

PEDAGOGY AND CULTURAL PRACTICE

Edited by Henry Giroux and Roger Simon

Recognizing that pedagogy begins with the affirmation of differences as a precondition for extending the possibilities of democratic life, the series analyzes the diverse democratic and ideological struggles of people across a wide range of economic, social, and political spheres.

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**WRITING PERMITTED
IN DESIGNATED AREAS
ONLY**

LINDA BRODKEY

**PEDAGOGY AND CULTURAL PRACTICE
V O L U M E 4**



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For
Jesse

DIFFERENCE AND A PEDAGOGY OF DIFFERENCE

I understand multiculturalism to be largely a *curricular* rather than a pedagogical reform. While I share the principles of inclusion that motivate faculty around the country to add multicultural materials to their reading lists or multicultural courses to their curriculum, and would like to believe that these principles motivate my work as well, I hesitate to think of what I do as multiculturalism in part because I work in composition, a field where pedagogy has historically taken precedence over curriculum—in theory and in research—but where curriculum commonly overrides pedagogy in practice, not least in the view of those who insist that my only job is to police language. In other words, the visible disciplinary content of most college composition classes—the handbooks, rhetorics, readers, topics, and even the writing assignments—often obscures and sometimes obviates the invisible *pedagogical* content of composition courses—student writing. Since writing pedagogy sets out to animate a desire to write, my interest in curricular changes, including multicultural reforms, depends on what I imagine that material contributes to a pedagogical representation of students to themselves *as writers*, as members of a privileged group who see themselves as entitled to articulate worlds in words.

The content of the visible curriculum represents writing as knowledge of the conventions of written language, which are encoded in handbooks, rhetorics, and readers and often reencoded in our evaluations of student essays. Little wonder that most students see writing as a matter of learning and following rules, and that many take a dim view of pedagogies that do not enforce the curriculum and instead represent writing in extracurricular terms. For extracurricular versions of writing require students to take responsibility for their assertions, which means taking into account the part language plays in representing a reality in which the writer has a *vested* interest. In the invisible curriculum, writing cannot be reduced *to* or separated *from* syntax and rhetoric, as it so often is in the visible curriculum, because what is said is not considered apart from how it is said. It is in pedagogy that teachers articulate a nexus of language, thought, and reality that is often ignored (as not the content of composition) or deferred (until students have learned the rules) in the visible curriculum.

My pedagogical bias concerns what I see as a tendency to conflate curriculum and pedagogy in higher education and hence a tendency to forget that a syllabus, even one that includes voices from other quarters, is probably a better index of curricular than of pedagogical goals, a better index, that is, of what we wish stu-

dents knew than of our desire to hear from them. While the presence of multicultural voices is of potential pedagogical value, that a syllabus includes the novels of Toni Morrison or Sandra Cisneros does not necessarily mean that students are being taught to read them. Nor do multicultural *essays* read themselves, certainly not the ones by bell hooks on whiteness, Earl Shorris on the heterogeneity of identities among Latinos, Hyo-Jung Kim on growing up Korean female in the United States, and Vito Russo or Walter Rico Burrell on living with AIDS, which are included in the writing program I direct. A curricular reform of the magnitude suggested by multiculturalism requires a pedagogical reform of equal magnitude. By that I mean that before adding multicultural materials to our courses, we need to ask ourselves what we expect students to *do* with these texts: texts that many Anglo students read as accusing them of genocide, slavery, and discrimination or treat as excursions to the sideshows of real culture; texts that many students of color see as the same old same old, more gestures of white liberal guilt or futile reminders of what might have been had not this or this or this happened.

If students read the new texts as they were taught to read the old ones, their conclusions are understandable. For judged in the light of the old texts, few of which specify their vested interest in topics, the arguments made in the new texts are excessive and their writers easily dismissed as too vehement, too angry, too personal, too biased, too political. Those of us in what is called English studies need to give some real thought to whether what the *Chronicle of Higher Education* proclaimed the age of "post-theory" should be taken as evidence of the success of critical theory, which is what the theorists cited—Jacques Derrida, Stephen Greenblatt, Jane Gallup—are reported to believe (Winkler 1993). While many, if not all, of my colleagues seem to have accommodated critical theory, most of the undergraduates I encounter would be surprised to learn that the culture wars in the academy were over theory and were not, as the pundits argued for the benefit of a considerably larger audience, valiant efforts on the part of a small group of concerned faculty to rout the insidious forces of "political correctness" that threaten to erode such venerable "American" traditions as the uncontested and uncontestable universal truths of Western art and science. If the popular view prevails over that of the theorists, if students cannot hear the voices that have been added to our courses, it will be because they are distracted by the white noise that makes it nearly impossible to hear lyrics spoken in unfamiliar cadences. While there is nothing much I can do for those students who refuse outright even to listen to unfamiliar voices, there is a good deal I can do pedagogically to reduce the volume of white noise for those who cannot hear for the din of common sense.

The white noise that most consistently impairs hearing is the commonsense belief that cynically denies that difference matters by dismissing it as superficial or maligning it as divisive. By this reasoning, the distinctions among the terms *physically challenged*, *disabled*, and *handicapped*, among *Negroes*, *blacks*, *African-Ameri-*

cans, and *people of color* are said to be trivial. No matter that the point of view shifts from one where something calling itself tradition or science reserves the sole right to define difference to one where people defined as different redefine difference for themselves. Difference, concludes sociologist Todd Gitlin, is essentialism, the basis of identity politics, and identity politics is antithetical to what he calls the "commonality politics" of the left, which he claims "acknowledges 'difference' but sees it against the background of what is not different, what is shared among groups" (1993: 18). No matter that Gitlin uses a spin on difference popularized by pundits the likes of George Will rather than a recognizable theoretical definition. The work of pedagogical reform begins here, in learning and teaching a theoretically recognizable and responsible version of difference.

In contradistinction to commonsense versions of difference, I offer a Foucauldian, poststructural version, which defines difference not as an attribute of someone or something, but as a negative quality that is *imputed* to someone or something as an essential and defining feature that rationalizes the surveillance and regulation of an entire population in search of the often trivial but consequential "differences" that justify systematically isolating groups of people for special and inequitable treatment. It is not difference but systematic denials of these regimes of surveillance and regulation that divide us. It is these regimes that authorize the commonsense epistemologies that consistently represent difference as negation or lack or abnormality that most students know. It is these versions that those who insist on redefining their differences in positive rather than negative terms seek to subvert. And it is varieties of commonsense epistemology that pedagogy must transvalue, for if multiculturalism is to be seen as part of the regeneration of a society rather than held up as the fetish of its decline, difference must be posed as a condition of community.

The language theory that tolerates and arguably even warrants some of the most outlandish commonsense definitions of difference is structuralism, and so it is this quintessentially modern theory of language that must be broached first, if we plan to *teach* the texts that modernism either dismisses or maligns on principle. Whether we are talking about the early-twentieth-century argument for the linguistic structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure or later versions such as that laid out by Noam Chomsky, the distinction between *langue* and *parole*, or competence and performance, the overwhelming intellectual contribution of linguistic structuralism to other forms of structuralism, including modernism, is a wholesale suspicion of practice. Those who would not be deceived seek the invariant patterns, rules, principles, universals, and laws that variation in local practice obscures: the unconscious of psychoanalysis, the base of classical Marxism, the deep structure of linguistics.

Like many poststructuralists of my generation, I began as a structuralist and continue to respect many of its projects and even to employ some of its principles of analysis. In particular, I value the work of linguists who document indigenous

languages and that of sociolinguists who argue for the viability of what is known as Black English Vernacular as a dialect of English governed by underlying rules as linguistically logical and complex as those of the other dialects (Labov 1972). And were the world a place where difference meant only, or even usually meant, variation in a set rather than variance from a norm, where difference did not ordinarily mean *not* white, *not* male, *not* middle class, *not* heterosexual, I might well have remained a structuralist. My quarrel is not with a theory that recognizes that language generates distinctions, but with one that out of fealty to a theory that dismisses local practice as *theoretically* uninteresting ignores the practical consequences of imputing differences to actual people.

The myopia of linguistic structuralism to powerful political practices is irresponsible to the extent that it ignores the human misery perpetrated in the name of difference out of a desire to establish itself as a nomothetic theory, one that issues the laws governing a specified field of knowledge. Nomothetic theories can be seductive, particularly if you imagine yourself to be on the right side of the law. In an article ostensibly reassessing the value of linguistics to composition, for instance, Frank Parker and Kim Sydow Campbell conclude that "linguistics and composition can be seen as symbiotic; linguistics provides part of the theoretical foundation for composition, and composition provides a practical application and testing ground for linguistic theory" (1993: 310). The relationship between theory (linguistics) and practice (composition) is not of course symbiotic, not if linguistics retains the right to define both theory *and* practice. In their model, linguistics is a discipline because linguistics is a freestanding theory with no inherent practice, and composition is an interdiscipline because composition has an inherent practice (teaching techniques) but no theory. As a testing ground for linguistics, the field of composition and its inhabitants effectively stand in the same relationship to linguistics as the residents of deserts and reservations do to those who deem their lands suitable sites for such practical scientific applications as the testing of bombs and the storage of nuclear waste. A theory that transcends practice on principle excuses its own collusion in those practices of human diminution, exclusion, and extinction that directly or indirectly follow from that theory.

Let me clarify the kind of problem I see arising from the decision to sever theory from practice. The structuralist separation of language from thought and reality is a theoretical convenience on the order of the separation of form and content in, say, some theories of literature, rhetoric, and philosophy. The separation is not meant as an empirical distinction, but as a way to organize, regulate, and evaluate the linguistic study of language, and to distinguish linguistic structuralism from other theories of language. The structuralist argument concerning the arbitrary or neutral relationship between language, thought, and reality is an explanation of linguistic variation, which explanation does not intend to account for the aesthetic, social, political, and historical dimensions of language or the circumstances under

which people speak and write. When these matters are sometimes undertaken at the discretion of individual linguists, they are understood as the extralinguistic concerns of *applied* or *hyphenated* linguistics.

Structural linguistics is an attempt to explain neither language nor the contingencies of its acquisition and use, but only those "aspects" of language that theory deems linguistically interesting: for instance, that phonological and morphological variation in, say, the word for cat, across languages where such a word appears, is not linguistically meaningful, and thus the linguistic relationship between sound and sense is arbitrary. While it may be true that the order of linguistic pairs like white/black, Anglo/Latino, American/Asian-American, American/Native American, heterosexual/homosexual, self/other, and man/woman is arbitrary in the narrowly defined linguistic sense that views local practice as deceiving, few people live in a world where the nomothetic logic of linguistic structuralism is more compelling than the local logic of racism or sexism or ethnocentrism or homophobia. A particularly pernicious version of commonsense epistemology that seems to derive support, however perversely, from linguistic arbitrariness is the belief that such pairs are natural sets whose ordering cannot therefore be altered without disturbing the natural order of things, or what students are more likely to call human nature. These natural pairs are understood as a given, inviolable reality independent of language and thought. It is an epistemology that supports the student who insists that generic "he" is natural, that "he or she"—or worse, "she or he"—sounds unnatural, and that interrupting the natural flow of language transmogrifies perfectly innocent and natural usage into the unnatural, "politically correct" language of feminists and feminist sympathizers.

The commonsense belief that language ordinarily plays no part in politics, no substantiative role in the construction of reality, except of course for its "unnatural" use in propaganda and advertising, creates a fair amount of white noise in the day-to-day teaching of writing. Unless we make it worth their while, students experience the poststructural critique of this commonsense epistemology as one more attempt to silence their true feelings and stifle their natural creativity with yet another set of rules, as alien as many of the others in handbooks, and even more unsettling. The loss of generic "he" is the more likely to be felt as a loss of self if students have not been introduced to the counterintuitive notion that human subjects are formed *in* social relations, not outside them, and that the language in which we represent ourselves as selves matters, as does the language in which we are represented.

It matters foremost whether representations are simple or complex, if only because complexity provides grounds for resisting the received identities, the stereotypes, that are used to rationalize inequitable social treatment. It matters a good deal, for instance, that characters in Toni Morrison's novels are complex rather than simple representations of African-Americans because their complexity chal-

lenges not only centuries of simple aesthetic representations, but also the more recent ones that social science has constructed and that politicians use to caricature black families as unnatural matriarchies run at the taxpayers' expense. It's not just that such representational simplicity confounds race, class, and gender, but that it denies the complicity of language in the construction of so-called crises in the black family—from welfare mothers to pregnant teens to school dropouts to gang violence—whose imputed differences distract us from scrutinizing the related discursive practices that sustain the systemic, institutional inequities in health care, education, law, and employment among the poor and the working poor.

If reality is posed as exterior to language, it is also anterior to language, which would mean that writers are literally not responsible for what they say they see or think. Like the writers portrayed in modern fiction, writers are amanuenses, technology, writing machines, as in Kafka's "In the Penal Colony." They are not implicated in the production of reality because these purveyors of modern reality—of the simple truths, the hard facts—are also its victims, innocent bystanders of history. In modernism as in structuralism, the separation of language from thought and reality is the ultimate alibi that guarantees the innocence of writers and readers alike, since language is not only separate from but a poor reflection of real thought and real reality, the material realities that ostensibly exist independent of language. Words are not deeds, speech is not action, form is not content. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." I wanted to but didn't believe that as a child, and I neither believe nor wish to believe it now. That's because I am persuaded that a theory based in practice knows that language is material rather than immaterial, knows that words are deeds, and recognizes the adage as a child's incantation against the pain and violence of words that wound.

At this juncture, I consider poststructuralism as articulated in the work of Michel Foucault to be the only theory of language based on practice sufficiently complex to explain at least some of the concerns of writing pedagogy. While I realize that some practitioners who are daunted by Foucault's prose dismiss him as needlessly abstract, infuriatingly abstruse, and generally unintelligible, I can remember many of these same complaints being leveled at Noam Chomsky and the graduate students who eventually reinvented linguistic structuralism from a Cartesian perspective. It's not that the then unfamiliar theory was impossible to understand, but that the theory undermined the empiricism that provided the disciplinary authority of linguistics. Foucauldian poststructural theory challenges the empirical and Cartesian scientific hegemony that privileges both early- and late-twentieth-century linguistic accounts of language universals and hence whatever claims to authority structural linguistic theory exercises over composition. While I am more concerned about our desire to be colonized by structural theory than by structural theory or theorists, I am suspicious of any theory that

reserves the right to govern from abroad, so to speak, on the grounds that its theoretical interest in universals is by definition more important than my theoretical interest in practices.

My interest requires a theory of practice, which begins, as I see it, by defining discourse as a worldview, ideology, theory, or epistemology, a way of knowing that selects and organizes and represents as worth taking into account what is seen from a particular vantage point. That means that I privilege discursive realities above what others call empirical or material reality because I am theoretically persuaded that it is likely that discourses theorize all realities and hence what individuals see and represent as reality in practice. In other words, I cannot imagine writing, thinking, or seeing outside of discourse, and I increasingly distrust people who insist that they do, particularly people who claim to speak the simple truth, who claim to be objective, who claim to be neutral. For those are people who all too often protect their own epistemological biases from scrutiny by passing them off as reality or truth, while imputing the dangerousness of theory, ideology, bias, and difference to me and anyone else who admits the complications and limits of their own positions.

The feminist historian of science Donna Haraway argues that only nonscientists seem actually to believe in what she calls the "doctrines of disembodied scientific objectivity—enshrined in elementary textbooks and technoscience booster literature" (1988: 376). While she is probably right, believers far outnumber nonbelievers in the population that concerns me, including the one I teach, nearly all of whom have learned that objectivity is good and subjectivity is bad, and few of whom have ever asked whether that naive version of objectivity is even desirable, let alone possible. Haraway, who argues that knowledge is partial because it is, by definition, limited to what can be seen from a particular vantage point, concludes that the received version of objectivity is neither possible nor desirable. It is not possible because human vision is literally and figuratively partial. Just as the human eye can see only what it is capable of seeing, a theory is partial, that is, an incomplete and interested account. Nor, as I understand her argument, is it desirable to define objectivity in science as unsituated knowledge, since a freestanding theory would be what she calls a "god trick," what can be seen from everywhere and nowhere, which would excuse scientists from dealing with the ethical considerations that scientific practice needs to take into account.

The caveat in Haraway's argument for the partial vision of situated knowledge that most concerns writing pedagogy is the refusal to privilege, ad hoc, what can be seen from any one vantage point, which is also a refusal to assume, a priori, that a view from below is necessarily better than one from above. A comprehensive understanding requires a full hearing from all quarters. College classrooms are if not ideal at least among the best possible places to hold such hearings, since the academy is one of the few places where common sense does not reign supreme and where there is sufficient leisure to lay out arguments in the kind of detail that such

hearings require. As I see it, Haraway provides pedagogy an epistemological basis for distinguishing responsible from irresponsible public argumentation. For if we refuse to privilege the vantage point, then it is not the position writers take but the cases they make from particular vantage points that concern pedagogy. Media representations of the culture wars give the impression that theoretical battles are either of no real consequence, just academic, or so consequential as to constitute a clear and present danger to students, the academy, and civilization. From where I stand, the wars are the result of enlisting the forces of common sense to quell *academic* challenges to *academic* theories that support commonsense epistemologies that have a vested interest in separating language from thought and reality, and that not incidentally define *writing* as an intransitive verb. In composition that amounts to agreeing that form is the content of both the visible and the invisible curriculum, which means that a writing assignment is a lure, not an invitation to write but a prompt sufficiently attractive to make students write enough for us to surveil and correct their grammar, spelling, punctuation, and organization.

The commonsense view of language and composition makes any pedagogical practice that exceeds policing student language suspicious because it challenges a hierarchy wherein others claim the right to discipline student thought. By this logic, if law is the exclusive academic property of the law school, sociality of the sociology department, and history of historians, then grammar, punctuation, spelling, and organization belong to composition. And by this logic, composition bears very little relationship to writing, where knowledge and application of the rules are not considered apart from the project at hand. A poststructural pedagogy of difference articulates the uncommonsense epistemology of situatedness that deliberately reconnects language to thought and reality. Such a pedagogy presumes that a writer must stand somewhere in order to write at all, and that the issue is not whether a writer is biased, for all writing is biased by definition, but whether the bias can withstand *academic* scrutiny, that is, whether the bias produces simple representations that effectively say there is nothing to talk about or complex representations that invite argumentation.

In my experience, students have learned to close down arguments at precisely the point where I think productive argumentation begins. They do this in moves that either undermine their right to engage in argument (of course that's only my opinion) or discredit argumentation (everybody has a right to their own opinion). While there are probably any number of reasons from inexperience to ignorance that might account for students' desire to avoid argumentation, that they do so at precisely those moments that call for laying out a case in support of their opinions suggests either that students do not have any support or that they fear that in specifying the grounds for their differences of opinion they will violate a social principle that enjoins against disagreeing with anyone in public—for whatever rea-

sons: politeness, futility, violence. And were I defining argumentation as they are likely to have known it, as forensic spectacles in which the only positions are pro and con or the purpose of which is to air political spins, I would support their refusal to engage strangers in public argumentation. For teachers often forget that students are not just strangers to us but also to one another, and yet on campus must live in a proximity that among the middle class at least is usually reserved for intimates. If we want students to engage in public hearings, then we must teach a version of argumentation that is productive rather than reductive.

In the time that remains I'll discuss argumentation as we have begun asking graduate-student instructors to teach and practice it in the program I direct, which is one of five undergraduate writing programs on the campus of the University of California, San Diego. The internal structure of the university is unusual, inasmuch as the five colleges are organized by themes rather than disciplines. The college whose writing program I direct is Warren College, and its *theme* is the individual and society. The writing sequence is two quarters, followed by a third course called Ethics and Society, and the three courses make up the general education requirement for the college. Historically, half the students who enter Warren College identify themselves as engineering or computer science majors, though it is not also the case that half the class graduates in those majors. In sum, the entering population is perhaps a little more visibly committed to the received versions of science and objectivity described in Haraway than some of the students I have worked with at other universities, and so may have a greater stake in defending the separation of language, thought, and reality. By that I mean that a good many students are likely to reject, without so much as a hearing, arguments that directly or indirectly challenge commonsense versions of objectivity.

Frankly, I do not much care whether students believe the arguments that writers lay out against the absolute objectivity of objectivity, but I do care whether they give these arguments as well as those written from other unfamiliar perspectives a full hearing. I care for a number of reasons, foremost among them that I understand the critique of received wisdom to be if not the only at least one of the most important purposes of scholarship. In order to ensure that students at least hear what those who argue that *their* vested interests are not served by commonsense versions of objectivity or difference have to say, we have privileged what I see as an academically responsible version of argumentation over other forms of argumentation and other forms of writing. While I make no special plea for the philosophical viability of Stephen Toulmin's description and analysis of argumentation, we describe and require students to describe arguments with some of the terms that Toulmin uses to describe the layout of arguments—claims and grounds invariably, and warrants and qualifiers when appropriate. The lexicon allows teachers and students to discuss the *intellectual* contents of arguments, which is nearly impossible when discussions are conducted in the more familiar vocabulary of thesis sen-

tence, body paragraphs, and conclusions, terms that students understand as limited to the formal expression of claims.

In the Warren College Writing Program, students examine in some detail both the arguments they write and those they read as a preliminary to the privilege of either agreement or disagreement. In other words, descriptive summary precedes analysis and critique in order to ensure that public discussion is based on some recognizable reading of the material at hand. It is not that all the students have to agree that a particular argument is either the only one or even the most important one in an essay, but that they can recognize the essay from the summary. Students are required to describe arguments by identifying claims that are supported by grounds and deciding which among them is primary in a particular essay. Every essay contains multiple claims, only some of which are argued, that is, supported with examples or illustrations or data whose use is warranted by some principle or procedure of evidence.

For the most part, we do not focus on warrants or encourage students to call for warrants, since warrants are rarely explicit and their pedagogical value is arguably limited to pointing out when a student has invoked an inappropriate warrant for academic argumentation. The divine authority of the Bible is not an appropriate warrant for academic cases, though it may well serve as a cultural or historical or aesthetic warrant. Few academics accept personal experience as a warrant for a statement of fact, unless it is marked as a *narrative* of experience, that is, presented as analysis rather than fact. Many forms of common knowledge that warrant a good many arguments outside the academy are considered illicit warrants inside the academy, particularly if they fly in the face of some warrant that has achieved the status of common knowledge in a particular field. The happy endings that a good part of the reading public uses to define good novels, for instance, would be a risky warrant to use to evaluate novels in a literature course warranted by modernist principles of fiction.

There are limitations to requiring students to summarize arguments before evaluating them. Some students who are offended by certain positions have complained about being required to summarize arguments with which they disagree. Some who recognize that description and evaluation are artificial distinctions want to foreground evaluation in their summaries. While I do not consider agreement a prerequisite of reading, I recognize that the elision of description and evaluation in summaries can be vexing. And were our reasons primarily to test their reading, I would abandon summaries. But the summaries are meant to warrant their *writing*, by grounding their evaluations of arguments in the texts rather than in reactions to notions that for one reason or another either confirm or disconfirm some common-sense belief they hold dear. All the essays students read in the first quarter argue or assume that reality is constructed via discursive representations. Students are assigned to one of three topics by group, and each group is responsible for a writ-

ten report and an oral presentation of its topic—the representation of race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, or AIDS. Readings either articulate or complicate a representation. In sum, the readings are about how to do things with words, about, that is, the conjunction of language, thought, and reality, words as deeds, so that students are fully apprised that writers who take upon themselves the privilege of representing a world in words are responsible for their representations. In the reading and writing assignments, we are attempting to represent students to themselves as writers formed in social relations, that is, as writers who have a vested interest in particular discursive representations and who recognize that in the context of the course, at least, the highest value is placed on complicated rather than simplified representations of human subjectivity.

In encouraging students to see themselves as writers, we are attempting to discourage them from identifying with infantilized representations of students as the entirely innocent victims of the circumstances of class, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation. Seeing students as writers requires us as teachers to resist what Susan Miller calls “a perduring sentimentality” in composition to insist that a student be “a presexual, preeconomic, prepolitical person” (1991: 87). I see the pedagogical measures we have taken as our effort to resist, and encourage students to resist, *all* reductive representations of human subjectivity and thereby clear a space for what, in an essay defending Michel Foucault’s hermeneutics of resistance, the philosopher John Caputo calls “the right to be different” (1993: 253). As I understand his argument, to be different is to refuse identities that predefine us and to take up instead the possibilities that are contained in not knowing who we are. I see writing as imminently well suited to difference and resistance, if writing pedagogy legitimates exploring the residual possibilities of situated individuality that modern technologies of individualization attempt to nullify. It is in transvaluing and articulating the possibilities of difference that we are likely to welcome the complexities of multicultural representations as part of a human project to resist identities that are not in our own best interests.

—Twenty-fourth National Institute on Issues in Teaching and Learning,
University of Chicago, 1992