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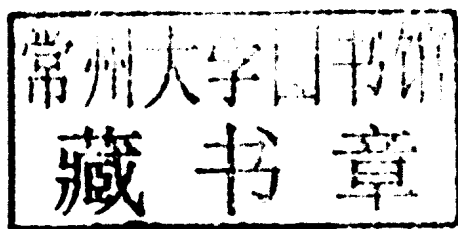
THE POWER IN/OF LANGUAGE

The Power In/Of Language

Edited by

David R. Cole and Linda J. Graham

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The Power In/Of Language

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Foreword

This monograph in the *Educational Philosophy and Theory* series brings into sharp focus the power of language and the many different ways discourse can dominate or liberate. *The Power In/Of Language* edited by David R. Cole and Linda J. Graham takes up its challenge from Zeus Leonardo's remarks on 'white privilege' which he suggests is often perpetuated through discursive strategies and tactics.

This collection is thematically integrated by the fact that contributors reference the work of Foucault, Deleuze and Gramsci (among others) across a range of themes and subject areas: disability science, post-colonial theory, critical discourse analysis and critical race theory to name a few of the prominent examples. Given the linguistic and discursive turns of educational and cultural theory, this emphasis on the 'power of language' is a welcome one and the penetrating analyses by renowned scholars will be of great service to those in the field working to analyse and unseat race, gender, class and cultural privilege.

Introduction

David R. Cole and Linda J. Graham

This monograph examines discursive strategies of domination and resistance used within the educational context.

In his 2004 essay 'The Color of Supremacy: Beyond the discourse of "white privilege" ', Zeus Leonardo (2004, p. 137) argues that 'white racial supremacy revolves less around the issue of unearned advantages, or the *State* of being dominant, and more around direct processes that secure domination and the privileges associated with it'. In relation to the issue of 'white privilege', he claims that in failing to engage with the active strategies and tactics employed by some groups to gain and maintain dominance over others, scholars end up perpetuating 'an image of domination without agents' (p. 137). Leonardo challenges those interested in marginalisation to direct critical attention beyond the status of dominance or marginality towards the structural, political, social and economic forces that allow them to be so.

In taking up Leonardo's challenge, we noted that strategies and tactics of domination are often discursive – hidden beneath layers of everyday language, ways of speaking about others and, interestingly, also about 'ourselves'. Because we think we are speaking only of ourselves, whether that be in racial, nationalistic or cultural terms, we fail to acknowledge or accept how speaking of ourselves is in fact a way of defining and subjectivating others – who we can then position as unlike 'us'. Language is thus a powerful weapon but, like other weapons, language can both hurt and defend. We are interested not only in the discursive tactics used to position the 'other', but also in the subversive effects of creative, determined and sustained responses to those tactics. For there are responses, even though they may eventually be ignored, vilified or victimised. So whilst, as Butler (1997) argues, 'a name tends to fix, to freeze, to delimit' (p. 35), the act of speaking to or speaking of also opens a space for linguistic return – an opportunity for the subjected to retort and subvert. This right of reply to address provides radical opportunities for the marginalised to speak themselves differently and, in so doing, engage in purposeful resistance.

To bring these broader issues into sharper focus within the educational context, this book features scholarly works that outline strategies and tactics of domination and resistance in and around (or 'outside') places of teaching and learning

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The Actions of Affect in Deleuze: Others using language and the language that we make ...

DAVID R. COLE

Introduction

Gilles Deleuze inextricably ties up the ways in which power works through and in language with affect. The problem that confronts us is therefore: What is affect, and how does it relate to language and power? Deleuze suggests that we get different answers to these questions depending upon whom we ask, and as such resists outlining a clear definition of affect anywhere in his oeuvre. In this paper, I have constructed the two ways in which affect is approached in the writing of Deleuze in terms of a model (please refer to Figure 1) to aid comprehension of the idea, though this does not represent a unified theory of affect. The point of the Deleuzian scholarly synthesis and reinvention of these thinkers through his studies (Hardt, 1993) is not to become confused by the ways in which affect has been deployed to support different philosophical outlooks, but to realise that affect is a philosophical tool that helps to build perspectives. For example, Spinoza used affect in his system of ethics to connect desire with reason; language therefore takes on a powerful ethical and joyful cadence as it communicates deeply felt emotions. Nietzsche used affect as a basis for sensation in his understanding of the will to power and the eternal return. Language, as such, assumes power as it is combined with the ways in which the repetitions of time and the energies of the will may drive one's life. Bergson, on the other hand, made affect part of his conception of *durée* and the *élan vital*, so that language may be imbued with the many subtle nuances of the continuities in time, memory and creativity, and these may constitute power. One should not therefore try to teach the truth of affect, nor rationalise it into a coherent or unified 'affect theory' but instead use it to develop theory that will help to sustain and modify one's views with empirical evidence and the fluctuations that may be contained in this evidence.

In contrast to Deleuze's focused scholarly studies, his joint publications with Félix Guattari on *Capitalism & Schizophrenia* (1984, 1988) do not bear down on specific philosophical systems. This writing is populated by conceptual figures such as rhizomes and the machinic phylum that synthesise and distribute the arguments as they occur. Affect appears as a connective element in this argumentation that takes particular ideas
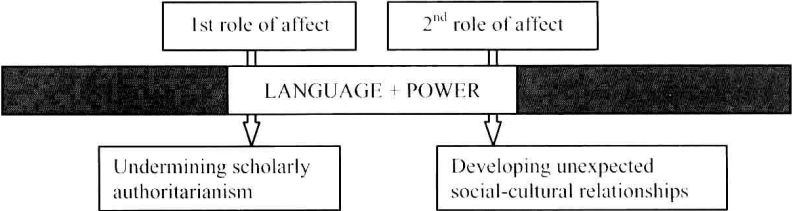
Figure 1: The two-role model of affect from Deleuze[1]

and points of intensity and makes them open to reabsorption and usage in novel ways. For example, Deleuze & Guattari (1984, 1988) are critically concerned about pre-figuration in primitive communities that has in many ways given rise to war machines and the modern development of the state. The historical lineage and analysis of this situation is dispensed with in favour of a moving confrontation with pre-figuration. The ideas and analyses are nomadic, affect is used as a conceptual weapon and an organising principle that links certain players and moments in history with their realisation in today's globalised society. Deleuze & Guattari's (1988) writing provides a connection between the creative unconscious, where the ideas and analyses are synthesised, and the plane of becoming that impinges immanently on everything that we do now (Cole & Throssell, 2008). In terms of the power of language, affect sits in the unconscious in systematic and organised ways, for example in the libido, which may be realised in advertising campaigns or the scripted speeches of politicians. Our society has made a huge investment in education, and this point of intensity is imbued and distributed with affect through teacher-talk and educational research. There is an enormous interconnected field here, through which educational affect makes things happen in the lives of teachers, academics and students, who may develop responses to power and language in unconscious and sentient ways.

Talking with Unconscious-affect

When Freud (1953) discussed affect in the interpretation of dreams, he was talking about a 'mood or tendency that is a determining influence on the dream' (p. 627). He analysed various dreams that patients related to him, examining the symbolic and metonymic figures that these dreams represented. Affect appears in all these dreams, not as constituent parts or as a comprehensible whole, but as a means to join together the expression of the patients with their particular emotional states. As such, anxiety, pain or paranoia could permeate the dreams as affect without being named by any of the patients. In the role of the analyst, Freud took it on himself to name the affect in the dreams, and to discuss the various ways in which the patients have articulated affect in their monologues. This situation could be designated as a parallel case to the analysis at hand of education and the power of language. It should be stated that there are potential blockages, neuroses and misunderstandings with respect to articulating the power of language in education. These problems spring from the fact that education, subjectivity and power in language are not unified or indeed cohesive units of analysis. This was perhaps Freud's point of introducing the Id, Ego and Super-ego as a distinctive layering in the analysis. These factors are representative of disunity that is also a mode of abundance that always exceeds disciplinary

regimes or any discourses of control or limitation such as definitions of the self. We therefore must expand the range of unconscious affect from devices that serve to make the subconscious analysable, and include the social plane on which contemporary educational practices work with power and language.

To find such a strategic deployment, we need to turn to the second role of affect in Deleuze & Guattari (1984, 1988) and the ways in which this has been taken up in, for example, contemporary feminism. This is because poststructural thinkers such as Elizabeth Grosz (1994) or Elspeth Probyn (2004) have disavowed the psychological basis of affect, and endeavoured to make affect mobile and without the dualism of the analysed-analyst (Cole, 2007a). Deleuze & Guattari (1984) have also worked to remove the Oedipal and Elektra interpretive templates from the dreams of the analysed subject and in contrast to the power of the analyst. As such, when we look for affect in the power of language in education, we cannot place ourselves in the role of examining the emotional moods or tendencies of a particular student or cohort or institutional discourse. Rather, we should firstly examine our own emotional proclivities, and articulate the ways in which they are factors in any analysis of the phenomena involved with the study. So, for example, if we observe a grade nine painting class with students disengaged and seemingly using the colours and brushes to make random splodges of colour and graffiti, what are we expressing, taking into account unconscious language-affect, when we endeavour to write up the report? The affect of rebellion expressed through the creativity of the group action should be included as a 'voice' in the discussion, as should the dissonance and factors of control that are perhaps already present in the school and have contributed to the expression of affect by the students. The discursive mode of the report must take into account peer relationships and power games that might be shaping the articulations of the class at any moment. There must be room in the writing for the dynamic and changing lived experience of the subjects, such as home life influences or the power of the media. The report should also be inhabited by the writer's understandings of their reception and relationships with the research context, and the ways in which the group have reacted to the extra presence. In summation, the report should not be a diagnosis of 'a lack of fulfilment of curriculum goals' caused by behaviour management problems or maladjusted students, but, according to the second role of affect, an earnest attempt to understand the complicated ways affect populates this situation through becoming:

> Becoming, [while happening in a gap], is nonetheless an extreme contiguity within [the] coupling of two sensations without resemblance, or, [it could be figured as] a light that captures both of the resemblances in a single reflection ... . It is a zone of indetermination, as if things, beasts, and persons endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation. This is what is called an affect. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 173)

The important point here is that becoming is not only about the ways in which changes coalesce and emerge in the educational context, or the outcomes of becoming that education can be reduced to. The second role of affect is about the complex and often hidden processes included in the becoming. In a similar way to Peter Clough (2002) who has used affect as constitutive of the social context of learning through the writing of educational narratives, the aspect of becoming that we may take from the second role of

affect in Deleuze will include fictional elements and the narrative re-creation of life. In other words, the second role of affect does not determine becoming as a wholly factual or psychological account of events that aims towards teleology. The second role of affect in Deleuze presents events as processes of complex material unpickings and entangled situations. In consequence, what emerges is a type of minor philosophy of education (Gregoriou, 2004) that attends to the movements of desire in language and power. Whenever one speaks in an educational context new connective apparatuses appear that will communicate unconscious affect that spreads on turbulent planes that depend on the learning that occurs. One must therefore analyse the teaching and learning educational plane and make sense of the two-role model of affect from Deleuze in terms of the language of pedagogy.

Teaching and Learning with Language-affect

The educational complex opened up by attending to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze involves context and practice. Context is important as affect is grounded in the situational points of intensity under scrutiny. Practice is thoroughly connected to language by the affect that one may produce due to the synthesis, analysis and representation of any repetition of an action (Albrecht-Crane & Slack, 2007). The Deleuzian analysis at this point relies heavily on the work of socio-linguists such as William Labov (1971) who had discovered that some of the rules of language, that he called 'variable rules' can generate systematic, endogenous or 'grown from within' variation (p. 21). For example, in small urban communities, social networks may develop that use language as a 'badge of identity' (De Landa, 1993, p. 14). These identities circulate around the community and define power relationships, allegiances and structures that maintain and transform the local dialect. In effect, Labov's (1971) research forms a potential bridge or undifferentiated plane where power relationships that could potentially undermine the circulation of social meaning in a system are stabilised.

Teaching and learning therefore critically involves a combination of the first and second roles of affect. The word of the teacher is principally about the first role of affect. The teacher's language will transmit power according to Deleuze as a function of its affect. If the teacher has researched his or her subject well, and speaks with passion and sincerity, these affects will permeate the atmosphere of the class, the learning context and the subsequent educational practice. This however is not a unidirectional or intentional relationship. This is because the second role of affect is also connected to teaching and learning due to the ways in which the socio-cultural context of the classroom funnels and plays with language, power and meaning. There will be an undifferentiated plane in the educational context between the students that will draw in parts of their social lives and perhaps not actively involve the teacher. This plane will also define power relationships, language and affect (Cole & Yang, 2008). The teacher cannot step into this plane from the outside, but must actively look for ways in which to connect with this plane through understanding the socio-cultural systems that are present in a cohort, but without trying to ape or become part of them in an artificial manner.

Another example to illustrate the two-role model of affect in teaching and learning that we may derive from Deleuze could be of a teacher investing time and energy

writing up his or her excellent classroom practice and sending off the account to an educational academic. The first role of affect is important in terms of the validity and accuracy of the account and the power of the language used by the teacher, the second role of affect takes place in the description of the teaching and learning context as an understanding of systematic endogenous variations in the lesson will add to the plausibility of the 'best practice' as it should be possible to repeat this one off great piece of pedagogy. In other words, the teacher will not only have to think about the formal impact of his or her writing style, and the suitability for academic consumption, but also the ways in which the writing deals with the specific desires and power relationships as constituted by the body of the class and how these may be transformed from within (Boler, 1999; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This teacher would also want to explain the collective practices of teaching in his or her school, and the ways in which they relate to this particular instance of teaching and learning. He or she should pinpoint the ways in which the students have learnt according to the specific pedagogic approach under analysis and also the responses and understandings of the students to the pedagogy at this point. The meaning of the report of best practice therefore comes about due to the two roles of affect and the processes that are inherent within the language of the collective teaching context, or as Deleuze and Guattari have put it:

> ... there is no simple identity between the statement and the act. If we wish to move to a real definition of the collective assemblage, we must ask of what [do] these acts [consist of] immanent to language [and] that are in redundancy with statements or that constitute order-words. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 80).

This movement towards a definition of the collective assemblage takes us further in understanding the educational complex that is defined by the two-role model of affect. According to the definition of the collective assemblage of Deleuze & Guattari (1988) the problem that causes an educational system to buckle and misfire is the production of order-words, or redundant instructions and directives that sit between the act and the statement. These order-words are incorporeal transformations (pp. 108–9) that take on board power and life and circulate around institutions and places of education like the routing of electricity in plasterboard walls. The most obvious example of this is the language involved with behaviour management issues. Teachers may spend much of their time repeating instructions or telling students off, when the real problem is often a basic lack of engagement with the teaching and learning activities (Woolfolk & Margetts, 2007). The first role of affect is present through the sound of the voice of the teacher, and the stress that this sound will invariably transmit. The second role of affect will be manifest in the reactions of the students, perhaps through mimicry or laughter, off task conversations, or any cynical and resigned reactions to being reprimanded. The collective experience of such classrooms may be fragmented and hostile.

Collectivity also involves the transmission of modes of working between different parties involved with the educational action. This transmission is itself a practice of communication that is open to the two-role model of affect. Any transformed practice will have to be represented and understood through language and the context of the learning. Here Schatzki's account of practice is useful to supplement the two-role model

of affect I outline here. According to Schatzki (1996, 2001, 2002) in an important sense, practices prefigure individual actions. In other words, for him, practices precede particular actors and actions, and work to shape their performance as well as supplying its meaning and significance in the particular context. So while any transformed practice is no doubt novel, it remains bounded by its relationships that it may develop between itself and the representation of other practices that are according to Deleuze structured and figured through affect. Schatzki (2002) views social activity as 'composed of a mesh of orders and practices', where orders are 'arrangements of entities e.g. people, artefacts, things' and practices are 'organized activities' (p. 27) and both of these are present in Deleuze & Guattari's conception of 'order-words'. As such, the order-words rely heavily on the first role of affect that is determined by the power and tone of the teacher's voice, and subsidiary factors such as body language and institutional identification and representation of pedagogy. The second role of affect is also implicated in practice as the social relations that are developed through teaching and learning are subject to constant variations in immanence and redundancy. Any indiscreet and throw-away lines of the teachers or students may be picked up and recycled in different contexts, strange relationships and jokes may be intuited by the students from the teacher's choice of content to illustrate a point (Brown, McEvoy & Bishop, 1991). The control and discipline of the teacher and institute may be enacted due to the second role of affect in ways such as the acting out of scenes with exaggerated or cruel punishment, inter-personal violence and sexuality, the order-words being transformed through these practices and the ways in which affectivity is contagious. Deleuze does not give us a neat solution to the free movement of desires, but asks us to follow it, and in particular through the use of figures such as the rhizome or the machinic phylum to understand how desire flows. To this extent, it is worth pursuing the machinic phylum from *A Thousand Plateaus* in order to examine how this idea relates to the two-role model of affect and the power in/of language that can be found in the writings of Deleuze.

The *Machinic Phylum:* Power and Language in Context

According to Deleuze, affect in education makes relationships happen between learning and practice. Furthermore, the language and power that one uses to describe practice and the ways in which learning undergoes transformations in context, and in turn alters the affect that is produced in teaching and learning (Semetsky, 2006). All of these multi-faceted arrangements of affect, language and power may be fed into the machinic phylum of Deleuze & Guattari (1988) to understand the ways in which power is represented through education. For Deleuze & Guattari novelty emerges from within systems, rather than being imposed from without, i.e. through hylomorphism or the doctrine that primordial matter is the first cause of the universe and combines with forms to produce bodies. This is illustrated through the example of metallurgy. For a blacksmith 'it is not a question of imposing a form upon matter but of elaborating an increasingly rich and consistent material, the better to tap coincidentally intense forces' (p. 411). As De Landa (1997) puts it, for Deleuze & Guattari 'the blacksmith treated metals as active materials, pregnant with morphogenetic capabilities, and his role was that of teasing a form out of them, of guiding, through a series of processes; heating, annealing,

quenching, hammering, the emergence of a form, a form in which the materials themselves had a say ... he is less realizing previously defined possibilities, than actualizing virtualities along divergent lines' (p. 4).

In expounding their notion of novelty emerging from within systems, Deleuze & Guattari deploy the key concept of the 'machinic phylum'. As De Landa explains, the machinic phylum serves to 'conceive the genesis of form in geological, biological and cultural structures as related exclusively to immanent capabilities of the flows of matter-energy-information and not to any transcendent factor, whether platonic or divine e.g. the hylomorphic schema' (De Landa, 1997). In terms of the two-role model of affect, the genesis of form shows how affect works as a transformative element in expressions. This element works 'from within to transform from without' (Cole, 2005, p. 4). For example, the teacher's language can, according to the first role of affect, develop blips and stutters that signifies the otherness and separation that a teacher may experience in their power-related job standing at the front of the class. In the second role, the transformations of affect develop due to social and cultural forces, potentially taking the expression of any collective along divergent lines. These expressions may be charted according to the order-words. The concept of the 'machinic phylum' can be further clarified by considering the terms 'machinic' and 'phylum' separately.

'Machinic' refers to the combinatorial diversity of the elements of a system. The more diversity and heterogeneity there is the greater the potential for novelties to emerge. As De Landa (1997) expresses it, 'a crucial ingredient for the emergence of innovation at any level of reality is the "combinatorial productivity" of the elements at the respective sub-level, that is, at the level of the components of the structures in question. Not all components have the same "productivity" ' (p. 2). De Landa illustrates the last point in this quotation by contrasting the low productivity of sub-atomic particles, yielding only about one hundred different kinds of atoms, with the prodigious productivity of the next level up where combinations of atoms yield seemingly uncountable numbers of different molecules. This combinatorial richness, which favours the emergence of novelty, is enhanced by both heterogeneity of components and by the presence of processes that enable heterogeneous elements to combine. For Deleuze & Guattari, 'what we term machinic is precisely this synthesis of heterogeneities as such' (1988, p. 435). In terms of the two roles of affect in education, the top level of educational process is often characterised by policy documentation and scientific analyses of empirical studies of populations. Yet the greatest heterogeneity happens at the base level, where actors coincide and may innovate on form and content, sometimes by enacting the top level of educational policy. Deleuze & Guattari (1988) therefore point to a reversal in educational organization, whereby the two-role model of affect could be locked into the organizational structures of education through the machinic phylum. This action of reversal synthesises and prioritises the language of pedagogy in terms of the two roles of affect as an immanent feedback system between all elements involved in the context of practice.

The second term of the Deleuze & Guattari concept of the 'phylum' connotes the processes of self-organization or the idea of a common body-plan, which through different operations, for example, embryological foldings, stretchings, pullings, pushings, can yield a variety of concrete designs for organisms or systems. For instance, while there is a huge diversity of actual body instantiations in the animal kingdom, these are variants