

gender and sexualities in education

A Reader

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Chapter 28

Hatred Haunting Hallways

Teacher Education and the Badness of Homophobia(s)

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When you are targeted, it's hard to know what to do. Sometimes I wrap myself in queer or psychoanalytic theory. I try to remember how we all suffer from gender- and heteronormative regulation, and that this is the transference (they do not hate me, they hate their own desire to break conformity, they hate the choices they have had to make against their desire). In so doing I can act with compassion; I can smile at staring children and say hello to glaring parents. I can approach gawking adolescents and warmly invite their questions. Humanizing myself is my best response. But sometimes I hide, behind a newspaper, behind a pillar. Sometimes I shut down and just go home. Sometimes I am rude or confrontational. A month ago I abruptly turned and walked towards a teenage couple who were following me in a subway station. They slowed and held each other, hiding their faces while I walked three slow circles around them and intoned "I see you..." on my last lap. We all have our ways of getting by.

Introduction: On Badness

This chapter was written during the school holiday months of July and August, in the largest city in Canada. Streets, subways, markets, and restaurants are different in the heat. Summer brings families and their school-age children into public space at all hours of the day. The street is usually the domain of adults: people presumed secure in their genders and sexualities, and more familiar with social mores about staring, pointing, and laughing. When large concentrations of children and parents occupy public space during the summer holiday, however, gender and sexuality's visible others become threats to children's insecure gender(-normative) and (hetero)sexual development, and children are only just learning to exercise discretion. At this time of year, I am reminded by my experiences and others' stories that the injection of elementary and secondary students into daytime, weekday public life brings increased levels of social stress and anxiety for queer, trans, and gender non-conforming people: visceral signs of young people's ordinary absence there.

As a teacher educator, I am always mindful that summertime public space is more harming for people like me and others who are differently non-normative *because school is out*. These are students, and these are their families. They are taught by teachers, who are my own students. Social justice teacher education (see Cochran-Smith, 2004; Michelli & Keiser, 2005; Vavrus, 2002; Zeichner, 2009), a sub-discipline that engages teacher education as a means of palliating harm perpetrated on the basis of social difference, believes in the trickle-down effects of its practice: that there is a meaningful connection between what changes a teacher educator can effect in our courses and what can change in the world outside. These two worlds overlap in the teacher candidate (TC) whose practice embodies social justice. Can we say, then, that the teachers whose students drastically shift the climate of public space in the summer have failed? Did their teacher education programs fail in turn to do something that would enable their having a particular effect on their students? Naming failure on the part of the teachers or teacher educators tangentially implicated in my example would be wildly simplistic, *but not altogether unimaginable*, given the great hope of anti-homophobia teacher education (see Athanases & Larrabee, 2003; Jennings, 2007; Kissen, 2002; Robinson & Ferfolja, 2001; Sears, 1992):¹ that we *can* prepare teachers to contribute to the well-being of gender and sexual minority students. Moreover, what precisely would anti-homophobia teacher education (AHTE) have failed to do?

Although AHTE relies, along with other similar endeavours, on this sort of trickling-down, Berrill and Martino (2002) are ambivalent about whether it is really borne out:

although it is important to stress that as teacher educators we cannot transform hostile school cultures, what we can do is provide our students with a theoretical framework for understanding how they have been formed and how they fashion themselves as particular kinds of individuals. (p. 67)

Providing such a theoretical framework is certainly to offer, after Michel Foucault and others, a technology of the self, and teacher selves are unfailingly relational. I wonder about the difference between changing toxic school cultures and investing in the complexity of their everyday facilitators: teachers. How can we separate working with future teachers to make visible the contingencies of subjectivity from working to make school cultures more open to the contingencies of otherness? Although this sort of boundary collapses under pressure, it gets at the means by which AHTE might define itself, or at least find when it has been successful. But what never collapses for AHTE is the urgency of K–12 student experiences of bigotry, hatred, oppression, prejudice, discrimination, or violence on the basis of perceived or self-identified gender or sexuality, badnesses which most often fall together under the umbrella of homophobia, but can include heterosexism, transphobia, biphobia, genderism (Airton, 2009a, 2009b), cis-sexism (Serano, 2007),² etc. And homophobia—the badness—must be conceived of as something teachers can affect and address, and moreover, something AHTE practitioners can *teach teachers* to affect and address.

In this chapter I explore the badness, or that which must recede or must not have taken place in order for us to have succeeded *at and as* AHTE. I suggest that how we imagine, construct, or narrate badness is a structural determinant of AHTE as a discipline and an everyday practice. How does homophobia appear to us? What are the boundaries between what is homophobic and what is not? Where and when do we look for homophobia? In

what times and places is homophobia 'unlikely' or 'less serious'? What is the immediate bodily experience of seriousness, and is it something apart from the seriousness conveyed by language? How is language a problem for AHTE? What are the roles of self and other in determining whether an utterance, interaction, or happening was or would be homophobic? Is 'homophobic' a characteristic applied to intentions or effects? While I do not provide direct answers to these questions, I do offer some entry points for other AHTE practitioners to reflect on the significance of the issues raised for their own practice. My point throughout is less that 'homophobia is everywhere' and more so that our conceptions of the badness we seek to prevent, reverse, contain, or even deconstruct might play an even greater role in the design and delivery of AHTE than the needs or stories of our students (Cosier, 2008), local cartographies of gender and sexuality (Mcconaghy, 2004), and our own experiences, interests, and expertise. What might an AHTE look like that begins from these places instead of from *the* badness?

My commentary here draws on my own teaching and exhaustive review of the anti-homophobia teacher education literature from 1982 to the present. A major finding was AHTE's citational reliance on survey research that, time and again, has documented systemic patterns of school-based violence and harassment perpetrated against non-heterosexual youth across the United States and Canada (e.g., Bochenek & Brown, 2001; Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008; Taylor et al., 2011; etc.). It seems that for its authority and justification, AHTE relies more on this body of scholarship than on its own or on teacher education research, for that matter, whether from other social justice teacher education domains or more generally. As I will suggest, such a reliance on evidence of the badness, whether for justifying the time and space we receive in teacher education (TE) programs or for developing our pedagogies, likely has a lot to do with the nature of teacher education itself.

The Problem of the Example

Like other domains of teacher education, AHTE involves people preparing other people to work with still other people down the line: it has something of a 'thirdhand' quality. We want to make sure that TCs will know what homophobia looks like long after we have receded from their lives. Using examples to represent 'homophobia in action' is a commonsensical strategy for preparing TCs to encounter a legible badness requiring immediate recognition and response. Examples are often in the form of scenarios (e.g., Darvin, 2011; Goldstein, 2004; Hall, 2006; Kissen, 1993; Koerner & Hulsebosch, 1996; Lipkin, 2002), or apparent in guest speaker testimony (e.g., Eyre, 1993; Fifield & Swain, 2002; Geasler, Croteau, Heineman, & Edlund, 1995; Goldstein, 1997; Mulhern & Martinez, 1999), and the research literature on the school-based suffering of queer young people inspires even more. The following are composites which, due to their ubiquity, do not require citation. What should teachers do when these things happen?

- A student hurls an anti-gay slur at another student; whether the student is gay or not gay, out or not out bears on the teacher's hypothetical response.
- Two young queer women are harassed by their peers when being affectionate at a school dance and/or are prevented from attending the prom.

- In a kindergarten classroom, some children respond to a story about same-sex parents with sounds of disgust, and act out instead of listening.
- A parent comes in angry that queerness or queer issues have been discussed in the classroom without her consent.
- The school counselor is homophobic, and offers prejudicial resources to queer students who come seeking support for issues of peer and family rejection.

These are not necessarily straightforward only because they are brief, and in no way do they represent the entirety or reflect the nuances of AHTE practice. Their familiarity is, however, undeniable. When we teach TCs to address the badness, we most often invoke familiar manifestations of badness that will be recognizable to them in the future, as well as thinkable within an action-reaction dynamic. This dynamic relies upon a 'tripwire effect' where 'what to do about homophobia' becomes a response to the 'x' that we have branded 'homophobic.' When 'x' occurs, the TC's anti-homophobia practice will be tripped, and 'x' will be addressed in the ways we have suggested are both successful and characteristic of anti-homophobia practice. Further, the badness tends to be construed as something enacted in an immediate encounter with another and necessarily falling outside of the 'benign realm' of ordinary behaviour. More insidious and structural kinds of badness can get lost, perhaps because they are difficult to portray with examples.

If the badness is outside of the ordinary, it becomes a state of exception (Agamben, 2005; Massumi, 2005) that can be rectified or reversed so that the normal, non-homophobic present might be restored. This is characteristic of the emblematic hopefulness of education as a whole, which is certainly alive in its social justice-related sub-fields. In each of the bulleted examples, there is a sense that a moment can come when the homophobia is gone, as follows: the user of the slur authentically apologizes and does not do it again; the couple is warmly welcomed at the prom after all, and their tormentors are barred from attending; the children's reaction is pedagogically addressed and does not recur; the parent is mollified and does not come back; and the counselor is reprimanded or even removed. These are certainly positive results, but they are so easily discernible from the examples themselves.³ Any other outcomes can almost be graphed according to their relative degree of distance from these ideals: when something has gone away. *The badness is something that can be made to go away.* Homophobia, as something teachers must reckon with, is here bounded to particular manifestations that recede.

How do we engage with a badness that cannot recede or be said to recede (assuming a difference between these), emergent in the middle of ordinary social doings to an often unintelligible degree? As part of my own AHTE pedagogy, I have tried to introduce examples conveying a murkier register of badness, such as the scenario below:

Ariel is a gifted artist in grade eleven who has taken an interest in sculpture and enrolled in a special elective. The class is led by Mr. Pacheco, a teacher and sculptor who has mastered classical Greco-Roman studies of the body. Ariel is inspired by Mr. Pacheco's passion and takes great pride in his work, labouring hard on a series of male athletic forms. Ariel eventually presents them in a school-wide art exhibition in the gymnasium as part of Meet the Teacher night. Mr. Pacheco greets Ariel and his parents as they walk into the gym, and he escorts them over to the sculpture area. Ariel's peers and their parents surround the display, staring at Ariel's athletes and glancing at each other. You, another of Ariel's teachers, notice that Ariel seems upset. His parents are obviously

uncomfortable with his sculptures and the reactions Ariel's work is eliciting from others in their community. But Mr. Pacheco is completely oblivious and continues to draw bystanders' attention to the high quality of Ariel's work and its fidelity to the subject matter. The next day you learn that Ariel's sculptures have been defaced. Mr. Pacheco thinks it was just a random act of vandalism, but by the week's end, Ariel has withdrawn from the elective, incurring the disbelieving anger of his favourite teacher.

The answer to the question, 'what should the teacher do?' is far from determined by the content of this example. It is difficult to determine which badness has surfaced, and this determination may not be the first order of business. Rather, a student's heartfelt interest and investment in a project—and in the approval of his teacher—received a challenging response from those close to him, culminating in vandalism that may or may not be related to this response. We might ask whether the teacher even needs to verify or invoke the vandals' intentions in order to address the effect that this potential connection might have on Ariel's well-being. After all, he may have already manifested this connection in his decision to leave the course. Extracting a confession—or a statement of 'non-homophobic' motives—from whoever is responsible may do very little to assuage the effects of Meet the Teacher night, even if the vandalism is redressed. Further, the addressee of the example is another teacher who must maintain a collegial relationship with Mr. Pacheco. There is also the question of *Ariel's* relationship with Mr. Pacheco, let alone with his parents and peers. Will Ariel leave behind, unexpressed, his talent for sculpture? Should Mr. Pacheco have anticipated the reaction to a teenage boy creating homoerotic representations of male bodies and exhibiting them publicly at school? In perhaps not dissuading Ariel, is Mr. Pacheco a better teacher or ally than another one who would have, however gently, dissuaded Ariel from the exhibition, at least? Overall, there is no way to make the badness go away, because it is diffuse and hard to pin down with terminology and the reference points terminology offers. The teacher will have to be satisfied with something less than ideal. Will this have been a failure of anti-homophobia education, or of AHTE?

My use of this and other similar scenarios includes asking TCs to identify a timeline of response to the narrated events in order to trouble the immediacy and exceptionality implied by the action-reaction dynamic. In groups, TCs discuss what they may have done beforehand in recognizing some of the precursors, immediate responses in the moment, and what they might do over the long term. I intend the timeline framework as a corrective for TCs' prior exposure to discourses of multiculturalism. The effects of this exposure appear in their frequent suggestion that using particular representations (e.g., assigning a young-adult novel with positive characterizations of queer adolescents) is an appropriate response to violence or vandalism. Calls for more and better curricular or other classroom representations of non-heterosexual people are frequent anti-homophobia strategies, and may have unintentionally contributed to this panacea of representation. In addition to multiculturalist impulses, I have also found that TCs must struggle hard not to name Ariel as gay, even after we have engaged together the complexities of assuming—or requiring—his gayness. If anything, this example brings up some inherent challenges of AHTE discourse—requiring homophobia to 'go away' and naming beneficiaries who are definitively non-heterosexual (Airton, 2009b; 2013)—whether originating with our pedagogies or a function of the contemporary climate in which we work. Exploring these challenges with TCs can be the

end point of the exercise, rather than preparing them to be experts at definitively naming the badness and making it go away, or risking failure (Kumashiro, 2004).

This is not to say that we can avoid the use of examples, or that the ones in common circulation are categorically undesirable. I am essentially bringing familiar critiques of representation into teacher education, giving them a pedagogical twist, and offering some ways to work with the inescapability of examples in AHTE. We must, after all, help people who may have no self-conscious experiences of othering to become cognizant of its structural purpose in social and institutional life. I wonder, however, whether a badness that appears as something we can both address and teach others to address is the only or the best way to do the work of making schools more open to gender and sexual diversity, among other things. The possibility of the correct address relies on transferability, and the transferability of the example to the disparate contexts in which TCs will find work is likely derived from and reinforced by school-based survey research showing the same things happening all over. But due to methodological constrictions, large-scale research has trouble picking up on experiences like Ariel's which may not be legible as *the* badness. I am concerned when the homophobias available to research become 'the way homophobia will always play out' in school, and that the future-directedness of teacher education ensures that this will be the case given the 'x' TCs are prepared to name. Will the future—or manifestations of these differences in the present—have to fight their way into AHTE? How might we embrace the pedagogical inevitability of the example *and* prepare TCs to combat the badness in its plural, local (Mcconaghy, 2004), and unintelligible-as-such manifestations?

The Problem of Looking at Others

In this section, my goal is to explore the possibility of doing both these things at once by bringing into AHTE a pedagogical proposal from psychoanalytic theorist, Kaja Silverman (1995). Silverman argues that the look—when we cast our eyes upon an object—is both a problem for social justice and a site of political transformation. Looking becomes a problem for intentionality when casting one's eyes around a room is no longer considered a 'neutral' and therefore defensible act. What are the implications for AHTE when simply looking at someone else—not touching or addressing them—can be bad, can be homophobic?

In *Threshold of the Visible World*, Silverman (1995) offers a strategy for changing our relations with the other through a particular kind of looking, and in so doing, deployed the Lacanian model of the visual field with its three components: gaze, look, and screen. The *gaze* is

a local elaboration of something much more fundamental and durable [than itself]: what Lacan calls 'the presence of others as such'....It is the inscription in the field of vision of the symbolic, of the necessity for every subject to be seen in order to 'be'. (p. 222)

The gaze is likened to the sensation of being continually photographed by an omnipresent camera for which we are always posing. But *how* we are photographed and *how* we experience this is determined by the *screen*, that which "gives shape and significance to how we are seen by 'others as such'" (p. 174). Silverman suggests that the screen is taken over by a

'dominant fiction' continually produced in hegemonic popular culture and dictating the visual ideals available in the current cultural image repertoire, namely (middle-class) Whiteness, gender- and heteronormativity, able-bodiedness, thinness, etc. In becoming aware of our bodily responses to what is *not* idealized, we can learn to see the dominant fiction: that which "passes for reality in a given society" (p. 178). Because we unconsciously idealize within this repertoire, our unconscious is the seat of our hostility towards bodies which visually differ from ideal images. Silverman suggests that our *look*—the third component—is a transformative site from which we can consciously apprehend the dominant fiction that guides our responses to de-idealized objects and others.

To reveal the dominant fiction, Silverman proposes a psychic mobilization on two fronts in an ethical project that she terms 'productive looking.' This is opposed to our habit of passive looking that ensures we continually idealize in keeping with the dominant fiction. The look is the component of the visual field which, unlike gaze and screen, is contiguous with the subject. It is therefore the site where a more socially just encounter between differentially 'idealizable' subjects becomes something that we can work towards or, it follows, be taught to attain. This is the promise of Silverman's theory for social justice educational projects like AHTE. She is hopeful that we can persevere against our unconscious, and confer a provisional ideality which is otherwise rendered impossible. The look espouses a transformative political power, one that is both individual and collective:

those subjects who are accustomed to having an unflattering set of visual coordinates projected onto them depend for their psychic survival upon the loving look of their intimates, which...can at least temporarily erase the terrible effect of that projection. But if the look acts in concert with other looks, it can reterritorialize the screen, bringing new elements into cultural prominence, and casting into darkness those which presently constitute normative representation. Under such necessarily collective conditions, the look could significantly change how the camera/gaze 'photographs' the world. (p. 223)

Let us now consider the two practical components of Silverman's productive looking. While conscious knowledge of our idealization processes is useful, these processes can only come into our awareness *after the fact*, because our unconscious activates before we do, in part determining our immediate affective responses which are quite often apparent to others. In order to shift our *unconscious*, then, Silverman suggests that we view films or photographs that "put marginal elements of the cultural screen in contact with what is most meaningful to [us], and thereby...validate what would otherwise be neglected or despised" (p. 185); this would, she hopes, gradually lessen the 'kick' that sparks our turn away from the visually other(ed). In the *conscious* realm—and this is key—we can belatedly register the unconscious 'kick' that signalled our de-idealization of someone and *look again*, but differently. The potential for greater social justice resides in our resolve to *look twice*.

It is this idea of looking again—when we recognize that we have viscerally looked away—which inspires me to poke at the boundaries of social justice pedagogy and the badnesses we combat. I am unsure whether 'looking again' at someone who experiences visually inscribed otherness can be mobilized as if the act of looking itself has no content. Just as our own educational efforts construct homophobia as 'the x' we *can* address—including what it 'looks like' as well as where it begins and ends—Silverman constructs the act of looking as a neutral tool of justice: something we can teach other people to use correctly. But what about

the object looking back at us, with his, her, or their very own eyes?⁴ A neutral deployment of 'looking and looking again' only attends to the experience of the one who looks; Silverman does not address the potentially deleterious effects that this look can have upon the person being looked at. The visual field is not a site outside, where things do not happen.

While I do not wholly disagree with Silverman, I perceive an oversimplification of the look when incorporated into a psychic, individual process of re-idealization, where 'looking' is, in fact, relational. 'Looking again' feels perilously close to the double take, whereby visual otherness is first seized and then so often relished, as described in the opening to the chapter. But more than that, when we mobilize something as ordinary as looking for projects like AHTE we must slide down the slippery slope of intentions. What are the implications for any pedagogical approach to justice if we cannot rely upon the intentions of 'misguided but otherwise friendly' subjects: both their knowability and changeability? What kinds of unthinking, ordinary behaviour must remain beyond the realm of badness altogether in order for AHTE to maintain its claims to realism and rationalism? Teachers and teacher candidates are renowned for their good intentions, and AHTE banks on these as much as any other TE sub-discipline. If homophobia is only in the realm of effects, can there be an anti-homophobia pedagogy? *Which aspects of our experience are presently conceived in AHTE as sites outside, where nothing happens?*

In order to give some flesh to these complications in the moment-to-moment time frame of everyday social interaction, I share a final example which, I confess, is not nearly as open-ended or contingent as that of Ariel and Mr. Pacheco:

A highly visible femme-butcht couple are having brunch in a hip café. They sit opposite the couch where a young, visually gender-normative heterosexual couple awaits an open table. The butcht—Z—notices them beyond their partner's—H's—shoulder. A few minutes pass in conversation and Z drifts their eyes towards the other couple, only to note that they are both staring at Z intently. H registers Z's change in affect and starts the usual check-in just as the other couple, now caught looking, erupt in a fit of conspiratorial giggling. The latter continue to laugh together, all the while casting glances at Z, hiding neither their laugh nor their look. Z burns with shame and hurt; H is livid. But Z and H are almost finished eating now and note triumphantly that the next open table is beside theirs. Z and H both glower at the couple as the latter realize their destination and are led to sit down in silence. After Z and H have paid the bill, H leaves ahead of Z in a familiar ritual and Z stands, leaning over the other couple's table. The woman looks up at Z with a nervous smile and the man freezes. Looking into both of their eyes, Z tells them that it will take the rest of the day for Z to get over how they have hurt Z's feelings by staring and laughing. The woman blinks and utters something; the man looks down and says nothing. Z turns and leaves. Later on, Z worries about the couple's feelings and suffers a pang of guilt. Maybe they were looking at the comic drawing that hung low on the wall, just over Z's shoulder.

The all-seeing and all-knowing narrator—"this is what happened and what it meant"—is destabilized in the last two sentences. Who ought to feel guilty in this equation? Is the shame of the gawking and laughing couple not a successful outcome of this very rudimentary pedagogical encounter with the gender- and heteronormalization of public space?

Whatever we may rely on when seeking to facilitate the trickling-down of AHTE is shaken by Z and H's realization of their potential error. As I have suggested already, we can imagine that the 'best' outcome is for the other couple to share and disseminate the story of their behaviour and comeuppance. Free-floating, it could serve as a warning to others

in their networks not to stare and laugh at people who are unlike them. For this to occur, they would have to be driven to narrate the experience to their community such that its lesson fans out, and public space is made less harming for the (visual) others of gender- and heteronormativity. But how likely are people to broadcast a story of their own wrongdoing in which they are rightly alleged to have egregiously hurt a stranger's feelings? If Z and H were right, the couple's shame could blunt the possibilities of narration and the trickling-down of the lesson.

If Z and H were wrong and the couple were *not* looking at Z but at something directly over Z's shoulder, it occurs to me that the story would more likely be shared. Narration here could serve as a vehicle to banish the bad feelings of shock, outrage, or guilt that may have come about after Z departed the scene: to recover fully from the experience with reference to their completely misunderstood intentions. Their laughter may not have been at Z's—or Z and H's—expense, but only expressive of the couple's embarrassment that Z thought they were looking at Z when they were not. Z was wrong.

My point here is that in the second instance, the sanctity of intentions—i.e., the couple's likely belief, as is common, in the determining role of intentionality in determining badness—means that *the trickling-down will probably happen*. Although the lesson will not be, 'don't stare and laugh *at the visually other*,' I am unsure as to whether the content of the lesson matters. No one—regardless of whether they are right or wrong—wants to be publicly accused of this sort of behaviour, and in ominously familiar, kindergarten-teacher tones, nevertheless. This was a traumatic learning. We can assume that Z's coping skills for moving about in a hostile visual field are well-developed, whereas for the visually normative couple, public space was made fraught, perhaps in a new way or for the first time. They may have no idea why this happened, and feel assaulted by a stranger. Z is inaccessible, and cannot bring them back into significance (Britzman & Pitt, 2004; Felman, 1995), or enable them to make a reparation or separation for the sake of closure. And regardless of whether the couple were targeting Z for Z's visual otherness, the ethical implication is that people like them capturing people like Z in their viewfinder for more than a glance is harming. Does this mean that in the pursuit of less badness, anti-homophobia education—and AHTE—would want visually gender- and heteronormative people not to look around freely when they are out and about, lest they remind the Others of their exclusion from (visual) ideality?

In the aftermath of this quite heavy-handed formulation, I seem to be in a position to suggest that a public pedagogy against the badness could entail visually *inter alia* gender non-normative and non-heteronormative (whether *heterosexual* or no) people wandering around and solemnly expressing hurt feelings to whoever looks in their direction at close range for more than, oh, ten seconds. Loosely following Kumashiro (2000, 2002), this might be termed a deliberate 'pedagogy of crisis,' but resembles, at bottom, something more like performance art than teaching. This idea entails a complete evacuation of intentionality as a site of political or pedagogical significance, and the two are joined together in the case of AHTE and its fellows. If somehow translated into a teacher education pedagogy, this kind of tactic is also an instrumentalisation of the very people who teacher education relies on to change the world. What is to become of AHTE if the badness we confront exceeds

the means and the medium we are given to do our work? Perhaps we place too much emphasis on students' technical development or acquisition of a what-to-do-when skill set. Can AHTE risk an experiment, telling TCs quite simply that looking at someone could be wrong, regardless of their intentions?

Conclusion: Our Examples, Ourselves

There is a way in which AHTE is asked to 'play along' by constructing what I have referred to as the badness in the template made available by the nature of education itself, including how people are prepared to enter the profession. The action-reaction dynamic, including its exclusionary rendering of what can be 'homophobic,' as in the case of looking at others, is closely modeled on the foundational educational assumption that the teacher who correctly identifies and addresses a student's error can make them learn, and furthermore, that teacher education can prepare TCs for this correct identification and response. In this environment, the intelligibility of our examples *as AHTE examples*, or as expressing a badness that AHTE is particularly suited to address, might equal the identity of our field.

What has interested me in this chapter is the degree to which, from my own review of the AHTE literature, the commonsense intelligibility of the badness is embraced by scholars and practitioners. AHTE's acceptance of the strictures of the action-reaction dynamic is certainly understandable, given how *inaction* on the part of legislative authorities has been experienced by at least two generations as directly leading to the deaths of loved ones—the paradigmatic example being the travesty of government silence and complacency during the early years of the AIDS crisis (Hubbard, 2012; Stein, 2012). Representation has often been championed as an opposite of silence, and silence has frequently meant death for queer people. This is what I remember when I reflect on the pervasiveness in AHTE of survey research on the school experiences of non-heterosexual youth, and the accessible examples of badness that we derive from these findings. This body of scholarship is most often presented as a reminder that *homophobia is still a problem*, where the 'still' marks the contemporary badness haunting queer peoples' lives today, even if total silence and inaction on the scale of the AIDS crisis is unlikely to recur, given the visibility and acceptance that many queers have achieved.⁵

Although a visibility politic is undeniably important in the realm of policy, in this chapter, I have hopefully offered a productive questioning of whether this style of engaging the badness must also characterize AHTE pedagogy. What conditions of entry into teacher education does AHTE accept by delimiting the badness of *inter alia* homophobia to things that rational, well-intentioned, and well-prepared teachers can change? We cannot ask TCs and others to stop looking at other people, to be sure, but can we ask them to witness without needing to win? As McConaghy (2004) suggests, "the challenge of anti-homophobia teacher education involves a personal challenge of psychic survival: teaching through the crisis of witnessing homophobia—again and again" (p. 64). Crises of witnessing occur when we must recognize "the limits to which teacher education is able to interfere with the patterns of self and other dynamics" (p. 64). These limits require humility and a willingness to accept that the badness might not be something we can vanquish, or that vanquishing homophobia cannot be what a teacher, administrator, parent, or fellow student must do

in order for something to have been done: for the state of exception to end. Becoming more open to the badness means understanding how the ebb and flow of ordinary social life can be terrible, even if it cannot be named *as such, as homophobia*. AHTE could help TCs develop the capacity to *believe* young people who struggle with locally derived norms of gender and sexuality—regardless of sexual identity—in their insistence that they cannot stay put and stay well, whether or not the circumstances resemble a badness TCs have been prepared to expect. Surviving the crisis of witnessing means surviving our own loss of control, but making and deriving our pedagogical examples from the most intelligible instantiations of homophobia is surely a strategy for maintaining control over the badness that continues to haunt queer life. While a valid response to recent history, this is far from the only way for AHTE to do and be.

Notes

- 1 These references are among the most recurring and widely cited in the literature review informing this chapter, and can be taken as foundational and exemplary of the field. The publication of full review findings is in process at the time of writing.
- 2 The term, *cis-sexism*, denotes the privileging of gender identities or expressions assumed to correlate with one's assigned sex as 'natural' or otherwise solely legitimate. The allied term, *cis-gendered*, refers to those who are not trans.
- 3 For an AHTE-based rethinking of the definitive 'success' suggested by these kinds of outcomes, see Elsbree (2002); Goldstein, Russell, & Daley (2007); and Taylor (2002).
- 4 They and its derivatives are used in this example and in places throughout the article as singular, gender-neutral pronouns in place of he, she, hers, his, etc. For more information, visit <http://theyismypronoun.tumblr.com>
- 5 My use of 'many' here is an explicit gesture to important critiques of these developments, many suggesting that only the most privileged queer people access the benefits of visibility and acceptance as they are currently experienced (see Duggan, 2004; Puar, 2007; Sycamore, 2004; Willse & Spade, 2005).

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