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appears hurt upon learning of the more functional and less romantic nature of her relationship needs, both Julie and we are exposed to a side of Victor distinct from his overbearingly macho performances during their first few interactions.

This larger context of gender relations provided most of the topics for spontaneous classroom discussion following the film with my female students generally banding together to criticize what they saw as typically chauvinist courtship methods and the several young men attempting to explain rather than defend similar behavior. The film turned out to be a powerful means for many of my female students to express their opinions on what they consider to be an ever present practice, while the entire class related to some of Victor's other problems, including his relationship with his siblings and with his grandmother, who struggles with her dual needs to understand and control the growing young man in her care. Perhaps one of the film's most important themes, one that is rarely articulated or discussed in a classroom setting, is the simultaneous senses of acceptance and loneliness experienced by members of a tight-knit urban minority community.

Teaching the Body in Composition Class

By Kim Socha

In an effort to begin teaching my own interests in a recent freshman composition class at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I decided to use issues of embodiment as a catalyst for exploring rhetoric and composition. Gregory T. Lyons's *Body and Culture*, a Pearson Longman reader that considers the body

as a "cultural matrix" for exploring societal issues, has served as a helpful accompaniment to a variety of successful classroom exercises and activities. For example, I began our semester by having my students "read" the bodies of John McCain and Barack Obama, thereby allowing them to form their initial definitions of body politics. My students identified the ways in which, along with their political ideologies, McCain and Obama were also being critiqued for their color, age, height, nationality, and overall aesthetic appeal.

Students become more engaged in their work when it involves experience, as opposed to mere theory. Therefore, as an accessory to Lyon's chapter on "Body Modification," I used a guest speaker who is pierced, tattooed, and otherwise modified. After providing an historical and multicultural overview of body modification rituals, the speaker showed off his own marked body. Rather than just hypothesize on the subculture of modification, students were given a real body to investigate *and* interrogate. They started out hesitantly, but soon developed the courage to ask questions such as, "Your goal is to be tattooed head to toe? That's crazy! How will you get a job? What will your children think?" My use of a speaker who was unafraid to put his body on display helped emphasize difference and how differences are accepted or rejected by so-called "normal" society.

Theodore Dalrymple's "Marks of Shame: Tattoos and What to Do About Them," a scathing critique of the tattooed, is an example of society's rejection of difference. His essay is filled with some of the worst argumentative strategies: lack of research in support of statistical contentions, personal attacks on whole groups of people, and a surfeit of unsupported

assumptions. I decided to use his poorly constructed article as a way to introduce students to argumentative writing. My unique approach—unique for me, at least—was to have a discussion that only explains and exemplifies how *not* to do something. I based this lesson on an unexpected resource—Monty Python. In particular, *YouTube* offers a video of the British comedy troupe’s “Argument Clinic,” an amusing six-minute skit that exemplifies some of the best worst elements of a poorly-communicated argument: abusive language, mere contradiction, directionless complaints, and calls for violence. My students were spot on in their application of Monty Python as method of critiquing Dalrymple’s article. Again, this activity spoke to both course themes: embodiment issues and effective writing.

These concurrent themes have resulted in some of the most profound essays that I have read as an English instructor. To wit, my class considered readings from the chapter “Sports and Difference” for an assignment in which they defined either femininity, masculinity, or race. The “research” they used was their own experiences living inside gendered and raced bodies for the past 18 to 21 years. One student responded with an essay comparing his hard-working father and uncles and the campus’s hard-partying fraternities. Another student pondered comic representations of African Americans on T.V. alongside her parents’ reiterations that being a black woman means her future will hold unfair and unjustified challenges. I believe that the insightfulness I have observed is inherently connected to the theme of embodiment because it compels students to investigate an inescapable aspect of their very existence.

These experiences with embodiment as a foundation for teaching rhetoric have made me a better educator. For years, I assumed that college freshmen were not ready for the theoretical weight underlying lofty terms such as misogyny, hegemony, and corporeity. However, the inclusion of these concepts in *Body and Culture*, whether overt or implied, has made it a necessity to introduce these terms. Most importantly, my students have reacted with enthusiasm. One young woman explained that our guest speaker ignited her desire to permanently mark her body while also making her cautious enough to wait a few years before doing so. Another student remarked that our work has forced him, albeit begrudgingly, to critically analyze body images that he regularly encounters. This class, along with an ideal text and a variety of relevant but engaging activities, has served as a catalyst for a sometimes discomforting—but always enlightening—dialogue based on something that we all share regardless of the many things we use to differentiate ourselves—the human body.

Call for Teaching Notes for *Radical Teacher*

Is there a book, film, essay, poem, or story that you’ve found particularly useful in the classroom and want to share with other Radical Teacher readers? We are especially interested in Teaching Notes on new materials not widely known, but we would also like to hear about newly rediscovered older works, as well as new ways of teaching familiar ones.

Or has something challenging, encouraging, or frustrating happened in class? If you think our readers can learn from your experience -- whether you handled things well, handled them badly, or are still trying to decide -- we’d like to hear about it.

Contributions should run about 500 words. If you'd like to see some sample Teaching Notes, check out "Recent Issues" on our web site.

Please send a hard copy of your Note to Bob Rosen, Department of English, William Paterson University, 300 Pompton Road, Wayne, New Jersey 07470 — and also an e-mail, with the header "Teaching Note," to: bobrosen@radicalteacher.org

News for Educational Workers

Books by *Radical Teacher* Collective Members

» **Joseph Entin, Robert C. Rosen, and Leonard Vogt**, Editors. *Controversies in the Classroom: A Radical Teacher Reader*. Foreword by Deborah Meier. The Teaching for Social Justice Series. Teachers College Press, 2008.

» **Sarah Chinn**. *Inventing Modern Adolescence: The Children of Immigrants in Turn-of-the-Century America*. Rutgers University Press, 2008.

Teachers Against Occupation

Teachers Against Occupation (TAO) (www.teachersagainstoctupation.org) is a collective organized to coordinate

various efforts by scholars and teachers to critique and resist military occupations worldwide. This site is intended to be a virtual 'meeting point' for different academic groups engaged in building opposition to imperial policies at home and abroad and a resource for groups challenging government support for such policies. Collectively, TAO hopes to present a stronger and more coordinated voice of resistance to occupations that destroy communities and livelihoods.

Teaching controversial topics is difficult but necessary. In an effort to provide practical pedagogical support and effective educational resources to teachers, TAO is collecting course materials for teaching against occupation, which will in turn be made available on our website. To that end, educators at all levels are asked to submit to TAO any of the following: syllabi, course modules, lesson plans, web sources/links, videos, primary source materials (articles, essays, maps, images), and pedagogical approaches to controversial subjects. TAO is collecting material suitable for use in grade 7-12 curriculum and in college and university classes. Over the coming weeks and months TAO will review submitted material and begin to post syllabi, modules, and other teaching resources freely available for educators.

Education and the Military

The U. S. military continues to solicit the help of psychiatrists and anthropologists in its ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In May of 2006, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) made a position statement forbidding psychiatrists from having any direct participation in the interrogation of anyone in military or civilian detention. A few weeks later, the Council