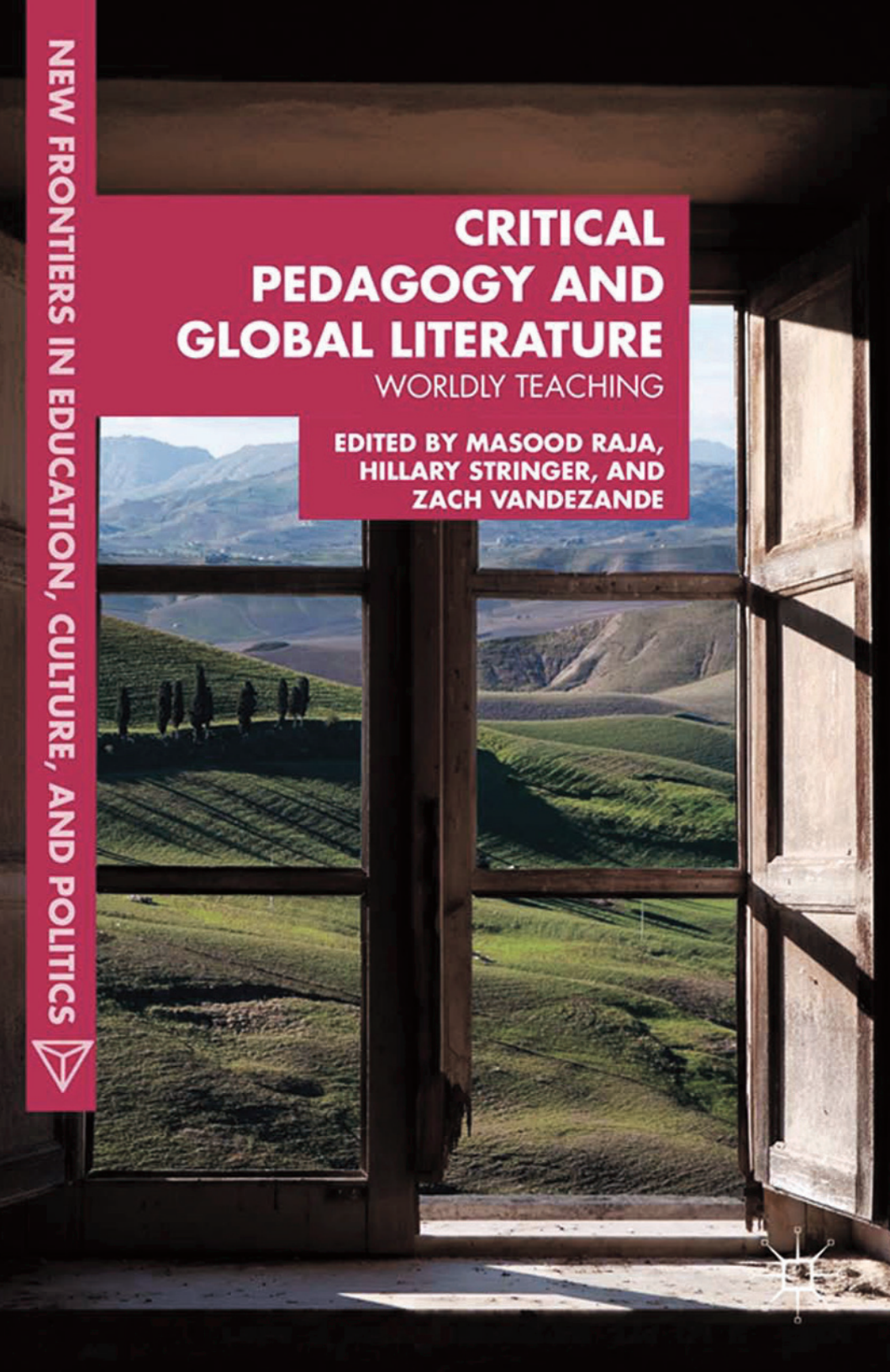
NEW FRONTIERS IN EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND POLITICS
CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND GLOBAL LITERATURE
WORLDLY TEACHING
EDITED BY MASOOD RAJA, HILLARY STRINGER, AND ZACH VANDEZANDE

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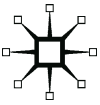

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Contents

Introduction 1
Masood Ashraf Raja

Part I Theory

1 Gender, Knowledge, and Economy: Greg Mortenson, Turning Schools into Stones 9
Robin Truth Goodman

2 Educating for Cosmopolitanism: Lessons from Cognitive Science 25
Mark Bracher

3 Learning to Be a Psychopath: The Pedagogy of the Corporation 47
Kenneth J. Saltman

4 Corporate World Literature: Neoliberalism and the Fate of the Humanities 63
Jeffrey R. Di Leo

5 Reading the "Other" in World Literature: Toward a Discourse of Unfamiliarity 75
Swaralipi Nandi

6 Pedagogy for Healing and Justice through Cambodian American Literature 97
Jonathan H. X. Lee and Mary Thi Pham

7 A Moving Pedagogy: Teaching Global Literature through Translation 113
Kyle Wanberg

8 "Re-worlding" in Tsitsi Dangaremba's *Nervous Conditions* 131
Linda Daley

9 Teaching World Systems: How Critical Pedagogy Can Frame the Global 149
David B. Downing

10 Object Lessons: Material Culture Approaches to Teaching Global Poetry 165
Hella Rose Bloom

Part II Praxis

11 A Gun and a Book: Teaching Naguib Mahfouz's *The Thief and the Dogs* in a Time of Revolution and Occupation 181
Jessica Chiccehitto Hindman

12 Magical Realism: A Gateway out of America and into the World 189
Tessa Mellas

13 Making the Familiar Unfamiliar: Teaching Origin Myths, Material Conditions, and "the Bible as Literature" 193
Hillary Stringer

14 Cycles of Opportunity: On the Value and Efficacy of Native American Literature in Teaching World Literature to Millennials 201
Marnie M. Sullivan

15 "The Speculation of Schoolboys": Confronting the Academy in *Ulysses* 213
Matthew McKenzie Davis

16 Reaching for the Other in Teaching Aleksandar Hemon's "A Coin" 221
Zach VandeZande

Afterword 227
Masood Ashraf Raja, Hillary Stringer, and Zach VandeZande

List of Contributors 229

Index 231

Introduction

Masood Ashraf Raja

The world as it was, is, or will be, is beyond common sense, beyond natural understanding: it must be taught. Didactics is not only a fancy term for teaching but is also a loaded concept, which, under certain enabling conditions, is meant to teach us the very nature of what is given to us and then perform an enabling act of transcendence from the given. The world that we live in, this world in which neoliberal capital offers itself as natural and non-referential, is also a world of unrelenting greed and heart-breaking inequalities. How must we change this world? The answer: we must teach the world as it is but also as it ought to be. We live in the belly of this monster called neoliberal capital that Ngugi, in another age it seems, had called a two-mouthed demon that steals "food from people's stores at midnight" and then visits the robbed in "robes of charity" to offer them "a calabash filled with the grain" (13) that was stolen at night. We are all complicit in its design, instruments of its logic. Yes, sadly, there is no outside to capital: we must, therefore, teach it from within and also learn, share, and teach the strategies of its ultimate undoing. For, let us not forget, every system has its own undoing woven into the very fabric of its being: the system needs this death message to remain constantly on the move, in flux. The system, thus, always has a secret at its core: true revolutionary pedagogy must seek, share, and teach this secret.

In its earlier stages, the demon of capital effaced difference to make everything in its own image and to arrogate all of world's resources to itself. Neoliberal capital, however, is a multiheaded demon and appropriates difference in the name of development to continue the northward flow of world's resources for the use and pleasure of the so-called "masters of the universe."

World literature, in all its connotations and denotations, is yet another tool in the hands of capital: to teach the world so that the new generations of northern elite can learn to negotiate the world in order to extract the maximum advantage. Knowledge for the sake of profit and appropriative

drive is at the heart of this new emphasis on introductory level world literature, world history, or world culture courses. The corporatized university is the ideal place to teach the world: it has now become the university's unannounced mission to maintain the US comparative edge by producing noncritical, but aware, citizens of the world, citizens ideally programmed to serve the purposes and missions of the global corporations. Yes, teaching the world through literature so that our students know of the world, because knowledge, as Foucault has aptly taught us, is inextricably linked with power and its project of disciplining, managing, and controlling human bodies and desires. That these courses are often taught by an overworked and underpaid precariat is also aptly clear. In the end then, the practice of teaching world literature to facilitate a certain metropolitan-specific view of the world is also an emblem of current division of labor: contingent labor of the so-called cognitariat[1] is appropriated to bring the world to our classrooms. And this "deliverance of others" (Palumbo-Liu, 1) to our students instead of creating empathy only functions to normalize the preinscribed global hierarchies of the neoliberal world, a world in which inequalities are essential and where the other can enter the metropolitan academy only as an exotic appendage or as a demonized marker of otherness.

But there is, I dare say, another kind of knowledge: a knowing beyond Hegel, beyond instrumentalization, beyond western metaphysics: knowledge in the thought of Levinas and in the praxis of Freirre. Knowledge not as the master or as the child of logos but as a servant of Eros, a bringer of freedom, love, kindness, care: knowledge that enables us to live more compassionate and responsible lives, lives in concert and in constant touch with our global others; a sort of impossible knowledge that seeks the other not to master it through learning but to love it through caring and sharing. This is the worldly knowledge, the worldliness that Edward Said talked about in one of his major and more hopeful books, and that is why what we propose here is called worldly teaching. For Said, worldliness, if described succinctly, is to acknowledge that the texts and critics exist in the world and are "hence worldly" (35). Our teaching, therefore, must also be grounded in the worldliness of the text, the teacher, and the student, and it must teach the world.

In the traditional epics of my culture,[2] epics not yet included in our world literature curriculum, a hero, when confronted with a self-regulating system—called Tilism—must launch a two-pronged offensive to reduce the Tilism, to undo its logic and the binding force of its regulative and appropriative power. In the heroic realm, the hero must muster his forces and build lateral alliances to fight countless battles and skirmishes to keep the Tilism at bay, to buy more time, more leverage, while searching

for the tablet that has the secret of the Tilism's final undoing inscribed on it. This tablet, this magical knowledge, is always hidden in the deepest recesses of the Tilism; one could argue that it is the *raison d'être* of the Tilism, something that needs the Tilism to hide it. But the tablet is always there, for it is absolutely necessary for a normalized system to pre-inscribe its own undoing, its own death, for without it there will be no reason for the system to grow. It is this genetic code, this pre-inscription coded at the originary moment of the system—the prescribed death—that forces the system to grow, and that must be found. For, unless the hero finds the tablet and reads the inscription aloud, the system cannot be undone: so the hero seeks the tablet while his supporters and his allies fight a thousand different battles to force the Tilism to look the other way.

So, as we muster our forces and fight our losing battles, in the classrooms, on the streets, in courtrooms against a thousand different specters of power, we are also buying time: enough time to find the tablet, the code, to undo the Tilism and write the world anew. And when, after a thousand stalemates and lost battles, we find the secret, all we will have to do is to speak the secret, to unhinge it from the interests of its masters. The mere act of saying it will undo the Tilism of capital and free us to be human, free us to live, to love, and to die in peace.

But until that moment comes, and trust me it will, as there are signs of it in the air already, we—teachers, students, activists, and the wretched of the earth—painfully aware of our own history of complicity in the projects of power, must fight on, must teach, learn, love, talk, write, and hope for a future to come, a future impossible but worthy of our hopes and dreams. True critical pedagogy, I believe, applied to the transformative potential of world literature can, at least, enable us to pose a threat to this neoliberal monstrosity that has now been globally naturalized.

What would it take for us to think the world differently, to love unconditionally, for conditions always reduce differences, and to live responsible lives? In my naiveté, I sometimes believe that world literature can help us do that, can help us train and, in Gayatri Spivak's words, enable the "empowerment of an informed imagination" (2) for our students. But when we mobilize these loaded and so-called cheesy concepts against the powerful machines of capitalism, do we not look slightly dreamy, and certainly ineffectual? But then who cares: let us fight on as Faiz Ahmad Faiz taught us: it is how you enter the field that matters / for to win and lose is entirely inconsequential.

Most of the essays in this collection come from academics: all committed to the issues of critical pedagogy and world literature, all at different levels of career trajectories. This emphasis on academics is the main strength of this collection but also its Achilles' heel: for as academics we

have a mission to produce liberatory knowledge, but in the process we are also inescapably caught in the normalizing process of power, for we, after all, are also expected to teach a certain degree of functionality within the system of capital. We are, however, humanists, and thus also responsible to teach beyond the system, beyond utility; the most important aspects of our practices are, or ought to be, to think the system itself, to lay bare its normalizing practices, its seductions, and its strategies of social stratifications. In the end, our efforts too are probably doomed to failure, but who knows: as the Arab spring and Occupy movement have taught us, the young may still surprise us, may still teach us the true meaning of life and the true spirit of democratic popular public dissent.

There are two parts to this book: Part I includes theoretical writings by some leading and some emergent scholars in the field of critical pedagogy. These are all situated scholars: they are concerned with the everyday functions and consequences of informed pedagogy. Unlike their prolegomenon counterparts who exist "in a preliminary intellectual space, whose value is enhanced by being, above other things, above productive work" (Brennan, 13), these scholars respond to the world as it is, point out its flaws, its irregularities, its inequalities, and then theorize transformative strategies. These scholars are deeply interested in transformative power of informed pedagogy and neither do theory for theory's sake nor subscribe to the dicta of the "aesthetics of complexity" (9) or "fetish of intricacy" (9). I will not attempt to reduce their chapters and give you some pithy excerpts here: I hope you, the reader, will take your time to read them and then enter in a conversation with them.

Part II contains essays by the practioners of world literature: part of the overworked global precariat; these are the people on the front, in the trenches. Theirs is a story of hope and resistance. We are honored to have them in this book, for they alone can teach us the true value of transformative pedagogy through their lived experiences.

Read together, the two parts are meant to provide you a set of theoretical and praxis-driven approaches to teaching world literature: teaching it against the grain, in opposition to the imperial imperatives of the global elite, and in the hope of changing and transforming the world.

All you have to do is *Iqra*: Read!

Notes

1. For a detailed discussion of precariat and cognitariat read: George Caffentzis, "A Critique of 'Cognitive Capital'," in *Cognitive Capitalism, Education and Digital Labor*, ed. Michael A. Peters and Ergin Bulut (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), 23–56.

2. Muhammad Hussain Jah. *Hoshruba: The Land and the Tilism*, 1883–1893, trans. Musharraf Ali Farooqi (New York: Urdu Project, 2009). (More information in: http://mafarooqi.com/hoshruba/index.html).

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Part I

Theory

1

Gender, Knowledge, and Economy: Greg Mortenson, Turning Schools into Stones

Robin Truth Goodman

In April, 2011, the news hit the wires that Greg Mortenson, the author of the celebrated *Three Cups of Tea* and *Stones into Schools,* had not described his adventures building schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan with full accuracy. *Three Cups of Tea* and *Stones into Schools* are both feel-good memoirs that chronicle Greg Mortenson's heroic travel exploits in an unfamiliar and often hostile environment to bring learning to Muslim girls. In a number of TV exposés and other mainstream outlets, including a dialogue with Jon Krakauer on *Sixty Minutes* followed by a book devoted to the topic entitled *Three Cups of Deceit,* Mortenson's credibility was interrogated along with the legitimacy of the charity he founded to collect money for the school-building projects that the book describes—Central Asia Institute or CAI. Evidence had surfaced that his stay in the village of Korphe, and his promise to build a school there, did not directly follow from his failed attempt to climb the Himalayan mountain K2 in 1993 and getting lost on the descent as he had written, and he was not really kidnapped by the Taliban. Krakauer is explicit about the questionable accounting practices that Mortenson practiced and later claimed as but instances of a naïve guy who suddenly and miraculously finds himself at the head of a large business enterprise. Not only did many of the members of the CAI charity's Board of Trustees resign due to Mortenson's inadequate reporting of expenses—for example, he was using expensive private jets to travel for speaking engagements—but also money that was collected from schoolchildren in the United States to pay for "teachers'

salaries, student scholarships, school supplies, basic operating expenses" (Krakauer, 41) was not spent in these designated ways. The total 2009 outlay for such school support amounted to "$612,000" (41). "Most teachers…have never received any training from CAI" and "a significant number of CAI schools only exist on paper" (48).

I am not so concerned here with the authenticity or veracity of the text but rather with questioning the desire for authenticity that the text elicits. Neither *Three Cups of Tea* nor *Stones into Schools* demands to be read as a reflection of the real. Mortenson's self-aggrandizing anecdotes often verge on the comical. For example, in *Stones into Schools*, Mortenson, encouraged by his daughter who had recently read *Where the Wild Things Are,* dashes out to Gold's Gym to buy playground equipment to provide to the schools. One day a Taliban fighter arrives, puts down his weapons, and along with his companions, "gleefully sampled the swings, the slide, and the seesaw" (201). The Taliban warrior then decides that he likes the idea of educating girls after all "but [the schools] absolutely must have playgrounds" (201). Immediately seduced upon first contact with US consumer products, the terrorist throws away local traditions, religious beliefs, and historical resentment for the sake of a friendly romp in the sandbox.

Given that Mortenson's tale is so preposterous, what is surprising is precisely the surprise with which the pundits responded to the revelation that the stories are fiction. As Katha Pollitt asks, "How did Mortenson enchant so many, including knowledgeable people?" (9). Pollitt's conjectured answer is that: "We've gotten used to a certain kind of NGO fairy tale…: Heifer International gives a family a farm animal, and in a dozen years, the profits send a daughter to college" (9). The idea of spreading education to girls promises the success of the imperialist dream while shadowing the nightmare of continued extremist attacks on girls and their schools, including insurgents throwing acid on the schoolgirls' faces, high dropout and low attendance rates, and low quality of curriculum and instruction.[1] Though certainly imperialist clichés and promises saturate Mortenson's prose, turning US military ventures in Afghanistan into miraculous acts of care, this paper argues that such girls' school narratives, as Angela McRobbie has recognized, position girls as the carriers of new economic rationalities: "The girl who has benefitted from the equal opportunities now available to her, can be mobilized as the embodiment of the values of the new meritocracy" (721–722). For McRobbie, the girl under neoliberalism is "now a social category understood primarily as being endowed with capacity" (722); she demonstrates the success of the education system as a whole and, on the international plane, becomes the target of worthwhile investment aid in the form of educational aid for the production of "the ideal…subject of the new international division of

labour" (729), in other words, "gender training to the long term benefit of the global corporations" (729).

Mortenson's "feel good" narrative of girls' emancipation through girls' education builds on a prior positioning of girls' schools as the crux of the struggle between colonizers and nationalist movements in other postcolonial renditions. For example, in his famous chapter on women revolutionaries, "Algeria Unveiled," Frantz Fanon interprets girls' schools as methodologically destroying the indigenous national culture. Fanon's description of girls' schools have an uncanny similarity to many of the celebratory descriptions that Mortenson, too, constructs: "Much is made of the young student's prodigious intelligence, her maturity; a picture is painted of the brilliant future that awaits those eager young creatures, and it is none too subtly hinted that it would be criminal if the child's schooling were interrupted. The shortcomings of colonized society are conceded, and it is proposed that the young student be sent to boarding school in order to spare the parents the criticism of 'narrow-minded neighbors'" (fn. 39). In keeping, Mortenson promotes the girls' school as the crux of social change in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but the culture that the schools are instituting is constantly extolled as a new economic culture, in this instance as the culture of the sweatshop: "In a disused room at the back of Hafi Ali's home, Korphe's women gathered each afternoon, learning to use the four new Singer hand-crank sewing machines Mortenson purchased, under the tutelage of Fida, a master Skardu tailor…'Balti already had a rich tradition of sewing and weaving," Mortenson says. 'They just needed some help to revive the dying practice'" (Mortenson amd Relin, 2006: 193). Mortenson uses the schools and the girls they are meant to benefit as praise-worthy examples of such overcoming of indigenous culture, traditions, and practices, imposing in their place technological rationality and the temporality of the machine. Mortenson's girls' schools also establish a transformation into neoliberal economic relations: public sphere destruction, military benevolence,[2] and private initiative. Every instance of public involvement, for Mortenson, ends in tragedy that Mortenson's heroic construction of schools will alleviate: for example, "the few permanent government school buildings that had been reconstructed were inappropriate, having been raised directly over the footprints of the old schools, and with the same techniques that were responsible for the structural failures that had killed so many children" (*Stones,* 219). Girls in schools come to represent a naturalized relationality and cooperative ethic that exist outside of external state controls and systems' regulations, or, as Krakauer cites Mortenson, outside of "government scrutiny into our operation" (57), as unmediated market potential.

This paper argues that Mortenson's construction of girls' education as the cornerstone of imperialist policy participates in a literary tradition of a girls' school genre that develops an economic rationality through displaying a common sense about girls. In its early twentieth-century form, as Patricia Tilburg notes, girls' school narratives "became…a kind of shorthand for feminine success" with the girls' school depicted "as a powerfully modern and powerfully female public space" (77). I show here how imperialist culture has co-opted the figure of rebellion that girls' school narratives have developed, to represent the problem of the marketability of women's work. As imperialist narratives merge into the girls' school trope, women's work turns to being a display of women's compliance with regimes of capitalization. This change in the literary role of women's work for the imperialist context has migrated into the social scientific justification in policy debates over girls' education, separate schooling, and "choice."

Girls' Schools in the Social Sciences

Though feminists have been critical of the move towards same-sex education because it perpetuates harmful stereotypes (American Association of University Women), public single-sex schooling and single-sex classroom options were incorporated in the school choice rhetoric of the "No Child Left Behind" era. Under the premise that public schools were failing, single-sex schools were championed as one option that might improve achievement levels for some children. However, the research routinely shows that single-sex classrooms have no proven or provable effect on educational "success." "There remains no strong evidence," Andrew McCreary, for example, states, and there is virtual consensus about this among researchers, "for the concurrent or long-term effects of these policies and no federal structure for uniformly studying those effects" (492). As the US Department of Education's report from its "Policy and Program Studies Service" sums up, "Any positive effects of SS [single-sex] schooling on longer-term indicators of academic achievement are not readily apparent. No differences were found for postsecondary test scores, college graduation rates, or graduate school attendance rates" (xv). The research on the effectiveness and benefits of single-sex public education is inconclusive, anecdotal at best. Researchers note that single-sex schooling expanded at the same time as high-stakes testing and accountability regimes were also expanding, blending together the effects of each. "There are no guarantees," Herr and Arms analyze in the existing empirical data, "that simply separating the sexes creates an equitable learning environment or one that interrupts stereotypical and racial arrangements" (548).

Salomone pronounces that most of the disparities measured between girls' and boys' performance can be said to be due to race or economic disadvantage since "the data make clear that the convergence of race, culture, and class present a complex set of social factors that reach well beyond the conventional girl-boy argument" (113). Part of the problem in the social science perspectives is, throughout, a lack of clear articulation of the intentions of single-sex schooling and what would count as "success": whether what is sought is higher "achievement," graduation rates, indicators of future effect (such as income or employment), or equality. Because of this indistinctness in outcomes, what counts as inputs often also seems variable and arbitrary, apart from the fact that such inputs are to be isolated from other potential influences.

Though single-sex schooling has no discernable scientific evidence that it "succeeds" or analysis of what would count as its "success," in the United States, 400 public schools have arisen in 37 states and the District of Columbia (McNeil)[3] along with 445 sex-segregated classrooms for the purpose of solving "sagging test scores and behavioral problems" (Medina).[4] Though Title IX of the 1964 Civil Rights Act enacted in 1972 explicitly denies federal funding to institutions that discriminate on the basis of sex, the George W. Bush administration in 2006 loosened its provisions, allowing the expansion of single-sex classrooms and schools in order to create alternative possibilities for raising achievement and competition. Constantly trying to justify school segregation by evoking sexed bodies as evidence of different types of aptitude and, contingently, future employability, the debates about single-sex schooling produce gendered subjectivities in order to position the child's body as the promise of a potential productivity, of differential market access. I show here how the debates over single-sex schooling serve to call upon and preserve the nature of the gendered body as underscoring the division of labor under neoliberalism, and to entrench the division of labor in the pledge of advancing prosperity.

In order to literalize these differences in the sexed body as grounded in fact, researchers often turn to the body. Rosemary C. Salomone, for example, declares, "Sex is irreducibly biological with an overlay of social considerations that define gender" (120). As Munira Moon Charania notes, anxiety about all-girls' schooling resonates with a "public anxiety surrounding girls' bodies" (306), situating girls' bodies as "the symbols of both cultural continuity and cultural crisis" (307). This frequent recourse to the body in the social science literature most often passes through a reference to the writings of Leonard Sax, MD, PhD. Sax's thesis is that "girls and boys behave differently" and learn differently "because their brains are wired differently" (28). In his book *Why Gender Matters,*

Dr. Sax supports his thesis by asserting that girls have better hearing than boys because of the configuration of their ears. Sax does not then recommend separating children on the basis of hearing ability but rather recommends a wholesale embrace of gendered classrooms on the basis that girls are more easily distracted by soft noises. Such hard-wiring makes girls better at reading and boys better at math and *Grand Theft Auto* while also explaining why men are interested in pornography when women are not. Furthermore, these brain-determined differences in hearing translate, for Dr. Sax, into irreparable differences in risk-taking, attention, self-esteem, aggression, and income. In response to the special configuration of their ears, girls process emotions through the cerebral cortex where the higher language functioning is located and therefore learn better through talking while boys learn better through doing. The gender differences that Dr. Sax spots in his learning bodies build toward a core understanding that boys move and girls do not, and girls relate while boys do not. Because of their hard-wiring, a girl learns through talking, relating, cooperating, collaborating, not acting. A 2011 study in *Science* has found Dr. Sax's recommendations based on misinformation, debunked science, and stereotypes.

As McRobbie underscores, such visibility of the sexed body produces an understanding of sexed bodies and subjectivities as carriers of economic capacity in ways that suit the economic layout of the present. Such science that explains how girls learn differently often draws on feminist research—like the work of Carol Gilligan, Nancy Chodorow, and Nel Noddings—to illustrate that girls respond to situations by relating cooperatively to others rather than through abstract principles, even though these analyses are based in historicalized socialization processes rather than essential gender types. The (boy's) moving body appears in the educational setting as moving toward mastery, like manual labor—in Marx's sense—taking control over nature. As, in contrast, the girl's immobilized body indicates, on the one hand, a lack of forward motion or advancement—in other words, a site of need, an unrealized capacity, a productive delay, even a momentum destroyed, awaiting inputs; on the other hand, the girl's body is in perfect submission, inactive but ready for service.

The Literary Record: Bronte's *Villette*

The scientific treatment of single-sex schooling cannot explain its constant recourse to the body as the final justification and cause of educational difference. The literary record, however, does offer a way of reading the body as the source of educational difference. Since the nineteenth

century, the girls' school plot in literature symptomatized the insecure line between women's domestic, reproductive work on the one hand, and, on the other, their inclusion in the productive economy. According to Anita Levy, early twentieth-century literary productions wove literary scenes out of the nineteenth century's "household as emptied of female labor" (51). The girls' school in Charlotte Bronte's 1853 novel *Villette,* for example, became integral to how economic realities relating to women's work were newly entering symbolic form and affecting identities. "I seemed to hold two lives," the protagonist Lucy Snowe notes to herself as she hesitates to enter the classroom, "—the life of thought, and that of reality; and, provided the former was nourished with a sufficiency of the strange necromantic joys of fancy, the privileges of the latter might remain limited to daily bread, hourly work, and a roof of shelter" (85). Her entry into the classroom proves her wrong, establishing that the work of the caretaker as well as the work of the thinker can be rendered countable in commodity form. Jennifer Ruth has demonstrated that Bronte's depiction of the proto-profession of teaching—which in both *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* develops as women's work—exhibits an ambivalent attempt to represent in marketable form a type of labor that had heretofore not been marketable. For Ruth, intellectual work like teaching in the nineteenth century had to be considered outside of the quantifiability of manual labor because of its irreducibility to time measurement, but, with the demise of a patronage system for art, intellectual products had to "embrace commerce" (284): intellectual work had to remain ungoverned by capital's determinants but were still appropriable into capital's value system.

The position of women's intellectual work as conflicted between the "natural" sensibility of household care and its production by circulating capital does affect women's bodies. In *The Professor*—Bronte's first novel, written in 1845–1846 but published posthumously in 1857, which many critics acknowledge as the rough draft of *Villette*—the professor's love interest, Frances, changes from inaction and a docile corporeality—"a corpse-like lack of animation" (89)—in a state of ignorance to an absolute mobility—"wakened to life,…she…could move with vivacity and alertness" (109)—when engaged in learning, to the point of eroticizing her acquisition of knowledge. Visibly revealing Frances's talents, these physical tensions between her domestic "quiescence" (89)—resistant to or even failing at market appropriations—and the energy of her marketable knowledge, propelled the girl's body into motion, indicating her potential as a teacher. The girl's body movement shows that she is entering, through schooling, into a relation to capital, but without a total alignment, as though the process of capitalization were still in conflict with the substance of its appropriation. In *Villette,* Lucy is similarly afflicted.

Left alone at school, with no employment or intellectual engagement over the holidays, Lucy's body literally becomes "lifeless" (173), "wasting and wearing" (174), without strength and compared to death and burial. Consumed with depression, Lucy wanders around until her body becomes immobilized, stilled in sickness, and collapses. The process of getting physically well and regaining physical and erotic vitality is the process that brings Lucy back to work at the school.

In *Villette,* this contradiction between nonmarketable and marketable forms of work is constructed into Lucy Snowe's femininity through her relation to the girls' school. In the middle of the novel, Lucy's friend M. de Bassompierre considers sending his daughter Polly to the school where Lucy teaches. M. de Bassompierre makes it clear that Polly's education is mostly for a good marriage, except if economic circumstances change, yet he also expresses admiration for what he calls Lucy's "success" and independence, the fact she is not a burden to others. By constructing women's work in a calculable form, the girls' school stages the development of women's service to the home as parallel to labor and appropriable by its terms, but sometimes anxiously or reluctantly so. Bronte shows the girls' school as producing a character—women's character in particular—*for* the market. Lucy's entry into the classroom establishes that the work of the caretaker as well as the work of the thinker can be rendered countable in commodity form.

The Girls' School as Transgression

In Modernism, the girls' school would be a temporary disruption to institutional practice, usually indicated by a type of female sexuality that fell out with convention. Even more fundamentally linked to strategic calculation, autonomous agency, and economic potential than Lucy or Frances, the girls' school in Modernism resembles the semiotic, an infantile corporeal fragmentation in Julia Kristeva's poetic language, where modern literature "attests to a 'crisis' of social structures and their ideological, coercive, and necrophilic manifestations" (15), a shattering of symbolic cohesion brought about through the "unceasing operation of the drives" (17) and primary processes but always in relation to a final closure of the socio-symbolic meaning. Both girls' animated bodies and the consciousness developed in the girls' schools are external and even antagonistic to normalization while always, as the semiotic, bringing stability to the symbolic stasis of institutional form. Girls in these accounts are anything but "relational," impossible to silence or to still, and certainly not cooperative.

This excessiveness of girls' bodies and sexualities in girls' school plots arises when women's bodies refuse the symbolic economy of women in the division of labor. One might consider, for example, Michel Foucault's 1978 "retrieved memoir" *Herculine Barbin,* where, once allowed to see inside the hidden fortress of the mid-nineteenth-century convent school, the reader learns its true secret to be that the headmistress has a penis. Once the girls' school reveals this secret, all sorts of unexpected misreadings and moral reversals ensue, as when, during a storm, Herculine, in shock from a clap of thunder, jumps out of bed into the palliative embrace of her teacher-nun Marie-des-Anges, only to find herself completely naked and visibly aroused. In the end, *Herculine Barbin* turns out to be a symbolic tragedy, where the institutional apparatuses of education, religion, law, and medicine are set in turmoil because the symbolic was wrongly assigned. This mis-assignation entailed, as one of its discomforts, "the prospect of being a *working woman*" (Barbin's emphasis; 20). Only when the designation "man" would be restored its functionality, in its proper body and for its proper job, is the convent institution again made secure.

The sexual, symbolic, and physical disorientation is often a cover-narrative for a deeper symbolic disturbance caused by the challenge of women's productive work to the sexual division between paid and unpaid labor time. Often, the sexual-symbolic problem of the girls' school plot erupts in the uneasy intersections between domestic, maternal socialization and caring functions with market value. In Dorothy Sayers's 1936 mystery-thriller *Gaudy Night*, for example, the protagonist Harriet Vane learns that the murder motive is the murderess' resentment over the loss of conjugal domesticity caused by the professionalization of women's scholarly labor in the Harriet's *alma mater*, the women's college of Oxford.

Colette is the writer who captures fundamentally the formation of girls' consciousness as economic capacity, precisely in its resistance to institutional appropriation, regimentation, and sexual control. Colette's quasi-autobiographical *Claudine in School*, published in 1900, imagines the girls' school as unabashedly in the business of training girls for the teaching profession, not predominantly for domestic or conjugal prospects as in *Villette*. Both the pleasure and the problem of the text appear through class inversions that are caused by this training but are woven through sexual play: "I had immense pleasure," Claudine characterizes her impressions of a dictation, "in hearing these daughters of grocers, cobblers and policemen meekly reciting and writing down parodies of the Romantic School" (37). Behind Claudine's sexual escapades and impish tricks, the girls' school upsets the expected correspondence between knowledge, language, and class identity.