

How about some critical soup?

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Abstract

This poem emerged from the raw data material of the author's most recent teaching evaluations in higher education, recasting the very phrases and opinions that often remain, decontextualized and invisible in the educator's official records. Rather than accepting the felt judgments that often do harm, the poem reworks reviewers' bolded sentences into a counter-narrative that centres the context of classroom dynamics and relational learning - transforming deficits into narrative coherence.

Additionally, this poem illustrates how reviewers' feedback, when clipped from its classroom context, can be situated into surveillance practices of women's tone as well as feminist critique that often flattens relational learning. By repurposing those words as another act of rebellion, the poem reframes criticism as a site of meaning-making. It moves from accusation to invitation, from rating to reflection, and from surveillance to shared responsibility.

The inspiration for this writing is situated in the lived realities of the author - a woman of colour - who has written about embracing poetry as a transformative practice in educational environments (Abraham, 2024). The author invites readers through the journey of reconsideration - from receiving student feedback in the form of teaching evaluation that is centred in anonymity to building dialogic, context-rich response to the felt damages of a consumer-style feedback system.

Citation Link

How about some critical soup?

You wrote
She is ***all over the place,***
I smiled,
That's called making space.

You typed
She is ***vague and unclear,***
I call it
You are learning not to hear.

You said
what ***a waste of time,***
and I turned
your mean reviews
into rhyme.

You added
too feminist
to the list
but I teach
to notice what is missed.

You wanted
structure and tests,
but I dared to want
questions that don't rest.

You wrote
She has strong opinions on loop,
my recipe:
What about some critical soup?

You flagged
men felt blamed,
I held a mirror
so harm could be named.

You posted
did not learn,
redo the plan,
I answered,

Don't worry...
I still can.

So here's my note,
my quiet reply:
I teach to ask,
not just to supply.

When I am in this room
we work with heart,
we learn to listen,
that's just art.

And when you write
your next review,
keep in mind
Critical soup
needs heat
so justice
can be renewed.

References

Abraham, Danna (2024). Towards a heart-centred philosophy: Embracing poetry as transformative practice. *Murmurations: Journal of Transformative Systemic Practice*, 7(1), 102–109. <https://doi.org/10.28963/7.1.9>

About the Author:

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URL: <https://www.theriselab.com>

Citation

Abraham, Danna (2025). How about some critical soup? *Murmurations: Journal of Transformative Systemic Practice*, 9(1), 19-21. <https://doi.org/10.28963/9.1.3>