determining whether there are, in fact, any process theorists left or whether process theory has been adequately characterized by the contributors to *Post-Process Theory*. Perhaps such a dialogue would have led to the conclusion that our profession, at least as it is manifested in recent scholarship in composition studies, is already (or is, at the very least, "almost, but not entirely") "post-process."


Reviewed by Jennifer Driscoll, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee

Academic conferences are strange events in which intellectuals debate esoteric ideas in cramped quarters and packed elevators. The result is sometimes a marvelous combination of minds that otherwise might not meet. At times, these events foreground further debate in specific fields of inquiry. At other times, they suggest that the work we do in our various disciplines is sadly divorced from the labor of a growing number of intellectuals who, out of necessity or choice, do not hold positions in university settings. Often issues raised at conferences are further removed from the economic and social interests of the culture at large, a culture divided over what constitutes a college education, how it should be administered, and who should fund it.

In many ways, the academic conference is a microcosm of what many in education find endemic to the field: isolation (from our peers, from scholars in other departments, from the administration, and even from our students). Here I mean to suggest that in conference settings we may experience alienation from the work of our colleagues, just as in the classroom we may often find ourselves isolated from the very students we teach. These students, despite their increasingly diverse backgrounds, too often lack the historical framework through which to conceptualize many intellectual discussions. Chief among these is feminism, a potential theoretical and political rallying force with which to combat isolation. Without an informed conceptual and historical background, students may view feminism as a dirty word. Especially suspect is the instructor who explicitly identifies her or himself as a feminist.

As an instructor of rhetoric and composition, and one of those feminists experiencing the growing gap between the historicity of my own
experiences and those of my students, I could not have read Megan Boler’s *Feeling Power* at a better time. This book argues for the need to situate the often isolated and isolating work we do in education in a historical and political framework—one that accounts for class, economic, and power relationships that we both identify with and are identified within. Boler suggests that emotions are not singular events. Instead, emotions are political and—when exercised in education—can work in two ways. First, they can be used as a form of social control. For example, humiliation, fear, and shame—emotions that have a cultural and gendered connotation—can work to uphold the status quo and predetermine the “value” of intellectual labor. Second, emotions can be understood as sites of resistance and social redress. In this latter scenario, emotions such as humiliation, fear, and shame, and even anger are “reclaimed.” In this case, emotions are connective and cognitive; they are not “private problems” but are indicators that “something is wrong with the outside world.”

As Boler maintains, because emotions have engendered histories that function in terms of cultural capital, the control of “emotional discourse” determines not only the dissemination of knowledge but also its production both outside and inside the classroom. Because women are often situated on the side of the “emotional” (a largely pejorative term that Boler avoids using), they find themselves in a bind. Women teachers are expected to act as caretakers and nursemaids, roles that are associated with feeling but not with power. At the same time, women are demeaned for taking on these roles. In this contradictory situation, Boler provides a new terrain for mapping the emotions. She argues that emotions are epistemological, and are not, as Western philosophy maintains, opposed to reason; rather, emotions enable reason. Boler, who received her early training in philosophy before entering the more interdisciplinary History of Consciousness program at Santa Cruz, writes in her preface that she began to realize that “emotion’s exclusion from philosophy and science was not a coincidence. . . . The boundary—the division between ‘truth’ and reason on one side, and ‘subjective bias’ and emotion on the other—was not a neutral division.” Once she began to see that “the two sides of the binary pair were not equal,” she also saw that emotion had been positioned on the “negative” side of the binary division and that emotion was not alone on the “bad side of the fence—women were there too.” Boler argues that emotions have utility and design, exemplified both in the ways that various cultures employ emotions—cross-culturally, emotions are not “equal” or neutrally valued—and in the ways that emotions are
structured to reinforce the dominant values of a culture. Within any given culture, emotions are engendered by and subsequently informed by power structures. Emotions might belong to one "body"—they do have a physiological structure that can be scientifically "measured"—but they are also (and this is Boler's point) part of the social body.

In education as elsewhere, emotions circulate in terms of what Boler calls "capital efficacy." Power relationships "manage" emotions and exact a cost. In the academy, for example, the price might be tenure. That is, we are socially conditioned not to express anger at our boss, although we might yell at the delivery person who shows up an hour late with a cold pizza. Clearly, certain emotions—such as anger and even disgust—are hierarchical in nature and rehearse power relations; they may also threaten (when "inappropriately" displayed) to unsettle those relations. For instance, railing at the ineffective boss rather than the delivery person would be both unsettling and inappropriate, but it might also be effective. As Boler contends, certain emotions—anger, bitterness, and fear—are widely silenced because they are considered disruptive, unruly, and outrageous. To "perform" emotion in front of others—to yell at an ineffective administrator or department chair rather than the pizza deliverer—is to threaten the status quo. As Feeling Power maintains, then, the expression of emotions—where, when, and in what context emotions are expressed—tells us much about the material relationships between people. These material relationships are not accidental; they have a shared social and cultural history and are governed by written and unwritten codes of conduct—that is, by what Boler calls "rules."

In Feeling Power, Boler ruptures the "absent presence" of emotions in our professional lives; that is, she dares to move emotion away from the terrain of the unspeakable and into the territory of the spoken, considered, and hence "knowable." Cultural values, dominant ideology, and the histories that give rise to educational structures in the United States—Western philosophy, structuralism and poststructuralism, feminism, and the educational pedagogies of Paulo Freire—meet here in a conceptual framework where emotions are finally, if incompletely, given their due. As a theoretical intervention, Feeling Power offers a useful framework for scholars to begin discussing how emotions are omitted or denigrated, by whom and when, and, ultimately, to what end. Perhaps most importantly, Boler asks us to consider the potential risks we take when we ignore emotion.

Language becomes important here, and her terminology deserves a brief note. Boler uses the word feeling in her title because it functions as
both verb and noun. Throughout her text, however, she prefers the term emotion because not only is it part of everyday language, but it lacks the sensationalized quality that feeling evokes. I read this word choice as part of Boler's larger intent to theorize a discourse of the emotions that steers away from terms that bias our reading. Emotion does seem to be a less gendered term than, say, passion or feeling. Clearly, Feeling Power has a political intention. It asks that we see that our intellectual work is located at a nexus of power relationships. Further, it calls for consciousness-raising in the classroom and elsewhere.

The use of emotion as a source of power has roots, as Boler suggests, in the women's movement of the 1970s, an era that spawned the phrase the "personal is (the) political." Yet many women, then as now, fear association with the personal as the political and its suggestion of a "feeling" discourse. Arguably, they do so and have done so because it associates them with the "f" word: feminism. In spite of the fact that most women have benefitted from the political inroads that feminism has made in the academy since the late 1960s, the "f" word still conjures up images of women made ugly by their supposed "random anger": women who are not good candidates for seduction, be it the seduction of male-oriented power or something more nebulous.

But Boler does not belabor this point; the emphasis here is my own. Indeed, she is pragmatic in her approach to reconceptualizing emotion as a form of resistance, which is why her text may appeal to a wide audience. This is not to say that Boler does not credit feminism for the theoretical light it has shed on her project. Indeed, her opening chapter refers to feminist and feminist-oriented theorists who have worked on the emotions. For instance, Boler draws on contemporary feminist philosopher Alison Jagger, who coined the term outlaw emotions—a term that Boler herself employs in her opening chapter; anthropologist Catherine Lutz and ethnographer Lila Abu-Lughod, who argue for a socio-cultural analysis of the emotions as "specialized knowledge"; Sandra Bartky, who discusses emotion in terms of "psychic alienation"; and Sue Campbell, who locates the use of emotion in terms of social and cultural "habits of inattention." In addition, Boler draws on the work of Kathleen Woodward, who has written on the historicity of the emotions. Other feminists who have contributed to a discourse of the emotions—such as Hannah Arendt, Annette Kolodny, and Lynne McFall, and Lynn Worsham—are referred to only in passing.

I do not believe that this is an egregious oversight however. Because work on the emotions is an interdisciplinary and burgeoning field, and
because we have, as yet, no "canon" of reference—no inclusive discourse
to which to refer—those of us who work on the emotions, and those of us
invested in locating emotion as "feeling power" are, so to speak, feeling
our way here. What Boler does, then, is include a lengthy author index in
which the reader can find further references to work women have done
on the emotions. For any one interested in a discourse on the emotions,
this is an excellent resource.

I am indebted to the tenacity of Boler's approach in several ways.
First, I welcome the argument she makes that emotions have a political
and material history and that emotions are not "singular" experiences but
are often "collective" ones that take root in a shared consciousness.
Second, I welcome her call for "reclaiming" emotions as sources for
social and political resistance—as forces that can be used to fight
injustice—and thus as an alternative to feeling powerless or isolated.
Rather then merely point to problems, Boler offers strategies in the second
part of her book for making social change.

I would now like to turn to the ordering of ideas in *Feeling Power* to
clarify what I have found most useful as a reader. In her preface, Boler
shakes up binaries. She dismantles the notion in Western philosophy—a
discourse that has informed our American educational system—that if
male unilaterally equals "reason," and female, because of the interdepen­
dency of binary terms, equals "non-reason," then women lack access to
reason. Women, she argues, have been situated on the side of non-reason
as a means of social control. She begins here by demonstrating the Janus-
faced aspect of language that allows men and, to a much lesser extent,
women to access power, critique it, and undo its stronghold. In her
opening chapter, "Feeling Power: Theorizing Emotions and Social Con­
trol," her earliest examples come from popular culture. She offers such
disparate examples such as Bob Marley's song lyrics and a Calvin and
Hobbes cartoon.

More specifically, Marley uses song lyrics as political commentary.
Education, the Jamaican born activist and songwriter wails, cannot
precede "equal opportunity." Calvin is not so sure; he has "opportunity,"
but it is a burden, and not an opportunity for systemic change, at least not
for a rambunctious, loosely drawn adolescent. Calvin's mother has given
him a book to read. When she inquires as to whether he has done so, he
laments, "It's complicating my life. Don't get me any more." The point
Boler makes here is that to see the world actively and consciously is to be
made uncomfortable. Discomfort foregrounds involvement and entails
witnessing, and witnessing is, as Boler explains, a process in which we do
not have "the luxury of seeing a static truth or fixed certainty." Boler provides these two witnesses—who are different culturally, economically, and racially—to suggest that inquiry is disquieting, and that it leads to a certain kind of awareness that can only be gained through lived experience. Lived experience entails an assessment of how emotions are used to condition experience, if not color it.

Much like Marley and the resistant Calvin, Boler complicates our understanding of how power, resistance, and social control are intertwined. Education, if we follow rote protocol, will merely reinforce givens. But awareness—an awareness fostered from constant questioning—will create discomfort. This discomfort is what Boler strives for: a "pedagogy of discomfort" foregrounds "defensive anger, fear of change, and fears of losing our personal and cultural identities." Such a pedagogy is, at root, ethical in nature, for it demands that we make sense of how we bear witness to what we learn and how we learn it and to each other. As Boler writes, "a pedagogy of discomfort begins by inviting educators and students to engage in critical inquiry regarding values and cherished beliefs and to examine constructed self-images in relation to how one has learned to perceive others" and, I would add, perceive the culture at large.

_Feeling Power_ reminds me of the earlier work of feminist scholar Annette Kolodny. In a 1980 essay, she uses the phrase "dancing through the minefield" (also the essay’s title) to argue that women who move through the educational system—particularly those who seek advanced degrees—must dodge unforeseen obstacles. Chief among these, I would argue, is isolation. I have little doubt that Boler, in reclaiming emotion as a tool of social and political inquiry, moves through her own minefield, while planting a few explosives of her own. That she dances through _Feeling Power_ with dexterity and skill is due as much to her exhaustive research as it is her tenacity and persistence. _Feeling Power_ is a text that promises discomfort, and might very well move us from complacency to action, from slumber to consciousness. It will no doubt cause a few people discomfort, particularly those entrenched in the gendered privileging practiced in academia. For its power to unsettle the commonplaces of thought, for its power to cause us to recognize discomfort as a starting point of critique, we should all commend the author of _Feeling Power_.