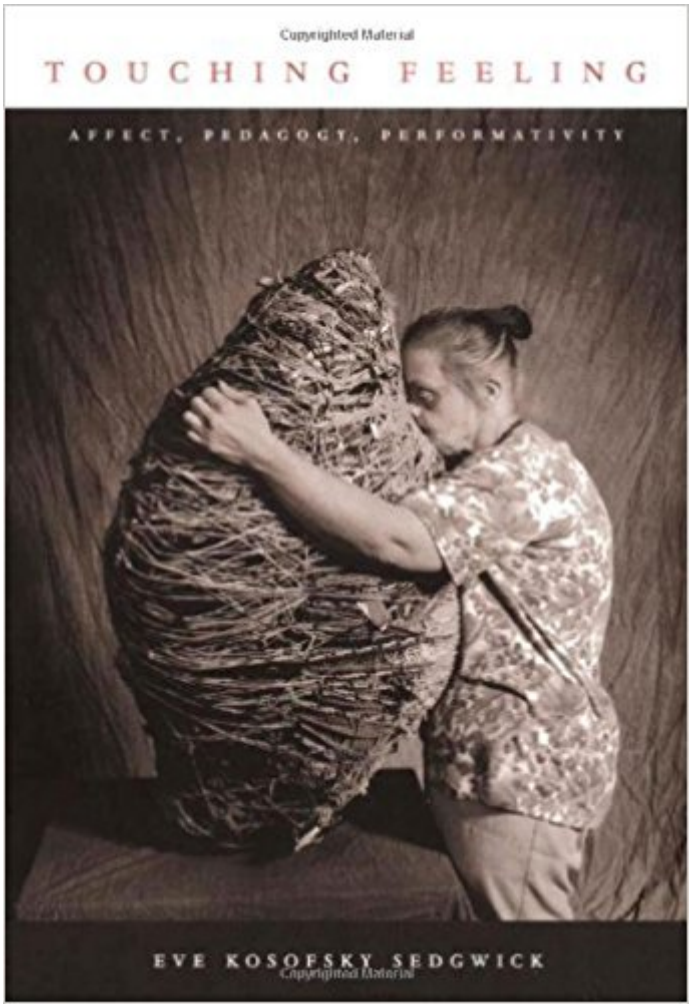
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Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity (Series Q)



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Synopsis

A pioneer in queer theory and literary studies, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick brings together for the first time in Touching Feeling her most powerful explorations of emotion and expression. In essays that show how her groundbreaking work in queer theory has developed into a deep interest in affect, Sedgwick offers what she calls "tools and techniques for nondualistic thought," in the process touching and transforming such theoretical discourses as psychoanalysis, speech-act theory, Western Buddhism, and the Foucauldian "hermeneutics of suspicion." In prose sometimes somber, often high-spirited, and always accessible and moving, Touching Feeling interrogatesÃ¢â ¬â •through virtuoso readings of works by Henry James, J. L. Austin, Judith Butler, the psychologist Silvan Tomkins and othersÃ¢â ¬â •emotion in many forms. What links the work of teaching to the experience of illness? How can shame become an engine for queer politics, performance, and pleasure? Is sexuality more like an affect or a drive? Is paranoia the only realistic epistemology for modern intellectuals? Ultimately, Sedgwick’s unfashionable commitment to the truth of happiness propels a book as open-hearted as it is intellectually daring.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

These essays, "a palimpsest of previously published and unpublished material," find Sedgwick expanding her impressive critical powers to areas beyond literature and politics. Though she’s best known for her work in queer theory (Epistemology of the Closet), Sedgwick has always been interested in "performativity"-how people embody linguistic and non-linguistic concepts. Sedgwick

has hardly abandoned explorations of queerness-an essay on shame and Henry James's The Art of the Novel is about as queer as theory gets-but these five pieces find her attuned to the textures of things, and to things themselves. Her readings-of everything from Thackeray to "my friends who are thirty"-take on a sensual quality, exploring the connections between "phenomenology and affect" and "what motivates performativity and performance" and "what individual and collective effects are mobilized in their execution." Fearless, challenging and occasionally exhilarating, Sedgwick remains one of the most courageous critics around. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Ã¢â ¬Å“Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes with intense precision, and yet her work directs us toward the domain where meaning is music, unquantifiable, enigmatic, nonlinguistic. If the performative speech act, with all its relation to norms and laws, is central to the reception of her work in queer theory, then the performativity of knowledge beyond speechÃ¢â ¬â •aesthetic, bodily, affectiveÃ¢â ¬â •is its real topic.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Lauren Berlant, author of The Queen of America Goes to Washington CityÃ¢â ¬Å“Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's gift is to electrify intellectual communities by reminding them that Ã¢â ¬â„¢thoughtÃ¢â ¬â„¢ has a temperature, a texture, and an erotics. With a generosity that is at once self-abnegatingly ascetic, and gorgeously, exhibitionistically bravura, she opens door after door onto undiscovered fields of inquiry. There are too many high points in Touching Feeling for me to list them. Sedgwick's language, richly garlanded, syntactically showstopping, gives, everywhere, its characteristic, always surprising pleasure.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Wayne Koestenbaum, author of Andy Warhol

This is one of the best works of "post-" theory that I've read, and the essay on paranoia is a much-needed light in the haze of contemporary grad school education. My copy is dog-eared and dirty and filled with underlined passages / scrawled notes to myself (mostly reading "YES!" or "come back to this"). Sedgwick's essays are brilliant, quirky, challenging, and deeply moving. I really can't find words sufficient for my experience -- this is certainly one of the most synaesthetic and vertigo-inducing books I've read in a long time. The final essay, in particular, continues to call me back.

Was it not the philosopher and critic Paul Ricoeur who coined the term "hermeneutic of suspicion" --- rather than Foucault?

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