

ON DOING THE RIGHT THING: EDUCATION WORK IN THE ACADEMY

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INTRODUCTION

As Frances Ansley has pointed out, the best formal anti-discrimination rules in the world are no protection against bigotry unless people of good will implement and enforce them.¹ The work of promoting empathy toward minorities² is not strictly legal work. Nor is it necessarily always public work. A good deal of it occurs in private, interpersonal relationships. Yet, this work is no less important, and no less political, for its private quality. In this essay, I will call the private, interpersonal work of fostering empathy for minorities "education work."³

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1. Ansley, *Stirring the Ashes: Race, Class and the Future of Civil Rights Scholarship*, 74 CORNELL L. REV. 993, 1046-47 (1989). Recent calls in legal scholarship for more empathy on the part of legal decisionmakers in part reflect this recognition. For a summary and critique of this work, see Massaro, *Empathy, Legal Storytelling, and the Rule of Law: New Words, Old Wounds?*, 87 MICH. L. REV. 2099 (1989).

2. At present, there seems to be no good way to talk about race, gender, class, and sexual orientation all at the same time, though some writers have made the attempt. See, e.g., Colker, *The Anti-Subordination Principle: Applications*, 3 WIS. WOMEN'S L.J. 59, 63 (1987). In this essay, I lump different forms of subordination together because of my intuition that the dilemmas of trying to challenge bigotry in the context of interpersonal relationships are similar for each. I will refer to traditionally subordinated groups as "minority groups" and members of such groups as "minorities." I am mindful of the fact that the term is not literally accurate (women constitute at least half the population) and that it obscures more particular perspectives and experiences.

3. Finding the appropriate label for this activity has given me considerable trouble. Education work is sometimes informally referred to as "consciousness raising." Yet, I understand consciousness raising to mean the process of developing an awareness of group political oppression through the sharing of individual experiences. See, e.g., C. MACKINNON, *TOWARD A FEMINIST THEORY OF THE STATE* 83-105 (1989). In contrast, efforts to fight bigotry and preserve a valued relationship at the same time often take place across lines of political oppression. Moreover, these interactions have a distinctly asymmetrical quality which traditional consciousness raising, as I understand it, does not share—one person challenging another's perception of the world. The term "sensitivity training" also seemed wrong to me. Aside from its faintly derisory New-Age ring, the term seems to suggest a superficial change—learn how not to offend those touchy [fill in name of troublesome group here]—rather than any fundamental alteration of perspective.

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Despite its nonlegal character, a lot of education work goes on among law school faculty members. This essay grew out of my experience as a so-called "diverse" member of a law school faculty dominated by white men. It is part of a continuing argument with myself about the meaning of personal and political struggle. Toward this end, I offer some tentative thoughts about the theory and practice of education work as undertaken by members of minority groups in majority institutions.⁴ My immediate purpose is to construct a justification for education work; my larger purpose, not realized here, is to understand its relationship to other forms of struggle.

I. THE NATURE OF EDUCATION WORK

A. *Boundary-Crossing*

Challenging bigotry is always difficult, but it is particularly difficult when it means risking a valued relationship. The risk is especially acute when the affront is unintentional. Many people equate bigotry with actions intended to hurt and degrade another human being. Challenging a casual, unintentionally hurtful remark may appear not only as an act which spoils the party but also as a hostile attack on the speaker's moral character.⁵ Patricia Williams describes these challenges as "boundary-crossing,"⁶ recognizing

Schools, Regina Austin spoke about "educating white people" and the toll this work takes on the educators. The word "education" expresses both the asymmetrical quality of the interaction and the depth of the changes sought. I added the word "work" to emphasize the difficulties and risks I associate with this activity.

4. Throughout this essay, my focus is on peer relationships, not relationships with students. It is in peer relationships that the need to preserve collegiality is most pressing.

5. The popular belief that words or actions are not degrading unless they are intended to be so is reflected in anti-discrimination law. See Strauss, *Discriminatory Intent and the Taming of Brown*, 56 U. CHI. L. REV. 935 (1989). Strauss argues that this conception of discrimination is too narrow and fails to capture the full range of the harm done by group subordination. See also Freeman, *Legitimizing Racial Discrimination Through Antidiscrimination Law: A Critical Review of Supreme Court Doctrine*, 62 MINN. L. REV. 1049, 1054-55 (1978) (identifying the notion of racial discrimination to include only intentional discrimination as "the perpetrator perspective"); Lawrence, *The Id, the Ego, and Equal Protection: Reckoning with Unconscious Racism*, 39 STAN. L. REV. 317, 349 (1987) (arguing that traditional notions of intent fail to reflect the character of racist behavior, which is often neither intentional in the sense of purposeful nor unintentional in the sense of random and fortuitous).

6. Williams, *The Obliging Shell: An Informal Essay on Formal Equal Opportunity*, 87 MICH. L. REV. 2128, 2151 (1989). According to Williams, "[t]he hard work of a non-racist sensibility is the boundary-crossing, from safe circle into that wilderness: the testing of boundary, the consecration of sacrilege. The willingness to spoil a good party and break an encompassing circle, to travel from the safe to the unsafe." *Id.*

that such actions risk the loss of community, whether the community is a friendship, a work environment, or just the decorum at a cocktail party. Patricia Williams describes challenging a friend's casual anti-Semitic remark:

As we argued, words like 'overly sensitive,' 'academic privilege,' and 'touchy' began to creep into her description of me. . . . She did not use the word 'righteous' but I know that is what she meant. I listened and we talked; I tried to reassure her that I did not mean to put her on the defensive, that I had not meant to attack or upset her, and that I deeply valued her friendship. But I did not back down.

Eventually I felt our friendship being broken apart. . . . She did not want me to understand merely that she meant no harm, she wanted me to confess ultimately that there *was* no harm. Moreover, I realized that she perceived the very raising of the subject matter as an act of hostility, while I perceived my mention of it as an attempt to take our friendship to newer and franker levels of conversation, risking showing what was truly important to me.⁷

Boundary-crossing is a struggle and risk for anyone. But, the dilemmas of boundary-crossing are more severe for minorities in majority settings. As Williams notes, being a minority group member makes acceptance into a majority community seem all the more precious. Those who feel themselves to be outsiders long to be insiders.⁸ At the same time, being a member of a minority group may also mean that one feels the insults of bigotry more keenly.⁹

7. *Id.* at 2147 (emphasis in original).

8. See Williams, *supra* note 6, at 2150. Williams writes:

Very much my father's daughter, I am always grateful when storekeepers are polite to me; I do not expect courtesy. I value it in a way that resembles love, that resembles trust. . . .

I know that this valuing is a form of fear. I am afraid of being alien, of being suspect, of being thrown out at any moment; I am relieved when I am not.

Id.

9. For example, Peggy Davis argues that day-to-day living for black people involves constantly managing "microaggressions," which she defines as "'subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'putdowns' of blacks by offenders.'" Davis, *Law as Microaggression*, 98 YALE L.J. 1559, 1565 (1988) (quoting Pierce, Carew, Pierre-Gonzalez & Wills, *An Experiment in Racism: TV Commercials*, in TELEVISION AND EDUCATION 66 (C. Pierce ed. 1978)). A person feeling assaulted by such constant interactions is likely to be sensitive, if not hypersensitive, to the more obvious instances of bigotry as well.

Williams eloquently describes the emotional impact of incidents of unintentional bigotry. "All this impermissible danger floating around in me, so boiling, so exhausting. I can't

The tension heightens when the majority institution is an academic community, where collegiality is a virtue. Each member of a faculty is judged in part on the basis of whether she or he contributes to collegiality or detracts from it. Collegiality is often a factor in the tenure decision. Yet, the very appearance of new, "diverse" people on faculties signals the loss of an older academic community. Faculty members once took for granted the presence of certain homogeneities of race, gender, sexual orientation, and the rest within their community. Minorities in academia sometimes feel themselves to be a threat to collegiality not only in their actions but in their very existence.¹⁰

B. Education Work

At a faculty cocktail party, someone mentions that I sing, and a colleague happily rambles on about all the "colored gals" he has known throughout his life who are musical, asking whether I know each one. Another asks me if I have a good recipe for barbecue sauce.¹¹

There are many ways to respond to these casual remarks. In some responses, the expression of my feelings is paramount: a silent glare, a cutting remark. In other responses, the preservation of the relationship is paramount: I say nothing at all, or laugh lightly and change the subject. Finally, there are the responses through which I try to balance my concern for the relationship with my self-regard. The remark leads to a long, sometimes painful, conversation about racism, sexism, and academic collegiality.

kill. I can't teach everyone. I can't pretend it doesn't bother me; it eats me alive. There is no place to dump this toxic rage." Williams, *supra* note 6, at 2150.

10. The tension that "diverse" faculty members, especially the untenured, feel around the issue of collegiality is often intense. "Collegiality" often feels like a command to assimilate at all costs. Marina Angel writes that "[i]f a faculty member doesn't enjoy the little jokes told about women in the faculty lounge, if she is not interested in the latest football ratings, if she doesn't drink beer with the boys, if she doesn't join the Friday afternoon poker games in the faculty lounge, she is not collegial." Angel, *Women in Legal Education: What It's Like to Be Part of a Perpetual First Wave or the Case of the Disappearing Women*, 61 TEMP. L. REV. 799, 831 (1988). Complete assimilation, even if attempted, may be impossible. See Moran, *Commentary: The Implications of Being a Society of One*, 20 U.S.F. L. REV. 503 (1986). "The unusual, and often highly politicized, status of the few minority and women professors on law faculties will frequently thwart assimilation, even if these individuals attempt to acculturate themselves to traditional roles." *Id.* at 509.

11. These incidents have been fictionalized to protect the innocent. For true-life examples of bigotry, unintentional and otherwise, ask any of your minority friends for their favorite horror stories, or see, *e.g.*, Angel, *supra* note 11; Lawrence, *supra* note 5.

Trying to respond to perceived bigotry and affirm the relationship at the same time is doing education work. When I do education work, I neither stay within the boundaries of casual conversation simply for the sake of "making nice," nor cross them simply for the sake of protecting myself. Education work is education. I want my colleague to learn something about me and about her/himself. Education work is also work. It is practically, emotionally, and morally burdensome. In the next two sections, I offer some thoughts about the theory and practice of education work.

II. THE THEORY OF EDUCATION WORK

My colleague asks me for a recipe for barbecue sauce. I respond both by recognizing his attempt to be friendly and by letting him know that his seemingly well-meaning question carries with it overtones of racism and sexism. What do I hope to achieve by this response? One of the goals of doing education work is to persuade my colleague that there is a different way to visualize the world that unmask his question as hurtful, not harmless. More importantly, I want to persuade him that he should not only respect, but adopt this different world view. It is conversion, not conversation, that interests me.¹² Behind this cocktail party exchange lurks a question of epistemology: On what basis and on what right do I rest my claim of persuasion?

I could be appealing to some notion of rational and objective Truth through which his statement is empirically verified as wrong. Empiricism can be a useful tool to challenge bigotry,¹³ but in this situation such an approach might deteriorate into a factual argument about whether black people tend to eat or prepare more barbecued food than others; whether women are more likely to collect recipes than men; or whether there are so few black chanteuses in the world that they all probably know each other. Winning such an argument by demonstrating my colleague's premises to be false

12. Cf. Massaro, *Empathy, Legal Storytelling, and the Rule of Law: New Words, Old Wounds?*, 87 MICH. L. REV. 2099, 2113 (1989). Massaro argues that the call in recent legal scholarship for more "empathy" on the part of decisionmakers represents not just the demand that new, previously disenfranchised voices be heard, but that they prevail. "This is not a call to conversation; it is *convert-sation*." *Id.*

13. See Bartlett, *Feminist Legal Methods*, 103 HARV. L. REV. 829, 871 (1990). "Feminist rational/empiricism has begun to expose the deeply flawed factual assumptions about women that have pervaded many disciplines, and has changed, in profound ways, the perception of women in this society." *Id.*

and his question irrational would not be enough.

As an alternative, I could argue that he should accept my perspective because, as a black woman, I have been victimized by the power relations of both race and gender, and that this experience of oppression gives me access to knowledge that my colleague, as a white man, can never possibly have.¹⁴ Yet, although my standpoint as a member of various subordinated groups may give me a unique perspective on the world, I do not understand it to give me a superior perspective.¹⁵ Thus, on this ground the best I can do is relativism—I'm OK, you're OK. Moreover, resting my claim to truth on my victimized status has a peculiar effect on the relationship between my colleague and me. Because our different positions in the power relations of race and gender have become insurmountable obstacles, we are farther apart, not closer together, when the conversation ends. Our distinct positions are barriers to knowledge as well as power.¹⁶

How can I justify asking my colleague to respect *and* adopt my perspective on the world? I do not think it is proper to justify this requirement by claiming that I possess knowledge inaccessible to him. He can respect and adopt my perspective of the world using knowledge that is within his grasp, but which is obscured by the distortions of power relations and the interplay of power and knowledge.

Many theoreticians have argued that power and knowledge are intertwined.¹⁷ Groups with political power use that power, both consciously and unconsciously, to shape what it is that "everybody knows."¹⁸ But there is another, more subtle effect of the relation-

14. Katharine Bartlett identifies this position as "standpoint epistemology." *Id.* at 873.

15. *See id.* at 875.

16. *See id.* at 876. This claim to truth also plays into the belief that all members of particular subordinated groups are interchangeable, which leads to the notorious majority requests for "the black perspective" or "the women's perspective." *See id.* at 873-74. *Cf.* Williams, *supra* note 6, at 2143-46 (discussing the inadequacy of the view that all standpoints have their unique goodness).

17. *See, e.g.,* M. FOUCAULT, *POWER/KNOWLEDGE: SELECTED INTERVIEWS AND OTHER WRITINGS 1972-77* (S. Hand trans. 1980); C. MACKINNON, *supra* note 3.

18. For example, Catharine MacKinnon argues that pornography is a practice through which a politically powerful group—men—shapes "what everybody knows" about a subordinated group—women. *See* C. MACKINNON, *supra* note 3, at 195-214. "Men's power over women means that the way men see women defines who women can be: Pornography is that way." *Id.* at 197.

The study of "what everybody knows" and how it is shaped by power relations goes by the rubric of "ideology." For a careful theoretical discussion of ideology in critical theory,

ship between power and knowledge. This effect concerns what W.E.B. DuBois called "double-consciousness."¹⁹ People who are members of minority groups have access to at least two perspectives and ways of being—the public world of the dominant group and the more private world of the minority subculture.²⁰ Belonging to more than one subculture increases the various perspectives on the world that one can gather, compare, and contrast. In addition, one has access to more social knowledge.

In this sense, political subordination creates an unexpected asymmetry of knowledge. People who are multicultural, happily or not, find themselves with multiple ways of knowing.²¹ People who belong to the dominant culture only gain access to these different worlds with difficulty. They may find themselves aware of a limited number of perspectives. My claim to truth, therefore, does not rest on my standpoint as a properly credentialed victim. Rather, it rests upon my ability to comprehend both my colleague's perspective and my own, a comprehension which my colleague does not share. My anger baffles him. I am shocked but not surprised by his ignorance.

This basis for my claim to truth avoids stigmatizing him as individually evil or stupid. Such deformations of knowledge are the social consequences of political subordination. My claim also avoids asserting that my colleague, as a white male, is somehow congenitally unable to comprehend my experience. Rather, my boundary-crossing, my effort at education work, becomes a hopeful political act aimed at change. It becomes an attempt to do battle with subordination not by redistributing power, but by redistributing knowledge.²²

see J. THOMPSON, *STUDIES IN THE THEORY OF IDEOLOGY* (1984).

19. W.E.B. DuBois, *THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK* 3 (1953).

20. See generally *id.* Sometimes the distinctions between dominant culture and subculture are vividly marked: by language, for example. Sometimes the distinctions are more subtle, as in lesbian or gay culture.

21. See Williams, *On Being the Object of Property*, 14 *SIGNS* 5, 6-7 (1988) (describing the sometimes painful effort to come to terms with both her white and black ancestors); Scales-Trent, *Commonalities: On Being Black and White, Different, and the Same*, 2 *YALE J. OF L. & FEMINISM* 305, 305 (1990). "Looking at all my work, I now understand that I have been working at the intersection of race and sex because I exist at the intersection of race and color, and because I understand, in a very profound way, that in order for me to exist, I must transgress boundaries." *Id.*

22. This claim to knowledge is consistent with the epistemological perspective that Bartlett calls "positionality." Bartlett, *supra* note 14, at 880. She describes positionality as follows:

III. THE PRACTICE OF EDUCATION WORK

In practice, education work is *work* as well as *education*. The practical burdens of doing education work stem from the reformist's dilemma—in order to be taken seriously by the “target” community, you must first become a part of it.²³ For a “diverse” member of a collegial body, the calculations involved, both on the side of credibility and on the side of challenge, are many and subtle.

Trying to be credible is an exercise in self-consciousness. Can I afford to wear a short skirt, or have my hair braided, or will that call too much attention to my “difference”? Are my clothes too frivolous or too severe? Is my conversational style too deferential or too aggressive?²⁴ Credibility sometimes means avoiding “sensitive” issues like race and gender in order to remain one of the group,²⁵ even though those issues may be foremost in my consciousness.

On the challenge side, I must judge whether education work is appropriate, or whether the behavior I want to react to was simply a show of open hostility. There is no point in doing education work with hateful people. There is no valuable relationship to preserve. I must consider issues of timing. Is this the right moment to speak up? Do I have enough credibility to make a challenge? I must

Because knowledge arises within social contexts and in multiple forms, the key to increasing knowledge lies in the effort to extend one's limited perspective. Self-discipline is crucial. My perspective gives me a source of special knowledge, but a limited knowledge that I can improve by the effort to step beyond it, to understand other perspectives, and to expand my sources of identity.

Id. at 881-82 (footnotes omitted). From a positional perspective, my efforts to do education work with my colleague represent a gift to him: the opportunity to add another piece, however small, to the puzzle. They are therefore worthy of the term “education.”

23. For a discussion of this dilemma in the context of racial struggle, see Crenshaw, *Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law*, 101 HARV. L. REV. 1331 (1988).

24. The task is made all the more difficult by the lack of uniform standards of judgment. Writing about women trying to “fit in” at male-dominated professional institutions, Deborah Rhode notes dryly, “[H]ow to seem ‘demure but tough’ is particularly difficult when standards vary among those whose opinions are most critical.” Rhode, *supra* note 10, at 1189.

25. See Williams, *supra* note 6, at 2147. Williams refers to Dr. Alvin Pouissant, who suggests that blacks who end up discussing race with whites in social settings should “[d]efuse the situation; devise a way of getting out of it very quickly. Develop some humorous responses . . . and take charge by steering the conversation in another direction.” *Id.* (quoting Williams, *Uneasy Mingling: When Small Talk at Parties Tackles Large Racial Issues*, N.Y. Times, Oct. 21, 1988, at A15, col. 1).

judge the manner of my challenge. Will anger or soft words be more effective with this person? Finally, I must ask myself whether I have the resources to handle one more confrontation today, or whether it is time to save my strength and go home. The dangers of burnout for "diverse" faculty members are all too real.²⁶

The emotional stress of education work is the stress of ambivalence. The "self-presentation" work²⁷ we do to appear credible feels false. We want to be accepted, difference and all. At the same time, constantly challenging affronts is tiring and alienating. Moreover, the act of playing the game is not simply an act. If we did not want to be accepted by this existing community, we would not be in the institution. Yet, we must temper this recognition with the realization that acceptance into the existing community will never be total. In a sense, doing education work means sacrificing an existing community for the sake of a future community not yet in being. Thus, doing education work means feeling torn. We simultaneously reject the group and question being part of it. We simultaneously try to assimilate and try to challenge community norms. We simultaneously feel true and false to ourselves.

Education work is an activity fraught with moral tensions as well. Some of these tensions are personal. For example, there is the danger of becoming "coopted" in the effort to fit in.²⁸ There is also the danger of becoming humorless, paranoid, a professional victim. Other moral tensions relate to the enterprise itself. For instance, a persistent objection to education work is the unjustness of the bur-

26. Minorities in majority institutions are also constantly faced with the realization that time spent doing education work with our majority colleagues is time taken away from our communities of origin, who need our skills and leadership. The time pressures of trying to serve both the majority institution and the minority subculture are intense. See Brooks, *Life After Tenure: Can Minority Law Professors Avoid the Clyde Ferguson Syndrome?*, 20 U.S.F. L. REV. 419, 422-23 (1986).

27. See generally E. GOFFMAN, *THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE* (1959).

28. Marina Angel describes the "Queen Bee" syndrome among women law faculty members:

Some of the women who survived the hiring and tenuring processes did so because they adopted a male style or one that was not threatening to male faculty members. These women are on the faculty because they are 'one of the boys' or serve as a cheerleader for the boys. The label 'Queen Bee' has been used to describe this type of senior woman. She made it, and she is enjoying the perks of being 'the only' or 'the most senior' woman on the faculty. She does not want competition from other women. . . . Male faculty members often look to this woman for assurance that what they are doing is right, that they are not discriminating against women.

Angel, *supra* note 11, at 831 (footnote omitted).

den. It is unfair that minorities must do the work both of assimilating to and altering the community. This is particularly true because our exclusion is not our fault but rather the fault of the community that excluded us in the first place. Why is it that minorities are held responsible both for our own salvation and for that of our oppressors? Majority members of the institution often treat education work as their right but our duty.

Moral qualms may also arise around the issue of whether minorities should share the knowledge they obtain from experience in a subculture. Such qualms arise because minorities purchase that knowledge only with great pain. For example, in Steve Tesich's play, *The Speed of Darkness*,²⁹ a Vietnam veteran who is now a hero refuses to discuss the war with anyone who did not fight in it. He refuses because he acquired the knowledge only through great suffering, and believes he should not give it up for free. Perhaps some of the knowledge that comes from subordination, particularly the knowledge that comes from pain and humiliation, is too deep, real, and precious to share with someone who has not been there.

The practical, emotional, and moral burdens of doing education work are heavy. Above all, though, the political payoff of education work is uncertain. As Kim Crenshaw has pointed out, working within a system always carries with it the side effect of strengthening the system.³⁰ Audre Lorde argues that between black and white women, anger at racist behavior and remarks can be the catalyst for real and lasting change.³¹

Every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being. Focused with precision, it can become a powerful source of energy serving progress and change. And when I speak of change, I do not mean a simple switch of positions or a temporary lessening of tensions, nor the ability to smile or feel good. I am speaking of a basic and radical alteration in those assumptions under-

29. S. TESICH, *THE SPEED OF DARKNESS* (unpublished).

30. See Crenshaw, *supra* note 24, at 1367. "People can only demand change in ways that reflect the logic of the institutions that they are challenging. Demands for change that do not reflect the institutional logic—that is, demands that do not engage and subsequently reinforce the dominant ideology—will probably be ineffective." *Id.*

31. A. LORDE, *The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism*, in *SISTER OUTSIDER* 124 (1984).

lining our lives.³²

Yet, on the other hand, Richard Delgado argues that ultimately such attempts at interpersonal education are worth very little. Racism, for example, may be too deeply entrenched in the lives and psyches of whites for social contact to ameliorate it.³³ Instead of trying to change the hearts and minds of white people, people of color should simply work to maximize the formality of settings in which whites and people of color interact, avoiding "intimate, unguided settings where highly charged interracial encounters can take place."³⁴ Delgado adds:

Little of this will surprise minority readers. We know by a kind of instinct that there are times when our white friends can be trusted and times when they cannot. We know that there are occasions—when the flag is flying, the bands are playing, and public values are foremost in everyone's minds—when we are comparatively safe, and that there are other occasions when we must be careful.³⁵

In light of the pervasiveness and persistence of group subordination in this country, it is difficult to reject this position entirely. It resonates deeply with our experience as minorities.

CONCLUSION

I suspect that there is no answer to the question whether there is a final payoff for education work. Should we therefore refuse to engage in it? Why undertake the burdens of education work without a sure reward? There are several reasons for minorities in majority institutions to undertake education work.

32. *Id.* at 127.

33. Delgado describes "social contact" theory as the theory that "prejudice arises from the individual's mistaken belief that minority group members hold beliefs and values different from one's own. Consequently, the belief may be dispelled through demonstration, via close contact, that it is erroneous." Delgado, *The Ethereal Scholar: Does Critical Legal Studies Have What Minorities Want?*, 22 HARV. C.R.-C.L. L. REV. 301, 317 n.100 (1987).

34. *Id.* at 318.

35. *Id.* Frances Ansley identifies this position as an "unmodified race model." Ansley, *supra* note 1, at 1048. "The aim of this strategy is not white conversion or education (an apparently hopeless task), but black protection. It rejects strategies that involve risk for blacks in the hope that whites can be redeemed. . . . It presumes that prospects for deeper transformation (personal or societal) are dim." *Id.* at 1046 (footnote omitted).

Such resigned separatism is harder to contemplate in the context of gender, because many feminist women desire close psychological and sexual relationships with men. Yet, the recent surge of self-help books and other popular literature on heterosexual relationships seem to attest to acute, if not chronic, problems between men and women.

First, we have a duty to ourselves to engage in education work. There are several ways to respond to our multiple perspectives and multiple selves. We can compartmentalize them, which does nothing to challenge the social practices that continue to deform knowledge along lines of power. We can also try to treat one life as more important than another, thus betraying a part of ourselves. Or we can try to enrich each perspective with the others we possess, and work to develop new perspectives. We can do this not with the goal of achieving perfect unity, but with the goal of gaining creative energy and intellectual enlightenment from the clash of different cultures, languages, and values.³⁶ This third choice requires education work, because it requires that one remain in community with people from different perspectives in order to learn from them. I cannot be a real colleague to my colleague unless I challenge his or her way of looking at the world with my own way of looking at the world. To the extent that I wish to grow from our friendship, I must embark on the process of education.

Second, we "diverse" faculty members have a duty to those who will follow us. To the extent that we feel ourselves bound to the cause of ending subordination, we must work to challenge bigotry in private as well as in public. Yet, we must also do so in such a way as to make life easier, not harder, for our younger, newer minority colleagues in majority institutions. When we widen the boundaries of our respective communities, we make room for our future colleagues as well.

Finally, we owe a duty to do education work to the ideal community we are trying to realize. We would not have entered majority institutions if we did not believe to some extent in the idea of collegiality, the notion of a community of scholars and friends. If we interact in the communities we find without ever trying to transform them, we are not living up to the ideal we have set for ourselves. We must realize, however, that collegiality is a problematic value. We must keep asking the questions: Upon whose silence does the collegiality of a community rest? To what extent should

36. Williams writes:

It is this perspective, the ambi-valent, multivalent way of seeing that is, I think, at the heart of what is called critical theory, feminist theory, and the so-called minority critique. It has to do with a fluid positioning that sees back and forth across boundary, that acknowledges that in certain circumstances I can be black and good and black and bad, and that I can also be black and white, male and female, yin and yang, love and hate.

Williams, *supra* note 6, at 2151.

we tolerate and encourage disruptions of the current community in the name of a better and stronger future community?

There are several practical consequences of this analysis. One conclusion is that the burden of doing education work should be lifted from the shoulders of "diverse" faculty members whenever possible. This is because the responsibility of doing education work belongs with people with breadth of experience and wisdom rather than people of a certain hue, gender, or sexual orientation.³⁷ People who desire education should not look exclusively to "diverse" colleagues for instruction in the experience of subordination, nor should they expect education as their due. If education work is a duty, it is not simply a duty that we owe directly to majority colleagues; it is a more complex obligation to self, to future generations, and to a community not yet in being.

Beyond these conclusions is simple faith. Education work is profoundly optimistic. It rests on the assumption that everyone prefers more comprehensive knowledge to less. The more knowledge we gain, the more we agree on what the right thing is. People will do the right thing when the choice becomes clear. The presence of so many minorities in majority institutions who are trying to do this work despite its burdens attests to the strength of this faith.

37. Stephanie Wildman quotes Sheila O'Rourke as saying "she 'tries to practice on other people's oppression.' So if someone says something racist, she as a white person tries to speak out. She hopes others will also speak out so that she won't be surrounded by silence when the remark is sexist or homophobic." Wildman, *The Classroom Climate: Encouraging Student Involvement*, 4 BERKELEY WOMEN'S L.J. 326, 334 (1989-1990) (footnote omitted) (quoting *Mini-Workshop on Sexism, Racism, Classism, and Heterosexism: A Close Look at our Biases in the Law School Classroom* (tape recording, December 1985, New Orleans, sponsored by the Society of American Law Teachers and the Association of American Law Schools Sections on Gay and Lesbian Legal Issues, Minority Groups, and Women in Legal Education)).

