

# What Would Hegel Do?

## Desire and Recognition in the Pedagogical Relation

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### Introduction: The Dream of the Ego

**T**O BEGIN it will be necessary to go to the end, and so this paper begins with the end, with a dream. Freud's dream of Irma's Injection, his interpretation, and Lacan's re-examination of both the dream and its interpretation. The dream, which Lacan divides into two parts, has Freud appear in the first part manifesting a desire to know, a figure tormented by an endless chain of questions: "Am I right or wrong? Where is the truth? What is the outcome of the problem? Where am I placed?" (Lacan 1988, 157). Propelled by these questions, dream-Freud takes aside one of his patients—Irma—he has assembled with other guests at his home. Irma is giving him trouble because she has symptoms that will not clear up despite her psychotherapist's best efforts (Lacan 1988, 149). In order to get to the heart of her symptoms, Freud must overcome the mute "recalcitrance" of her condition (Freud 1955, 107). He peers down her throat and sees the problem but it is a horrible sight. This is the moment of climax of the first part of the dream. Freud sees a disgusting shapeless form down there, "turbinate bones covered with a whitish membrane" (Lacan 1988, 154). He sees nothing with a definite meaning. The horrifying reality is not diagnosable, "this mouth has all the equivalencies in terms of significations" (ibid.). The truth is he sees nothing that could mean anything. The "flesh one never sees" from which "everything exudes" (ibid.). This encounter causes dream-Freud distress and it moves the dream into the second part, which is a response to the anxiety manifested in the first. After coming through the "moment of great anxiety," Freud escapes the nothingness by "call[ing] upon, as he himself wrote, the congress of all those who know" (Lacan 1988, 159). Confronted with the "spectre of anxiety" there is "no other solution... than the word"; Freud turns from the "origin of the world... into the symbolic community of his fellow doctors" (Copjec 1994, 120). The climax of the second part of the dream is captured in the pronouncement of a word (...*trimthylamine*...), which the doctors agree is the correct course of treatment for Irma.

Progressive/liberatory pedagogy also has a dream. The first part involves a similar desire to do good, the desire to provide students with "knowledge, skills and values needed to become social critics who can make reflective decisions and implement their decisions in effective

personal, social, political, and economic action” (Shor 1992, 16). Like Freud’s desire, this desire also involves overcoming recalcitrance, which is described as students’ “resistance to dialogue” (ibid.). The climax of the dream occurs when an “aggressive silence” happens in the classroom and the well-meaning pedagogue invites them to open their mouths but hears nothing. The second part of Freud’s dream involves discussion and articulation of a treatment for Irma’s condition; similarly critical pedagogy involves often involves strategies and techniques for overcoming this silence (perhaps a ‘generative theme’ will get them talking). The silence is the nothing which elicits anxiety in the pedagogical encounter, and the articulation of these strategies is a turn ‘into the symbolic community’ of critical pedagogues.

Student silence becomes a symptom in the pedagogy literature; in critical pedagogy it is taken as something that blocks learning and simultaneously a point on which the emphasis on dialogue is potentiated. For example, following Lacan, Felman (1987) and Ellsworth (1997) have argued that such silences are moments of a passion for ignorance that is rooted in resistance to so-called dangerous knowledge. In Lacanese, dialogue, and its conditions of possibility, signifies the turn away from the anxiety-producing real of silence. Joan Copjec (1994) writes that in the Lacanian conception, “anxiety is a signal of danger”; it is a sign of something real that is too close (118). Dream-Freud’s anxiety in Irma’s injection signals the danger in being thwarted “at the height of [the] need to know” with the revelation—“you are this, which is so far from you, this which is ultimate formlessness” (Lacan 1988, 155). The turn away from this anxiety is the dialogue that occurs among Freud and the recognition he receives from his fellow experts on the subject of Irma’s treatment. The revelation of a lack of knowledge and its spectre of anxiety are contained and covered over through “the dialogue of the ego with the object” (ibid.). In this paper, I will explore this anxiety in the context of the pedagogical relation and its connection to dialogue as a progressive pedagogical strategy.

## Pedagogical Relations

In *Dangerous Territories* (1997), Leslie Roman and Linda Eyre conceive of a progressive pedagogy that would be able to acknowledge and see as fruitful the range of identities too often glossed over in traditional progressive or liberatory politics. The authors seek to avoid reproducing in the classroom:

... the narcissistic conceit of certain hegemonic elements of the Left/progressive politics—whether male Marxists, white and/or heterosexual middle class feminists, and so forth—who are only able to think of remaking progressive/radical politics in their/our own romanticised images. (17)

Roman and Eyre have romanticised images of unity in mind that have historically functioned to cover over difference when they speak of narcissistic conceit. Their eye on ‘radical’ difference acknowledges the riskiness of pedagogical practices that require pedagogues be open to “re-naming ourselves in the context of strategic coalition building” (Roman and Eyre 1997, 17). Taking such a risk resists the tendency to remake conflicting claims of difference ‘in our/their own romanticised images.’ For Roman and Eyre, in the context of progressive pedagogy this is done by first “recognising the different and often conflicting claims of ‘difference’” (18) and then locating these claims in cultural and historical contexts. This task presents some challenges;

after first *recognising* the claims of difference, it is necessary to locate them through “deconstructing whose difference/identity matters to whom and in what particular contexts of differential power” (ibid.). This prescription may be appropriate in some circumstances; however, there is a moment that Roman and Eyre do not describe but just invoke, which potentiates their strategy. That moment is when the “claims of difference” must be *recognised*. A necessary event if they are to be located.

Who must recognise these claims of difference? The pedagogue, other students, both? Does the requirement for recognition mean only certain claims can be recognised by certain subjects in certain moments? If this is the case, we must begin to interrogate our own position as those interested in progressive pedagogy relative to the need for recognition. Despite Roman and Eyre’s (1997) wish to avoid “hegemonic elements of the left/progressive politics,” they maintain processes of recognition and location are necessary because “the left is fractured and composed of diverse groups,” who are “struggling to find the bases for common cause and alliance” (18). I admire this goal, and the attention to radical difference does resist some narcissistic tendencies but it does not address another more fundamental conceit that is necessary for Roman and Eyre’s end; the demand that the other *speak* their experience and connected desire to *know* the experience of the other. I want to call attention to this process of recognition inherent in the pedagogical relation.

Consider one of the primary assumptions in Ira Shor’s *Empowering Education* (1992), which is that there is an inherent need for student participation in pedagogical practices that “empower” them. He writes: “participation is the most important place to begin” because “action is essential to gaining knowledge and developing intelligence” (17). This assumption underlies his call for teachers to create environments that compel students to participate by connecting their “individuality to larger historical and social issues” (ibid.). Several assumptions thereby manifest—among them that students are not aware or do not experience themselves as connected to larger social processes. This may or may not be the case. The teacher is also assumed to know these larger social processes, and, through the use of dialogue, know how to bring students to a similar point of awareness. The assumptions about the teacher being a mechanism for such beneficial changes, especially considering the positive reinforcement of the progressive educators’ notion of themselves as ‘progressive’ that these assumptions enact, need to be apprehended. For contained in the call for student voice is also the teacher’s *desire* for student participation. Shor does not ask about the nature of this desire or where it is founded. He assumes it is based in the benevolent motive of making students “skilled workers and thinking citizens who are also agents of social change” (Shor 1992, 16).

On the other hand, Elizabeth Ellsworth, a major figure in critical pedagogy, criticises the widespread privileging of “rational argument” in progressive pedagogical strategies, which she argues reproduces “rationalism’s regulated and systematic... ‘exclusion of women, people of colour, of nature as historical agent’” (1989, 304). Since it is the “pedagogue” who “enforces the rules of reason in the classroom” (1989, 304), this indicates a fundamental difficulty with progressive classroom practices based on dialogue. Ellsworth rightly urges the pedagogue to not create a space in which only voices adhering to the norms of rationality can be heard, and it is acceptance of the imperfection of the student voice that can ensure this. Against hegemonic demands for rationalism, Ellsworth urges for understanding the “voices of students” to be “partial in the sense that they are unfinished, imperfect, limited; and partial in the sense that they project the interests of ‘one side’ over others” (1989, 305). We must allow for imperfection in the voices of students, which resists the demands of rationalism through the *recognition* there are

things one can never know about the “experiences, oppressions, and understandings of other participants in the class” (1989, 310). I agree with Ellsworth’s characterisation of ‘student voice’ generally, but her focus on the status of that voice is only half the story. I will focus on the experience of student voice from the side of the pedagogue, as the object in the pedagogical relation. This view begs a question unexplored but strongly implied by Ellsworth. If the pedagogue enforces rules of reason despite a conscious motivation to define “pedagogy against oppressive formations” (Ellsworth 1989, 310), where does this *je sais bien, mais quand même*<sup>1</sup> come from?

As mentioned, Shor (1992) equates participation, through student voice, with positive action. However, what are the implications for students who do not speak or who refuse to participate? His use of metaphor is telling: “I think of this lowered productivity [silence] as a performance strike, an unorganized mass refusal to perform well, an informal and unacknowledged strike” (20). Shor blames the strike and lowered productivity as resulting primarily from the non-participatory nature of education and society in general and not a result of particular classroom dynamics. One may well agree with his assessment of modern society as non-participatory and undemocratic, but we might also pause at a progressive pedagogy that views the capacity to strike as negative non-action. This issue notwithstanding, I suggest that there is another level to the non-participatory dynamics at work inside the classroom. What does it mean when, despite efforts to resist hegemonic rationalism and allow a space for ‘partial’ student voices, we still may be met with silence? The answer indicates that although a refusal to participate appears to be non-work, and therefore unproductive, it may contain within it something very productive after all.

### Silence in the Classroom

Alison Jones takes on some of these issues in her article “Limits of Cross-Cultural Dialogue” (1999). She writes that when critical pedagogy advocates dialogue, too often “border crossing and recognition of difference turns out to be *access for dominant groups to the thought, cultures and lives of others*” (308, emphasis in original). Jones is pointing to another level of investment than Roman and Eyre (1997), which evidenced in the moment when speech from the other is demanded but the demand not fulfilled, and a sense of “outrage marks the refusal of the already-privileged” to accept a denial of access to those other knowledges and experiences (Jones 1999, 311). As a specific example, Jones writes that when faced with this denial of access by Maori students, their non-Maori counterparts “sensed a powerful loss” that she explains as a reaction to being “displaced from the unproblematic centre of knowing” (1999, 312). Ultimately, these dynamics can be grasped through the articulation of a desire on the part of a “dominant group” expressed in the demand, “I want you to teach me!” the denial of which results in great discomfort (1999, 312). She writes that “the possibility of such opening gives pleasure to progressive teachers” (1999, 308).

Indeed, doubts about the straight-forward and unproblematic promotion and use of dialogue as a progressive pedagogical method have been expressed by several writers. Megan Boler (2004) has no illusions about the ideal of open dialogue in the classroom. She is aware ‘dialogue’ is a potentially problematic goal considering “power inequities institutionalized through economies, gender roles, social class, and corporate-owned media ensure that all voices do not carry the same weight” (3). Her recommended course of action in the face of these discursive dynam-

ics is “an affirmative action pedagogy [that] seeks to ensure that we bear witness to marginalized voices in our classrooms, even at the minor cost of limiting dominant voices” (4). However, Suzanne DeCastell (2004) critiques the notion of affirmative action pedagogy for exacerbating social pathologies that are evidenced by the occurrence of “bigoted speech” in the first place. She argues that affirmative action pedagogy focuses on the symptom: the bigoted speech and whether and when to silence it. DeCastell points out, the cause of the symptom is something these pedagogical techniques are simply not able to tackle effectively because education itself is a mechanism of “institutionalization” “validation” of “dominant cultural values” (54). Ellsworth (1989) notes similar dynamics at work in pedagogical methods that use “rational deliberation, reflection and consideration” as a “vehicle for regulating conflict and power to speak” (301).

DeCastell (2004) urges the de-emphasising of dialogue across differences and instead advocates a focus on education as assault on ignorance, which she sees as underlying the oppressive speech affirmative action pedagogy would want to silence. Freud cautioned against such a conception of consciousness-raising in the context of analysis:

It is a long superseded idea... that the patient suffers from a sort of ignorance, and that if one removes this ignorance by giving him information (about the causal connection of his illness with his life, about his experiences in childhood, and so on) he is bound to recover. (Freud quoted in Felman 1997, 26)

Viewed subjectively, the discovery of the unconscious reminds us that to combat ignorance in this sense is a Sisyphean task. However, this is not to suggest that knowledge is impossible or that it is not relational. Rather, when considering the pedagogical encounter, we must recall that knowledge is a relation between knowing and not-knowing, between the ego and the object, that it is dialogic and shared; “no knowledge... can be supported if transported by one alone” (Lacan quoted in Felman 1997, 29).

This view of knowledge Felman draws from Lacanian theory. Lacan’s conception of the unconscious as “knowledge which does not know itself” (Lacan 1998, 88) problematises the idea that ignorance is the obstacle to effective pedagogical practices. As Lacan (1988) comments:

The discovery of the unconscious, in the full dimension with which it is revealed at the very moment of its historical emergence, is that the scope, the implications of meaning go far beyond the signs manipulated by the individual. As far as signs are concerned, man is always mobilizing many more of them than he knows. (150)

The mobilising and manipulating of signs in any context, including a pedagogical one, is always overdetermined in this sense.<sup>2</sup> In another idiom we could say because “language expresses nothing but universality...I cannot say what I merely mean” (Hegel 1989, 196).<sup>3</sup> Knowledge, in other words, will always be exceeded by its articulation. For Freud and Lacan, the discovery of the unconscious coupled with the symbolic nature of language means that there is a certain irreducibility of not knowing, an irreducibility of ignorance. And ignorance in this context is not a passive refusal to be productive but rather an active withdrawal. It is constituted by repression, which is not a “simple lack of information it is an active dynamic of negation, an active refusal of information” (Felman 1997, 25). I think this means that teaching must at least take the dynamic of refusal seriously and, even more, reflect on its potential as a fruitful tension.

I want to make clear that I am writing not only of ignorance on the part of the student but also of the teacher. In this I am drawing on Lacan's description of a refusal-to-know manifested in the incapacity to acknowledge one's own implication in information (1998, 110). This lack of knowledge manifests for the pedagogue in their refusal of students' refusal to speak. I argue this refusal of refusal is evidenced in the assumptions described above, and persists despite pedagogical efforts to create a space for voice that is not hegemonically rationalist (Ellsworth) or a space that refuses bigoted speech (DeCastell) or a space that allows for difference that can be dialogued across (Boler). The refusal of refusal is interesting to me because I think that such ignorance/refusal can teach us something. It is necessary to interpret "the phenomenon of doubt as an integral part of the message" (Lacan 1988, 155). The refusal of students to speak and participate—to become transparent—should be of interest to educators for the simple yet crucial reason it can teach something too. As Lacan says:

...there is no true teaching other than the teaching which succeeds in provoking in those who listen an insistence—this desire to know which can only emerge when they themselves have taken the measure of ignorance as such—of ignorance inasmuch as it is, as such, fertile—in the one who teaches as well. (1998, 242)

There are many who acknowledge the social forces which influence the status of student voices in the classroom (for example, Garrison 2004; Li Li 2004) and see these social forces as *barriers* to dialogue rather than as what can be alleviated *through* dialogue (Boler 2004). However, the assumption remains that dialogue is inherently positive. If it does not freely occur naturally, it is because various social forces block it; as Ellsworth (1989) writes: "The professor brings his or her own race, class, ethnicity, gender, and other positions" into the classroom (309). To avoid these problems, Ellsworth recommends alternative classroom practices whose end is not communication across difference, through experiential voice, but instead to occupy a different pedagogical locus where students and teachers are positioned together in opposition to larger social formations. As she writes: "a preferable goal" is to "become capable of a sustained encounter with currently oppressive formations and power relations that refuse to be theorised away" (Ellsworth 1989, 308). My interest is not in the end of unity but in the means suggested for bringing it about. Moving to a reconsideration of ends as Ellsworth does still leaves one of the issues, which inspired her critique, unapprehended. That is the *desire* of the pedagogue evidenced in the assumption and repetition of rationalist discourse. What is the fuel for the desire expressed through the demand for pedagogy by the oppressed?

### Overcoming Recalcitrance in the Pedagogical Relation

Shor begins *Empowering Education* (1992) with a story of silence in the classroom and how he was able to overcome it through democratic dialogue. Describing the 'strike' as an "aggressive silence" (2) on the part of his students, he relates how he was able to "confront their resistance to dialogue" (ibid.). Jones (2004) writes that in education "the threat to dialogue has particular emotional force because it is a threat to the dominant group at the very point of their/our power in education—to their ability to know" (62–63). The threat is the answer to dream-Freud's questions articulated by Lacan: Am I right or wrong? Where is the truth? Where am I placed? Shor (1992) managed to overcome this threat through finding a "generative theme,

an issue generated from the problems of [the students'] own experience" (3). Jones (2004) characterises the motivation for this 'experiential content' as "the sense of exclusion and outrage [that] marks the refusal of the already privileged to accept that some knowledges and relationships might not be available to them/us" (63). These are moments of a "western desire for coherence, authorization and control" (Jones 1999, 311). For Shor, the class became a success, even though when encouraged to take action based on things learned through classroom dialogue, "the group as a whole was unenthusiastic about becoming activist" (1992, 6).

The call for dialogue across difference involves necessarily the opening of a space for excluded voices to speak, but just this speaking is not enough; the speech must be heard or recognised. The call for dialogue across difference is a call for an action on behalf of the powerful, a call to listen, recognise or "grant a hearing" (Jones 1999, 307). What is thereby excluded is "the dominant group's exclusion from their inability to hear the voice of the marginalized" (ibid.). This inability to hear is misrecognised as the silence of the subaltern. The key is not just the voice but rather the voice that is heard. A lack of a dominant group is dissimulated as a lack in the other, their inability, due to unjust social dynamics, to speak. There is a paradox emerging here. If student voice depends on a dominant group to 'hear,' but the entire pedagogical relation depends on the offering up of that voice, where does the agency lie? In *misrecognising* the inability to hear as a lack of the other's voice, critical pedagogy positions itself to be recognised as eliciting those voices, instead of being dependent upon them. And since the voice can be heard only if it is offered up in the space of a granted hearing, the *voice that is heard* is already in a form that can be heard by dominant consciousness. The content of the other's speech is taken as course content.

Jones's interesting and appropriate critique of critical pedagogy in general, and dialogic pedagogy specifically, helps us understand where the desire for dialogue comes from. However, in the face of such desire how can we move beyond demands for satisfaction and consequent feelings of frustration at their refusal? To answer this question it is essential to keep in mind how pedagogical encounters depend on a differential power relation. Jones and Ellsworth have helped to this point, but to understand the processes of recognition at work in the pedagogical relation and the role of desire for this recognition, I will turn to Hegel. Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic can help us to understand how power in the pedagogical relation is connected to an economy of desire also inherent in pedagogical relations. Additionally, Hegel's dialectic will help us understand why the demand for student voice is being made in the first place.

Hegel's dialectic of lord and bondsman is a story about how self-consciousness depends on relations of dependence, desire, and recognition. In a sense, Hegel's discussion of self-consciousness is easy to understand because it is what we experience every day. He writes that self-consciousness only exists "by the fact that it so exists for another" (Hegel 1977, 111).<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, understanding the master-slave dialectic is hard because Hegel forces us to take this experience as involving more than our understanding usually appreciates: self-consciousness exists, but "it exists *only* in being acknowledged" (emphasis added, ibid.). In Hegel's analysis, self-consciousness is in the relation of lordship and bondage with different moments of itself. Thus, interactions with others involve reflection, desire for recognition, domination, and repudiation.<sup>5</sup>

To begin, Hegel posits that self-consciousness is only possible in the context of relations to an other. It is consequently dependent on social relations to others for its existence; self-consciousness requires recognition of itself through seeing itself in the form of an other. So, self-consciousness is process of reflection of itself back to itself through another.

Self-consciousness is faced by another self-consciousness; it has come *out of itself*. This has a two-fold significance: first, it has lost itself, for it finds itself as an *other* being; secondly, in doing so it has superseded the other, for it does not see the other as an essential being, but in the other sees its own self. (Hegel 1977, 111, emphasis in original)

Self-consciousness qualitatively alters itself through doubling out and back. Instead of a straightforward reciprocity of recognition however, Hegel maintains that there it is always a differential relation. In the movement of self-consciousness, “the extremes which, as extremes, are opposed to one another” are asymmetrically related, “one being only recognized, the other only recognizing” (Hegel 1977, 113). In this asymmetry, self-consciousness relates to an ‘other,’ but this other is uncanny, an “unessential, [and] negatively characterized object” (ibid.). This relation between self and other is ambivalent because it affords recognition, but the ‘negative’ and ‘unessential’ element of this recognition is anxiety producing. I will explain this anxiety through Freud’s conception of the feeling of uncanniness.

### An Uncanny Object

In Freud’s discussion of the uncanny/*unheimlich* he draws attention to several features of the word *unheimlich*’s literary development. The word literally means ‘unhomely’; a lack of familiarity with something familiar. After some analysis of literary examples of the uncanny, Freud tells us it is the feeling that we experience when “what is called *heimlich* becomes *unheimlich*” (Freud 1919/2003, 143). Of the word’s etymological development, he writes that “*heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*” (Freud 1919/2003, 132). For Freud, the feeling of uncanniness is an experience in a moment, but it is also a process that refers to a history, where something strange “leads back to what is known and familiar” (Freud 1919/2003, 134). Like Hegel, Freud also knew that in considering such a process moments must be held strictly apart and taken and known as not distinct. While holding in mind that Freud said “uncanny element we know from experience arises either when repressed childhood complexes are revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs that have been *surmounted* appear once again to be confirmed” (Freud 1919/2003, 142). In the Freudian idiom, the uncanny “involves a harking back to single phases in the evolution of the sense of self” (Freud 1919/2003, 143).

A particularly obvious representation of the uncanny in literature Freud wrote is that of the double or *doppelgänger*, which is uncanny because a relation with the other is “marked by the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else”; in this identification, an anxiety or ambivalence is involved because of the ever-present “doubt as to which [the] self is” because the there is “a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self” (Freud 1919/2003, 142). In citing Otto Rank, Freud tells us that the recognition of a double is “originally an insurance against extinction of the self or ‘an energetic denial of the power of death’” (ibid.). The assurance against death provided by the double functions in a one-sided form of primitive narcissism, but its truly

uncanny quality can surely derive only from the fact that the double is a creation that belongs to a primitive phase in our mental development, a phase that we have surmounted, in which it admittedly had a more benign significance. (Freud 1919/2003, 143)

This moment of recognition marks Hegel's notion of self-consciousness in a relation of sense-certainty, which is the first moment of the dialectic of lordship and bondage. Hegel (1977) tells us that "sense-certainty immediately appears as the *richest* kind of knowledge" because it has not "as yet omitted anything from the object" (56). Finding sense-certainty on its own to be inadequate to its experience of the world, "pure being at once splits up into what we have called two 'Thises,' one 'This' as 'I,' and the other 'this' as object" (ibid.). In this mode, "neither I [later, the ego] nor the thing [the outside world, others] has the significance of a complex process of mediation" (ibid.). The relationship is one of "simple immediacy" (Hegel 1977, 59).

The first movement of the dialectic is propelled by this anxiety, which signals the dangerous truth that emerged in sense-certainty, that "self certainty still has no truth" (Hegel 1977, 113). In the relation of lordship and bondage, anxiety manifests for the lord in the moment where

The lord is a consciousness that exists *for itself*... it is a consciousness existing *for itself* which is mediated with itself through another consciousness, i.e. through a consciousness whose nature is bound up with an existence that is independent, or thinghood in general (Hegel 1977, 115)

The existence of an 'I' depends on recognition, but it cannot regard its object as an independent entity but only as it exists for self-consciousness. The implication is that while recognition may be forthcoming, it can never be finally guaranteed. Anxiety in the face of the uncanny is not caused by the loss of recognition but rather by the over-proximity of the desire for it.

## Working in the Classroom

To bring these elaborations to bear on the use of dialogue and student participation in critical pedagogy, let us continue with Hegel's discussion of recognition. The position of the lord "holds the other in subjection" (Hegel 1977, 115) and achieves "recognition as an independent self-consciousness" through an other (114). Hence the lord's position depends on the bondsman's work, but the objects produced for the lord provide a "recognition that is one-sided and unequal" (ibid.). Because the lord can only enjoy those objects as sheer negation or consumption, it lacks a connection to its mode of production. Therefore, there is an anxiety involved for the lord because it depends on something "outside itself" and feels a desire to "rid itself of its self-externality" (Hegel 1977, 114). What is uncanny about the objects of the bondsman then is that they contain this "truth:" that the "independent consciousness [of the lord] is... the servile consciousness of the bondsman" (Hegel 1977, 117).

What Hegel means by all of this is that in coming out of itself to secure recognition an ambiguity is instituted that is constitutive of self-consciousness. In finding itself in the recognition of an other, self-consciousness also "has lost itself, for it finds itself as an *other* being" (Hegel 1977, 117). This asymmetrical recognition is never complete since the lord "does not see the other as an essential being" (ibid.). In the Freudian idiom, we could say that the doubling of self-consciousness was "insurance against the extinction of the self," and because the other embodies

the threat of death, it was also “an energetic denial of the power of death” necessary to emerge out of sense-certainty (Freud 1919/2003, 142). It should be clear how the bondsman’s capacity to labour also “becomes the uncanny harbinger of death” (ibid.). The objects of the bondsman’s labour can bring recognition or death: its independent relation to dominant consciousness means it signifies both simultaneously.

These processes of recognition constitute the objects of the bondsman’s labour in two important ways. First, the object might be the property of the lord, but it acquires an independent being for bondsman, who actually makes it through the working. The negative relation to the object the lord has is the *form* of the relation to the object of the bondsman. This is actually an advantage for the bondsman that the lord cannot appropriate: “It is in this way, therefore, that consciousness, qua worker, comes to see in the independent being [of the object] its own independence” (Hegel 1977, 118). Second, for the lord, “the special feeling of uncanniness is a feeling of anxiety that befalls... whenever we too closely approach the extimate object” (Copjec 1994, 129). The ‘extimacy’ of the object relates simultaneously to its integral place in the constitution of self-consciousness and to the fact that it is also outside self-consciousness. The object contains both the lord’s dependence on the bondsman’s work and the independence of the bondsman’s capacity for working on the object that the lord lacks. In other words, the extimate object is like the body of the bondsman who works for the lord. The experience of the uncanny signals the proximity to self-consciousness of this repudiated and externalised truth. The object is potentially uncanny because of the lord’s dependence on the bondsman’s production of it for recognition, something long known and familiar that has become strange.

How this discussion of Hegel and Freud relates to dialogic pedagogy is expressed by Alison Jones (2004). In talking about the demand for dialogue in the progressive classroom, she writes of the desire of the pedagogue:

Dialogue, it is assumed, provides the opportunity for the development of tolerance, understanding, and ultimately unity; it can decrease instances of ignorance and racism and other prejudices that are the basis of social division. (57)

She remarks further: “given that nonwhite or other minority students seldom have the duty, desire or ability to take on the task of teaching slow or recalcitrant white classmates [and teachers], many of them sensibly avoid its demands and remain silent” (2004, 61). And further still:

Dialogue is based, however cautiously it might be considered, in a dominant group fantasy or romance about access to and unity with the other. This is the fantasy of a democracy based in consensus reached from rational debates across different views and groups.... Inevitable, anxiety and anger are readily expressed when such a romance appears thwarted or threatened in any way.... Therefore, those with sincere and benevolent desires for a unified and egalitarian classroom and society are likely to identify as threat any apparently contrary practice such as the withdrawal or active silence of some groups. (2004, 62)

This desire for the other’s ‘object’ in the context of critical pedagogy manifests as a desire to know and a desire for participation. The desire is for the other to provide worked on mediated objects (inaccessible experiences), which corresponds to the desire to be recognised as a progres-

sive and good teacher. In other words, it is a desire for the right answers to dream-Freud's questions: *Am I right or wrong? Where is the truth? What is the outcome of the problem? Where am I placed?*

Jones tells us that this desire is present in dialogical pedagogy because "dialogue requires particular pedagogical *work* from the subordinate group. The other, via voice, must *work hard* to donate (provide access to) her experience and views to the dominant other" (2004, 62). Indeed, Hegel describes the lack of the capacity for "formative activity" by the lord means that its desire for recognition can only be satisfied in aim, never in goal. In relation to the lord, the object lacks "objectivity and permanence" (Hegel 1977, 118). Through repeated cycles of work and consumption, the labour of the slave covers over the truth that "it is precisely for the worker that the object has independence" (ibid.). Similarly, through eliciting participation, the inability to hear is covered. Thus, the aim of the lord's desire is to simply maintain the relation *ad infinitum*, to cover it with its very marker, the formative activity of the slave. Recall Shor's (1992) characterization of students' refusal to participate as "an informal and unacknowledged strike" (20). He assumes the labour strike is negative and must be overcome, and this is to be done through more recognition from the students and desire for their work. Teachers are advised to negotiate a curriculum that begins with students' "language, themes and understandings" (Shor 1992, 16). Shor wants to help students "reflect on reality and received values," (22) but what about the silence in the face of such attempts? The strike manifests the dependence on student work and makes that object (their capacity to withdraw participation) extimate in this moment of self-consciousness explicit. If silence in the classroom is really like a worker's strike, it may indeed be unproductive; at least the anxiety expressed in the face of the silence can perhaps be reflected upon productively. This is what I will do in the final section of the paper.

## The Pedagogical Object

In Jones's opinion, what "really underlies calls to dialogue is not the dominant group's longing for inclusion of others"; rather, "the dominant group seeks its *own* inclusion by being rescued from its inability to hear the voices of the marginalized [the lack of a body]... they do not have the 'ears to hear'" (Jones 2004, 65). Similar to the lord, the pedagogue is able to relate to student learning only mediately and through their work—not through the independent aspect of the pedagogical relation—the student's experience—but through the dependent aspect that is heard as class content. The students' sharing of their experience is an "opening [that] gives pleasure to the progressive teacher" (Jones 1999, 308). But this pleasure is experienced in relation to the lack of the object's independence, which is left "to the bondsman" (Hegel 1977, 116). And here we see what 'consciousness qua worker' has that the lord lacks, the independence in of an object. In the pedagogical encounter, the object is student participation.

Hegel tells us that the *appearance* of an object is contingent. The particular context in which an object appears—the particular set of social relations in which it emerges—is "the essential ground of determination" for its appearance (Hegel 1977, 223). In the case of dialogical pedagogy, the object is different for the sides of the dialectic of student/teacher. In its dependent aspect and negativity, the object is class content. Class content, based out of the particular experiences of particular students in particular classes, will be contingent on these contents. As such, in its contingency for the teacher, the object provides a fleeting and inessential satisfaction and must be made again; students must work every time. From the direction of students, the

object has independence in the form of subjective experience. Dominant consciousness only cannot make this object, which is why it must interpose “the bondsman between it and himself.” (Hegel 1977, 116) The interposing both signals and covers the lack. The lack of ‘ears to hear’ is only manifest in the face of a refusal to speak. The desire to elicit participation (articulated as “necessary to the good pedagogical encounter” (Jones 1999, 305)) is a refusal of this lack. It is no wonder why silence in the classroom is uncannily anxiety producing.

In a discussion of the uncanny, Joan Copjec tells us in a Lacanian idiom that the feeling signals a failure of the symbolic world of discourse to “evict” a dangerous knowledge (1994, 121). This eviction involves an intersubjective relation of recognition; “it is necessary to say that the real is absented, to declare its impossibility” (ibid.). The ‘real’ is the Lacanian term for dangerous knowledge, which in this context is the pedagogue’s lack of a unilateral formative capacity to generate class content. Dialogue, in other words, is a way for language to include its own impossibility in itself; the lack of ears to hear is assumed through its own negation. In a pedagogical relation, moments of silence or refusals to speak will be uncanny for this reason. Dialogical pedagogy famously assumes a necessary encounter “between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world” (Freire 1972, 61). Silence in the face of attempts to engender such an encounter, and the dependence of the pedagogue it reveals, points to the fundamental paradox upon which notions of dialogue across difference are based. For it is also the case that “dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not want this naming” (ibid.). Silence, in the particular context of pedagogy, therefore, is also a refusal of the pedagogue’s desire for “exclusion from the inability to hear” (Jones 1999, 397). In the pedagogical relation, silence is the uncanny proximity of “silence in the ears of the powerful” that is too often “misrecognised as the silence of the subaltern” (Jones 1999, 307). The lack of ears to hear is misrecognised as the lack of voice; hence, the lack of lack is covered over by dialogue and its trace, silence, is uncanny.

We recall in Freud’s dream that in the face of the uncanny spectre down Irma’s throat, a turn into the symbolic order of discourse and knowledge was necessary in order to diagnose the problem. But if this turn is necessary, perhaps in a pedagogical context it can be done differently. Lacan points out that dream-Freud flees from the uncanny spectre he sees but he does not *only* flee the spectre, he *flees it while holding on to it* by taking the measure of it as such with his fellow doctors. In this way Lacan describes two possible reactions to the dangerous knowledge signalled by the uncanny. He cites Erik Erikson’s commentary on Freud’s dream to illustrate “an improper response, a certain deafness” to the signal of the uncanny (Copjec 1994, 125). What Erikson sees in Freud’s dream is “an entire theory of the different stages of the ego” (Lacan 1988, 155). To this Lacan (1988) asks rhetorically: “can you really... bring me testimonies of these splendid typical developments of the ego of subjects” (155)? Lacan is cautioning against narrative foreclosure in the face of the uncanny. Through foreclosure it becomes possible to deny lack, and instead see only “an uninterrupted chain of signifiers” (ibid.). The uninterrupted chain appears in Erikson’s analysis as ‘typical developments of the ego,’ and as a result, Lacan claims Erikson does not have the ears to hear “the fact Freud states in a thousand, two thousand different places,” that the ego does not develop but that it is always the “sum of the identifications of the subject, with all that that implies to its radical contingency.” (Lacan 1988, 155)

The second form of response to the uncanny avoids foreclosure and also the way we can salvage a notion of dialogue. Lacan argues that this response is evident in the second space of Freud’s dream and manifests the non-integration of the ego, which he says is “the real meaning of the dream” (Lacan 1988, 156). This meaning emerges once we understand that in dream

interpretation, dream figures are not to be understood as independent characters but as elements in a common situation, each element is “a site of an identification whereby the ego is formed” (ibid). The uncanny moment indicates the fact that “what is at stake in the function of the dream is beyond the ego, what in the subject is of the subject and not of the subject, that is, the unconsciousness” (Lacan 1988, 158). The answers to the questions posed by dream-Freud (Who am I? Where am I placed? Am I right or wrong?) are presented in the “identification of anxiety,” which gives “the final revelation of *you are this—You are this, which is so far from you, this which is the ultimate formlessness*” (Lacan 1988, 154–155, emphasis added). At the height of his demand, of his need to know, Freud has this revelation. At the height of need for recognition in the pedagogical relation, in the moment where one attempts to elicit speech, the potential for this revelation is present as well. Here is where we might find some potential in uncanny moments of silence in Li Li 2004; pedagogical encounters: response in the face of silence that does not demand another object.

Recall the desire to be recognised as eliciting oppressed voices, which covers over the misrecognition of the inability to hear the voice of the other, the lack of ears, and ultimately the proximity of the uncanny extimate body. Instead, in this uncanny moment where one may confront a gap in the signifying chain, or come up against “a point that interpretation, the logic of cause and effect, cannot bridge”; the key is not to re-double attempts to bridge it, but rather to “record its unbridgability” (Copjec 1994, 126). There is a kind of inscription of lack, instead of a simple refusal. As Copjec writes:

If the symbolic must inscribe its lack of foundation [the lack of ‘ears’ in the pedagogical relation] in the real, the inaccessibility to it of some of our knowledge of this real, then, we are obliged to admit that it also thereby inscribes the real itself, since it is precisely there where we do not know. (122)

Lacan concludes it is this unbridgability and lack of knowledge that is the greatest lesson of Freud’s dream—a lesson missed by approaches such as Erikson’s which seek continuous coherence and uninterrupted dialogue. In the pedagogical relation, an important lesson can be missed too, that there is always an other “whose very existence is dependent on our lack of knowledge” (Lacan 1988, 157).

## NOTES

1. I know very well, but nonetheless...
2. This is the sense in which I agree with DeCastell’s position on education being a mechanism of ‘institutionalisation’ and ‘validation’ of the ‘dominant cultural values.’
3. Page numbers for Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia of Logic* refer to Inwood’s (1989) edited edition of *Hegel Selections*.
4. Page numbers refer to Miller’s (1977) translation of Hegel’s *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.
5. It seems necessary to give a summary of the dialectic. I am unable to do this beyond what I begin to describe here. I will thus cite *A Hegel Dictionary* (1992) edited by Michael Inwood:

Hegel’s account of self-consciousness has three notable features. First, self-consciousness is not an all-or-nothing matter, but proceeds through increasingly adequate stages. Second, it is essentially interpersonal and requires reciprocal recognition of self-conscious beings; it is ‘an I that is a we, and a we that is an I’ (PS, IV). Third, it is practical as well as cognitive: finding oneself in another, the appropriation of the alien other, in which self-consciousness consists, involves the establishment and operation of social institutions, as well as scientific and philosophical enquiry. (63)

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