CHAPTER EIGHT

Race, Multiculturalism, and Pedagogies of Dissent

Preamble

Growing up in India, I was Indian; teaching high school in Nigeria, I was a foreigner (still Indian), albeit a familiar one. As a graduate student in Illinois, I was first a “Third World” foreign student, and then a person of color. Doing research in London, I was black. As a professor at an American university, I am an Asian woman—although South Asian racial profiles fit uneasily into the “Asian” category—and because I choose to identify myself as such, an antiracist feminist of color. In North America I was also a “resident alien” with an Indian passport—I am now a U.S. citizen whose racialization has shifted dramatically (and negatively) since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001.

Of course through all these journeys into and across the borders of countries, educational institutions, and social movements, I was and am a feminist. But along with the changing labels and self-identifications came new questions and contradictions which I needed to understand. Paying attention to the processes of my own racialization, for instance, transformed my understandings of the meaning of feminist praxis. Was being a feminist in India the same as being a feminist in the United States of America? In terms of personal integrity, everyday political and personal practices, and the advocacy of justice, equity and autonomy for women, yes. But in terms of seeing myself as a woman of color (not just Indian, but of Indian origin) and being treated as one, there are vast differences in how I engage in feminist praxis. After all, living as an immigrant, conscious of and engaged with the script of American racism and imperialism is quite different from living as a “color blind” foreigner.

Difference, diversity, multiculturalism, globalization, and how we think about them complicate my intellectual and political landscape in the United
States, and I turn to theory, and to the potential of political education, for some way to link my “personal” story with larger stories. For a way to understand the profoundly collective and historical context within which my personal story and journey through difference, and through the inequities of power, privilege, discrimination, marginalization, exclusion, colonization, and oppression, make sense. I am speaking of how I came to recognize, understand, think through, and organize against sexism, racism, heterosexism, xenophobia, and elitism in the United States.

I “do” feminist and antiracist theory as a scholar, teacher, and activist in the U.S. academy—so how do I understand the significance of theory and analysis? I believe that meanings of the “personal” (as in my story) are not static, but that they change through experience, and with knowledge. I am not talking about the personal as “immediate feelings expressed confessionally” but as something that is deeply historical and collective—as determined by our involvement in collectivities and communities and through political engagement. In fact it is this understanding of experience and of the personal that makes theory possible. So for me, theory is a deepening of the political, not a moving away from it: a distillation of experience, and an intensification of the personal. The best theory makes personal experience and individual stories communicable. I think this kind of theoretical, analytical thinking allows us to mediate between different histories and understandings of the personal. One of the fundamental challenges of “diversity” after all is to understand our collective differences in terms of historical agency and responsibility so that we can understand others and build solidarities across divisive boundaries.

Even if we think we are not personally racist or sexist, we are clearly marked by the burdens and privileges of our histories and locations. So what does it mean to think through, theorize, and engage questions of difference and power? It means that we understand race, class, gender, nation, sexuality, and colonialism not just in terms of static, embodied categories but in terms of histories and experiences that tie us together—that are fundamentally interwoven into our lives. So “race” or “Asianness” or “brownness” is not embodied in me, but a history of colonialism, racism, sexism, as well as of privilege (class and status) is involved in my relation to white people as well as people of color in the United States.

This means untangling whiteness, Americanness, as well as blackness in the United States, in trying to understand my own story of racialization. So the theoretical insights I find useful in thinking about the challenges posed by
a radical multiculturalism in the United States—as well as, in different ways, early twenty-first century India—are the need to think relationally about questions of power, equality, and justice, the need to be inclusive in our thinking, and the necessity of our thinking and organizing being contextual, deeply rooted in questions of history and experience. The challenge of race and multiculturalism now lies in understanding a color line that is global—not contained anymore within the geography of the United States, if it ever was. I begin with this preamble because it locates my own intellectual and political genealogy in a chapter that addresses questions of curricular, pedagogical, policy, and institutional practices around antiracist feminist education.

Feminism and the Language of Difference

"Isn't the whole point to have a voice?" This is the last sentence of an essay by Marnia Lazreg on writing as a woman on women in Algeria (1988, 81–107). Lazreg examines academic feminist scholarship on women in the Middle East and North Africa in the context of what she calls a “Western gynocentric” notion of the difference between First and Third World women. Arguing for an understanding of “intersubjectivity” as the basis for comparison across cultures and histories, Lazreg formulates the problem of ethnocentrism and the related question of voice in this way:

To take intersubjectivity into consideration when studying Algerian women or other Third World women means seeing their lives as meaningful, coherent, and understandable instead of being infused “by us” with doom and sorrow. It means that their lives like “ours” are structured by economic, political, and cultural factors. It means that these women, like “us,” are engaged in the process of adjusting, often shaping, at times resisting and even transforming their environment. It means they have their own individuality; they are “for themselves” instead of being “for us.” An appropriation of their singular individuality to fit the generalizing categories of “our” analyses is an assault on their integrity and on their identity. (98)

In my own work I have argued in a similar way against the use of analytic categories and political positioning in feminist studies that discursively present Third World women as a homogeneous, undifferentiated group leading truncated lives, victimized by the combined weight of their traditions, cultures, and beliefs, and “our” (Eurocentric) history.¹ In examining particular
assumptions of feminist scholarship that are uncritically grounded in Western humanism and its modes of “disinterested scholarship.” I have tried to demonstrate that this scholarship inadvertently produces Western women as the only legitimate subjects of struggle, while Third World women are heard as fragmented, inarticulate voices in (and from) the dark. Arguing against a hastily derived notion of “universal sisterhood” that assumes a commonality of gender experience across race and national lines, I have suggested the complexity of our historical (and positional) differences and the need for creating an analytical space for understanding Third World women as the “subjects” of our various struggles “in history.” I posit solidarity rather than sisterhood as the basis for mutually accountable and equitable relationships among different communities of women. Other scholars have made similar arguments, and the question of what we might provisionally call “Third World women’s voices” has begun to be addressed seriously in feminist scholarship.

In the last few decades there has been a blossoming of feminist discourse around questions of “racial difference” and “pluralism.” While this work is often an important corrective to earlier middle-class (white) characterizations of sexual difference, the goal of the analysis of difference and the challenge of race was not pluralism as the proliferation of discourse on ethnicities as discrete and separate cultures. The challenge of race resides in a fundamental reconceptualization of our categories of analysis so that differences can be historically specified and understood as part of larger political processes and systems. The central issue, then, is not one of merely “acknowledging” difference; rather, the most difficult question concerns the kind of difference that is acknowledged and engaged. Difference seen as benign variation (diversity), for instance, rather than as conflict, struggle, or the threat of disruption, bypasses power as well as history to suggest a harmonious, empty pluralism. On the other hand, difference defined as asymmetrical and incommensurate cultural spheres situated within hierarchies of domination and resistance cannot be accommodated within a discourse of “harmony in diversity.” A strategic critique of the contemporary language of difference, diversity, and power thus would be crucial to a feminist project concerned with revolutionary social change.

In the best, self-reflexive traditions of feminist inquiry, the production of knowledge about cultural and geographical others is no longer seen as apolitical and disinterested. But while feminist activists and progressive scholars have made a significant dent in the colonialist and colonizing feminist
scholarship of the late seventies and eighties, this does not mean that ques-
tions of what Lazreg calls “intersubjectivity” or of history vis-à-vis Third
World peoples have been successfully articulated.4

In any case, “scholarship”—feminist, Marxist, postcolonial, or Third
World—is not the only site for the production of knowledge about Third
World women/peoples.5 The very same questions (as those suggested in re-
lation to scholarship) can be raised in relation to our teaching and learning
practices in the classroom, as well as the discursive and managerial practices
of U.S. colleges and universities. Feminists writing about race and racism have
had a lot to say about scholarship, but perhaps our pedagogical and institu-
tional practices and their relation to scholarship have not been examined with
quite the same care and attention. Radical educators have long argued that
the academy and the classroom itself are not mere sites of instruction. They
are also political and cultural sites that represent accommodations and con-
testations over knowledge by differently empowered social constituencies.6
Thus teachers and students produce, reinforce, recreate, resist, and transform
ideas about race, gender, and difference in the classroom. Also, the academic
institutions in which we are located create similar paradigms, canons, and
voices that embody and transcribe race and gender.

It is this frame of institutional and pedagogical practice that I examine
in this chapter. Specifically, I analyze the operation and management of dis-
courses of race and difference in two educational sites: the women’s studies
classroom and the workshops on “diversity” for upper-level (largely white)
administrators. The links between these two educational sites lie in the (often
active) creation of discourses of “difference.” In other words, I suggest that
educational practices as they are shaped and reshaped at these sites cannot
be analyzed as merely transmitting already codified ideas of difference. These
practices often produce, codify, and even rewrite histories of race and colo-
nialism in the name of difference. Chapter 7 discussed the corporatization of
the academy and the production of privatized citizenship. Here I begin the
analysis from a different place, with a brief discussion of the academy as the
site of political struggle and radical transformation.

Knowledge and Location in the U.S. Academy

A number of educators, Paulo Freire among them, have argued that edu-
cation represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power re-

194 Feminism without Borders
lations. Thus, education becomes a central terrain where power and politics operate out of the lived culture of individuals and groups situated in asymmetrical social and political spaces. This way of understanding the academy entails a critique of education as the mere accumulation of disciplinary knowledges that can be exchanged on the world market for upward mobility. There are much larger questions at stake in the academy these days, not the least of which are questions of self- and collective knowledge of marginal peoples and the recovery of alternative, oppositional histories of domination and struggle. Here, disciplinary parameters matter less than questions of power, history, and self-identity. For knowledge, the very act of knowing, is related to the power of self-definition. This definition of knowledge is central to the pedagogical projects of fields such as women's studies, black studies, and ethnic studies. By their very location in the academy, fields such as women's studies are grounded in definitions of difference, difference that attempts to resist incorporation and appropriation by providing a space for historically silenced peoples to construct knowledge. These knowledges have always been fundamentally oppositional, while running the risk of accommodation and assimilation and consequent depoliticization in the academy. It is only in the late twentieth century, on the heels of domestic and global oppositional political movements, that the boundaries dividing knowledge into its traditional disciplines have been shaken loose, and new, often heretical, knowledges have emerged, modifying the structures of knowledge and power as we have inherited them. In other words, new analytic spaces have been opened up in the academy, spaces that make possible thinking of knowledge as praxis, of knowledge as embodying the very seeds of transformation and change. The appropriation of these analytic spaces and the challenge of radical educational practice are thus to involve the development of critical knowledges (what women's, black, and ethnic studies attempt) and, simultaneously, to critique knowledge itself.

Education for critical consciousness or critical pedagogy, as it is sometimes called, requires a reformulation of the knowledge-as-accumulated-capital model of education and focuses instead on the link between the historical configuration of social forms and the way they work subjectively. This issue of subjectivity represents a realization of the fact that who we are, how we act, what we think, and what stories we tell become more intelligible within an epistemological framework that begins by recognizing existing hegemonic histories. The issue of subjectivity and voice thus concerns the effort to under-
stand our specific locations in the educational process and in the institutions through which we are constituted. Resistance lies in self-conscious engagement with dominant, normative discourses and representations and in the active creation of oppositional analytic and cultural spaces. Resistance that is random and isolated is clearly not as effective as that which is mobilized through systematic politicized practices of teaching and learning. Uncovering and reclaiming subjugated knowledges is one way to lay claim to alternative histories. But these knowledges need to be understood and defined “pedagogically,” as questions of strategy and practice as well as of scholarship, in order to transform educational institutions radically. And this, in turn, requires taking the questions of experience seriously.

To this effect, I draw on scholarship on and by Third World educators in higher education, on an analysis of the effects of my own pedagogical practices, on documents about “affirmative action” and “diversity in the curriculum” published by the administration of the college where I worked a number of years ago, and on my own observations and conversations over the past number of years. I do so in order to suggest that the effect of the proliferation of ideologies of pluralism in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1990s in the context of the (limited) implementation of affirmative action in institutions of higher education, and of the corporate transformation of the academy, has been to create what might be called the race industry, an industry that is responsible for the management, commodification, and domestication of race on American campuses. This commodification of race determines the politics of voice for Third World peoples, whether they/we happen to be faculty, students, administrators, or service staff. This, in turn, has long-term effects on the definitions of the identity and agency of nonwhite people in the academy. The race industry is also of course an excellent example of the corporatization of the academy—a visible if somewhat depressing site to explore in terms of the effects of capitalist commodity culture and citizenship on curricular, research and pedagogical priorities in the academy.

There are a number of urgent reasons for undertaking such an analysis: the need to assess the material and ideological effects of affirmative action policies within liberal (rather than conservative Bloom- or Hirsch-style) discourses and institutions that profess a commitment to pluralism and social change, the need to understand this management of race in the liberal academy in relation to a larger discourse on race and discrimination within the
neoconservatism of the United States, and the need for Third World feminists to move outside the arena of (sometimes) exclusive engagement with racism in white women’s movements and scholarship and to broaden the scope of our struggles to the academy as a whole.

The management of gender, race, class, and sexuality are inextricably linked in the public arena. The New Right agenda since the mid-1970s makes this explicit: busing, gun rights, and welfare are clearly linked to the issues of reproductive and sexual rights. And the links between abortion rights (gender-based struggles) and affirmative action (struggles over race and racism) are clearer in the 1990s and in the early 2000s. While the most challenging critiques of hegemonic feminism were launched in the late 1970s and the 1980s, the present historical moment necessitates taking on board institutional discourses that actively construct and maintain a discourse of difference and pluralism. This in turn calls for assuming responsibility for the politics of voice as it is institutionalized in the academy’s “liberal” response to the very questions feminism and other oppositional discourses have raised.⁹

Black/Ethnic Studies and Women’s Studies:
Intersections and Confluences

For us, there is nothing optional about “black experience” and/or “black studies”: we must know ourselves.—June Jordan, Civil Wars, 1981

The origins of black, ethnic, and women’s studies programs, unlike those of most academic disciplines, can be traced to oppositional social movements. In particular, the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, and other Third World liberation struggles fueled the demand for a knowledge and history “of our own.” June Jordan’s claim that “we must know ourselves” suggests the urgency embedded in the formation of black studies in the late 1960s. Between 1966 and 1970 most American colleges and universities added courses on Afro-American experience and history to their curricula. This was the direct outcome of a number of sociohistorical factors, not the least of which was an increase in black student enrollment in higher education and the broad-based call for a fundamental transformation of a racist, Eurocentric curriculum. Among the earliest programs were the black and African American studies programs at San Francisco State and Cornell, both of which came into being in 1968, on the heels of militant political organizing on the
part of students and faculty at these institutions. A symposium on black studies in early 1968 at Yale University not only inaugurated African American studies at Yale, but also marked a watershed in the national development of black studies programs. In the spring of 1969, the University of California at Berkeley instituted a department of ethnic studies, divided into Afro-American, Chicano, contemporary Asian American, and Native American studies divisions.

A number of women's studies programs also came into being around this time. The first women's studies program was formed in 1969 at San Diego State University. Over nine hundred such programs exist now across the United States (Sheftall 1995). Women's studies programs often drew on the institutional frameworks and structures of existing interdisciplinary programs such as black and ethnic studies. In addition, besides sharing political origins, an interdisciplinary project, and foregrounding questions of social and political inequality in their knowledge base, women's, black, and ethnic studies programs increasingly share pedagogical and research methods. Such programs thus create the possibility of a counterhegemonic discourse and oppositional analytic spaces within the institution. Of course, since these programs are most often located within the boundaries of conservative or liberal white-male-dominated institutions, they face questions of cooptation and accommodation.

In an essay examining the relations among ethnicity, ideology, and the academy (1987), Rosaura Sanchez maintains that new academic programs arise out of specific interests in bodies of knowledge. She traces the origins of ethnic and women's studies programs, however, to a defensive political move, the state's institutionalization of a discourse of reform in response to the civil rights movement:

Ethnic studies programs were instituted at a moment when the university had to speak a particular language to quell student protests and to ensure that university research and business could be conducted as usual. The university was able to create and integrate these programs administratively under its umbrella, allowing on the one hand, for a potential firecracker to diffuse itself and, on the other, moving on to prepare the ground for future assimilation of the few surviving faculty into existing departments. (86)

Sanchez identifies the pressures (assimilation and cooptation versus isolation and marginalization) that ethnic studies programs inherited in the 1990s.
In fact, it is precisely in the face of the pressure to assimilate that questions of political strategy and of pedagogical and institutional practice assume paramount importance.

For such programs, progress (measured by institutional power, number of people of color in faculty and administrations, effect on the general curricula, etc.) has been slow. Since the 1970s, there have also been numerous conflicts among ethnic, black, and women’s studies programs. One example of these tensions is provided by Niara Sudarkasa. Writing in 1986 about the effect of affirmative action on black faculty and administrators in higher education, she argues: “As a matter of record, . . . both in the corporate world and in higher education, the progress of white females as a result of affirmative action has far outstripped that for blacks and other minorities” (3–4). Here Sudarkasa is pointing to a persistent presence of racism in the differential access and mobility of white women and people of color in higher education. She goes on to argue that charges of “reverse discrimination” against white people are unfounded because affirmative action has had the effect of privileging white women above men and women of color. Thus, for Sudarkasa, charges of reverse discrimination leveled at minorities “amount to a sanction of continued discrimination by insisting that inequalities resulting from privileges historically reserved for whites as a group must now be perpetuated in the name of justice for the individual” (6). This process of individualization of histories of dominance is also characteristic of educational institutions and processes in general, where the experiences of different constituencies are defined according to the logic of cultural pluralism.

In fact, this individualization of power hierarchies and of structures of discrimination suggests the convergence of liberal and neoconservative ideas about gender and race in the academy. Individualization, in this context, is accomplished through the fundamentally class-based process of professionalization. In any case, the post-Reagan years (characterized by financial cutbacks in education, the consolidation of the New Right and the right-to-life lobby, the increasing legal challenges to affirmative action regulations, etc.) suggest that it is alliances among women’s, black, and ethnic studies programs that will ensure the survival of such programs. This is not to imply that these alliances do not already exist, but, in the face of the active corrosion of the collective basis of affirmative action by the federal government in the name of “reverse discrimination,” it is all the more urgent that our institutional self-examinations lead to concrete alliances. Those of us who teach
in some of these programs know that, in this context, questions of voice—indeed, the very fact of claiming a voice and wanting to be heard—are very complicated indeed.

To proceed with the first location or site, I move from one narrative, an analysis of the effect of my own pedagogical practices on students when I am teaching about Third World peoples in a largely white institution, to a second narrative, of decolonization—a story about a student project at Hamilton College. I suggest that a partial (and problematic) effect of my pedagogy, the location of my courses in the curriculum and the liberal nature of the institution as a whole, is the sort of attitudinal engagement with diversity that encourages an empty cultural pluralism and domesticates the historical agency of Third World people. This attitudinal engagement, or, rather, the disruption of it, is at the center of the student project I will discuss.

**Pedagogies of Accommodation/Pedagogies of Dissent**

How do we construct oppositional pedagogies of gender and race? Teaching about histories of sexism, racism, imperialism, and homophobia potentially poses very fundamental challenges to the academy and its traditional production of knowledge, since it has often situated Third World peoples as populations whose histories and experiences are deviant, marginal, or inessential to the acquisition of knowledge. And this has happened systematically in our disciplines as well as in our pedagogies. Thus the task at hand is to decolonize our disciplinary and pedagogical practices. The crucial question is how we teach about the West and its others so that education becomes the practice of liberation. This question becomes all the more important in the context of the significance of education as a means of liberation and advancement for Third World and postcolonial peoples and their/our historical belief in education as a crucial form of resistance to the colonization of hearts and minds.

As a number of educators have argued, however, decolonizing educational practices requires transformations at a number of levels, both within and outside the academy. Curricular and pedagogical transformation has to be accompanied by a broad-based transformation of the culture of the academy, as well as by radical shifts in the relation of the academy to other state and civil institutions. In addition, decolonizing pedagogical practices requires taking seriously the relation between knowledge and learning, on the one hand, and
student and teacher experience, on the other. In fact, the theorization and politicization of experience is imperative if pedagogical practices are to focus on more than the mere management, systematization, and consumption of disciplinary knowledge.

NARRATIVE I

I teach courses on gender, race, and education, on international development, on feminist theory, and on Third World feminisms, as well as core women's studies courses such as "Introduction to Women's Studies" and a senior seminar. All of the courses are fundamentally interdisciplinary and cross-cultural. At its most ambitious, this pedagogy is an attempt to get students to think critically about their place in relation to the knowledge they gain and to transform their worldview fundamentally by taking the politics of knowledge seriously. It is a pedagogy that attempts to link knowledge, social responsibility, and collective struggle. And it does so by emphasizing the risks that education involves, the struggles for institutional change, and the strategies for challenging forms of domination and by creating more equitable and just public spheres within and outside educational institutions.

Thus pedagogy from the point of view of a radical teacher does not entail merely processing received knowledges (however critically one does this) but also actively transforming knowledges. In addition, it involves taking responsibility for the material effects of these very pedagogical practices on students. Teaching about “difference” in relation to power is thus extremely complicated and involves not only rethinking questions of learning and authority but also questions of center and margin. In writing about her own pedagogical practices in teaching African American women’s history (1989), Elsa Barkley Brown formulates her intentions and method in this way:

How do our students overcome years of notions of what is normative? While trying to think about these issues in my teaching, I have come to understand that this is not merely an intellectual process. It is not merely a question of whether or not we have learned to analyze in particular kinds of ways, or whether people are able to intellectualize about a variety of experiences. It is also about coming to believe in the possibility of a variety of experiences, a variety of ways of understanding the world, a variety of frameworks of operation, without imposing consciously or unconsciously a notion of the norm. What I have tried to do in my own teaching is to ad-
dress both the conscious level through the material, and the unconscious level through the structure of the course, thus, perhaps, allowing my students, in Bettina Aptheker's words, to "pivot the center": to center in another experience. (921)

Clearly, this process is very complicated pedagogically, for such teaching must address questions of audience, voice, power, and evaluation while retaining a focus on the material being taught. Teaching practices must also combat the pressures of professionalization, normalization, and standardization, the very pressures or expectations that implicitly aim to manage and discipline pedagogies so that teacher behaviors are predictable (and perhaps controllable) across the board.

Barkley Brown draws attention to the centrality of experience in the classroom. While this is an issue that merits much more consideration than I can give here, a particular aspect of it ties into my general argument. Feminist pedagogy has always recognized the importance of experience in the classroom. Since women's and ethnic studies programs are fundamentally grounded in political and collective questions of power and inequality, questions of the politicization of individuals along race, gender, class, and sexual parameters are at the very center of knowledges produced in the classroom. This politicization often involves the "authorization" of marginal experiences and the creation of spaces for multiple, dissenting voices in the classroom. The authorization of experience is thus a crucial form of empowerment for students—a way for them to enter the classroom as speaking subjects. However, this focus on the centrality of experience can also lead to exclusions: it often silences those whose "experience" is seen to be that of the ruling-class groups. This more-authentic-than-thou attitude to experience also applies to the teacher. For instance, in speaking about Third World peoples, I have to watch constantly the tendency to speak "for" Third World peoples. For I often come to embody the "authentic" authority and experience for many of my students; indeed, they construct me as a native informant in the same way that left-liberal white students sometimes construct all people of color as the authentic voices of their people. This is evident in the classroom when the specific "differences" (of personality, posture, behavior, etc.) of one woman of color stand in for the difference of the whole collective, and a collective voice is assumed in place of an individual voice. In effect, this results in the reduction or averaging of Third World peoples in terms of individual person-
ality characteristics: complex ethical and political issues are glossed over, and an ambiguous and more easily manageable ethos of the “personal” and the “interpersonal” takes their place.

Thus a particularly problematic effect of certain pedagogical codifications of difference is the conceptualization of race and gender in terms of personal or individual experience. Students often end up determining that they have to “be more sensitive” to Third World peoples. The formulation of knowledge and politics through these individualistic, attitudinal parameters indicates an erasure of the very politics of knowledge involved in teaching and learning about difference. It also suggests an erasure of the structural and institutional parameters of what it means to understand difference in historical terms. If all conflict in the classroom is seen and understood in personal terms, it leads to a comfortable set of oppositions: people of color as the central voices and the bearers of all knowledge in class, and white people as “observers” with no responsibility to contribute and/or nothing valuable to contribute. In other words, white students are constructed as marginal observers and students of color as the real “knowers” in such a liberal or left classroom. While it may seem like people of color are thus granted voice and agency in the classroom, it is necessary to consider what particular kind of voice it is that is allowed them/us. It is a voice located in a different and separate space from the agency of white students. Thus, while it appears that in such a class the histories and cultures of marginalized peoples are now “legitimate” objects of study and discussion, the fact is that this legitimation takes place purely at an attitudinal, interpersonal level rather than in terms of a fundamental challenge to hegemonic knowledge and history. Often the culture in such a class vacillates between a high level of tension and an overwhelming desire to create harmony, acceptance of “difference,” and cordial relations in the classroom. Potentially this implicitly binary construction (Third World students vs. white students) undermines the understanding of coimplication that students must take seriously in order to understand “difference” as historical and relational. Coimplication refers to the idea that all of us (First and Third World) share certain histories as well as certain responsibilities: ideologies of race define both white and black peoples, just as gender ideologies define both women and men. Thus, while “experience” is an enabling focus in the classroom, unless it is explicitly understood as historical, contingent, and the result of interpretation, it can coagulate into frozen, binary, psychologicistic positions.

To summarize, this effective separation of white students from Third
World students in such an explicitly politicized women's studies classroom is problematic because it leads to an attitudinal engagement that bypasses the complexly situated politics of knowledge and potentially shores up a particular individual-oriented codification and commodification of race. It implicitly draws on and sustains a discourse of cultural pluralism, or what Henry Giroux (1988) calls "the pedagogy of normative pluralism" (95), a pedagogy in which we all occupy separate, different, and equally valuable places and where experience is defined not in terms of individual qua individual, but in terms of an individual as representative of a cultural group. This results in a depoliticization and dehistoricization of the idea of culture and makes possible the implicit management of race in the name of cooperation and harmony.

Cultural pluralism is an inadequate response, however, because the academy as well as the larger social arena are constituted through hierarchical knowledges and power relations. In this context, the creation of oppositional knowledges always involves both fundamental challenges and the risk of co-optation. Creating counterhegemonic pedagogies and combating attitudinal, pluralistic appropriations of race and difference thus involves a delicate and ever-shifting balance between the analysis of experience as lived culture and as textual and historical representations of experience. But most of all, it calls for a critical analysis of the contradictions and incommensurability of social interests as individuals experience, understand, and transform them. Decolonizing pedagogical practices requires taking seriously the different logics of cultures as they are located within asymmetrical power relations. It involves understanding that culture, especially academic culture, is a terrain of struggle (rather than an amalgam of discrete consumable entities). And finally, within the classroom, it requires that teachers and students develop a critical analysis of how experience itself is named, constructed, and legitimated in the academy. Without this analysis of culture and of experience in the classroom, there is no way to develop and nurture oppositional practices. After all, critical education concerns the production of subjectivities in relation to discourses of knowledge and power.

NARRATIVE 2

Stories are important. They keep us alive. In the ships, in the camps, in the quarters, field, prisons, on the road, on the run, underground, under siege, in the throes, on the verge—the storyteller snatches us back from the edge to hear the next chapter.
In which we are the subjects. We, the hero of the tales. Our lives preserved. How it was, how it be. Passing it along in the relay. That is what I work to do: to produce stories that save our lives. — Toni Cade Bambara, “Salvation is the Issue,” 1984

In the intellectual, political and historical context I have sketched thus far, decolonization as a method of teaching and learning is crucial in envisioning democratic education. My own political project involves trying to connect educational discourse to questions of social justice and the creation of citizens who are able to conceive of a democracy which is not the same as “the free market.” Pedagogy in this context needs to be revolutionary to combat business as usual in educational institutions. After all, the politics of commodification allows the cooptation of most dissenting voices in this age of multiculturalism. Cultures of dissent are hard to create. Revolutionary pedagogy needs to lead to a consciousness of injustice, self-reflection on the routines and habits of education in the creation of an “educated citizen,” and action to transform one’s social space in a collective setting. In other words, the practice of decolonization as defined above.

I turn now to a narrative in the tradition of Toni Cade Bambara, a story that “keeps me alive—a story which saves our lives.” The story is about a performance by a student at Hamilton College. Yance Ford, an African American studio art major and feminist activist, based her performance, called “This Invisible World,” on her three-plus years as a student at the college.16 She built an iron cage that enclosed her snugly, suspended it ten feet off the ground in the lobby of the social sciences building. She shaved her head and—barefoot and without a watch, wearing a sheet that she had cut up—spent five hours in the cage in total silence. The performance required unimaginable physical and psychic endurance, and it dramatically transformed a physical space that is usually a corridor between offices and classrooms. It had an enormous impact on everyone walking through—no mundane response was possible. Nor was business as usual possible. It disrupted educational routines—many faculty (including me) sent their classes to the performance and later attempted discussions that proved profoundly unsettling.

For the first time in my experience at Hamilton, students, faculty, and staff were faced with a performance that could not be “consumed” or assimilated as part of the “normal” educational process. We were faced with the knowledge that it was impossible to “know” what led to such a performance, and that the knowledge we had, of black women’s history of objectification, of
slavery, invisibility, and so on, was a radically inadequate measure of the intent or courage and risk it took for Yance to perform “This Invisible World.”

In talking at length with Yance, other students, and colleagues, and thinking through the effects of this performance on the campus, I have realized that this is potentially a very effective story. Here is how Yance, writing in October 1993, described her project:

What is it? I guess or rather I know that it is about survival. About trauma, about loss, about suffering and pain, and about being lost within all of those things. About trying to find the way back to yourself. The way back to your sanity, a way to get away from those things which have driven you beyond a point of recognition. Past the point where you no longer recognize or even want to recognize yourself or your past or the possibility that your present may also be your future. That is what my project is about. I call it refuge but I really think I mean rescue or even better, survival, escape, saved. My work to me is about all the things that push you to the edge. Its about not belonging, not liking yourself, not loving yourself, not feeling loved or safe or accepted or tolerated or respected or valued or useful or important or comfortable or safe or part of a larger community. It's about how all these things cause us to hate ourselves into corners and boxes and addictions and traps and hurtful relationships and cages. It's about how people can see you and look right through you. Most of the time not knowing you are there. It is about fighting the battle of your life, for your life. And this place that I call refuge is the only place where I am sacred. It is the source of my strength, my fortitude, my resilience, my ability to be for myself what no one else will ever be for me.

This is most directly Yance’s response and meditation on her three years at a liberal arts college—on her education. In extensive conversations with her, two aspects of this project became clearer to me: her consciousness of being colonized at the college, expressed through the act of being caged like “animals in a science experiment,” and the performance as an act of liberation, of active decolonization of the self, of visibility and empowerment. Yance found a way to tell another story, to speak through a silence that screamed for engagement. However, in doing so, she also created a public space for the collective narratives of marginalized peoples, especially other women of color. Educational practices became the object of public critique as the hege-
monic narrative of a liberal arts education, and its markers of success came under collective scrutiny. This was then a profoundly unsettling and radically decolonizing educational act.

This story illustrates the difference between thinking about social justice and radical transformation in our frames of analysis and understanding in relation to race, gender, class, and sexuality versus a multiculturalist consumption and assimilation into a supposedly “democratic” frame of education as usual. It suggests the need to organize to create collective spaces for dissent and challenges to consolidation of white heterosexual masculinity in academy.

The Race Industry and Prejudice-Reduction Workshops

In his incisive critique of current attempts at minority canon formation (1987), Cornel West locates the following cultural crises as circumscribing the present historical moment: the decolonization of the Third World that signaled the end of the European Age; the repoliticization of literary studies in the 1960s; the emergence of alternative, oppositional, subaltern histories; and the transformation of everyday life through the rise of a predominantly visual, technological culture. West locates contests over Afro-American canon formation in the proliferation of discourses of pluralism in the American academy, thus launching a critique of the class interests of Afro-American critics who “become the academic superintendents of a segment of an expanded canon or a separate canon” (197). A similar critique, on the basis of class interests and “professionalization,” can be leveled against feminist scholars (First or Third World) who specialize in “reading” the lives/experiences of Third World women. What concerns me here, however, is the predominantly white upper-level administrators at our institutions and their “reading” of the issues of racial diversity and pluralism. I agree with West’s internal critique of a black managerial class, but I think it is important not to ignore the power of a predominantly white managerial class (men and women) who, in fact, frame and hence determine our voices, livelihoods, and sometimes even our political alliances. Exploring a small piece of the creation and institutionalization of this race industry, prejudice reduction workshops involving upper-level administrators, counselors, and students in numerous institutions of higher education—including the college where I used
to teach—shed light on a particular aspect of this industry. Interestingly, the faculty often do not figure in these workshops at all; they are directed either at students and resident counselors or at administrators.

To make this argument, I draw upon the institution where I used to teach (Oberlin College) that has an impressive history of progressive and liberal policies. But my critique applies to liberal/humanistic institutions of higher education in general. While what follows is a critique of certain practices at the college, I undertake it out of a commitment to and engagement with the academy. The efforts of Oberlin College to take questions of difference and diversity on board should not be minimized. However, these efforts should also be subject to rigorous examination because they have far-reaching implications for the institutionalization of multiculturalism in the academy. While multiculturalism itself is not necessarily problematic, its definition in terms of an apolitical, ahistorical cultural pluralism needs to be challenged.

In the last few decades there has been an increase in this kind of activity, often as a response to antiracist student organizing and demands or in relation to the demand for and institutionalization of “non-Western” requirements at prestigious institutions in a number of academic institutions nationally. More precisely, however, these issues of multiculturalism arise in response to the recognition of changing demographics in the United States. For instance, the prediction that by the year 2000 almost 42 percent of all public school students would be minority children or other impoverished children and that by the year 2000 women and people of color would account for nearly 75 percent of the labor force are crucial in understanding institutional imperatives concerning “diversity.” As Rosaura Sanchez suggests, for the university to conduct “research and business as usual” in the face of the overwhelming challenges posed by even the very presence of people of color, it has to enact policies and programs aimed at accommodation rather than transformation (Sanchez 1987).

In response to certain racist and homophobic incidents in the spring of 1988, Oberlin College instituted a series of “prejudice reduction” workshops aimed at students and upper- and middle-level administrative staff. These sometimes took the form of “unlearning racism” workshops conducted by residential counselors and psychologists in dorms. Workshops such as these are valuable in “sensitizing” students to racial conflict, behavior, and attitudes, but an analysis of their historical and ideological bases indicates their limitations.
Briefly, prejudice reduction workshops draw on a psychologically based “race relations” analysis and focus on “prejudice” rather than on institutional or historical domination. The workshops draw on cocounseling and reevaluation counseling techniques and theory and often aim for emotional release rather than political action. The name of this approach is itself somewhat problematic, since it suggests that “prejudice” (rather than domination, exploitation, or structural inequality) is the core problem and that we have to “reduce” it. The language determines and shapes the ideological and political content to a large extent. In focusing on “the healing of past wounds” this approach also equates the positions of dominant and subordinate groups, erasing all power inequities and hierarchies. And finally, the location of the source of “oppression” and “change” in individuals suggests an elision between ideological and structural understandings of power and domination and individual, psychological understandings of power.

Here again, the implicit definition of experience is important. Experience is defined as fundamentally individual and atomistic, subject to behavioral and attitudinal change. Questions of history, collective memory, and social and structural inequality as constitutive of the category of experience are inadmissible within this framework. Individuals speak as representatives of majority or minority groups whose experience is predetermined within an oppressor/victim paradigm. These questions are addressed in A. Sivanandan’s incisive critique (1990) of the roots of racism awareness training in the United States (associated with the work of Judy Katz et al.) and its embodiment in multiculturalism in Britain.

Sivanandan draws attention to the dangers of the actual degradation and refiguration of antiracist, black political struggles as a result of the racism awareness training focus on psychological attitudes. Thus, while these workshops can indeed be useful in addressing deep-seated psychological attitudes and thus creating a context for change, the danger resides in remaining at the level of personal support and evaluation, and thus often undermining the necessity for broad-based political organization and action.16

Prejudice reduction workshops have also made their way into the upper echelons of the administration at the college. At this level, however, they take a very different form: presidents and their male colleagues do not go to workshops; they “consult” about issues of diversity. Thus, this version of “prejudice reduction” takes the form of “managing diversity” (another semantic gem that suggests that “diversity” [a euphemism for people of color] will be
out of control unless it is managed). Consider the following passage from the publicity brochure of a consultant:

Program in Conflict Management Alternatives: A team of applied scholars is creating alternative theoretical and practical approaches to the peaceful resolution of social conflicts. A concern for maximizing social justice, and redressing major social inequities that underlie much social conflict, is a central organizing principle of this work. Another concern is to facilitate the implementation of negotiated settlements, and therefore contribute to long-term change in organizational and community relations. Research theory development, organizational and community change efforts, networking, consultations, curricula, workshops and training programs are all part of the Program.17

This passage foregrounds the primary focus on conflict resolution, negotiated settlement, and organizational relations—all framed in a language of research, consultancy, and training. All three strategies—conflict resolution, settlement negotiation, and long-term organizational relations—can be carried out between individuals and between groups. The point is to understand the moments of friction and to resolve the conflicts "peacefully"; in other words, domesticate race and difference by formulating the problems in narrow, interpersonal terms and by rewriting historical contexts as manageable psychological ones.

As in the example of the classroom discussed earlier, the assumption here is that individuals and groups, as individual atomistic units in a social whole composed essentially of an aggregate of such units, embody difference. Thus, conflict resolution is best attempted by negotiating between individuals who are dissatisfied as individuals. One very important ideological effect of this is the standardization of behaviors and responses so as to make them predictable (and thus manageable) across a wide variety of situations and circumstances. If complex structural experiences of domination and resistance can be ideologically reformulated as individual behaviors and attitudes, they can be managed while carrying on business as usual.

Another example of this kind of program is the approach of the company that was consulted for the report just quoted, which goes by the name Diversity Consultants: "Diversity Consultants believe one of the most effective ways to manage multicultural and race awareness issues is through assessment of individual environments, planned educational programs, and management
strategy sessions which assist professionals in understanding themselves, diversity, and their options in the workplace” (Prindle 1988, 8).

The key ideas in this statement involve an awareness of race issues (the problem is assumed to be cultural misunderstanding or lack of information about other cultures), understanding yourself and people unlike you (diversity—we must respect and learn from each other; this may not address economic exploitation, but it will teach us to treat each other civilly), negotiating conflicts, altering organizational sexism and racism, and devising strategies to assess and manage the challenges of diversity (which results in an additive approach: recruiting “diverse” people, introducing “different” curriculum units while engaging in teaching as usual—that is, not shifting the normative-culture-vs.-subcultures paradigm). This is, then, the “professionalization” of prejudice reduction, where culture is a supreme commodity. Culture is seen as noncontradictory, as isolated from questions of history, and as a storehouse of nonchanging facts, behaviors, and practices. This particular definition of culture and of cultural difference is what sustains the individualized discourse of harmony and civility that is the hallmark of cultural pluralism.

Prejudice reduction workshops eventually aim for the creation of this discourse of civility. Again, this is not to suggest that there are no positive effects of this practice—for instance, the introduction of new cultural models can cause a deeper evaluation of existing structures, and clearly such consultancies could set a positive tone for social change. However, the baseline is still maintaining the status quo; diversity is always and can only be added on.

So what does all this mean? Diversity consultants are not new. Private industry has been using these highly paid management consulting firms since the civil rights movement. When upper-level administrators in higher education inflect discourses of education and “academic freedom” with discourses of the management of race, however, the effects are significant enough to warrant close examination. There is a long history of the institutionalization of the discourse of management and control in American education, but the management of race requires a somewhat different inflection at this historical moment. As a result of historical, demographic, and educational shifts in the racial makeup of students and faculty in the last twenty years, some of us even have public voices that have to be “managed” for the greater harmony of all. The hiring of consultants to “sensitize educators to issues of diversity” is part of the post-1960s proliferation of discourses of pluralism. But it is also a specific and containing response to the changing social contours of the U.S.
polity and to the challenges posed by Third World and feminist studies in the academy. By using the language of the corporation and the language of cognitive and affectional psychology (and thereby professionalizing questions of sexism, racism, and class conflict), new alliances are consolidated. Educators who are part of the ruling administrative class are now managers of conflict, but they are also agents in the construction of race—a word that is significantly redefined through the technical language that is used.18

Race, Voice, and Academic Culture

The effects of this relatively new discourse in the higher levels of liberal arts colleges and universities are quite real. Affirmative action hires are now highly visible and selective; every English department is looking for a black woman scholar to teach Toni Morrison's writings. What happens to such scholars after they are hired, and particularly when they come up for review or tenure, is another matter altogether. A number of scholars have documented the debilitating effects of affirmative action hiring policies that seek out and hire only those Third World scholars who are at the top of their fields—hence the pattern of musical chairs in which selected people of color are bartered at very high prices. Our voices are carefully placed and domesticated: one in history, one in English, perhaps one in the sociology department. Clearly these hiring practices do not guarantee the retention and tenure of Third World faculty. In fact, while the highly visible bartering for Third World "stars" serves to suggest that institutions of higher education are finally becoming responsive to feminist and Third World concerns, this particular commodification and personalization of race suggests there has been very little change since the 1970s, in terms of either a numerical increase of Third World faculty or our treatment in white institutions.

In their 1988 article on racism faced by Chicano faculty in institutions of higher education, Maria de la Luz Reyes and John J. Halcon characterize the effects of the 1970s policies of affirmative action:

In the mid-1970s, when minority quota systems were being implemented in many nonacademic agencies, the general public was left with the impression that Chicano or minority presence in professional or academic positions was due to affirmative action, rather than to individual qualifications or merit. But that impression was inaccurate. Generally [institutions
of higher education] responded to the affirmative action guidelines with
token positions for only a handful of minority scholars in nonacademic
and/or "soft" money programs. For example, many Blacks and Hispanics
were hired as directors for programs such as Upward Bound, Talent Search,
and Equal Opportunity Programs. Other minority faculty were hired for
bilingual programs and ethnic studies programs, but affirmative action
hires did not commonly extend to tenure-track faculty positions. The new
presence of minorities on college campuses, however, which occurred dur-
ing the period when attention to affirmative action regulations reached its
peak, left all minority professionals and academics with a legacy of token-
ism—a stigma that has been difficult to dispel. (303)

De la Luz Reyes and Halcon go on to argue that we are still living with
the effects of the implementation of these policies. They examine the prob-
lems associated with tokenism and the ghettoization of Third World people
in the academy, detailing the complex forms of racism that minority faculty
face today. To this characterization, I would add that one of the results of
the Reagan-Bush years has been that black, women's, and ethnic studies pro-
grams are often further marginalized, since one of the effects of the man-
agement of race is that individuals come to embody difference and diversity,
while programs that have been historically constituted on the basis of collec-
tive oppositional knowledges are labeled "political," "biased," "shrill," and
"unrigorous." Any inroads made by such programs and departments in the
seventies were slowly undermined in the eighties and the nineties by the man-
agement of race through attitudinal and behavioral strategies, with their logi-
cal dependence on individuals seen as appropriate representatives of their
"race" or some other equivalent political constituency. Race and gender were
reformulated as individual characteristics and attitudes, and thus an individu-
alyzed, ostensibly "unmarked" discourse of difference was put into place. This
shift in the academic discourse on gender and race actually rolls back any
progress that has been made in carving out institutional spaces for women's
and black studies programs and departments.

Earlier, it was these institutional spaces that determined our collective
voices. Our programs and departments were by definition alternative and op-
positional. Now they are often merely alternative, one among many. Without
being nostalgic about the good old days (and they were problematic in their
own ways), I am suggesting that there has been an erosion of the politics of
collectivity through the reformulation of race and difference in individualistic terms. By no means is this a conspiratorial scenario. The discussion of the effects of my own classroom practices indicates my complicity in this contest over definitions of gender and race in discursive and representational as well as personal terms. The 1960s and 1970s slogan “The personal is political” was recrafted in the 1980s as “The political is personal.” In other words, all politics is collapsed into the personal, and questions of individual behaviors, attitudes, and lifestyles stand in for the political analysis of the social. Individual political struggles are seen as the only relevant and legitimate form of political struggle.

There is, however, another, more crucial reason to be concerned about (and to challenge) this management of race in the liberal academy: this process of the individualization of race and its effects dovetail rather neatly with the neoconservative politics and agenda of the Reagan-Bush years and now the Bush-Cheney years, an agenda that is constitutively recasting the fabric of American life in the pre-1960s mold. The 1980s Supreme Court decisions on “reverse discrimination” are based on precisely similar definitions of “prejudice,” “discrimination,” and “race.” In an essay that argues that the U.S. Supreme Court’s rulings on reverse discrimination are fundamentally tied to the rollback of reproductive freedom, Zillah Eisenstein (1990) discusses the individualist framework on which these decisions are based:

The court’s recent decisions pertaining to affirmative action make quite clear that existing civil rights legislation is being newly reinterpreted. Race, or sex (gender) as a collective category is being denied and racism, and/or sexism, defined as a structural and historical reality has been erased. Statistical evidence of racial and/or sexual discrimination is no longer acceptable as proof of unfair treatment of “black women as a group or class.” Discrimination is proved by an individual only in terms of their specific case. The assault is blatant: equality doctrine is dismantled. (5)

Eisenstein goes on to analyze how the government’s attempts to redress racism and sexism are at the core of the struggle for equality and how, in gutting the meaning of discrimination and applying it only to individual cases and not statistical categories, it has become almost impossible to prove discrimination because there are always “other” criteria to excuse discriminatory practices. Thus, the Supreme Court decisions on reverse discrimination are
clearly based on a particular individualist politics that domesticates race and gender. This is an example of the convergence of neoconservative and liberal agendas concerning race and gender inequalities.

Those of us who are in the academy also potentially collude in this domestication of race by allowing ourselves to be positioned in ways that contribute to the construction of these images of pure and innocent diversity, to the construction of these managerial discourses. For instance, since the category of race is not static but a fluid social and historical formation, Third World peoples are often located in antagonistic relationships with one another. Those of us who are from Third World countries are often played off against Third World peoples native to the United States. As an Indian immigrant woman in the United States, for instance, in most contexts I am not as potentially threatening as an African American woman. Yes, we are both nonwhite and other, subject to various forms of overt or disguised racism, but I do not bring with me a history of slavery, a direct and constant reminder of the racist past and present of the United States. Of course my location in the British academy would be fundamentally different because of the history of British colonization, because of its specific patterns of immigration and labor force participation, and because of the existence of working-class, trade union, and antiracist politics—all of which define the position of Indians differently in Britain. An interesting parallel in the British context is the focus on and celebration of African American women as the “true” radical black feminists who have something to say, while black British feminists are marginalized and rendered voiceless by the publishing industry and the academy (“black” in Britain often referred to British citizens of African, Asian, or Caribbean origin, although this alliance has unravelled in recent years). These locations and potential collusions thus have an impact on how our voices and agencies are constituted.

**Critical Pedagogy and Cultures of Dissent**

If my argument in this essay is convincing, it suggests why we need to take on questions of race and gender as they are being managed and commodified in the liberal U.S. academy. One mode of doing this is actively creating public cultures of dissent where these issues can be debated in terms of our pedagogies and institutional practices.²⁰ Creating such cultures in the
liberal academy is a challenge in itself, because liberalism allows and even welcomes "plural" or even "alternative" perspectives. However, a public culture of dissent entails creating spaces for epistemological standpoints that are grounded in the interests of people and that recognize the materiality of conflict, of privilege, and of domination. Thus creating such cultures is fundamentally about making the axes of power transparent in the context of academic, disciplinary, and institutional structures as well as in the interpersonal relationships (rather than individual relations) in the academy. It is about taking the politics of everyday life seriously as teachers, students, administrators, and members of hegemonic academic cultures. Culture itself is thus redefined to incorporate individual and collective memories, dreams, and history that are contested and transformed through the political praxis of day-to-day living.

Cultures of dissent are also about seeing the academy as part of a larger sociopolitical arena that itself domesticates and manages Third World people in the name of liberal capitalist democracy. They are about working to reshape and reenvision community and citizenship in the face of overwhelming corporatization. The struggle to transform our institutional practices fundamentally also involves the grounding of the analysis of exploitation and oppression in accurate history and theory, seeing ourselves as activists in the academy, drawing links between movements for social justice and our pedagogical and scholarly endeavors and expecting and demanding action from ourselves, our colleagues, and our students at numerous levels. This requires working hard to understand and to theorize questions of knowledge, power, and experience in the academy so that one effects both pedagogical empowerment and transformation. Racism, sexism, and homophobia are very real, day-to-day practices in which we all engage. They are not reducible to mere curricular or policy decisions—that is, to management practices. In this context we need to actively rethink the purpose of liberal education in antiracist, anticapitalist feminist ways.

I said earlier that what is at stake is not the mere recognition of difference. The sort of difference that is acknowledged and engaged has fundamental significance for the decolonization of educational practices. Similarly, the point is not simply that one should have a voice; the more crucial question concerns the sort of voice one comes to have as the result of one's location, both as an individual and as part of collectives. The important point is that it be an active,
oppositional, and collective voice that takes seriously the commodification and domestication of Third World people in the academy. Thus cultures of dissent must work to create pedagogies of dissent rather than pedagogies of accommodation. And this is a task open to all—to people of color as well as progressive white people in the academy.