

Queering Alterity: Engaging Pluralism to Move Beyond Gender Binaries in the Classroom

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Abstract : In Simone de Beauvoir's climatic 1959 meditation, *The Second Sex*, she avows that 'On ne naît pas femme; on le devient,' translated most recently in the unabridged text (2010) as 'One is not born, but rather becomes, woman.' The signifier 'woman' in this context, signifies Beauvoir's contemplation of the institution, the concept of woman(ness) defined in relation to the binary and hegemonic man(ness.) She is 'the other.' This paper is a theoretical contemplation of (1) how we actively teach 'othering' in the institution of schooling and (2) new considerations of pluralism for self-reflection and subversion that teachers, in particular, are faced with. How, in schooling, do we learn one's options for racialized, classed and sexualized gender identification and the hierarchical signification that define these signifiers? Just like the myth of apolitical schooling, we cannot escape teaching social organization in the classroom. Yet, we do have a choice. How do we as educators learn about our own embodied intersectionalities? How do we unlearn our own binaries? How do we teach about intersectional gender? How do we teach 'the other'? We posit the processes of these reflections by educators may move our classrooms beyond binaries, engage pluralism and queer alterity itself.

Keywords : othering, alterity, education, schooling, identity, racialization, gender, intersectionality, pluralism

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