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Felt Understandings: Talking About Race in College Classrooms

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**FELT UNDERSTANDINGS: TALKING ABOUT RACE IN COLLEGE
CLASSROOMS**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

SOCIOLOGY
with an emphasis in FEMINIST STUDIES

by

Christie G. McCullen

September 2017

The Dissertation of Christie G. McCullen is
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Abstract

Felt Understandings: Talking about Race in College Classrooms

Christie G. McCullen

This dissertation addresses the difficulties of conversations about race in

multicultural contexts, specifically in social science, writing, and theater classrooms.

While previous literature has attributed such difficulties to discursive framing issues

and divergent identity-based attitudes, beliefs, knowledges, and feelings, this study

understands those difficulties as also shaped by affects and public feelings of race

(i.e., ineffable feelings, named emotions, and sensations that exist both at and above

the level of the individual body and social subject). As such, it develops

understandings of race, affect, and pedagogy both theoretically and empirically, using

data-driven analysis of ethnographic field notes from eight classrooms, 45 interviews

of students and instructors, and 181 qualitative surveys of students.

First, this study demonstrates how discourses about race are inextricably tied

to feelings about race—feelings that are both expressed by racialized individuals and

that circulate with particular ideas about race at the cultural level. The term "affect-

discourse" is used to account for that mutual formation of affects and discourses.

Second, by comparing the qualities of conversations about race in different classroom

settings, this study shows that pedagogies shape the reach and transformation of

affect-discourse in micro-sociological contexts. Students in these classrooms both

reproduce the impasses and difficulties noted in public conversations about race in

mass media and move through those impasses, creating new forms of coalitional

bonds and publics. Third, this study documents what the discursive and affective

characteristics of race talk look like in an era proclaimed as "post-race" by some,

specifically as that race talk manifests in a racially-diverse and politically liberal

college campus in California.

For Sara, who made great stories

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Chapter 1 – Introduction: Feelings and stalled conversations about race

Field note

There is a short scene in Ava DuVernay's documentary *13ᵗʰ* (2016) that encapsulates the thrust of this study: that feelings (i.e., affect and emotion) shape the reproduction and transformation of racism. The scene overlays quotes and footage from Donald Trump's presidential campaign rallies (in February and March 2016, specifically) with historical footage from the Jim Crow and Civil Rights Movement eras. More specifically, the quotes that DuVernay used were Trump's responses to #BlackLivesMatter protesters (who verbally disrupted his rallies to criticize the racist rhetoric he used throughout his campaign) and Trump's white supporters (who physically assaulted some of those Black protesters). The scene opens with several shots of white Trump supporters shoving Black protestors around and then breaks to an old clip of an angry white mob pushing a sole Black man down the street. As black-and-white footage shows the mob push the man to the ground, Trump's words are voiced over this old image: "Knock the crap outta them, would you? Seriously. Get 'em outta here." Somber music plays for a moment as the scene toggles back and forth between the historic tape and tape of the Trump rallies, both with angry white groups pushing Black people around with increasing force and contempt. Trump's voice returns over the historic shot and says, "In the good ole days this [Black protestors disrupting rallies] doesn't happen because they used to treat them very, very rough. And when they protested once they would not do it again so easily." As Trump's words "I'd like to punch 'em in the face" plays, a white man in an historic tape punches the Black man in the back of the head and knocks him to the ground. The scene sharply cuts to more historical footage of a white man punching a Black man in the face and knocking him to the ground. You can hear the sound of the impact as the man falls back from the blow. As the audio from that old footage continues with the sound of someone yelling, "You are arrested," the scene cuts to a white Trump supporter elbowing a Black protester in the face. Trump's voice returns: "I love the old days. You know what they used to do to guys like that when they were in a place like this? They'd be carried out on a stretcher, folks." The cheers of his supporters play loudly, overlaying a series of shots of Civil Rights Movement protesters being trampled by police offices with batons and carried out on stretchers (by fellow Black protesters not medical technicians). Again, Trump's words are voiced over historic footage of angry white mobs pulling Black protesters off of their seats at a lunch counter sit-in: "In the good ole days, they'd rip him out of that seat so fast." The historic and contemporary shots alternate quickly, flipping back and forth between police shoving Black Civil Rights protestors and angry white Trump supporters pushing Black protesters out of rallies. It's a textbook illustration of contempt and callousness—of racial

animus that is just as contemporary as it is bygone. Trump's voice continues: "In the good ole days, law enforcement acted a lot quicker than this." Again, the historic and contemporary shots swing back and forth, consistently showing white police offices and security guards carrying Black protestors away. The scene cuts to video of a Richard Nixon campaign rally where he pledges enforcing "law and order" and then shows a mass of young Black protestors behind bars. The words "law & order" appear on the screen in front of Coretta Scott King and Martin Luther King, Jr. leading a march. The scene returns to Trump, standing behind a podium as he slowly emphasizes, "I am the law and order candidate." Again, the words "law & order" appear on the screen, this time in front of a group of young #BlackLivesMatter protestors leading a march. Even though the contrast between grainy, black-and-white footage and full-color, high-definition footage suggests a sort of temporal progress, the words of Trump, the cheers from his supporters, and the resemblance of racial dynamics tells a different story, one of sustained pain, denigration, contempt, and sorrow. The feelings animating each scene are uncanny.

Feelings, impasses, and the reproduction of racism

Ava DuVernay's documentary *13th* (2016) examines the life of the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution, an amendment that formally outlawed slavery yet upheld its legality when it served as punishment for a crime. Because of this legal articulation between forced labor and delinquency, blackness and criminality have co-constructed one another since the ratification of the 13th Amendment. As such, anti-Black racism has shifted from convict leasing and Black Codes into The War on Drugs and Predictive Policing (Alexander 2010, Omi & Winant 1994). Therefore, instead of simply telling a story of racial progress, *13th* chronicles the "logic" of anti-black racism (Smith 2012), demonstrating the ways that it reconfigures and transmogrifies through time to reproduce racism in less explicit—and even unintentional—ways (Perry 2011). That is, even though there is no language in the law that explicitly mandates racial discrimination (like Jim Crow did), racial

inequality, especially in the form of mass incarceration, is still accomplished through the enforcement of laws (especially those created through The War on Drugs) (Alexander 2010).

13th is essentially an argument about what sociologists call "structure," "institutional racism," and "racial formation"—the ways in which institutional policies and practices, ideologies, representations, and social movements combine to produce, reproduce, and transform racial inequality (Omi & Winant 1994). Stylistically, 13th mirrors the conventions of many documentary films by weaving together the words of experts—"talking heads"—to develop its own argument. And because DuVernay relies upon social scientist experts to explain the workings of racism through the methods they use to "know" about race (e.g., through historical comparison, observation, surveys, interviews), 13th also resembles sociological methods of telling stories (Becker 2007, Gordon 1997).

But explicating the links between institutional policies and practices, ideologies, representations, and social movements isn't the only way that 13th tells the story of race's persistent, yet shapeshifting, structure. As the scene above demonstrates, 13th also tells the story of structure through feelings, affects and emotions that transcend time and that are more than the possession of individuals. In scenes like the one outlined above, 13th's focus on emotionality is not only important because it makes an examination of structure more compelling, but also because it paints a more detailed picture of how race's structure is legitimated and challenged, recognized and hidden, sustained and transformed. Feelings are not simply responses

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to structure, they are also integral to its mechanics, its form and function (Ahmed 2004, Berlant 1997, Holland 2012). Love, hatred, grief, anger, shame, hope, fear, and anguish—to name a few—play a pivotal role in the production, reproduction, and transformation of race and racism (Ahmed 2004, Holland 2012). The images and quotes pieced together in the scene above demonstrate some of the ways that feelings shape both structure and the experience of structure by its subjects.

Structure reproduces and transforms because of subject's agency, and feelings also shape that agency. In the case of #BlackLivesMatter, feelings have shaped the unlawful killings that inspired the movement (e.g., fear of Black men in civilian's and police officer's implicit bias (Greenwald & Krieger 2006). Moreover, feelings have shaped the rise of #BlackLivesMatter (e.g., indignation from repeated, unlawful deaths without justice served to the killers and victim's family). But it would be a mistake to conclude that those feelings of grief and indignation are simply direct responses to the killings; while they are immediate responses to recent deaths by police for sure, they are more than that too. Those feelings are also "ghostly," evocative of past Black deaths that resurface in the present (Gordon 1997). The specific incidents of killings today retrigger prior deaths, conjuring up a much longer history—and contemporary continuation—of forced labor, lynching, and dehumanization (Gordon 1997, Gray 2015). As the scene from *13th* demonstrates, feelings link the past and present, illuminating the repetition of anti-Black racism's logic and sustained suffering through time. And what is more, these feelings exceed the legal categories of race (which suggest equal protection under the law). When the

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legal language of rights and entitlements suggest historical progress of full racial equality—despite the continuation of brutal subjugation of Black people—melancholic feelings emerge, conjuring feelings of grief that cannot be assuaged by formal grievances (Cheng 2001). The Guardian (2016) and Washington Post's (2017) running death tolls of killings by police not only reflect this melancholia, but their recirculation through social media constantly reminds people of the killings, making it hard to forget and accumulating the reasons to grieve. Often too much to bear, this set of factors reproduces and amplifies melancholia. Perhaps those feelings also produce a sense that something must change, motivating people to join movements that resist the reproduction of racism (Gould 2009). Perhaps they drive people further into their seat cushions, overwhelmed by the depth of our racial wounds.

  #BlackLivesMatter and violent Trump rallies are not the only emotionally-laden responses to Black killings by police; they are only the most polarized examples of how feelings shape responses to structural racial inequality. Moreover, disproportionate Black killings are one of many manifestations of structural racial inequality in the US. There are many other materializations of racism and a multitude of complicated and ambiguous feelings in between those extremes (e.g., indifference, guilt, apathy, despondence, confusion, shame). What action (or lack of action) those feelings inspire is not clear and who has those feelings doesn't necessarily map neatly onto identity (e.g., not all whites express the contempt that those shown in the footage of Trump rallies do). Feelings that shape race are as complicated as our racial landscape is—more diverse than black and white, layered with intersectional

implications and identities (e.g., gender, sexuality, class, religion, nationality, ability, political affiliation, region), and inflected with discourses celebrating diversity (Brown 2006, Ward 2008). Race relations look really different now, and yet at times like those illustrated in *13th* scene, they look eerily similar.

But one thing that unites most issues of structural racial inequality is the characteristics of our national conversations about them. These conversations, as they take place in mainstream media, usually revolve around controversies such as police shootings, celebrity faux paus or protests, or legal cases asserting "reverse racism," etc. The controversies spawn a debate, but the debates are rarely resolved, stalling at predictable impasses (i.e., the inability to think about race outside of intentional actions of racist individuals, the "post-race" belief that racism was fixed by the Civil Rights Movement, the sense that if a person of color has a roll in perpetuating racist practices than the issue is not influenced by race, the reduction of complicated issues into neat binaries of black and white, the assumption that what affects one group of color affects all groups of color, the manipulation of racial issues into partisan politics, the inability to see racism outside of spectacular manifestations of it) (Bonilla-Silva 2003, Hancock 2011, Perry 2011). Bonilla-Silva (2003) and Perry (2011) argue that these impasses result from faulty thinking, that we wrongly conceptualize racism as resulting from the intentionally malicious acts of racists.

But emerging literature in affect studies begs for elaboration on Bonilla-Silva's (2003) and Perry's (2011) arguments about why common impasses continue. This literature argues that affect (i.e., feelings, emotions, sensations) animates

discourse (Berlant 1997, Deleuze & Guatarri 1980), working in tandem with power-knowledge to shape bodies into subjects (Ahmed 2004) and hauntingly quell resistance (Gordon 1997). Racism, accordingly, has an "emotional lifeblood" that keeps reproducing its structure (Holland 2012). Moreover, affect literature argues that the racial controversies that play out in mainstream media, as well as stalled debates around them, pique, channel, and invite "public feelings" about race (Berlant 1997, Peterson 2011). For example, guilt, shame, and desires to be beyond race undergird assertions of a post-race era (Ahmed 2004, Holland 2012). I build off of this emerging literature in affect and race studies to add another layer of analysis to Bonilla-Silva's (2003) and Perry's (2011) arguments about why our conversations stall—the feelings that circulate with knowledge about race. Examining the role of affect and emotion can expand our understandings of why our national and local conversations across difference stall, and perhaps it can also indicate ways to subvert discourses that continually lead to impasses.

Feelings and impasses in classroom conversations about race

In order to examine the role of affect and emotion in stalled conversations about race, I investigate classroom conversations about race. Because public discourse conditions the way we talk and act in more localized contexts (Foucault 1975, Foucault 1976), the national conversations about race also condition the local ones we have in work, school, and community settings. Indeed, my own teaching experience, as well as journals and edited volumes on teaching about race (see, for

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example, Johns & Sipp 2004, Tusmith & Reddy 2002) confirm that the impasses of national conversations also materialize in college social science and humanities classrooms. In short, the essays and small studies that investigate these impasses diagnose discursive framing problems, point out students' dismissal and discrediting of facts, and analyze the correlations between particular beliefs, responses, and identities (Hancock 2011, Bonilla-Silva 2003, Myers 2005). In order to overcome these impasses in our classroom conversations about race, we aim to establish a common starting point, a base knowledge from which to collectively conceptualize and understand race. This common point is understanding race is a sociohistorical construct—a fictitious concept with real material consequences. Employing the bulk of literature on race that emphasizes historical contexts and structural inequality, we teach that race is a social construct that is interwoven into and contingent upon other social factors and fictions, and that people both refashion and unravel its contours and textures through the ideologies, policies, practices, and representations that they circulate (Omi & Winant 1994).

But, as essays and small studies about teaching about race indicate, deconstructing race does not necessarily mean that our academic conversations are free of trouble and immune to the impasses of national conversations about race. Nor can deconstruction fully address feelings about race. The anthropologist John Jackson (2010) writes that as scholars in the social sciences and humanities, we often wrongly assume that deconstructing race will "somehow inoculate us all against its most hazardous features, dull its sharpest talons" (85). Therefore, feelings condition both

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national and classroom conversations about race. As a relatively new field of interdisciplinary study, the affect literature lacks a stronghold of empirical evidence to verify its theoretical assertions. In order to investigate larger theoretical questions about the role that affect and emotion play in discourse and the reproduction of racism, this study focuses its empirical evidence on localized manifestations of national conversations about race—conversations in college classrooms.

Journals and edited volumes dedicated to pedagogy include a number of small studies and critical reflections on the difficulties of teaching about race in multicultural contexts, and even when those essays do not specifically analyze feelings, they often report that feelings play a role in those conversations and their impasses. This study will build off of the findings and reflections of those smaller studies and essays. For example, teachers notice a general stress and unease among students when talking about race (Gurin et al. 2013, Kumagai et al. 2007, hooks 2003, hooks 1994) and insensitivity toward women and people of color who express frustrations with racism and sexism (Bollag 2005). Conversations that include white students are often plagued by white resistance to learning about racial inequality and backlash against the instructors who teach that material, as well as students of color in the class (Matias 2014, Boatwright-Horowitz & Soeung 2009). Studies also show white students who dismiss the critical scholarship by people of color as unscientific, subjective, overly opinionated, and not intellectually rigorous (Sánchez-Casal 2002, Zentella 1995). Moreover, because student evaluations are considered in tenure assessments, such backlash can discipline teachers of color (Boatwright-Horowitz &

Soeung 2009). Even when white students welcome voices of people of color, decontextualized personal stories can teach students that only people of color are racialized and that white students have nothing to investigate about their experiences (Mohanty 2003), leading to an uneven voyeurism and vulnerability of students of color (Srivastava 1994). Bell & Golombisky (2004) outline several dilemmas faced by teachers aware of micro-level racial dynamics, such as how to "celebrate African-American women without reinforcing racist essentialisms" and "pre-empt poisonous voices without silencing" (294).

In short, classroom conversations about race are filled with feelings (e.g., tension, backlash, resistance, vulnerability) and their interactional dynamics mirror the impasses of national conversations about race. Moreover, all of this happens in settings where diversity, equity, and inclusion are celebrated in official documents of the university (Ahmed 2012, Ward 2008) and where the explicit goal is to have a different conversation about race, one that overcomes impasses and thinks beyond dominant discourses. This study follows in the footsteps of studies and teacher's reflections that report tension and impasses in classroom conversations about race by explicitly analyzing how feelings—affect and emotion—shape those conversations and their interactional effects. I investigate the following questions: How do emotional cultures of different classrooms affect how people talk and emote about race in front of others? How do the pedagogical practices of classrooms relate to those emotional cultures and thus shape the way that students talk and learn about race? How do public feelings about race condition not only those classroom

emotional cultures and pedagogies, but also the disciplinary knowledges we produce and that students absorb, co-construct, and resist?

What we know about difficulties in talking about race

When it comes to examining the difficulties, tensions, shortcomings, and impasses of talking about race in mixed groups, there are two approaches to understanding and analyzing the root of those issues and their interactional effects: 1) discursive and framing issues, and 2) diverging identity-based attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and feelings. In what follows, I will briefly outline these different approaches and what they have taught us a lot about why our interracial dialogues infrequently lead to greater understanding, compassion, and solidarity.

Discursive and framing issues

Discursive framing problems for conversations refer to the ways in which conversations are enabled and constrained by the disciplinary framing, terms, vocabulary, and narrative structure used to describe, locate, and analyze race and racism. Students of all racial backgrounds have trouble unlearning the racist ideologies that they have been socialized to believe (Forbes & Kaufman 2008, hooks 2003) and often blend anti-racist sociological narratives with more popular racist ideologies (Goldsmith 2006). Perhaps the most commonly cited tome about why conversations about race short-circuit because of discursive framing issues is Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's book *Racism without Racists* (2003). He argues that many people

(especially whites without direct experience of racism) think that racism results from drawing attention to race, and thus "not seeing color" will cause racism to crumble. But, as Bonilla-Silva (2003) points out, not seeing color also means not seeing inequality based on color, and thus allows racism to go unnoticed and unchallenged, a phenomenon he calls "colorblind racism." Because of predominant myths that construct the US as a just society (Tatum 1992), Bonilla-Silva (2003) also argues that mainstream discourses of race and accounts of American history have constructed racism as an individual phenomenon, or the collection of individuals who hold overtly bigoted attitudes and beliefs. Some anti-racist workshops also operate with this assumption, enhancing a sense that racism is an interpersonal phenomenon that we can be talked away (Srivastava 1994). Similarly, both popular culture and legal frameworks conceptualize racism as a collection of individual and intentional acts (Perry 2011). When many people conceptualize racism in these ways, they tend to think that racial justice will be achieved when those who intentionally act upon their racial antagonism and malice—"the racists"—are held accountable in court (Perry 2011) or ignored (Bonilla-Silva 2003). Such understandings circumscribe our conversations about race and racism, leading to facile understandings of their causes and effects. Moreover, when people with these colorblind or intentional understandings converse with people with more sociological understandings, they will have trouble finding a common knowledge base for dialogue. Because of this regular impasse, both Perry (2011) and Bonilla-Silva (2003) want to make structural understandings of inequality the common starting point. Many sociologists seem to

agree: *Racism without Racists* (Bonilla-Silva 2003) is now in its 4th edition and is widely assigned to undergraduates.

Impasses may also result because of diversity discourse and the varying understandings of race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism that it produces and proliferates in popular culture. Like colorblind discourses, these problems stem from varying attention paid to power and privilege. While democratic and anti-racist education frameworks emphasize an "insurgent multiculturalism" that scrutinizes whiteness and uneven racial power in the US (Giroux 1997), most mainstream, neoliberal discourses of multiculturalism flatten or ignore power differences between racial groups and often reduce racial inequality to "cultural" factors (Duggan 2003, Gordon & Newfield 1996, Ward 2008, Mamdani 2004). For example, "pluralist multiculturalism" is a domesticated, sanitized, entertainment and consumption-based multiculturalism that's ahistorical and apolitical, a celebratory form that reduces race and ethnic to cultural flavors by "bypasses[ing] power as well as history to suggest a harmonious, empty pluralism" (Mohanty 1993:42). Diversity discourse also emphasizes tolerance as a foundational value of multiculturalism (Brown 2006), giving students an expectation that talking about diversity with classmates should feel harmonious. But realizing harmony also requires a certain level of social amnesia (Steinberg, McLaren, & Kincheloe 2006). Moreover, such forms of multiculturalism often leave whiteness as unmarked category, and thus do not interrogate in its role in this hegemonic version of multiculturalism (Giroux & McLaren 1994, Mohanty 1993). When many students have been socialized by these discourses to believe that

the US is a just and post-race society, coming into contact with more insurgent, critical multiculturalisms in their classrooms can be jarring; they are likely to interpret the latter as overly political at best, and propaganda at worst (Sánchez-Casal 2002). Tensions between enjoyment, conflict, and discomfort also arise (hooks 1994).

Walter Benn Michaels (2006) critiques diversity culture's focus on cultural inequality rather than economic inequality. According to Michaels (2006), when conversation is framed around cultural inequality, we think that addressing racial inequality means *valuing* different cultural identities more than examining racism as a structure with economic roots. As such, valuing *who someone is* comes to matter more than *what they believe* (i.e., the ideologies they relay) or *what they have* (i.e., their class status). In conversations guided by affirmative action (i.e., focusing on the voices of people of color to make up for historical silencing), this can translate to valuing what people of color say more than whites, even if what a person of color says is conservative or what a white person says is anti-racist. Although I don't agree with the way Michaels pits race against class, his argument does draw our attention to the ways that diversity culture makes conversations about race confusing, especially to students who are just learning about how racism is constructed. They might wonder: Is everything that comes from a student of color critical of racism? If a person of color says it, does it mean that it's not racist? Can only white people be racist?

Unlike Michaels, Ward (2008) does not pit race (or culture) against class in her critique of diversity culture. She argues that diversity culture *both* raises critical

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consciousness about forms of inequality *and* hegemonically serves interests of elites[1].

Diversity culture confuses conversations about race and racism because its blatant

value of diversity can lead people to believe that they are adequately addressing

issues of race and racism because they are using language that explicitly expresses a

value of difference and a desire to address gaps and disparities. But because its

measures for diversity and equality rely too much upon bodily indexes of parity,

diversity culture does not necessarily push people to address the ways that race works

above the level of the body (i.e., structurally). Therefore, when diversity culture sets

the parameters for how a group of people can evaluate whether or not they are

addressing racism within their organization, it grants a vocabulary of proof and truth

claims to some people, but not to those who sense a racist logic that cannot be

measured by counting bodies (Ward 2008). Commonly, an impasse results.

Impasses also result from common discourses that only render inequality

legible through victimhood and injury. Accordingly, addressing inequality through

legal means requires groups to frame their claims through victimhood and grievance,

but this framing has also moved from the courts to popular culture (Berlant 1997,

Cheng 2001, Perry 2011). When framed this way, racism is understood as a zero-sum

game and thus the gains of one group can be seen as taking away or competing with

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[1] While it insists that inequality is antithetical to American values and operationalizes
that belief through programming that aims to diversify staffing, address gaps, and
increase access to particular products and services, its critical edge is dulled when it
links inclusion and equality to private gain (of profits, fundability, productivity, or
market access) and deflects attention from the practices of inequality that don't fit
within prescribed and celebrated diversity goals (Ward 2008).

another (Hancock 2011). From this discursive starting point, discussions often lead to two different dead-ends. One such impasse from focusing on injury is the individualizing of racism, leading people to believe that racist injury only exists if *all* individuals targeted by it express hurt or offense (Myers 2005). Moreover, if all individuals targeted do not claim injury, then injury gets cast as a choice rather than a condition. From that point, conversation devolves into questions of choice and sensitivity. Another dead-end stemming from injury discourses is a limited identity politics, one where group identities cohere around "wounded attachments" that cannot imagine a future beyond the injury (Brown 1993). When different groups with differing injuries engage in conversation about racism, they may also engage in *ressentiment*—"the moralizing revenge of the powerless" (Brown 1993:400)—or compete with one another for most oppressed. Hancock (2011) calls the latter phenomenon the "Oppression Olympics," a form of "intergroup competition and victimhood" that "prevent[s] recognition of common ground and frames of political solidarity (4).

Identity-based feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledges

In addition to discursive issues, multicultural conversations about race are often difficult and tense because of the different feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledges that participants bring to those conversations and develop as a result of those conversations. Because we live in a society where people are treated differently because of race, our individual and collective awareness (or lack thereof) is

differentially shaped by race (DuBois 1996, Frankenburg 1993, Hill Collins 2000, Tatum 1992). Lacking a common ground always challenges conversation, and although building a common understanding is often the explicit goal of multicultural conversations about race (Banks 1993), that common understanding is difficult to forge for the following reasons related to differing racialization processes.

First, in the US, people of all racial identities feel emotionally, mentally, and physically drained by interracial conversations (Blascovich et al. 2001, Clark et al. 1999). Some reason for fatigue is shared across racial lines. For example, residential and school segregation patterns keep whites and people of color largely separated and therefore discomfort can arise from that simple lack of familiarity (Tatum 2007). But most reasons for fatigue are specific to racial identity. People of all different racial backgrounds hold conscious and unconscious biases and judgments based on race (Greenwald et al. 1998), but whites are either in denial of their prejudices (Tatum 1992) and/or preoccupied with appearing prejudiced (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005, Vorauer & Kumhyr 2001), while Blacks are concerned with being targeted by prejudice or confirming stereotypes (Shelton et al. 2005). Cutting across race, people concerned with appearing middle-class worry about lacking the right vocabulary around diversity to succeed in that class performance (Ward 2008). From these preoccupied starting points, people of color put more effort into conversation to avoid confirming the stereotypes and prejudices of others (Shelton et al. 2005), while whites either avoid situations where they will be perceived as prejudiced (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005) or use a default strategy of "prejudice control" when taking part in

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interracial interactions (Richeson & Shelton 2007). Even whites who do not think of themselves as prejudiced exhibit signs of stress that indicate that they are concerned with self-control in interracial conversations. For example, white research subjects who did not consciously hold racist beliefs and attitudes, but who did score relatively high on implicit bias tests (Greenwald et al. 1998), performed aversion to interracial contact in non-verbal ways (i.e., avoiding eye contact). Not only did Black subjects pick up on those non-verbal cues from whites, but they also cited those cues as the reason for discomfort in their conversations with the white research subjects (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005).

Second, building common understanding through interracial dialogue is difficult because stress inhibits the mind's ability to engage in complex thinking needed to understand the complex machinations of race and racism. When people feel stressed by interracial contact, they are so consumed with self-regulation (i.e., self-control) that their cognitive abilities are compromised (Richeson & Shelton 2007). Whites do poorly on cognitive tests after just short interactions with Black researchers and vice versa for Blacks subjects with white researchers (Richeson & Shelton 2007). When race is emphasized before completing cognitive tests, Black students' concern with stereotype threat (i.e., confirming negative stereotypes) inhibits their cognitive function and negatively affects their test scores when compared to a control study (Steele & Aronson 1995). Because the simple act of interracial contact often leads to stress reactions that inhibit cognitive functioning, it is no wonder that multicultural classroom conversations that try to analyze complex

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arguments about race are often tense or filled with silence; students are both

preoccupied with their presentation of self (Goffman 1959) and cognitively impaired.

Third, many whites respond to fatigue from and difficulty with multicultural

conversations about race in ways that builds more tension, discomfort, and aversion

to those conversations for everyone involved. Because white folks rarely encounter

race-based stress in their everyday lives, they both expect racial comfort and have a

low threshold for race-based stress (DiAngelo 2011). To cope with their "white

fragility," whites respond to race-based stress with several common defenses (e.g.,

anger, guilt, disbelief, deferral) (DiAngelo 2011). For example, white students often

believe racism is only a matter of the past (Bonilla-Silva 2003, Eng & Han 2003) or

refuse to consider arguments that make them feel racially self-conscious, guilty,

exposed, and/or vulnerable (Davis 1992, DiAngelo 2011, Matias 2014, Davis 1992).

"Willful blindness" and "defiant ignorance" are two names given to this resistance-

as-disbelief, while "compassion deficit disorder" describes a callous effort to not be

affected by material that discusses injustice (Hancock 2011)[2]. These forms of white

resistance and backlash can also be disguised through normative classroom practices

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[2] Given the ubiquity of cell phone cameras, racial violence is now more readily
captured and circulated through both mainstream news media and social media.
Therefore, while patterns of racial and class segregation have kept whites and some
wealthy people of color from regularly bearing witness to racialized violence in the
past, those days are largely over. Future research should look into the effects that
more exposure to racialized violence has on whites and how they respond to those
effects. Backlash and callousness in response to #BlackLivesMatter protests certainly
suggests that some groups of whites double-down on willful blindness, defiant
ignorance, and compassion deficit disorder even after being exposed to footage of
police shootings of unarmed Black folks.

of critically examining arguments. For example, Zentella (1995) found that white students often dismiss critical scholarship by people of color as unscientific, subjective, overly opinionated, and not intellectually rigorous. Sánchez-Casal (2002) has also noted this white backlash. Not only does this resistance and backlash enhance the discomfort of difficult conversations, but it also undermines teaching objectives and works to reinstate normative whiteness through conversations that often aim to deconstruct it (DiAngelo 2011, Matias 2014).

Fourth, students' ability to learn through interracial dialogue is impaired by racist ideologies that differently affect students' sense of racialized self (Tatum 1997) and their attitudes and beliefs about one another (Dessel & Rogge 2008, Gurin et al. 2014, Hurtado 2005). For example, Nagda & Zúñiga (2003) found that students who only engaged with diversity curriculum through the general learning process (i.e., through lectures and papers) did not strongly understand the importance of race and how it shapes sense of self, nor did they gain dialogic skills needed to learn from people of different racial identities. Goldsmith (2006) found that when students were not asked to directly confront their racist ideologies, they enhanced those ideologies by blending selective content from course material with their pre-existing beliefs. Gurin et al. (2013) found that students cannot fully understand disciplinary content about racial formation and how it shapes everyday life without first learning how to listen carefully to one another and engage themselves personally (i.e., realize how their individual lives have been differentially shaped by race and the power implications of those differences). In order to do so, students need to develop a

positive sense of self and racial identity, and one not based in superiority, like white

supremacy or Asian model minority stereotypes (Tatum 1997). In particular, white

students have to recognize themselves as racialized subjects so that they can equally

engage with students of color in investigating the impact of race on their lives (Tatum

1992). Without this mutuality, diversity curriculum can lead to an uneven voyeurism

and vulnerability for students of color (Srivastava 1994), an act that not only builds

resentment in dialogue, but also normalizes whiteness (Narayan 1998). Students also

need help learning how to see others as they would like to be seen (hooks 1994,

Tatum 1997), and gaining dialogic skills that aid in understanding differences (e.g.,

active thinking, perspective taking, comfort communicating across difference,

inviting productive conflict, and bridging differences) (Nagda & Zúñiga 2003).

As a result of the aforementioned research, scholars of multicultural education

promote approaches that address attitudes and beliefs about the self and others in

addition to disciplinary explanations of racial formation (Dessel & Rogge 2008,

Gurin et al. 2014, Hurtado 2005). Gurin et al. (2014) have developed and tested the

effectiveness of the intergroup dialogue model, a model for multicultural

conversations about race that combines dialogue skill-building, metacognition, and

disciplinary content on racial formation. When students learn how to dialogue (i.e.,

embrace mutuality, receptivity, curiosity, recognition, and validation), they decrease

their defenses and report more positive experiences with diversity curriculum (Gurin

et al. 2014). Achieving these positive results is important not just for feel-good

results, but for interfering in the reproduction of racist ideologies, attitudes, beliefs,

and identity formation. A comprehensive review of varied approaches to multicultural education in colleges found that students who had a positive experience in them showed improvements in most of the cognitive, social, and democratic measures for multicultural skills and attitudes (Hurtado 2005). However, those who reported negative experiences scored lower on outcomes and were also more likely to develop strong racial identity through negative feelings toward other racial groups (Hurtado 2005).

Social psychologists have penned most of the aforementioned studies of how social forces commonly embroil and inhibit our efforts to build common understandings through interracial dialogue. Theoretically, social psychologists are concerned with the ways in which social conditions shape and are shaped by the internal landscape of individual people (i.e., their identifications, thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs). This approach, as evidenced above, has taught us a lot about how racial formation affects individual cognitive and emotional processes, shapes collective experiences and identities through those processes, and, in turn, impacts the ways in which differently-racialized subjects engage—or not—in conversation with one another. As such, social psychological approaches to feelings and the role they play in racial formation boil down to feelings as property of the self (albeit a self that can never be fully extricated from the social). Moreover, when social psychological approaches conceptualize feelings as collective, they do so by thinking of common feelings arising from patterns in racialized or gendered socialization (e.g., because white subjects have been socialized to think of themselves as "just human," being

associated with "the oppressor" may lead them to feel disbelief or irritation, and resist that association).

This social psychological approach to feelings is distinctive from an approach based on public feelings (Cvetkovich 2007, Cvetkovich 2012). By "public," this emerging literature on affect conceptualizes feelings as cultural or discursive phenomena in addition to an individual experience of emotion. Accordingly, feelings exist both in and above the level of the individual body. As such, public feelings exist and arise culturally rather than individually. Individuals may or may not personally report feeling public feelings, but those feelings nonetheless permeate popular culture and discourse, and thus condition how we understand, talk about, interact around, identify with, and feel about the social (Ahmed 2004, Berlant 1997, Cvetkovich 2007, Cvetkovich 2012). By animating discourse, power functions through an affective mode that is physically and psychically sensed but difficult to visually point out (Fleetwood 2011, Gordon 1997). Because of this inseparability of affect and discourse, I will often emphasize that inseparability by referring to "affect-discourse" throughout the reporting on this study. In the section that follows, I will briefly review emerging literature on that role that public feelings and affect play in race and racism. This literature informs my investigation of how public feelings also shape our multicultural conversations about race.

What we know less about: How public feelings affect race talk

Although not necessarily stemming from literature on affect and public feelings, there are a number of theoretical concepts that I understand to be describing public feelings about race: haunting (Gordon 2008), racial melancholia (Cheng 2001), racial paranoia (Jackson 2010), racial sincerity (Jackson 2005), racial melodrama (Williams 2001), aversive racism (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005), and the erotic life of racism (Holland 2012). In what follows, I will briefly review these concepts and speculate about how I think they condition and affect the challenges that arise in multicultural conversations about race.

Haunting is a public feeling—a cultural force—that shapes the structure and experience of race, including our conversations about race. The terms "haunting" or "ghostly matters" describe moments when "a repressed or an unresolved social violence makes itself known...directly or obliquely" (Gordon 2008:xvi). These erasures produce "absent presences," "traces," and "ghosts" whose existence is ineffable in language but affectively palpable in experience (Gómez-Barris & Gray 2010, Gordon 2008). Far from occasional, haunting is an everyday occurrence and an insidious social force that functions through indirect, affective modes of power and control[3]. The affective energy stirred by haunting becomes another "register of knowing" besides language that also produces material effects (Gómez-Barris & Gray

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[3] For example, Gordon (2008) argues that the power of disappearance is a ghostly one; it shapes and forces through blurring the lines between real and unreal, by undermining civilians' sense of a real, unquestionable ground on which to stand (e.g., "your child never existed"). Disappearance represses by turning what was once real into terrorizing ghosts who remind the haunted of the state's tyrannical power and violent capacities. Through disappearance, the state's power functions through "the affective mode in which haunting traffics" (Gordon 2008:127).

2010: xi). In conversation—and classroom conversations more so—language is the

currency of exchange. Therefore, when we consider that haunting constitutes not

only absent presences but another way of knowing that goes undiscussed in the

language available in the classroom, awkwardness and tension will likely result as

one such material effect. Moreover, because identity is shaped by ineffable qualities

from stories, memories, and myths (Hall 1996a), another material effect of haunting

is identification, and perhaps wounded attachments to identity (Brown 1993). Racial

identity is a common topic in classroom conversations about race, so without a

language to speak to the ghostly forces that imbue identification processes, students

will likely feel some "thing" not being addressed in conversation.

Like haunting, racial melancholia has developed because of the US's failed

attempts to fully address and heal racial wounds (Cheng 2001). This failure stems (in

part) from the cultural and legal assumption that collective grief (in its highly

personalized and ineffable forms) can be transformed into concrete grievances and,

ostensibly, litigated away. But because "grief" and "grievance" are not synonymous

terms, the grief of collective wounds can never be truly healed by legally addressing

grievances[4]. Racial melancholia emerges from that gap and refers to a collective

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[4] Our laws have addressed collective grievances, but grief exceeds those grievances
and begs for relief, attention, and healing (Cheng 2001). The law, in its cold and
disinterested language and praxis, does not assuage much of the various bodily
sensations we call "grief." With its focus on individual intention and accountability,
the law has limits in ensuring racial justice (Perry 2011). These limitations are
exacerbated by exclusions of quasi-citizens (e.g., felons, detainees, members of
highly surveilled neighborhoods) from full recognition of rights (Hartman 1997,
Perry 2011, Spivak 1999).

identification with loss (i.e., of full humanity, equality, or inclusion) and a despondent worldview regarding matters of race[5]. In the context of everyday racialized violence, even pleasure is circumscribed by and entangled with pain (Hartman 1997). To clarify, that identification with loss and despondent worldview is *collective*, a definitive marker of American culture that redevelops when collective grief continues to resurface—unhealed—and hauntingly attaches to contemporary cultural forms. Therefore, regardless of whether individuals personally claim melancholic feelings about race, racial melancholia blankets and shapes the parameters of multicultural conversations about race before they even start. *How* those public feelings specifically shape conversations about race has not been investigated in the literature but is something I aim to do in the context of college classrooms.

Multicultural conversations about race are also conditioned by "erotic" energies. Sharon Holland (2012) defines "the erotic life of racism" as an economy of feelings that lend affective attachment to structural relationships through quotidian practices (such as conversations about race). More specifically, race and racism gain cultural legitimacy through an economy of desires—wanting something from another in order to define the self (e.g., desiring recognition of full humanity, wanting one-

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[5] This despondent worldview is not solely related to race. The circulation of trauma narratives both reflects the existence of widespread depression and produces collective depression and public cultures based on it (Cvetkovich 2003). Collective and everyday despondence, anxiety, and numbness mark much of the public feelings that define late capitalism and the War on Terror (Cvetkovich 2012). Feel Tank Chicago also coined the term "political depression" to describe collective feelings of depression and fatigue that have arisen from ineffectiveness of direct action and critical theories.

way access to the other, wishing for a time after race, longing for pure heritage). In

an examination of Black cultural forms and practices, Jackson's (2005) concept of

racial sincerity describes a particular form of racial erotics (although he doesn't use

the term "erotic"). As opposed to desires for racial authenticity that are discursively

overdetermined, easily measured, and publicly policed, racial sincerity refers to

desires for recognition of racial "realness" that affectively registers and resonates but

also resists discursive management. Again, these erotic energies can be felt by

individuals, but they do not originate in individual bodies; they produce and are

produced by the very discourses that author ideas about racial difference and the

boundaries of that difference. When students enter a classroom to talk about race

with one another, they bring those desires with them and thus their conversations are

always already erotically charged with desires for certain types of recognition.

Perhaps the tension that we commonly expect and feel in multicultural conversations

about race—what Gurin et al. call "intergroup anxiety"—emerges from the fraught

quest to fulfill those desires.

The erotic life of racism also helps us understand why our conversations about

race feel so charged and shaped by a certain degree of "drama" (to use Millennial

parlance). That is, American culture has continually relied upon melodramatic

binaries of good and evil to understand race and grapple with its moral dilemmas

(Williams 2001). By deploying a logic of good and evil, racial melodrama calls upon

sentimentality to generate sympathies and antipathies, and condense complicated

racial formations into neat categories of individual victims and villains that keep

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reproducing historically-frozen race relations (e.g., the beaten Black man, the threatened white woman (Williams 2001), or perhaps, the "wounded attachments to identity" (Brown 1993)). In this way, racial melodrama is a "political pedagogy," a lesson in how people should think and feel about race (Peterson 2011). Students unknowingly bring this affective pedagogy to the classroom, and thus it conditions what unfolds in multicultural conversations about race. For example, when students say that their classes on race "hate on white people," they reduce complex theories of race into binaries of protagonists and antagonists. White guilt and resistance may be responses to students' importation of melodrama in the classroom.

Like haunting and melancholia, both the erotic life of racism and melodrama emphasize that the past looms heavy in present and that those haunting feelings push us to rely upon historically-frozen imaginations of race that affect how we talk about race within and across racial boundaries. As such, they circumscribe how we talk about race in the classroom because: 1) they more easily lend themselves to simplified notions of power (Williams 2001) and 2) they inspire constant disavowal (Holland 2012). In conversations about race, this disavowal presents itself as a desire to be elsewhere and thus an inability to be with what is. As Holland (2012) puts it, "Race talk always wants to be somewhere else: beyond black and white ("Can't we all get along?"); beyond the self ("I'm not a racist, but"); beyond the situation ("I wanted to say something, but") (32). Although we tend to think of desires as the possession of individuals, Holland (2012) argues that they are cultural and that both blacks and whites participate in disavowing during race talk in US. As a cultural

force, the erotic life of racism grants colorblind racism an affective power that fortifies that discourse and its influence in American culture. Both Bonilla-Silva (2003) and Michaels (2006) conclude that we need to replace students' hegemonic understandings of race and racism with structural explanations, but perhaps doing so is especially fraught because we're fighting an uphill battle against the erotic life of racism. Perhaps discursive issues described in the previous section would not produce as much tension, discomfort, and conflict in classroom conversations if it were not for the public feelings fueling them.

Last, tension and discomfort in multicultural conversations about race certainly stem from racial paranoia (Jackson 2010) and aversive racism (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005). While haunting, racial melancholia, racial melodrama, and erotics describe public feelings with a history as long as the US, racial paranoia and aversive racism arose in the post-Civil Rights era. Although the Civil Rights Movement rendered overt racist speech taboo and shameful, those norms did not erase the racist sentiments that have been brewing for centuries. Racial paranoia arises out of that contradiction, and describes the uneasy feeling of knowing that racist sentiment exists, but not being able to easily identify it in people's speech or actions (2010). For Jackson (2010), racial paranoia exists at a cultural-discursive level and yet manifests differently in Blacks and whites. Accordingly, Black people vigilantly monitor white speech acts for indications of racist beliefs and attitudes, while whites anxiously guard their speech for fear of being seen as racist. Gaertner & Dovidio (2005) describe the same paranoia in white research subjects and found that that

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paranoia drove whites to avoid anything more than casual interactions with Black

folks[6]. They label this avoidance "aversive racism." When we consider that diversity

culture has made eloquent speech about diversity a form of cultural capital, the need

to "get it right" becomes even more vital for professional success (Ward 2008),

avoidance becomes less possible, and paranoia likely intensifies. In classroom

conversations—moments of interracial contact where students are asked to directly

talk about race—the only way to avoid contact is to stay silent. Perhaps, then, racial

paranoia and aversive racism drive the awkward silences and pregnant pauses that

mark many multicultural conversations about race.

    In the previous section, I reviewed studies on the discursive and identity-based

reasons for why we often encounter challenges in multicultural conversations about

race. As an emerging, interdisciplinary literature, affect studies to date does not fully

explicate the mechanisms by which affect and public feelings influence individuals'

feelings and materialize in interactions. It does suggest that affect and public feelings

shape individuals' thoughts and feelings by offering, even ushering, certain terms we

use to understand social problems (Ahmed 2004, Berlant 1997, Cvetkovich 2003,

Cvetkovich 2007, Cvetkovich 2012). While we know a lot from the literature on

discursive framing and identity-based reasons for stalled conversations about race,

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[6] Although Gaertner & Dovidio (2005) understand aversive racism as a psychological
phenomenon particular to white racial socialization, it arises out of the discursive
contradictions of the post-Civil Rights era (e.g., sensing racism without being able to
confirm it, Obama's presidency and peaking of mass incarceration of African-
American men, widespread valuing of diversity and Trump's xenophobic and racist
campaign rhetoric).

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approaching the problem with an explicit analysis of affect, emotion, and feelings—

especially *public* feelings—stands to add more layers and nuance to existing

explanations that chalk up issues to false consciousness and identity politics, or

perhaps offer different explanations all together. Investigating conversations about

race through the lens of public feelings can help us understand how affect conditions

and complicates framing problems, coded speech, identity-based feelings, and

standpoint issues. More broadly, we stand to learn more about the dense overlay of

affect and discourse, how feelings amplify the legibility of discursive terms, animate

disciplinary technologies, inspire identification, invite proximities and distances, and

shape interactions (Ahmed 2004, Berlant 1997, Cvetkovich 2003, Cvetkovich 2007,

Cvetkovich 2102, Peterson 2011).

The findings of this study contribute to the affect literature by adding

empirical evidence of the intimate reach of affect-discourse in micro settings such as

the classroom, as well as showing that an interruption of affect-discourse is also

possible. By demonstrating the mechanisms of these interruptions through practices

that emphasize learning through feeling, the findings will also contribute to the

critical pedagogies literature that already suggests that historicizing feelings and

experience leads to the development of critical consciousness and the resolution of

impasses. This study suggests that historicizing experience and emotions is not

always necessary for that development and movement, and moreover, that critical

consciousness and coalitional desires flourish from facilitated practices of feeling

together. Last, this study contributes to race literature by suggesting that while the

periodization of racism (e.g., "racism without racists" (Bonilla-Silva 2003)) helpfully describes the need to account for racism beyond conscious attitudes and beliefs, it also misses something very essential about the experiences of and affective factors compelling post-race discourses. In short, this study suggests that we cannot think our way out of racism, we need to critically engage with and employ feelings. Doing so can move us through impasses and transform student engagement.

Research questions

Narrowing in and focusing on affect and emotion as objects of analysis necessitates paying particular an attention to not only what students and teachers say in classroom conversations about race (i.e., discourse, ideology), but also how they say what they say (i.e., what affect comes through with their words). It also means paying close attention to what bodies are doing, both when they are talking and when they are not talking. Because norms condition what bodies do in particular contexts, attending to norms around emotionality indicates how feelings are shaped and managed by social expectations, rather than produced by individuals. Therefore, paying careful attention to the norms of different emotional cultures helps us understand how classroom conversations, and their impasses and breakthroughs, are conditioned by socially-managed feelings. Not all classroom cultures are the same, particularly when it comes to emotionality. Thus, I compare two types of classrooms with distinct emotional cultures and pedagogies, traditional social science classrooms and a multicultural theater classroom. In comparing these emotional cultures, I

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examine what mechanisms inhibit or facilitate students in stalling at common affect-discourse impasses or breaking through them.

Emotional norms shape the way that students talk about race, and those cultural norms also relate to and reflect pedagogical practices (Chávez & Longerbeam 2016, Rendón 2009). Moreover, classroom practices can both reflect hegemonic discourses and transgress them (Freire 1968/2000, Freire 1998, Giroux 1984, hooks 1994). Therefore, examining pedagogical practices can develop our understandings of the mechanisms that inhibit and facilitate conversations about race, showing the simultaneous reach and transformation of national affect-discourse in classrooms. Are there weak spots in the overarching influence of affect-discourse, and if so, what pedagogical practices seem to penetrate those weak spots? Which pedagogical styles facilitate or inhibit that breakthrough?

Because of the inseparability of affect and discourse suggested by Ahmed (2004), Berlant (1997), Cvetkovich (2003, 2007, 2012), I hypothesize that affective circulation in classrooms and broader culture will also shape the knowledges that students use most to make sense of race with one another (i.e., the words they say), as well as the knowledges that they have trouble incorporating or taking seriously. In other words, how do the combined influences of emotional cultures and pedagogical practices affect the knowledges about race that students use, and the negotiation and integration of the academic and previous knowledges about race? To use Ahmed's terms, what knowledges and affects "stick" to one another, deepening their legibility and amplifying their circulation? This dual attention to affect and discourse can help

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us understand common impasses and the staying power of certain conceptualizations of race and racism (e.g., that racism is perpetuated by intentional, bigoted racists (Bonilla-Silva 2003) and also why students blend sociological understandings of race with hegemonic ideologies (Goldsmith 2006). Examining the co-circulation of affects and knowledges may also point to opportunities for breaking through impasses. What knowledges transform how students talk about race and what affects—aided by emotional cultures and pedagogical practices—circulate with those knowledges? The evidence for this will come in part from the classrooms' confluences of and divergences from public feelings, national conversations, and their impasses.

To summarize, I investigate how affect, emotions, and public feelings shape multicultural conversations about race in college classrooms by asking the following questions:

1. How do emotional cultures of different classrooms affect how people talk and emote about race in front of others?

2. How do the pedagogical practices of classrooms relate to those emotional cultures and thus shape the way that students talk and learn about race?

3. How do public feelings about race condition not only those classroom emotional cultures and pedagogies, but also the disciplinary knowledges we produce in sociology and that students absorb, co-construct, and resist?

Because this study is predicated on the assumption that national affect-discourse reproduces itself in local contexts, these research questions importantly

address how that reproduction happens in the contexts of college classrooms, spaces

that explicitly aim to counter that reproduction. Yet, even as reproduction takes place,

that process is never complete nor determinative. Social construction never finishes;

it is always in the process of both reproduction and transformation. Given that

sociological truth, I also assume that there are weak, permeable points in the

mechanisms that reproduce affect-discourse, and thus ways to undermine or subvert

it. Therefore, these questions are also important because they examine and document

the conditions under which transformations of affect-discourse emerge and take hold

in people's everyday practices and interactions. The finds will account for both

aspects of social construction—reproduction and transformation.

Cases and methodology

To examine these research questions, I used mixed methods (i.e., ethnographic

observations, interviews, and written surveys) and a comparative approach to study

contrasting classroom settings and their conversations about race at the University of

California – Santa Cruz. The data collection took place between September 2013 and

June 2014. In total, I observed about 235 students in eight different classrooms (six

traditional classrooms that totaled 135 and two Rainbow classrooms that totaled about

100 students[7]). I collected all of the data and expanded all of my field notes between

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[7] Because students who are not enrolled in Rainbow come to some classes and not
others, this number is an average of the total number of students who were in these
classrooms when I observed.

September 2013 to June 2014. From October 2014 to June 2017, I worked with a

total of 33 research assistants who read through codes of and memos about field

notes, survey responses, and interview transcripts[8] to check the validity of my

analysis, add their own interpretations, and learn about how the research process

works. They also read drafts of chapters and gave feedback on my argumentation.

My comparative classroom cases consisted of two discussion sections of an

introductory sociology class called "Issues & Problems in American Society," four

freshmen "core course" seminars called "Communicating Diversity for a Just

Society," and two multicultural theater classes under the umbrella of the Rainbow

Theater program. Because the classroom cultures and practices of the sociology and

core courses were fairly similar, I often refer to them as "traditional classrooms" in

this and subsequent chapters. While the sociology and core courses exemplify a

didactic approach to learning, Rainbow is a more praxis-oriented learning

environment. Each of these learning environments operates with its own assumptions

about what constitutes knowledge about race, what needs to be discussed in order to

undo racism, and what types of emotional performances are appropriate in classroom

discussions. Within these different learning environments, this dissertation analyzes

how different cultures of emotional expression, knowledges about race, and teaching

practices affect the qualities of conversation, interactions among students,

understandings of the self and others, and students' evaluations of those classrooms.

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[8] To ensure anonymity of human subjects, I changed all the names and identifying
characteristics of individuals mentioned in field notes, surveys, or interviews before
the research assistants analyzed that raw data.

As a course and a set of productions, Rainbow consists of both official class periods and after-class rehearsals. In the fall quarter, its main production quarter, I observed the regular class periods, rehearsals for the "5th Element" troupe[9], auditions, publicizing events, and final productions. In the spring quarter, I also observed the Rainbow II class (a seminar that discusses works by playwrights of color) and the rehearsals for the Outreach Team (a multicultural spoken word troupe that gave performances at underserved high schools in Los Angeles and the Bay Area). In total, I spent 10 months observing the traditional classrooms and Rainbow. I attended five-six classes or rehearsals per week (totaling 12-16 hours per week) and generated over 200 pages of raw field notes from those observations.

In terms of racial demographics, the traditional classrooms and Rainbow were fairly similar. Each of the six classrooms I observed varied in terms of racial demographics, ranging from 59-95% people of color, 5-30% white, 0-9% mixed (at the extremes). On average, students in the traditional classrooms were 73.2% people of color, 18.8% white, 4% mixed, and 4% who declined to state their racial identity. Rainbow students were 80% people of color, 7.8% white, 7.8% mixed, and 5.3% who declined to state. Because a number of students were absent on the days that I administered surveys to collect demographic data, the numbers are slightly different than what I observed. This was especially so in Rainbow. From my field notes, I

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[9] Rainbow Theater has several troupes within the larger organization. 5th Element is a multicultural play troupe. They also have two multicultural spoken word troupes (Poet's Corner and the Outreach Team) and a multicultural dance troupe (The Rainbots). Its other troupes are specific to race/ethnicity—the African-American, Chican@/Latin@, and Asian-American troupes.

would estimate the demographics to be closer to 85% students of color, 10% mixed, and 5% white.

Traditional sociological methods rely upon what can be undisputedly observed and measured, but these methods for registering, locating, and conceptualizing "the social" have their limits when it comes to investigating affect, emotion, and public feelings. How can a researcher document something that is often felt more than seen, more ineffable than describable? Because affect, emotion, and public feelings exist at and above the level of the individual body, I employed mixed methods to capture this dual existence of feeling. Ethnographic observations allowed me to detail the affective textures of conversations, emotional cultures of each classroom, and the interactions between students and teachers. Following classic ethnographic protocols of paying equal attention to silences and assumptions (Emerson et al. 2011) helped me see how affect, emotion, and feelings served as cultural forces and logics in each classroom. To get at feelings that were not articulated in language, I paid close attention to body language, changes in energy and "vibe" throughout a class period, and the degree to which students' emoting aligned with what was being said. These observations also helped me document the pedagogical practices and knowledge formations most readily used (and contested) in these classroom conversations about race. To get at how students and teachers felt "on the inside" about those conversations, I used semi-structured interviews and written surveys to assess how students and teachers made sense of those experiences.

I developed interview data from 40 students and five instructors and qualitative survey data from 181 of the students in classes I observed.

After site visits, I expanded my field notes to provide thicker description of my observations (Geertz 1973) to document and interpret the processes of meaning construction, to understand the logics at work in each classroom, and to make further methodological and theoretical notes to inform subsequent field observations and interviews (Emerson et al. 2011). To code these notes, I initially used an inductive approach to coding (i.e., "open coding") wherein the original codes were derived from themes in observations rather than predetermined theoretical codes (Glaser & Strauss 1967). After this open coding process, I used the "cutting and sorting" method technique to better organize my rough data into more meaningful codes and units for analysis (Ryan & Bernard 2003). With the rough data reorganized into these more meaningful codes, I used my theoretical approach to write out longer memos that analyzed and interpreted the relationships between codes (Glaser & Strauss 1967). These memos served as the basis for the three data chapters to come.

In addition to ethnographic observations, I also conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews (Schutt 2009) with students and instructors from each classroom (approximately one hour in length). The interview schedule for students asked open-ended questions that elicited the meanings they attached to their classroom experiences and how they thought and felt about those experiences. These longer interviews complimented and expanded upon the survey questions that addressed how individuals assessed the qualities of interactions in the classroom (Schutt 2009). I

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solicited interviewees while administering the survey during their last week of class and interviewed every student who volunteered for an interview. To analyze the interviews and surveys, I used the same coding techniques outlined above for field notes. In addition, I compared and contrasted what students said and how they performed in public classrooms with the more private, anonymous surveys and interviews. Doing so allowed me to get at the ways that feelings and emotion existed as cultural forces and individual responses to those social circumstances.

Chapter overviews

Chapter 2 is a literature review of conversations about race, culture, affect, emotion, experience, and models of multicultural education. Chapter 3 is titled "Keeping it in or "keeping it real": Comparing emotional habitus" and it compares the emotional cultures of the traditional classrooms and Rainbow. Chapter 4, "(Contested) storytelling: Practices, politics, and possibilities of learning through experience" compares and contrasts the role of storytelling and reflecting on experience in each classroom type. Experience, both in the form of sharing experiential knowledge from one's life and the experience of doing that sharing, was a key theme in both the traditional classrooms and Rainbow, but the emotional cultures and disciplinary approaches to learning made sharing experience a fraught endeavor in the traditional classrooms and the main form of learning about and connecting across difference in Rainbow. Chapter 5, "Felt understandings: Affective investments in knowledge about race" explores the entanglement of knowledges and

public feelings about race, as well as how emotional cultures and pedagogical practices affect what knowledge formations about race students will entertain, reject, and attach to in those particular learning environments. Chapter 6 summarizes the findings of the chapters 3, 4, and 5. It also concludes with a discussion about the entanglement of thinking and feeling about race, the reproduction and transformation of affect-discourse in the classrooms, and implications for teaching and facilitating multicultural conversations about race.

Chapter 2 – Literature review

Introduction

In college classrooms, student conversations about race, diversity, and related issues often privilege the social construction of race and racism. Particularly in the social sciences, and especially in sociology, race is presumed to be a social construction and rather than a biological reality or chosen identity (DuBois 1903, Linton 1936, Cornell & Hartmann 2007, Omi & Winant 1994). More than simple intellectual conversations or hypothetical ones, discussing race in an interracial context is a social phenomenon in and of itself, one that mirrors the larger structural aspects of race and racism. Classrooms are "political and cultural sites that represent accommodations and contestation over knowledge by differently empowered social constituencies" and classroom practices "often produce, codify, and even rewrite histories of race and colonialism" (Mohanty 2003:194). Classrooms are also shaped by the circulations of feelings or affective economies (Ahmed 2004). For example, classrooms are places where students are trained to perform affective flatness, under the assumption that doing so will aid their abilities to think (Rendón 2009). Historically, shame was used to motivate and discipline students into performing scripts of public schools (hooks 2003). Although there is emerging literature on race and affect (reviewed in the last chapter and later in this one), no studies prior to this one investigate the role that public feelings play in classrooms and their conversations about race. Because classrooms, as any other setting, are shaped by, reflect, and transform broader social conditions (Giroux 1984, Giroux & McLaren 1994), I

assume that public feelings about race play a largely unacknowledged role in learning and classroom racial politics.

To study classrooms as affectively-dense moments of great social significance, this study pulls from and ties together three main sets of literature from sociological and feminist studies—literatures on race and racism, critical multicultural pedagogies, and affect studies. In what follows, from the literature on race and racism, we gain understanding of how colonialist and diversity discourses shape students into different racial subjectivities whose experiences reflect differing positions vis-à-vis racist structure. In other words, many of the discursive strategies that students use are learned prior to and outside of college, and additionally, they are exposed to other discursive strategies in college. The literature on critical multicultural pedagogies, as a counterhegemonic strategy to colonialist discourses, argues that students' personal experiences can be leveraged to illuminate, rather than elide, racist structure and how it conditions their experience. In other words, this literature offers students a strategy of self-reflection that counters the hegemonic tendency to blame people's individual choices for their own circumstances. What is interesting about both of the aforementioned literatures is that affect and emotion are briefly or scantly analyzed and theorized, and reflection, however it occurs, arrives via the emotional. Therefore, in an effort to bring the assumed affect and emotion to the fore, my reading of those literatures will emphasize or hypothesize about the role that emotionality plays in the social processes that those literatures discuss. The literature on affect studies, a relatively emergent field of studies, deals specifically

with role of affect and emotions at a cultural or discursive level rather than individual level, and this distinction is reflected in various terms, such as public feelings (Cvetkovich 2003 & 2007), political emotion (Gould 2009), or affective economy. Therefore, I will review emerging literature from affect studies, specifically those relating to race, to discuss the role that affect and emotion play in racial subject formation, discourse, and interracial interactions.

Critical race scholarship on discourse and subjectivity

In this section, I first review literature on race and racism from sociological and feminist studies to explain the larger structural aspects of racism that classroom conversations reflect. I use critical race scholarship in a broad manner, referring to a mode of analysis about race that stems from critical legal studies (see, for example, Hunt 1986) as well as the work that follows racial formation theory (Omi & Winant 1994). Race and racism is a broad field in social theory and I will examine here the aspects of the literature that deal specifically with how individuals (e.g., students and teachers in classroom conversations) are subjects differently positioned by racism and other forms of power. , how their experiences have been differently shaped by racist structure, how their racial subjectivity varies within groups, and how contemporary diversity discourse shapes what students and teachers legibly say about race and racism.

Racial subjectivity

Racial subjectivity and subjecthood is a constitutive element of classical and contemporary race relations literature. W.E.B. DuBois (1903/1996) famously asserted that America's most prominent social problem of the 20th century would be that of "the color line," or the structural construction of racism put into place by the slavery-based economy and sustained by failures of Reconstruction. In addition to DuBois (1903), Fanon (1967), Blauner (1969), and Pettigrew (1980) were also concerned with racial identity and structural racism, and race relations. Structural racism has persisted into the 21st century, fueled by racial capitalism (Robinson 2003, Leong 2013), segmented markets (Nee & Sanders 1987, Portes & Zhou 1993), racial neoliberalism (Goldberg 2009), possessive investments in whiteness (Lipsitz 1998) and white racism (Wellman 1977/1993), colorblind discourses that ignore racial inequality (Bonilla-Silva 2003), cultural explanations of inequality that justify it (Mamdani 2004), and biopolitical and necropolitical disciplinary technologies (Foucault 1976/1990, Mbembe 2003) that institutionally preserve race and class privileges and reproduce disparities in wealth, health, and access to full citizenship through patterns in containment, displacement, disposability, and legibility (Goldberg 2009, Wacquant 2009).

While the reproduction of different racisms follows from different logics of anti-blackness, Orientalism, and settler colonialism (Smith 2012), their particular materializations change through history, a phenomenon known as racial formation (Omi & Winant 1994). According to this theory, "racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed" (Omi & Winant 1994:55) through interwoven

historical, political, economic, social, and representational processes. More

specifically, race constantly reemerges and morphs through the dynamic interplay of

hegemonic and counter-hegemonic "racial projects" (i.e., the micro and macro

attempts of the state, capital, social movement groups, and individuals to explain,

represent, and alter racial dynamics). Racial formation theory focuses on formal

grievances meant to legally redress racial trauma, but feelings of grief from racial

trauma exceeds those grievances and produces a national culture laced with

melancholia and despondence in terms of race (Cheng 2001). Those feelings of grief

also play a role in the reproduction of and resistance to racism. Moreover, through its

attention to policies, practices, and representations, racial formation theory explains

much of why racial inequality and meanings both change and stay the same, but it

undertheorizes how race functions through affect, something that is crucial to

consider given that race is a social construct mapped onto bodies (and all of their

sensory and emotional capabilities).

Because race is a social construct mapped onto bodies, students in the

classroom have been differently affected, shaped, and positioned by racial projects (or

what others more broadly describe as biopolitical and necropolitical disciplinary

technologies (Foucault 1976/1990, Mbembe 2003)). Colonial discourses produce

power through marking and splitting bodies according to racial and sexual difference,

producing colonial subjects and knowledges, and then dictating certain forms of

surveillance for the colonized and colonizers (Bhabha 1996). This differential

positioning and forms of surveillance lead to patterns in experiences based on race,

class, gender, sexuality, and ability, and thus students' embodied experiences with racism vary greatly according to their positionalities. Moreover, the acts of labeling and (mis)recognition through language "interpellates" or "hails" students into different racial subject positions (Althusser 1965/2005, Foucault 1976/1990), regardless of whether they identify with and feel attached to that categorization or not. Moreover, language related to gender, sexuality, class, and documentation (to name a few) also interpellate bodies into subject positions, leading to intersectional subject positions (Anzaldúa 1999, Chow 1987, Crenshaw 1991, Garcia 1989). Therefore, racism and other forms of inequality create patterns of experiences, as well as patterns of ignorance and obliviousness (for those relatively privileged) (Frankenberg 1993). Thus, multicultural conversations about race in the classroom involve students with wildly different experiential understandings of race and racism.

Moreover, centuries of colonial discourses have trained students to (mis)recognize one another as representations of racial categories, and the meanings attached to those representations are, more often than not, limited and overdetermined (Hall 2003). Regulatory discursive practices produce a set of constrained possibilities that bring certain bodies into being, making them imaginable and intelligible through normative markings and signifiers (Butler 1990). In other words, discourses generate the cultural signifiers through which individuals come to understand the self, and the extent to which performances of the self can be understood by others. Everything a body does is then socially recognized as proof of the natural difference of that racial subject position (rather than the effect of it) and the cycle of misrecognition and

disciplining reproduces itself. When students discuss race together, they are exchanging these cultural signifiers, both in their words and performances. Regardless of intention, students work to represent the racialized self or racial groups in particular ways when they engage in these discussions. For many students of color, this is also a conscious concern—a "stereotype threat"—that affects how they perform in the classroom (Steele & Aronson 1995). Moreover, anti-racist discourses have made whites more racially self-conscious now than they have been in previous history (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005, Jackson 2010) and this too affects their performance in intellectual tasks (Blascovich et al. 2001).

Because the interpellation process works on and with the body, it involves feeling (e.g., threat, recognition, desire, fear), and this has mostly been theorized through psychoanalytical theory which conceptualizes feelings in binaries of fear and desire, freedom and unfreedom, and worth and lack. Accordingly, the discursive power imbedded in (mis)recognition causes a psychic splitting, an ambivalence of desire for and fear of the racial subject positions to which one is hailed (Hall 1996a, 1996b, 2003). Bhabha (1996) and Fanon (1967) explain that the fetishism in colonial representations create colonial subjects by splitting their sense of self into fragments. Accordingly, white skin represents the site of power and wholeness, and blackness represents a split of self and self-as-other, what DuBois (1903/1996) similarly called "double consciousness." The desire for wholeness and power (i.e. white skin) splits black subjects and leave them feeling unwhole and always lacking. For Hall (2003), representations like stereotypes constantly reproduce this splitting, remaking a

colonized subject who can only be fully recognized by having white skin or acting in a purely stereotypical manner. As Fanon points out to us, colonized subjects are produced through being seen, not seeing for themselves. As such, freedom for is an impossible possibility for those with dark skin. The persistent existence of stereotype threat shows that many Black and Latino still feel, at least in the context of interracial groups, burdened by colonial discourses that position them as lacking, deficient, or model minorities without a need for support (Eng & Han 2003, Erba 2017, Gonzales et al. 2002, Kao 1995, Steele & Aronson 1995). At the same time, discourses about race have proliferated since the civil rights movement, and as such, Black popular culture is filled with examples of Black subjects manipulating racist signs, centering their own experiences, and confidently speaking about racial marginality without accommodating a white gaze (Boyd 2002, Boyd 2003, Fleetwood 2011). Therefore, the ambivalence—the desire for and fear of the racial subject positions to which one is hailed—that Hall (1996a, 1996b, 2003) describes is still true today.

But what that ambivalence looks like, feels like, and manifests as for individual students is neither straight forward nor visible to teachers and other students in the classroom. Students' individual *identifications with subject positions* are better understood as a *process of becoming*, shaped by the constant interplay of interpellation and internal psychological processes (Hall 1996a) that change with social contexts (Hall 1996b, 1996c). The term "subjectivity" rather than "subject position" better accounts for both the subjects' interiority and the intersectional interpellations and experiences that shape identification. In an examination of Black

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cultural forms and practices, Jackson's (2005) concept of "racial sincerity" emphasizes racial subjectivity and interiority, and describes a space in between racial essentialisms and anti-essentialisms, recognizing that people cannot be predetermined by social categories even as those categories have shaped them to the core (Jackson 2005). Many discourses on race posit overdetermined categories that often define race as something you can measure, know, put parameters on, and essentialize, but racial sincerity emphasizes the messiness of racial identifications and our inability to "see" and "observe" a subject's interiority. It helps us appreciate the myriad ways that subjects make sense of, attach to, belong to, resist, perform, define, and identify with racial subject positions. In some ways, the focus on interracial dialogue as a pedagogical practice assumes this kind of understanding of racial subjectivity, and suggests that dialogue can help students learn to see and interrupt processes of misrecognition (Gurin et al. 2013). Affect studies, which I review later, also brings in other ways of thinking about feeling beyond interiority and intersubjective (mis)recognition.

Disciplining race talk and racial subjectivities through diversity discourse

The aforementioned understandings of race and racial subjectivity mostly theorize racial subjectivity as it relates to colonial discourses and societal racism and their long reach into contemporary culture and meaning-making. But students in today's classrooms are also hailed by neoliberal diversity discourse that celebrates diversity, tolerates difference, lauds multiculturalism, and seeks inclusion, visibility,

and recognition for all racial groups. At face value, this discourse exudes feelings of hope, possibility, harmony, and happiness, and although the literature does not make this link explicit, diversity discourse mobilizes "the erotic life of racism," or desires to be outside or beyond race (Holland 2012). Thus, diversity discourse is a seductive one and being hailed through it further complicates contemporary understandings of race and racism, the subjects it makes, and its institutional forms.

Ward (2008) defines diversity culture as "the ways in which celebrating identity-based diversity and equality have become a part of daily life" (28), both in ways that challenge racism and hegemonically keep power relations in place, obscured, and unquestioned. In its most hegemonic form, race (and other forms of social difference that point to systemic inequality and disadvantage), transmogrify into power-neutral forms of difference—"benign variation" (Mohanty 2003:191)—that we're taught to recognize and celebrate as cultural diversity (Goldberg 2009, Gray 2013). Rather than understanding identities as effects of power, differences become essential aspects of groups deemed "cultural" (i.e., people of color, religious minorities, and immigrants) (Brown 2006, Mamdani 2004).

In this formation, invoking race to critique systemic racism becomes less legible and diversity workers in institutions strive to maneuver the discourse to account for inequality (Ahmed 2013). Thus, hegemonic diversity discourse manages race (and other forms of difference) by way of depoliticizing it (Duggan 2003, Gordon & Newfield 1996) or "construing inequality, subordination, marginalization, and social conflict, which all require political analysis and political solutions, as

personal and individual, one the one hand, or as natural, religious, or cultural on the other" (Brown 2006:15). Moreover, diversity discourse replaces the solutions of justice and redress with sensitivity to and respect for others (Brown 2006). This understanding of remediating racism through attitudinal measures, along with the privatizing of public institutions under neoliberalism, as spawned a "race industry" "responsible for the management, commodification, and domestification of race on American campuses" (Mohanty 2003:196). Norms of "safe space" (where everyone is can openly and honestly talk about their individual thoughts and feelings about race) are common in sensitivity and competency trainings of the race industry. But by suggesting that safety for people of color can exist in a racist society, this common practice contributes to depoliticizing and individualizing race talk in university settings (Leonardo & Porter 2010).

Therefore, diversity discourse does not simply reproduce older forms of inequality by ignoring them, it also constitutes new forms of discipline, regulation, and race and class privilege[10]. For its normative subjects, hegemonic diversity discourse links inclusion, visibility, recognition, and equality to private gains (of profit, fundability, productivity, and market access) and deflects attention from practices of inequality with sensitivity workshops, competency trainings, and public celebrations of diversity (Ward 2008). In corporate and social media contexts,

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[10] In the US, diversity discourse produces, regulates, controls, and manages abject subjects (i.e., the fundamentalist/intolerant/barbaric) and normative ones (i.e., free/tolerant/civilized), and abroad it works to justify American imperialism (Brown 2006, Puar 2007, Puar & Rai 2002).

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diversity discourse "embraces difference as the basis of individual liberty and market transactions" (Gray 2013:791) and promotes the proliferation of difference, recognition of diversity, and increased visibility in order to expand markets into proliferating market niches, consumer choices, and brand distinctions (Banet-Weiser 2012). In this context, recognition and visibility becomes an individual practice of competition (rather than collective practice of social movements) wherein recognition and visibility is an end in and of itself, useful for branding oneself as unique and distinct (Banet-Weiser 2012). As such, recognition and visibility become forms of power that discipline and regulate entrepreneurial subjects to understand their freedom as being seen, but not necessarily being treated fairly or having equal access to public resources (Gray 2013). It seems to me that people attach to the ideals and subject positions of diversity discourse because it seductively promotes recognition— you are not simply a race or gender subject, you are a unique individual with diverse experiences seductive. That is, even as it disciplines, diversity discourse seems to allow for freedom, at least in terms of labeling yourself, and that's alluring.

Diversity discourse also seems alluring in that it promises change and breathing new life into institutions. But when diversity gets institutionalized, instrumentalized, and professionalized in NGOs and universities, it functions as a form of power even as it works to resist power. For example, in NGOS, diversity is leveraged for institutional gain, often in competition with other NGOs doing diversity work (Ward 2008). This instrumentalization also increases "the demand for utilitarian and easily measurable forms of difference—creating the most room for those who

embody predictable and fundable kinds of diversity, adversity, or transgression"

(Ward 2008:6). As such, intersectionality is only legible when it's normatively

presentable to funders and "picturable" (Ahmed 2013), or easily read on bodies vis-à-

vis skin color, gender signifiers, and ethnic costumery (which class is not) (Ward

2008)[11]. Thus, because of the emphasis on *fundable* diversity, the "diverse" people

who NGOs ostensibly serve cannot legibly speak for themselves. In such cases, "race

is visible but emptied" (Gray 2013:780).

In colleges and universities, institutionalizing and professionalizing diversity

manages race by containing conflict, truncating knowledge, and ignoring its

fundamental exclusionary practices (Ahmed 2012, Alexander 2005, Ferguson 2012,

Mohanty 2003). Because fostering diversity on college campuses is often interpreted

as increasing people of color or other marginalized groups (Alexander 2005, Mohanty

2003), universities often understand diversity work as adding the right people to its

existing culture, practices, and goals (Ahmed 2012). Without examining what is

fundamentally exclusionary in its culture and practices, "diversity can participate in

the creation of an idea of the institution that allows racism and inequalities to be

overlooked" (Ahmed 2012:14-15). Institutional diversity, or as Ahmed (2012) calls it,

institutional whiteness, presumes that the university will be inclusive once the right

people are there. As such, diversity professionals often see this as a public relations

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[11] Instrumentalized diversity also reproduces class privilege because working class
knowledges about diversity are not considered "diversity skills" or the ability to speak
and relate to *funders* about "the importance of diversity, to demonstrate one's
commitment to different groups and their concerns, and to critique others'
presumably deficient diversity skills" (Ward 2008:51).

problem—that the right people have the wrong idea about their university. Such an understanding necessitates changing perceptions of those outside of the university and hence focuses attention on "repicturing" the campus with images of diverse students (Ahmed 2012), representing it as diverse but not redistributing resources to ensure equality (Ferguson 2012). Although "getting the right people there" eschews investigation of the institution's own racist practices, Ahmed (2012) pushes back on dismissing the "body count" approach, arguing that "numbers can be affective" and that "It can be surprising and energizing not to feel so singular" (36).

Adding diverse bodies is not what the movements for critical race and ethnic studies pushed for in the 1960s and 1970s. Those movements pushed for both inclusion in the existing university and disruption of its standard practices. But over the last several decades, "voice" as a political strategy of those movements has been accommodated and institutionalized in university (Mohanty 2003). The academy's modes of interpretation and engagement have archived minority difference (both subjects and knowledges) and absorbed it into normative modes of teaching and producing knowledge (through disciplinarity). Doing so intellectualizes race (making it into an "interesting topic" rather than a lived experience) (Leonardo & Porter 2010), dulls the activist framework of critical race and ethnic studies (Ahmed 2012, Ferguson 2012), and obscures the politics of knowledge formation (Mohanty 2003). As such, Ferguson (2012) warns that inclusion and recognition are forms of power—a recognition-cum-control (15) where the academy "establish[es] rules for membership and participation" (12). He pushes scholars to think strategically about how to

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maneuver that recognition-cum-control to "achieve provisional forms of freedom and insurgency" (Ferguson 2012:15). Mohanty (2003) pushes for pedagogies of dissent that resist the logic of accommodation and invest in unlearning the normative by showing its historical contingency and role in producing difference. Critical multicultural pedagogies, especially those discussed in literature on feminist pedagogies, work to maneuver this recognition-cum-control. They do so by using individual experiential knowledge to draw out social conditions. In the next section, I review this work.

Critical multicultural pedagogies on experience and emotionality

At the heart of this study are key tensions between emotionality and cognition, as well knowledge of systemic racism and individuals' experiential knowledge of race. These are also common themes in some sociological knowledge, as well as literature on critical multicultural pedagogies (Giroux 1984, Giroux & McLaren 1994, Sleeter & McLaren 1995), especially that from intersectional feminist scholars that I review in this section. Experiential knowledge has long been considered important for sociological knowledge. WEB DuBois' (1996) developed of the concept of "double consciousness" to show how one's life experiences and positionality affect their consciousness, evaluation of knowledge, and research priorities, and symbolic interactionists and ethnomethologists emphasized the rich social significance of everyday experiences (Goffman 1959, Garfinkel 1967, Blumer 1986). Perhaps the best-known instantiation of the role of experience in sociological knowledge comes

from C. Wright Mills (2000) who emphasized the pedagogical use of experiential knowledge with the concept of the "sociological imagination," or the ability to understand the dense overlay of personal troubles and public issues.

Building off of their own experiential knowledge of the simultaneity of race, class, gender, and sexual oppression, feminist of color scholars developed intersectionality theory (Anzaldúa & Moraga 1987, Crenshaw 1991, The Combahee River Collective 1977) and then built off earlier sociological theories about experience and standpoint epistemology (Hartsock 1998) to develop the concepts of Black feminist thought (Hill Collins 2000), mestiza consciousness (Anzaldúa 1999), post-positivist realist theory of identity (Moya 2002), and critical realist theory of identity (Sánchez 2006). Out of this intersectional scholarship and activism grew theorizing on pedagogy. Major foci of literatures on multicultural education (specifically those that align with feminist, anti-racist, and social justice pedagogies), are the tensions between experiential and systemic knowledge of inequality, and tense interpersonal dynamics in the classroom (Adams 1997). In this section, I will briefly outline these major approaches for teaching about race and racism, and discuss what role they think students' experiences should have in the classroom, as well as how emotionality (e.g., difficulty, tension, feeling) shapes learning about race in multicultural settings.

There are a multitude of approaches to multicultural education, including a) those that understand multiculturalism as observing more holidays, b) adding representational materials to existing Eurocentric curriculum, c) analyzing content

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from varying perspectives, d) sensitizing groups to the experiences of other groups,

catering education to the cultural backgrounds of students, e) fostering intergroup

understanding, examining the institutional formations of inequality, and f)

transforming knowledge about systemic racism into anti-racist action (Banks 1989,

Banks 1993, Chávez & Longerbeam 2016, Sleeter & Grant 1987). While not all of

these approaches engage with power, privilege, and equity, affect imbues all of them

through feelings cultivated by diversity discourse and its blindspots (i.e., celebration,

inclusion, recognition, sensitivity, indignation, indifference, shock, hope, etc.)[12].

Moreover, because students are embedded in a society where all of these approaches

to multiculturalism exist simultaneously, they bring a variety of affects related to

multiculturalism when they enter their classroom conversations about race.

Because the focus of this study is on classrooms that all intend to address and

deconstruct uneven power relations, I will focus on the critical multicultural

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[12] There is a consensus among social theorists (see, for example, Gordon & Newfield 1996) and critical pedagogy educators that multicultural education must go "beyond heroes and holidays" (Lee et al. 1997) to teach about the contribution of communities of color in US history and the systemic production of racial inequality (see, for example, Giroux & McLaren 1994 and Takaki 1993). The assumption, stated explicitly or not, is that the feel-good feelings of "heroes and holidays" is only socially meaningful in that it obscures critical perspectives. While I agree that only teaching about themes like "heroes and holidays" fails to address social creation and effects of difference, I do think that it is important to investigate the affects and emotions in these different forms of multicultural education. Doing so may illuminate more affective-discursive dynamics at work beyond obfuscation-through-celebration. For example, perhaps certain forms of visibility (e.g., holidays) stimulates pride that later works against silencing dynamics. Or, "angry white men" filter multiculturalism through prisms of privilege, entitlement, and defensiveness, concluding that the celebration of people of color in US history is a direct affront to their own communities and families that only white nationalist hate groups can protect (Kimmel 2013).

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approaches to multicultural education: Freirian, critical race, feminist, and intergroup

pedagogies. There is so much overlap in these literatures that it makes sense to

outline them simultaneously for their approaches to experience and emotionality.

Critical race and feminist approaches to multicultural education align with Paulo

Freire's (1998) "pedagogy for freedom" or what is broadly referred to as critical

pedagogy. Pulling from Marx, Freire's pedagogy focuses on student agency,

empowerment, and critical consciousness of social conditions, and it adds a focus on

collectively dialoguing, reflecting on experience, and co-constructing knowledge in

order to arrive at critical consciousness. As such, a Freirian classroom should focus

on everyday experience, theories should be grounded in praxis, and teachers should

facilitate dialogue and co-construction of knowledge rather than "banking" students

with preconceived knowledge. In other (feminist) words, the "personal is political"

and personal experience should be "mined" to draw out a critical awareness and

orientation toward social conditions of inequality (Ladson-Billings 1995). Critical

race and ethnic studies take this one step further by grounding curriculum in

contemporary issues in local communities marginalized by race, ethnicity, class,

gender, sexuality, and documentation status (Adams 1997). In ethnic studies'

pedagogies and epistemologies, examining hegemonic histories collectively gives rise

to knowledge for self-definition and resistance (Mohanty 2003).

Freire's (1968/2000, 1998) pedagogical framework also attends to affect in a

number of ways. First, it considers denial. That is, because hegemony creates

material conditions that hide oppression in plain sight, "the oppressed" do not

necessarily know that they are oppressed and may even reject such a notion because it would imply weakness or lack of pride within hegemonic ideologies. Freirian facilitation takes such feelings seriously and backtracks from those feelings to unveil their social construction, as well as their masking effects. Second, critical pedagogy speaks to despondence and fatigue by framing agency as collective change (not individual coping strategies) and pairing the deconstruction of inequality with tools for reconstructing justice (because students should see themselves as makers of history and culture). For Freire, inequality is a dehumanizing process for both "the oppressors" and "the oppressed," and critical pedagogy interrupts that with the humanizing practices of simultaneously denunciating one's social positionality (and its roots in hegemony) and enunciating a new theory of reality based in justice. Many of Rainbow Theater's practices that I outline later were influenced by Augusto Boal's (1981) book *Theater of the Oppressed,* an expansion of Freirian pedagogy. For Boal, multicultural theater should blur the distinction between actors and audience, making everyone a participant in the theater. With active participation as an organizing frame, Boalian theater aims to develop a critical consciousness in its participants as they act out, witness, reflect on, rescript, and redo skits based on inequality, using interactive theater as a rehearsal for, and imagination of, more egalitarian social interactions in the future. Because the practice of acting necessitates reflection on embodiment, this pedagogy attends to the emotionality of inequality.

Like Freirian approaches, critical race, feminist, and intergroup education

approaches[13] emphasize the practice of learning through personal experience. The

intergroup dialogue model builds off of Freire (1998, 2000) by examining the social

constructedness of personal experience and pointing out how racism is a

dehumanizing process for whites and people of color. As such, they emphasize

dialogue in order to explore those dehumanizing and social construction processes by

comparing and contrasting individual experience with the experiences of diverse

peers. In intergroup education pedagogies, the purpose of education is for students of

different racial identities to see outside of themselves, and to understand how they

have been socialized differently. Moreover, intergroup education aims to teach

students how their differing socialization has led them to distrust one another and take

on racist misinformation, attitudes, and beliefs about themselves and others. As such,

comparing and contrasting one's experiences with others' experiences is a key

component to "consciousness raising" (hooks 1994, hooks 2003). It also helps

students build an "emotional muscle" needed for sustained and productive interracial

dialogue (Adams 1997). These trainings also assume that making individuals aware

of their biases will result in future anti-racist action (Adams 1997).

While dialoging about these interpersonal differences is a key component of

this pedagogy, not all intergroup education models critically interpret experience to

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[13] Intergroup education pedagogies grew out of sensitivity trainings, anti-racist workshops, and consciousness raising teach-ins of the civil rights and feminist movements, and they have often laid the foundation for contemporary staff development workshops on diversity (which affirmative action and equal opportunity policies have made common (Adams 1997, Ward 2008).

show how they are constructed, nor do all intergroup models combine that interpretation of experience with instruction about systemic racism (Nieto 1996, Suzuki 1984) and anti-racist action research (Gurin et al. 2013, Nieto 1996, Sleeter & Grant 1994). But interpreting and historicizing experience is a crucial practice, otherwise intergroup pedagogies risk reproducing diversity discourses by a) averaging out differences between people of color and coagulating them into a frozen super-category of "the oppressed," and b) giving students the sense that the purpose of dialogue is becoming sensitive to the suffering of people of color and developing good manners for showing that sensitivity (Mohanty 2003). But for Mohanty, critical pedagogies can utilize experience to transgress diversity discourse by addressing power head-on and understanding differences in experiences as relational, historically-produced phenomena. If sociology instructors engage experience, they can also provide explanations for experience that are historical, contextual, and social rather than individualistic (Burke & Banks 2012, Goldsmith 2006, Hurtado 2005, McKinney et al. 2004, Persell 2010).

The literatures on critical pedagogy that emphasize intersectional feminism have carefully articulated how to utilize experience to draw out social conditions and avoid the neoliberal pitfalls that Mohanty (2003) articulated. The most cited vein of this literature aligns with post-positivist realist approaches to experience and identity (Moya 2002). For Moya (2002), "Experience in its mediated form contains an epistemic component through which we can gain access to knowledge of the world" (Moya 2002:39). In order for students to understand this use of experience, teachers

have to help them understand "race, class, and gender not as embodied categories, but as collective histories and experience that divide or tie people together" (Mohanty 2003:191). Sánchez-Casal & Macdonald (2002), as well as Williams & McKenna (2002), approach experience from a post-positivist realist framework by both honoring the role of experience in constructing knowledge *and* interrogating the authority of experiences in doing so. In order to establish these "multiple authorities" of knowledge, dialogue that emphasizes difference is the necessary pedagogical approach. Williams & McKenna (2002) suggest structuring the class around experience as merely one text among several others that will be interpreted and analyzed. This means teaching students to see their experiences as interpretations rather than self-evident truths. In other words, just because a student says that an experience was true for them does not mean that it shouldn't be challenged or critically unpacked. Indeed, without those challenges, talking about experience can flatten or equalize difference (Nance 2006) by legitimating one another experiences on "an attitudinal, interpersonal level rather than in terms of a fundamental challenge to hegemonic knowledge and history" (Mohanty 2003:203).

Moreover, critical pedagogies emphasize that *all* students' experiences need to be interpreted and contextualized to understand their historical contingency, not just the experiences of students of color. Less critical intergroup education models often assume whites as target audiences of diversity "training," meaning that whites need to listen to and become sensitized to experiences of people of color. But doing so positions people of color as the only ones with racialized experiences (Sleeter &

Grant 1987). Not only does this recenter whiteness as a norm, but it also creates tension, alienation, and resentment from uneven expectations around vulnerability (wherein whites voyeuristically listen in to people of color's experiences with racism but do not necessarily critically reflect on their own experiences (Srivastava 1994)).

The most contemporary version of intergroup education pedagogy that incorporates the critical perspectives brought from critical race and feminist pedagogies, as well as data-driven teaching methods, is Gurin et al.'s (2013) intergroup dialogue model. Based off of decades of multi-campus, collaborative research projects that evaluated early models (reviewed in Dessel & Rogge 2008, Gurin et al. 2002, Hurtado 2005), the newest iteration of the intergroup dialogue model combines "content learning, structured interaction, and facilitation" (Gurin et al. 2013:74) by first establishing dialogue skills and then adding critical sociological content to the mix. Such an approach fosters three interrelated processes that other intergroup education models strive to do— intergroup communication, individual psychological, and individual cognitive processes needed for anti-racist awareness and action across difference. In terms of outcomes, the intergroup dialogue model results in "intergroup understanding (sources of intergroup inequality and attitudes toward diversity), relationships (empathy and motivation to bridge differences), and action/collaboration" in multicultural alliances (76). Although some may discount the intergroup dialogue model's attention to attitudes and talking about feelings as an individualizing effect of diversity discourse, talking about feelings is important for

engaging in critical work across difference to undermine the institutional roots of racism (Stockdill 2003).

The intergroup dialogue model, because it builds off of a Freirian (1968, 1998) understanding that colonialism damages the humanity of both the oppressor and oppressed, frontloads instruction and facilitation on the psychological processes of multicultural dialogue (Gurin et al. 2013). According to this understanding, students have to be able to imagine social change, new possibilities, new identities, and freedom (that is not defined by privilege) in order to see one another as humans who have been differentially shaped by an unequal society and in order to work together in anti-racist action. Moreover, frontloading the psychological processes is based off of research that found that students who had negative experiences in diversity programs scored lower on cognitive, social, and democratic measures for multicultural skills and attitudes, *and* were more likely to develop oppositional racial identities (Hurtado 2005). However, students with positive experiences showed improvements in most of those cognitive, social, and democratic measures (Hurtado 2005). Nagda & Zúñiga (2003) found that students who only engaged with diversity curriculum through the general learning process (i.e., through lectures and papers, and not through intergroup dialogue or service learning) did not improve in similar measures (e.g., understanding the importance of race, active thinking, thinking of the self as social, perspective taking, comfort communicating across difference, inviting productive conflict, and bridging differences). Therefore, frontloading psychological processes fosters an "affective positivity" that helps students learn through discomfort

and build interpersonal skills needed for interacting across difference (Gurin et al. 2013). The intergroup dialogue model also builds off of Freirian pedagogy in that it emphasizes action and students' capacity to change their environment, starting with a multicultural project at the end of an intergroup dialogue course (Gurin et al. 2013). This project works to counter the sense of hopelessness that can come with an overwhelming appreciation for how deeply embedded racism is in the foundations of our society.

As a whole, the literature from critical, feminist, anti-racist, and intergroup pedagogies for multicultural education has reached a consensus about how to design classes that attend to students' feelings and build off of their personal experience to understand the social conditions that shaped that experience. This is great work that has informed and continues to inform many college instructors in the social sciences and humanities. That said, this literature largely understands emotionality in the classroom as a product of the exchange of differently positioned individuals whose feelings arise from divergent but related patterns in racialized or gendered socialization. Such an understanding of emotionality cannot be denied nor discounted, and yet it does not get at the emotionality that the affect literature points to—feelings that structure a particular social context or that give discourse its force (Ahmed 2004, Berlant 1997, Cvetkovich 2003, Cvetkovich 2007). For example, with that framework, we might think about how university and classroom norms reflect and produce affects above the level of individual bodies, and in turn, how those feelings enable or constrain the critical work of interpreting experiences. Therefore,

this study builds off of insights on experience and emotionality from critical pedagogies, and adds insights from affect studies to examine classroom cultures, practices, and knowledges as affectively structured at and beyond the level of students' individual bodies.

Affect Studies: Thinking about race

In the introductory chapter to this study, I outlined theories on public feelings about race—haunting (Gordon 1997), racial melancholia (Cheng 2001), racial paranoia (Jackson 2010), racial sincerity (Jackson 2005), racial melodrama (Williams 2001), aversive racism (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005), and the erotic life of racism (Holland 2012)—and hypothesized about the ways that those might shape conversations about race both in the classroom and public conversations. While the previous literatures on race and pedagogy are theoretical and pragmatic frameworks for understanding social contexts and dynamics, affect studies draws our attention to not only the interiority of individuals, but also the "interiority" of social groups and the affective economies of discourse (Ahmed 2004). We have, perhaps an intuitive understanding of interiority of an individual through psychodynamic processes, but affect studies suggests that there is an interiority to a collective, or a social process of emotions that may or may not resemble the psychodynamic processes we use to understand individual interiority. In this section, I will more broadly sketch out how affect studies understands feeling (in relation to subjectivity and discourse) in ways that are distinct from social psychological approaches that understand feelings as

property of the self (albeit a self that can never be fully extricated from the social), and also how affect literature can enhance what we know and ask about racial subjectivity, discourse, and critical pedagogies. In terms of the overlay of race, subjectivity, and feeling, psychological approaches explain how racial formation affects individual cognitive and emotional processes, shapes collective experiences and identities through those processes. In short, psychological approaches to feelings are focused on subjects' interiority and how that plays out in social interaction.

Affect studies, on the other hand, places feelings everywhere—in people, but also in culture, objects, discourse, laws, spaces, representations, etc. (Clough 2010). As such, affect is independent of individual bodies, it moves between and through bodies (Deleuze & Guatarri 1980). Affect studies became recognized as a field of study through work that made distinctions between affect and emotion. Accordingly, emotion referred to sensations and feelings defined and catalogued in language, and affect referred to sensations and feelings that exceeded linguistic capture (Massumi 2002, Sedgwick & Frank 1995). The act of crying serves as a good distinction between affect and emotion; crying often signifies sadness (a well-defined emotion) but crying may signify other emotions (e.g., happiness, relief) or it may not signify any particular emotion at all (e.g., crying as a simple physiological action or response). For Massumi (2002) and those whose work follows in his footsteps, this distinction between affect and emotion is important because it points to an affective force that exists before and outside discursive ordering and meaning-making, and thus provides a space of freedom. Like Ahmed (2004) and Hemmings (2005), I think that

drawing a firm line between affect and emotion suggests a reality outside of the social where the language simply interprets reality, rather than language bringing reality into being and significance.

That said, like Ahmed (2004) and Gould (2009), I find that the articulation of affect (as distinct from emotion), has given us language to talk about feelings in ways that do not necessarily rest in an individual body. Feelings in this way can organize and mobilize social movements (Gould 2009), animate discourse (Berlant 1997, Clough 2010, Hemmings 2005), shape bodies into subjects (Ahmed 2004), stylize subjectivity (Jackson 2005), visually construct difference (Fleetwood 2011), silence dissent (Gordon 1997), remind us of unresolved grief and oppression (Cheng 2001, Gómez-Barris & Gray 2010, Gordon 1997, Minnow 1998), create public cultures (Cvetkovich 2003, 2007, 2012), invite identifications (Peterson 2011), shape narratives (Cheng 2001, Williams 2001), condition interactions (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005, Holland 2012, Jackson 2010). Thoroughly shaped by affect, these social also play significant roles in the social construction of race and racism, and multicultural conversations about that construction. Therefore, attending to feelings (as affect and emotion) can help us sharpen our understanding of how discourses form racial subjects, how individuals embody, enact, identify with, and stylize subjectivities, and how subjects interact with one another in different contexts.

In terms of racial subjectivity, affect "places bodies in spatial relation along racially defined lines" (Hemmings 2005:562) and shapes bodies into racial subjects (Ahmed 2004). This understanding of subject-making enunciates the role that

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feelings play in that process, and I think of it as focusing on the affective dynamics of discursive practices and disciplinary technologies (Foucault 1975, 1976). For example, in the "Fanonian moment," two bodies sense proximity and one marks that proximity by casting the other as an object to be rejected: "Look, a Negro!" When disgust is the organizing principle for this interaction, one body becomes Black as it feels a burning sensation on the skin (the surface of significance) and the other becomes white by turning away and creating distance from the rejected object (Ahmed 2004). This is one example of what Holland (2012) means they call racism "the emotional lifeblood of race" and "the "feeling" that articulates and keeps the flawed logic of race in its place" (6).

To generalize the affectively-dense process of subject formation beyond disgust, Ahmed coins the term "affective economies" to explain how the circulation and accumulation of particular affective states and emotions constitute subjects through feeling (instead of feeling resulting from subject identification). Accordingly, bodies gain the sense of having a boundary at the skin (or not) through emotional encounters and interactions with other bodies and/or cultural texts. In addition to feeling a boundary, bodies become oriented toward or away from other bodies through the experience of certain emotions like fear, disgust, or shame. This orientation to others through feelings describes the first way that emotions play a role in creating subjects through drawing bodies into and away from collectivities and forge feelings of attachment and detachment from those collectivities. The more these emotion-object encounters occur, the more the feelings that orient people to

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certain subject positions accumulate and the more people "feel" consciously or not like they belong to a particular subject position. Repetitive circulation makes emotions "stick" to certain objects (such as other human bodies or inanimate things). As emotions increasingly stick to objects through repetition (like bears and fear in her example), the encounters and interactions that produced the stickiness of that emotion to that object become elided and people within that cultural context increasingly assume that that emotion is innate to that object and thus the emotional response becomes more automatic (e.g., if you see a bear, you feel scared and run away). What we deem "stereotypes," and judge as "positive" or "negative" are examples of affectively sticky representations (e.g., scary thug in a hoody, the model minority) that draw bodies into and away from collectivities. José Muñoz's concept of "feeling brown" (2000) sounds like this accumulated and oriented feelings.

In addition to forming subjects through affects, discourses produce affects that shape interaction, or the materialization of discourse. For example, the mismatch between material racial inequalities and diversity discourse produces "racial ambiguities" (Holt 2000) and heightened racial paranoia (Jackson 2010). That is, diversity discourse's focus on celebration and tolerance cannot legibly link racial difference with inequality (Brown 2006), and yet signs of racial inequality abound. Therefore, seeking recognition of that inequality through the parameters of diversity discourse is "crazy making" (Jackson 2010). In the classroom, this mismatch makes for an affective climate that "vacillates between a high level of tension and an

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overwhelming desire to create harmony, acceptance of "difference," and cordial relations" (Mohanty 2003:203).

Moreover, because liberal discourse identifies the individual as the locus of change and, by extension of that, diversity discourse aims to tackle racism through sensitivity and competency trainings, these combined discourses deploy their subjects in carefully regulating individuals' speech, as if saying the right thing will make racism dissolve (Brown 2006, Hartigan 2010, Mohanty 2003). As "seductive" as that simple solution to ridding us of racism is (Holland 2012), knowing what the right thing to say is impossible to ascertain because race is far too complicated to be easily summarized, critiqued, and undone with "the right phrases." And yet, the desire for simple answers persists and is visible in national controversies over racial "breaches of etiquette" (Hartigan 2010:167). Stalled conversations are not the only effect of anxiously seeking the right thing to say, it also leads many whites to stay quiet and avoid contact with people of color in general (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005) and leads many Blacks to suspect racist thoughts in the silence or niceties of whites (Jackson 2010). Often that suspicion is accurate (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005). In short, diversity discourse tries to regulate aversion (Brown 2006), but in doing so it also produces aversive behavior (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005) which, in turn, heightens racial paranoia. Moreover, when norms of safe spaces aim to regulate aversion and maintain white comfort, they not only reproduce this aversive behavior, but also enact symbolic violence by disciplining students of color to remain silent and affectless to assuage white fragility (DiAngelo 2011, Leonardo & Porter 2010). These erotic

feelings and discourses structure and constrain behavior, even in classrooms where the goal is to deconstruct these very discourses and public feelings.

Within sociology, our scientific discourses around truth and objectivity have led us to study race and racism in particular ways, mainly through that which is observable and measurable (e.g., interactions or talk between people, policies, practices, representations). But feeling exceeds and escapes all of these observable and measurable phenomenon; grief exceeds the legal grievances that we track (Cheng 2001). Affect is messy—it cannot be clearly seen, pinned down, or articulated in language (Clough 2010). In our studies of race and racism, we tend to "only see something produced by the machinations of large systems like the university or the state. We often only have eyes for the spectacularity of racist practice, not everyday machinations that we in turn have some culpability in" (Holland 2012:27). Similarly, Gordon (1997) argues that affect constitutes an invisible, ghostly force that shapes the social world in a multitude of ways, but our methods of gathering and presenting sociological data does not conjure that social force nor account for complex personhood. When applied to the classroom, this suggests that thinking about race and feeling about race cannot be pulled apart without missing something vital to how race operates as a field of power. And yet, academic ideals promise that thinking about race objectively will help us understand its construction and then enable us to deconstruct it intellectually and materially (Jackson 2010). By using the broad understanding of affect and emotion developed in affect studies, this project will investigate those suggestions more by examining the emotional cultures, pedagogical

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practices, and knowledges of different classrooms, and how they shape multicultural dialogues and their effects.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined the confluence of sociological and feminist studies literatures on racial subjectivity, critical pedagogies, and affect studies to frame the theoretical problems and research questions in this study. Classrooms are, in many ways, microcosms of the society (Anyon 1980, Freire 1968, Giroux 1984, hooks 1994). In order to understand the classroom dynamics at play in conversations about race, I draw from these literatures in order to recognize a) the colonial histories and structural inequalities of race in discursive practices, b) that those histories and inequalities shape students' racial subjectivities, identities, experiences, and feelings about experiences, c) that students perform those positionalities in class in ways that stall conversations, d) that pedagogies can interrupt hegemonic discourses, and e) that public feelings and affective economies about race also shape discourses and the conversations we have through discourses.

In the next chapter, I turn my attention to the cases of this study—six traditional classrooms with a social science, humanities, and/or rhetoric curriculum, as well as the comparative case, Rainbow Theater, a multicultural theater class and set of student-led productions. Stepping back from the conversations themselves, I first utilize field notes to examine the cultures of each classroom type, specifically the cultures of emotional expression or emotional habitus (Gould 2009). I also draw on

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field notes, students' interviews, and surveys to understand the emotional labor that students perform in order to fulfill the norms of each classroom space. Those emotional cultures and forms of emotional labor both reproduce and transform the affect-discourse of overlapping colonial discourse, diversity discourse, and public feelings about race, and in doing so, also shape the qualities of conversations that take place in each classroom type.

Chapter 3 – "Keeping it in" and "keeping it real": Comparing and contrasting emotional habitus and emotional labor in the classroom

Introduction

This research investigates how people talk about race in university classrooms—the language, narratives, understandings, and feelings that people utilize to make sense of structures and experiences of race and racism. As I noted earlier, the literature on multicultural education in college settings is primarily composed of quantitative studies on individual-level measures of attitude and belief change (see Gurin et al. 2013 and Hurtado 2005 for meta-analyses of these studies). These quantitative studies suggest that when students report positive experiences with multicultural education, they develop "the habits of mind that will prepare [students] for a diverse and global world" (Hurtado 2005: 606). However, when students report negative experiences in multicultural education, they are more likely to develop a strong racial identity through negative feelings toward other racial groups (Hurtado 2005). Therefore, the *qualities* of conversations very much matter for the outcomes. Investigating the qualities of conversations and individual outcomes of four-person intergroup dialogues, Gurin et al. (2013) found that students develop attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that support racial justice, but only after they learn dialogue skills for diversity (e.g., engaging self, appreciating difference, critical reflection, and alliance building). While Gurin et al. (2013) validate that race talk is difficult and requires careful facilitation, this impressive study is limited in scope—they examine

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only four-student dialogues with two facilitators (an ideal form that is difficult to replicate in terms of funding and human resources). Moreover, it does not systematically compare the qualities of conversations in different disciplines, their respective effects, and how those conversations are pre-conditioned by public feelings about race. In this chapter, I will compare the qualities of conversation in traditional and multicultural theater classrooms, with specific attention to the emotional cultures of those spaces and their relations to public feelings about race.

Classroom culture generates the language, narratives, understandings, and feelings that people have available to do this work of making sense, fostering legibility, and informing action (Freire 2000, Scering 1997, Giroux 1984). In this chapter, I use theories of culture and emotion to compare traditional classrooms and the Rainbow Theater program. In his pioneering work, Pierre Bourdieu (1977) outlined a theory of *habitus* to refer to the shared cultural principles that enable improvisational behavior, specifically behavior that aligns with a shared sense of normality and results in some sort of material or felt consequences (e.g., a sense of belonging, an accumulation of social capital, or a political leaning). Many other scholars have used Bourdieu's habitus to analyze social processes (see, for example, Bourgois & Schonberg (2007) on ethnicized hierarchies among injection drug uses, Wacquant (2004) on boxing as a tool for Black upward mobility in urban Chicago, and Bettie (2003) on racialized class hierarchies in schools). Building on Bourdieu, Gould (2009) is unique in adding emotion to develop the concept of *emotional habitus*, defining it in several ways: "the socially constituted, prevailing ways of

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feeling and emoting, as well as the embodied, axiomatic understandings and norms

about feelings and their expression" (10); "a social grouping's collective and only

partly conscious emotional dispositions" (32); and "a sense of what and how to feel,

with labels for their feelings, with schemas about what feelings are and what they

mean, with ways of figuring out and understanding what they are feeling" (34). For

Gould, these normative understandings of feelings have political effects since

collective emotions drive social movements in varying directions (e.g., who/what

they hold accountable for social problems, whether their membership and

involvement grows or shrinks). In addition, social movements also expose people to

new emotional dispositions and new objects to which to attach their emotions (Gould

2009).

I borrow from and extend Gould's emotional habitus to refer to the cultures of

emotional expression that structure the traditional classrooms and Rainbow Theater.

While these classrooms are not social movement projects like Gould's (2009) study,

the importance of affect and emotion seems appropriate in race talk given the

affective and emotional components of race and racism—racial paranoia (Jackson

2010); racial melancholia and the haunting of unhealed non-reconciled racial wounds

(Gordon 2008, Cheng 2001, Minnow 1998); the erotic life of racism (Holland 2012);

racial ambivalences (Holt 2000); aversive racism (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005); white

fragility (DiAngelo 2011) and white resistance and backlash (Matias 2014).

Moreover, Gould's concept of an emotional habitus also helps to analyze how the

cultures of different educational settings carry over from other ethnic communities or

institutional settings, and thus affect a sense of inclusivity or exclusivity in those spaces. In sum then, emotional habitus analyzes how these normative expressions enable and constrain certain performances (i.e., ways of talking or emoting) and create different burdens of representation for students. In other words, emotional cultures in the classroom affect both performance in the front stage/back stage sense (Goffman 1959) and performativity in the discursive sense (Butler 1990, Hall 2003). In turn, performance and performativity have interactional effects.

In addition, I also utilize the concept of emotional labor (Hochschild 1983) to describe how students more consciously manage their emotions in the classroom. The concept of emotional labor is used to describe how companies or other public institutions (explicitly or implicitly) require employees to cultivate certain feelings and/or manage their emotional expressions in order to invoke desirable feelings in customers, clients, managers, or employers. Although this concept has mostly developed in studies of corporate settings, it can work in any institutional settings characterized by hierarchal relationships and strict normative practices, such as classrooms. In studies of family life, Hochschild (1983) distinguishes between surface acting (i.e., covering up one's outward appearance to conceal one's actual feelings) and deep acting (i.e., empathizing so deeply that one cultivates the feelings of another). While emotional habitus describes the more *intuited and seemingly unremarkable* cultural practices that shape student behavior—I use emotional labor to describe how the emotional cultures of different classrooms give students a more *conscious* sense of what is (in)appropriate in those spaces and thus inform students in

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how to *intentionally* manage their emotional performances. I will show that

traditional classroom cultures require students to engage in containment and perform

flat affect, an emotional labor of "keeping it in" that has different identity-based

effects. I will also argue that Rainbow's emotional habitus requires students to

perform emotional labor too, even though it actively pushes back on the "keep it in"

culture of other university spaces. Rainbow's emotional labor does not feel like labor

to its students because it aligns more with students' desires for honest, good-faith

conversations about race and connecting across difference.

Before analyzing the emotional habitus and labor in these different

educational settings, I provide short ethnographic descriptions of each classroom

setting. The following field notes and renderings of these spaces will focus on how

they take shape in the first couple weeks of the quarter, and as the class time begins

each time they meet. I choose to describe these because starting moments mark

transitions from one cultural space to another, thus they draw attention to some

defining characteristics and norms that make one cultural space distinct from another.

Field Note: Rainbow
> Walk into a Rainbow Theater class (or just "Rainbow" as students call it) and
> this is what you would likely see. You walk into Stevenson Event Center, a
> high-ceiling, open space that can seat several hundred people for shows. As
> roughly 50 students walk in, there's music playing, hip hop for the most part,
> and it's loud, loud like a party, loud enough that you have to lean in to the
> person next to you if you want to talk to them. Right away, just the volume of
> the space forces a sort of immediate intimacy, even if you don't know the people
> around you yet, much like the forced intimacy of a party or a bar, but without
> the alcohol or the drugs. You have to lean in and look carefully at people if you
> want to make out the words that they are saying.

The students gathering for class arrange themselves in a variety of ways. Dozens are standing up and talking to one another in small circles, and again, the talking is much like a party. There are frequent flamboyant explosions where you see someone yell out something, dance a little, talk with their hands; and other people in the group laugh and playfully taunt the one in the spotlight for the moment. Some people are in costumes or clothing that mark them as either eccentric or party-ready. They're not necessarily dressed up as a particular character, but they've got a little flair on—a glittery shirt or hat, an ugly-chic thrift store find, a kimono, a prop like a plastic sword or toy gun. While these groups are talking to one another, there are some people sitting in the chairs set up for class or a performance—10-15 rows of chairs facing the stage, the stage where Rainbow performances will happen, and from which Mr. Taylor[14] (Rainbow Theater's founder and director) and student leaders will speak. Some of the people talking already know each other well, some are just getting into the mix. The chair-sitting students either talk to a few other students next to them, again leaning in to hear one another, or they sit alone, watching the other groups, or looking down at their phones. There's only a few of these phone-lookers though, maybe four out of the 50 or so students in the classroom. But rarely do those folks sit alone, as other Rainbow students often greet the lone folks, whether they know them already or not. The greeter initiates the conversation, asks questions, engages the person about their day or their interest in Rainbow, often mentioning that they recognize them from one cast or another, a different class on campus, or a student organization. As the class progresses, students clump together with people from their cast and directors walk around to check in with their cast members.

It's ten minutes past the hour and thus the official starting time of the class, and still no one is standing on the stage indicating that the class has started. Actually, class *has* started. You could only imagine that the class has not started on time if you have a particular notion of what a class looks like, with the teacher up front, dictating and commanding the attention of the students, who all look to the teacher as the purveyor of knowledge. But that's not what's happening right now in Rainbow. In fact, the "front" of the classroom holds very little meaning at this point. People are socializing, getting to know each other, meeting new people, and building what they refer to as the Rainbow "family." Some of the explicit objectives of this class are for people to connect, learn about someone different than themselves, and develop as leaders. So class doesn't start when Mr. Taylor enters the room, it starts when students start talking to one another. This period does not feel like a transition period to class, it feels like what's supposed to be happening is happening. People joke that Rainbow never starts on time, but what they mean be that is that Mr. Taylor isn't holding court yet.

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[14] I use pseudonyms for individuals.

Somewhere between 10-20 minutes after the hour, one or more of the student leaders of the class, or Mr. Taylor himself, will get up on the stage and call everyone over to the rows of chairs facing the stage, often by yelling out "Rainbow, Rainbow," a call-response cheer that happens all throughout Rainbow classes, rehearsals, and performances. It's a call that signifies group membership, belonging, pride, and the need for attention and focus. After the call has been made for students to sit, some students, especially the chatty ones, need coaxing to move over to the seats and get quiet. This coaxing is often in the form of a playful, yet stern, command from the leaders, maybe by calling out of one individual by name or by their outfit. Students make their way over to the rows of chairs, talking on their way over there, and often into the first couple sentences made by the student leader or Mr. Taylor. This chatter by the students is often loud enough that part way through the head speaker's first words they will stop and call out "one mic!" Dozens of students will echo "one mic" back to them until students quiet down and give their silence and attention to the speaker. The first announcements tend to be a series of logistics and announcements about the plays, the rehearsals, upcoming deadlines, or other student group announcements. Somewhere between 3 and 6 students will make an announcement or plug for an event or political action on campus that they want Rainbow folks to support with their presence. The announcers often start their announcement with a "Rainbow, Rainbow" call-response.

This mix of yelling out call-responses and speaking only loud enough to be heard and understood characterizes the normal sonic cadence of Rainbow. The other cadence that marks this space is the fluctuation between serious and playful tones and responses. Often, this modulation happens as quickly as one sentence to the next. The different activities also exemplify this affective dynamism. A typical class will "start" with a motivational speech from Mr. Taylor, as well as a stern reminder of deadlines or commitment. Most students look up at him quietly and respectfully as he expresses disapproval at an unnamed group of students' behavior during a former rehearsal. Some look guilty, ashamed, or even a little scared. Mr. Taylor lets that feeling hang in the air for a moment, looking around the room and making eye contact with a bunch of students. And just as the tension reaches a high point, he breaks it by ribbing a couple students or dancing a little as he makes a joke or sings. The students burst out into laughter at these moments, yelling back at him in jest, or even jumping up, dancing, and pointing at other students. This free-for-all continues until someone calls out "Rainbow, Rainbow" and then Mr. Taylor collects their attention so that he can introduce an improv[15] game (in which case the mood

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[15] "Improv game" is shorthand for improvisational theater games or icebreakers. They are commonly used to teach acting. Mr. Taylor told me that he uses them to

stays playful), give another speech, or turn their attention to student leaders who explain the next activity.

Field Note: Traditional classroom

At three minutes before the hour in the traditional classrooms, the chairs are arranged in a circle around the room. Students file in one by one, or sometimes in pairs. The pairs coming in often chat while they come in, at a slightly louder volume than that of the other students in the classroom, if any people are talking in the classroom, and usually at least a few are already there. As those talking pairs enter the classroom door, they realize that their volume is louder than the rest of the people, they immediately drop their volume, sometimes with an expression of slight shame (such as a blush, head drop, and verbal "oh!").

The students already there are either quietly talking or looking down at their desk, flipping through a reading, or more commonly, swiping through the touch screen of their phones, ostensibly perusing a social media site. Some people talk in pairs or triads, mostly with the people seated directly next to them. In these classrooms, students mostly file into the same spot they usually sit in every class, even though there is no assigned seating. They secure this spot early in the quarter, and tend to go back to it repeatedly. As such, they end up sitting next to the same four or five people in a class of 18-30. Talk mostly revolves around trials and tribulations of a shared class besides this one, or in the case of the Core classrooms where people also live close to one another, some gossip from their dorms.

When the teacher is in the room, students' interactions with the teacher vary. In a couple of the classrooms, the teachers come early and tend to chat with a couple students about school or weekend plans. In a couple other classes, the teachers are there, but quietly focused on prepping the class. They shuffle papers around, read some notes, hand papers back, or talk with a student who approaches them to ask a question about an assignment. In a few others, the teacher tends to walk in a minute or so before the class is scheduled to officially begin, and when they enter the room, the students tend to get quiet immediately. Conversations that were happening slow down and get quiet in mid thought, and the students who were looking at their phones look up to see what the teacher will do or say. In the other classrooms where the teacher is prepping, this hush in the crowd happens as soon as the teacher stands up or moves to the middle of the room. Often without any explicit directive, the teacher's presence commands their attention, at least partially. The teacher then gets their full attention, or at least silence, when they declare that the class is starting.

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teach acting skills (such as staying in character and improvising lines when forgetting scripted lines) and help the students get to know one another.

The front of the classroom is an interesting concept here since the chairs are in a circle—an effort to diminish the teacher-student hierarchy of frontal teaching methods (Freire 2000). Even so, students seem reluctant to sit in the seats closest to the teacher, and those who do sit there end up being the students who come in later and thus have the last pick of seats. Some of the classroom circles are actually semi circles, with more space opened up near the teacher (and/or course assistant, in the case of the Core courses). Seats are missing in that space, and usually make for uninterrupted view of the chalkboard or screen. This is what is intuited as the front of the classroom. Class starts either at the top of the hour, or within a few minutes of that time.

Class usually begins with a couple announcements from the teacher, announcements mostly related to deadlines in the class, but occasionally also about events on campus. The teacher then tells the students that they'll be discussing one of the assigned readings for that day. These discussions vary in size—some are three to five people in size and others involve the whole class. Most of the time, the teacher leads large group discussions, but at times, pairs of students lead discussion as an assignment. Leading discussion in both cases refers to prompting the students with few questions about the readings, and at times, the readings' relevance to their own experiences or society at large. After the leader asks the questions, students begin to offer up their own answers, and at first these comments come in as a series of responses, often without reference to the previous students' comments. The entire conversation might consist of these "serial monologues" (Gurin 2013) from a talkative minority in the class (between 4-8 students). The conversation is marked by a flat affective tone wherein most students do not talk at all, sit slightly slumped in their chairs, and stare in the general direction of the talker, but with a downward gaze or distantly past them. It is unclear if most of these quieter students are listening or not, and the only thing that makes me think that they are is that an occasional comment inspires an explosion of different affects in the room—suddenly people rigidly sit up right, multiple hands go up in the air, and most students talk at once, some loud enough to hear across the room, and some more quietly to their neighbors.

"Keeping it in": The emotional habitus of the traditional classrooms

The culture of flat affect and keeping it in

The emotional habitus of the traditional classroom mirrors what some scholars have described as "national affect." We tend to commonly think of affect and emotion as possessions of individuals, but here I am suggesting that classroom

contexts are expressions of and producers of affects that more broadly shape social life. In the traditional classrooms, such affect is influenced by or related to what some scholars term "national affect." National affect refers to a normative emotional culture marked by disinterest, indifference (Peterson 2011, Dyer 1997), affective flatness, and emotional containment and/or impoverishment (Muñoz 2000). Rooted in Western democratic ideals that posit reason and emotion as oppositional (Peterson 2011), the national affect became the normative emotional culture not only in formal democratic processes, but also in other arenas of public debate. Moreover, because "the modern Western academy was created as the repository and guarantor of national culture" that "establish[es] rules for membership and participation" in the nation (Ferguson 2010:12), the academy also mimics the emotional ideals of citizenship and national democratic culture. For example, in many classroom practices, university students enact the national affect in ways that mirror the formal democratic processes of congress—people take turns having the floor to speak and instead of debating policy, they flatly discuss the claims made in the assigned readings. Like any social phenomenon, these norms of flatness are accomplished through everyday interactions, and dominant schooling practices in the US have taught children that emoting strongly is not only inappropriate but antithetical to thinking (Chavéz & Longerbeam 2016, Rendón 2009). Therefore, schooling teaches students to enact national affect. My observations and interviews lead me to believe that students accumulated norms of flat affect during primary and secondary schooling and then assumed those norms when they entered the formal classroom at college. Every

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student I interviewed had a strong sense that they shouldn't show emotion and that doing so was a threat to their reputation as a good student. What is more, even though several instructors verbally countered norms of flat affect (e.g., several instructors told students who emoted strongly that they appreciated their candor and that it was not only OK to show emotion, but that doing so could aid in the power of their argument), the students I interviewed did not remember hearing that or still felt that emoting was risky.

The description of the traditional classroom in the field note above reflects this national affect wherein most conversations maintained a flat affective tone for long periods of time. However, this affective flatness was also modulated by periodic emotional explosions of anger, frustration, laughter, and uncontained chatter. In each one of the classes I observed, 4-5 students constituted what I call the *vocal minority* (i.e., the primary talkers) during large group discussions. As Yvonne, a sociology student, told me of her class: "A lot of people didn't speak up…[laughs]…Like I'm sure you noticed that, you were there. It was the same five or six people talking." The vocal minority tended to share comments without much prodding (i.e., just the posing of a discussion question), and they responded to the instructor or one another at a fast clip. While these students' comments varied in affective tone (from flat to dynamic), the tone of *the rest of the room* remained flat. That is, the quieter students' expressions were mostly blank—they peered down at the ground in front of their desk, at papers on their desk, or if they looked in the direction of the speaker, they

often seemed to look past the speaker. It was difficult to tell if they were paying attention to the conversation at hand.

However, occasionally one student's comment set off a flurry of thoughts and feelings among many students—a common moment I call an *affective explosion*. In these affective explosions, students' body language expressed high levels of excitement and agitation—hands rose quickly and stiffly, bodies shuffled erratically in the seats, voices increased in volume, and words blended together as multiple people talked over one another. Not only did these affective explosions indicate that the quieter students had been listening and engaged, it also indicated that they harbored stronger feelings about race than their previous body language demonstrated, and that these feelings contributed to the mounting emotional tension in the room. The affective explosions suggest that students were engaging in emotional labor in the classroom—surface acting (Hochschild 1983) or actively working to contain feelings and compose their bodies in ways that publically performed disinterest or indifference despite these feelings. Napo claimed that this norm of composure discouraged students from speaking and produced a lot of "awkward tension." In his words, "that's what a conversation in sociology is—it's awkward tension." Ariana agreed that the norm of composure contributed to her silence in the classroom. She often disagreed with statements made by other students in class, but because she feared "getting really loud" when voicing her disagreement, she "liked to prevent that" by staying silent in class.

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The norm of appearing emotionally disinterested, as well as its silencing

effects, also stem from students' internalization of frontal pedagogy (i.e., the colonial

pedagogy that leads students to believe that knowledge is an objective, disembodied

truth that teachers impart on passive recipient students (Freire 2000)). Although none

of the instructors in the traditional classrooms I observed endorsed frontal models—

indeed they ideologically opposed them—they also regrettably noticed that students

expected that model and often acted accordingly, even when instructors assigned

Freire (like they did in the core classes) and encouraged students to "take ownership"

of the assigned materials and speak about them on their own terms. Nonetheless,

students had a sense that talking about race was only appropriate in the classroom if

they flatly talked, using the terms and argumentation laid out in the assigned readings

for class. This internalized frontal model gave students the sense that there was a

"right thing" to say about race in the classroom and *a right way to say it* (and saying

something with strong feelings was not it). For example, Alexis stated that she often

remained silent because of fears of saying "the wrong thing" and "sounding stupid[16]."

For her, "the wrong thing" and "sounding stupid" meant anything that might offend

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[16] Although this fear of seeming inept was mentioned by most of my interviewees in
the traditional classroom, I noticed that students in Nora's core course classroom
risked "sounding stupid" in front of others regularly. They often started sentences
with "I'm not sure if this is right" or "I'm confused." Nora usually followed up such
comments with an appreciation for sharing their confusion and an assertion that
sharing incomplete thoughts was part of the learning process. In regard to the partial
understanding that stems from different positionalities and standpoints, Nora often
repeated the phrase "what we don't know, we don't know." It seemed that Nora's
emphasis on destigmatizing ignorance (in the purest sense of the word) gave students
more permission to take risks and show vulnerability in front of others.

someone else or "does not sound academic." Likewise, when asked about whether or

not she censors herself in class, Anabel said "I use academic language [laughing].

I'm not gonna do a slur of f-words or something." Regina also avoided speaking in

class because "I always have this fear that people would judge me on what I say.

Because I just don't—I don't use big terms." Like Anabel who feared sounding

angry while speaking, Regina also feared losing her emotional composure:

"sometimes I'm afraid I'll break down talking about it." Alexis, Anabel, and

Regina's comments all demonstrate their sense that there is a right thing to say about

race (i.e., that which mimics the academic language used in texts) and a right way to

say them (i.e., in a composed, disinterested affectation). For the students, the course

material often invoked feelings, but the norms of flat affect made expression of those

feelings risky. To fit those speaking norms, students made choices about emotional

labor—most stayed silent or used academic language to help them conceal feelings

that might sneak out if they used colloquial language to talk about race.

Staying silent or using academic language to say "the right thing" in "the right

way" was also shaped by the combination and contradictions of racial paranoia,

aversive racism, sociological knowledge, and diversity culture's incitement to

discourse. Diversity culture in the US gives people a sense that talking about race in

public means talking about seemingly agreed-upon values of diversity (Ward 2008,

Michaels 2006). Sociological language gives students a sense that there is another

way to talk about race publicly, but unlike diversity values (which nearly everyone

can agree upon and which tend to travel with heartwarming feelings (Ward 2008)),

sociological discourses about race emphasize power differences and conflict, issues that diversity culture often obscures in its feel-good affect and discursive focus on universality. Moreover, national patterns of racial paranoia and aversive racism both pervade most mixed conversations about race, conditioning students to feel suspicious about one another's' racial animus (Jackson 2010), to fear offending one another (Jackson 2010, Gaertner & Dovidio 2005), and to avoid any actions or thoughts that may implicate them as prejudiced (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005)[17]. Jackson (2010) writes that racial paranoia is marked by Black feelings of suspicion of Whites and White fears of offending Blacks. However, I observed a fear of offending among students of all racial identities (in classroom observations, interviews, and surveys). This fear of offending cut in all directions in terms of difference—white students feared offending students of color, students of color feared offending white students, straight students feared offending queer students, etc. Students would regularly preface comments with "I hope this doesn't offend anyone."

Interviewees expressed a series of statements that pointed toward the contradictory logic of racial paranoia and diversity culture pervading the classroom culture, as well as the historical context in which it is embedded. That is, students knew that talking about race could offend others (thus indicating that students have

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[17] Gaertner & Dovidio (2005) define aversive racism as a type of racism harbored by Whites who consciously uphold egalitarian beliefs and attitudes but who unconsciously hold racial animus towards Blacks. Because other research shows that Latino, Asian, and Whites all harbor implicit bias against Blacks (Greenwald & Krieger 2006), and many Blacks hold implicit bias against Blacks (Greenwald et al. 2002, Lowry et al. 2001), I infer that students of all racial identities may exhibit the avoidance behaviors associated with aversive racism.

emotional investments in different knowledges about race). But diversity culture

generally, and classroom rules specifically, urge people to avoid provoking negative

emotions in other when talking about race. From this juncture, most students

engaged in emotional labor through remaining silent or using academic language to

talk about race without "getting emotional" or provoking emotions in others[18]. Both

of these avoidance strategies aimed to resolve these affective-discursive

contradictions. Not only does this contradiction require a lot of emotional labor and

management to perform properly, it also creates a palpable awkward tension that

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[18] In some instances, racial paranoia also works against national affect to enable less
contained expressions about race and racism (such as indignation, anger, and disgust).
John Jackson (2010) argues that racial paranoia is a two-sided coin—it instills fear of
conversations about race in mixed groups but also invites people to talk openly about
race in regards to high-profile racist events (e.g., the overtly racist statements of
former LA Clippers' owner Donald Sterling). The latter cases incite people,
especially whites who are afraid of being identified as racist, to perform non-racism
through public condemnation of overt acts of racism (the instances that almost anyone
readily recognizes as "real racism"). Mainstream historical accounts of the Civil
Rights movement constructed racism as overt, intentional, and interpersonal, and also
attached feelings of shame and disgust to these overt forms of racism (Bonilla-Silva
2003). In the post-Civil Rights era, publicly condemning overtly racist acts through
shame, disgust, and anger have become commonplace performances of national
identity, a way of performing the self as non-racist and the nation as post-race (and
conversely constructing bigots as outside of the nation and remnants of an old racist
past (Peterson 2011)). Because of the ignorance and irrationality attached to
representations of overt racism, condemning those acts also performs the self as
educated and rational, two characteristics that mark middle-class belonging (Ward
2008, Bonilla-Silva 2003) and national affect, respectively. I observed a desire to
speak effusively about race in obvious cases of racist intention or bigotry, and other
scholars have noted this as well (Ward 2008, Bonilla-Silva 2003). Quieter students
join the vocal minority in conversations that revolve around such cases, and they
contribute with more excitement than their body language previously showed—
expressing frustration, disgust, and anger. Indeed, talking about instances of overt
racism usually resulted in some of the affective explosions that I described above.
This is especially true for white students who need to publically condemn racism in
order to distinguish themselves as a non-racist variety of whiteness.

Napo described earlier. When I have reported these findings to other sociology students (in classrooms and in research assistantships), they have readily commented that these findings put words to the awkward tension that they have felt in many of their classrooms.

Because of the oppositional direction of these affective-discursive pulls, many students feel confusion and sometimes anxiety about what constitutes appropriate race talk in the classroom, a dissonance that also encourages students to remain quiet and/or contain their feelings rather than talking in a way that feels honest and sincere. For example, Alexis was confused by her instructor Annie's rule that students should respect one another's ideas. Wondering how that could be realized when so many students' ideas and feelings about race were oppositional (and thus likely to provoke anger or annoyance), Alexis concluded, "Well I think that [rule] is pretty impossible." Ivy pointed out this impossibility as well, saying that if a student were to angrily respond to another student's comment, some other students would likely show disapproval with their body language or with words that direct them contain their feelings and/or perform flat affect. Yvonne agreed, saying that her own friends told her, "Don't be so frickin serious! Calm down!" Alexis, Ivy, and Yvonne's comments point out a double bind that students feel—a desire to talk honestly about race with their peers, and yet a fear that doing so will offend others or be inappropriate for a classroom. What is more, their comments point out that their classroom culture contributed to the confusion created by contradictions of diversity culture, racial paranoia, and sociological knowledge. For both Ivy and Alexis, being silent was the

easiest way to avoid offending, disrespecting, or saying something non-academic. Most interviewees and survey respondents claimed that only silence can totally assuage that fear of offending. Yvonne refused to stay quiet, but she often felt alienated as a result.

A majority of the students I interviewed desired a classroom culture that resolved those contradictions, but found that their classrooms fell short of that goal. For example, Yvonne expressed remorse that her sociological class ended up stalling conversations about race. In the first two weeks of the quarter, she was filled with excitement and optimism about her sociology class's ability to generate honest conversations about race that went beyond the common impasses of mainstream conversations about race. She noted: "We've got some people in here who actually want to talk!" Unfortunately, that excitement and optimism diminished after the first couple weeks when she noticed students staying quiet in class. In her words: "[Students] are in these classes that are supposed to be critically thinking and looking at the world, but then they kinda don't actually want to talk about things, which makes me really upset, because I was really ready to get into discussions in that class." For Yvonne, her classroom culture did not give students tools to resolve the contradictions of diversity culture, racial paranoia, and sociological knowledge: "I felt like so many people had things they wanted to say, but they didn't, just because they didn't wanna offend anybody."

Holland (2012) writes that the erotic life of racism is an economy of feelings that continually enlist us in reproducing racism and keeping its logic in place. The

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desires that Yvonne and other students described have also been produced through years of racial formation and resistance, but they want to undo the flawed logic of race. They desire honest interracial conversations that go beyond the paranoia, guardedness, and niceties of colorblindness and diversity culture. They want something different—a conversation where people feel like they can be sincere, where they can address power imbalances, where they can build knowledge together, and where they can learn how to communicate and work together across differences. When those desires meet an emotional habitus that values affective flatness, and thus also encourages containment, students consciously notice that they are doing emotional labor. Moreover, because that containment runs contrary to their desires for honest dialogue, many feel insincere and resentful of the emotional performances they have to do there.

Performance, performativity, and racializing effects

The valuing of flat affect stems from the Western and colonial culture/nature binary (Peterson 2011). This binary not only positioned reason and emotion as oppositional, but it also mapped binaries of Western/Other and masculine/feminine onto the nature/culture binary (Lugones 2007, Quijano 2007). This articulation of various binaries was used to construct colonial subjects as savage, justify their economic exploitation and oppression, and deny suffrage for women and people of color (Collins 2000, Dyer 1997, Lowe 2015, Lugones 2007, Quijano 2007, Spivak 1999, Wynter 2003). As such, the reason/emotion binary has pulled whiteness,

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heteromasculinity, and middle-class status in co-constitution (Lowe 2015, Lugones 2007, Quijano 2007, Spivak 1999, Wynter 2003). America's cultural valuing of disinterested affectation and devaluing of emotional displays beyond flatness—especially those associated with contestation of injustice (e.g., indignation, sadness, grief, rage)—stems from liberalism's notion that cold affectation leads to rational decision-making for all. The logic at work here is that "feeling too much" marks one as too needy and interested, or as a marginal interest group rather than an "average citizen" (Peterson 2011). Of course, as the identity-based movements of 1960s to the present elucidate, the "average citizen" that lawmakers have had in mind is often a straight, middle-class, white man. Therefore, acts of condemning emotional performances that contest this injustice have historically worked as a racial, gender, sexual, and class project by rearticulating flat affectation, rationality, and objectivity with whiteness, heteromasculinity, and middle-class status.

Even though national affect has historically constructed the contours of whiteness, heteromasculinity, and middle-class status, its normativity and rewards (i.e., feelings of inclusion within academic spaces, legibility as intelligent) mean that students of any racial identity can and do feel attached to and invested in performing flat affect (although many also feel alienated by its cultural import). When the national affect is centered as the norm in classrooms, performances of anger, frustration, rage, excitement, and sadness are read as excessive, inappropriate for the classroom, or irrational. Because of the historical articulation between containment, whiteness, middle-class status, and masculinity—as well as their constitutive others

of emotional excess, femininity, working-class status, and black/brownness (Collins 2000)—Americans have been discursively trained to read the performances of women and people of color as emotionally excessive and irrational, and performances of white men as rational (regardless of whether their performances are emotionally contained).

According to my surveys, this is a burden that women and people of color, especially the women of color, disproportionately shouldered during class. All six of the interviewees above who resorted to silence were women, and five of them were women of color. Three of the four men of color interviewees also reported silencing to avoid being read as emotionally excessive and irrational. The white male interviewees from traditional classrooms did not report this same concern. Therefore, norms of flat affect not only shaped performance (in the Goffmanian sense of front stage adherence to norms), but they also shaped performative pressures on students. In other words, the burden of representation as flat and rational was different for women and people of color than it was for the white men in class. Because these burdens did push women and people of color to disproportionately stay silent, the norms of flatness and emotional containment rearticulated rationality and objectivity to whiteness and masculinity, even in a classroom that aimed to deconstruct racial inequality.

One effect of this different burden was a disparity in talk time between white students and students of color. As I explained above, most of the people of color I interviewed regularly remained silent to avoid sounding "too emotional." Staying

silent was an indirect way to perform flat affect and thus play the part of a good student. This intense concern for performing the good student role was common for students, and students of color in particular. In general, banking models of education have conditioned students to believe that good students are quiet, attentive, and malleable to the desires of teachers (Freire 2000). But performing as the model student has different performative imperatives and legibility issues based on race. For example, Osajima (1991) argues that Asian-American students often perform silence not out of cultural traditions of deference but because being read as a good student holds particular importance for them; silence and educational success have historically characterized much Asian-American resistance to racial oppression. Because vulnerability and asking for help contrast with Latino male students' sense of pride and machismo, they may remain silent in class to avoid seeming weak or in need of help (Sáenz et al. 2013). Moreover, hooks (2003) argues that many Black students' silence stems from experience shaming in early education, learning that their sense of worth and value is tied to their ability to be a good student. Because college classrooms often evoke and repeat that shame through intense scrutiny and judgment of students' comments and writing in class, silence can be a safe way to avoid scrutiny and judgment. Indigenous students in one study of community college classrooms and advising stayed silent to "maintain traditional cultural practices, distinguish cultural practices from those of non-Indians, and safekeep cultural elements from extra-cultural ideological and pragmatic threats" (Covarrubias & Windchief 2009:333). Given these legibility issues based on race, performative

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silence and containment can be empowering for students of color in that it becomes cultural capital in academic spaces.

Even though the majority of the students of color I interviewed and surveyed described engaging in silence and containment, they did not always describe that emotional labor as an insincere performance or a form of erasure. Indeed, several interviewees of color felt ambivalence about silence and containment. On the one hand, silence and containment helped them fulfill their desire to listen carefully to others rather than focusing on their own responses. But even as they did not find *their own* containment or silence problematic, they did express remorse that more students in the class did not talk: "I wonder what the quiet people were thinking" or "I wish more people felt comfortable talking in class." Individually, they found their silence to be sincere; but collectively, silence felt like an insincere way to learn about race together. A few outlying students of color also acted as ardent advocates for emotional containment in the classroom. For example, I observed Mateo urge his fellow core students to stick to rational discussion of texts when several other students shared their personal and passionate responses to the text. Moreover, in the written surveys, the two staunchest advocates for not sharing personal responses came from Latinas.

Gender also created performative concerns for women—they worried about being read as too emotional more than men did. Race seem to decrease this burden of representation for white women. While some of the white women I interviewed expressed concerns about being read as irrational or overly emotional, none of the

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white men I interviewed expressed concerns about this. Moreover, most white men

in the classrooms I observed talked regularly, with the exception of a few white men.

An effect of these performative concerns, or lack thereof, was uneven talk time based

on race and gender. Even though students of color outnumbered white students in all

of the classes I observed[19], white people took up a disproportionate share of the talk

time in four out of six classrooms[20]. In half of these classes, both white men and

women took up the majority of talk time; while in the other half, white men

dominated talk time. White male students' dominance of class talk time is not an

isolated phenomenon; other research shows this as well (Bell & Golombisky 2004,

Sánchez-Casal 2002, Zentella 1995, Sadker & Sadker 1992, Sadker & Sadker 1990,

Swann 1988)[21]. Women of color's disproportionate concern about emotional

containment makes the classroom an active site of rearticulating emotional

containment, middle-class whiteness, and masculinity[22]. This racial unevenness of

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[19] Although this is not demographically common in most UCSC classes, it is in the core courses that I observed and increasingly so in the Sociology Department.

[20] There was only one white student in the two other classes where white students did not dominate the talk time.

[21] Several studies and reflective essays have noted that many multicultural education models rely upon students of color to teach white students about race, and thus force students of color to talk about their experiences with racism. While the intention is to decenter whiteness, this approach has its own problems. For one, it suggests that the purpose of multicultural discussion is to educate white people about the realities of racism. It also gives white students a sense that they do not have a racialized experience (Mohanty 2003, hooks 1994, Tatum 1992). Moreover, it subjects students of color to uneven voyeurism and vulnerability (Srivastava 1994).

[22] Although my interviewees did not use class-based language to express performative concerns about flatness and containment, class anxieties certainly affect those concerns as well since middle and upper classes have often judged working-class styles, sensibilities, and performances as excessive (Bettie 2003). Moreover,

talk time also contributes to the awkward tension that Napo described above. When white students—a demographic minority—dominate their classroom's discussions about racism, students of color often get talked about more than they are talked with[23].

Emotional containment is a cultural norm in the traditional classrooms. However, the effects that follow from this norm depend on who is performing flat affect. I just explained the effects of students of color, especially women of color, containing emotions, and now I will explain a peculiar effect of white men performing flat affect (in the classrooms with more than one white men enrolled). Quite often, *what* white male students said was fairly scripted non-racist speech for a sociological class—they pointed out the policies and practices that produced racial inequality and condemned those policies and practices with their words. However, when that non-racist script was spoken with the normative flat affect, it was often met with subtle signs of annoyance by other students—rolled eyes, whispering, or note-sharing[24]. In one example, the class discussed the prison industrial complex and

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because American culture lacks much vocabulary for describing and analyzing class, students often use race-based language to describe class-based phenomena.

[23] I will further discuss the gap between being talked about and talked with in a subsequent chapter.

[24] This type of white male performance adds to, and complicates, descriptions and analyses of how white students, especially white men, interact in diverse educational settings. Most of these descriptions articulate a backlash or resistance where white men (and sometimes white women) actively refuse to believe or intellectually consider the writings, lectures, and arguments of scholars of color who analyze and articulate policies and practices of racial inequality (Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung 2009, Forbes & Kaufman 2008, Sánchez-Casal 2002, hooks 1994, Davis 1992). While I definitely witnessed instances of backlash in the classes I observed at UCSC,

Angela Davis' (1998) claim that prisons work to disappear social problems by disappearing the people experiencing those problems most acutely. When the instructor asked the class what Davis meant by that, one white male answered: 'They're hiding addiction, and it's like what the Alexander article says, it takes the rights of people of color away.' *What* this student said did not indicate racial malice nor racist ideology, instead it specifically made connections with another article that also pointed out the institutional racism of mass incarceration. Both the act of connecting to textual arguments, and the affective *way* he did so, were normative for the classroom, but his statement caught my attention because his flat affective tone did not seem to express any concern. To me, he sounded indifferent or bored, and when I took note of other students' reactions to that statement, several of them rolled their eyes or looked at him with a pointed, disdainful stare.

Why, in a classroom culture of flat affect, would that particular comment catch my attention as odd and draw non-verbal criticism from other students? I think part of the reason was that this particular student often took up a disproportionate share of talk time in class, and therefore his repeated contributions were often met with signs of irritation from other students. But I also think that the other students and I were conditioned to be suspicious of both what he said and *how* he said it. That is, most

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they were much less frequent than the classes described in the aforementioned studies of white backlash. At UCSC, where the norms of mainstream diversity culture dominate, students have a strong sense that there is a "right" way to talk about race, and resistance and backlash are not included in appropriate race talk. While I did see some resistance and refusal to consider, agree, or believe arguments about persistent racism, I more commonly saw white students perform scripts of non-racism, albeit with a detached tone (however conscious or not).

high-profile instances and representations of overtly racist agents in American history, politics, and popular culture are/were white men. Furthermore, regular "caught on tape" scandals publicly air white public figures' private racist sentiments (e.g., Michael Richards, Don Sterling, Paula Dean). Most of these people caught on tape are white men. These instances, as Jackson (2010) points out, fuel and confirm reasons for racial paranoia, or the search for "racist wolves in sheep's clothing" (81). We are conditioned to suspect or expect to see white men enacting racist sentiment. Therefore, when white men said something in class, even when what they said is seemingly non-racist, many students looked at them with suspicion or surprise (e.g., with head tilts, sideways glances, eye rolls, raised eyebrows, or squinting eyes). Flat affectation—because it can be read as a sign of indifference and lack of concern (especially in people already discursively suspect)—can serve as an indication of hidden racial malice at worst, or detachment at best. In this way, the classroom's emotional culture compounds racial paranoia and creates a legibility dilemma for white men—performing appropriately for the classroom constrains their ability to be read as non- or anti-racist. But the emotional culture does not get troubled for creating this dilemma. Instead, the emotional culture's imperatives to perform in certain ways conceal the ways that the culture itself contributes to suspicion of white men. Keep it in performance bolsters suspicious performativity.

Since the flat affect of all students is learned and rewarded in the classroom, I question if it really symbolizes an indifference, detachment, or aloofness. Instead, it could be a containment of emotional displays of connectedness, care, and concern.

Or, perhaps it's a coping mechanism for deflecting guilt or shame. White resistance and backlash *do* reflect a sense of guilt or shame, or in other words, a sense of connection and responsibility, albeit one that the backlasher tries to cast off to relieve their culpability. By teaching whites to contain or deflect their guilt and shame by flatly talking about racial structures, do we also teach them that their sense of connection, implication, and responsibility is misguided as well[25]?

John Jackson (2010) argues that scholars "assume[] that all they have to do is objectively "deconstruct" race, prove it isn't real in the biological ways that we once thought, and then imagine that by doing so they have somehow inoculated us all against its most hazardous features, dulled its sharpest talons" (85). If that were the case, *the way* that white men said the "right" thing would not matter. But it does. The suspiciousness of white male speech and women of color's fear of being read as overly emotional reveal important affective components to race talk as situational

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[25] White guilt about racism is a powerful affect that shapes understandings of and interactions around race. Watchel (1999) argues that white guilt arises out of white indifference to racial inequality. The concomitant expression and denial of guilt fuels racial melancholia (Cheng 2001) and Williams (2001) argues that black-white melodramas have sustained popularity throughout US history because they work to transform white guilt into virtue. Ahmed (2004) argues that guilt, in general, arises from the realization of external connection to others, but leads to an inward retreat aimed at relieving guilt. Lorde (1984) was concerned about that inward retreat as well, arguing that white guilt incapacitates whites from engaging in anti-racist action. That retreat is also why many anti-racist workshops and trainings urge whites to resist dwelling on guilt (Helfand & Lippin 2001, for example). However, social psychologists have found that guilt sometimes serves as an antecedent to white anti-racist action and attitudes (Iyer et al. 2003, Gurin et al. 2013), perhaps because it indicates a sense of connection, responsibility, and wrong-doing.

performance (i.e., based on norms of a particular context) and performativity (i.e., based on discursive legibility for raced and gendered subjects).

As Sharon Holland argues: "Racism can also be described as the emotional lifeblood of race; it is the "feeling" that articulates and keeps the flawed logic of race in its place" (2012: 6). When students of color are made to feel that their emotional displays about racism are inappropriate, or when white men's dispassionate espousal of a non-racist position is met with irritation, we see some of the feelings that keep race's flawed logic in place. How could we address those feelings in our traditional classrooms, as part and parcel of the process of racial formation, deconstruction, and resistance? The "realness" culture of the theater program deals with a multitude of feelings about racism and their quotidian reproduction. In this next section, I describe the culture and interactional effects of Rainbow Theater.

Realness as Rainbow's emotional habitus

While the traditional classroom's emotional habitus incited students to perform an emotional labor of "keeping it in," Rainbow's culture urged students to "keep it real." While vernacular terms like "be real" and "keep it real" are often deployed in authenticity politics that work to delimit racial performance through narrow cultural scripts (Appiah 1996, Boyd 1997), Rainbow's invocation of realness more closely reflects what John Jackson (2005) refers to as "racial sincerity." While authenticity politics make people into overdetermined objects (judged as true or false representations of some racial essentialism), racial sincerity emphasizes racial

subjectivity and *interiority*, and describes a space in between racial essentialisms and anti-essentialisms (Jackson 2005). Accordingly, racial sincerity points to a different kind of cultural politics attached to vernacular uses of "realness," one where people feel attached to racial categories in some ways, yet refuse overdetermination based on those categories. When Rainbow students describe realness culture and its effects, they refer to a culture that does not trap their performance and performativity in authenticity or respectability politics. In that space of racial sincerity, Rainbow students can start sentences with "as a Latina I think that" (and thus invoke a sense of racial interiority) and yet not worry if their performances are "too much" or "not enough" for the classroom. Rainbow students often contrasted this sense of freedom with constricting emotional labor in the traditional classroom. While Rainbow students did not *feel* like they were doing emotional labor in Rainbow, I will show that they were indeed doing emotional work, albeit work that aligned with their coalitional desires.

Rainbow's realness culture guided students to use either colloquial or academic terms to speak openly, honestly, and expressively (or not) about the subject at hand. It also revolved around complete verbal and non-verbal participation from students, often through call-response speech patterns. It pushed students to move, and be moved by, one another. Kai, an alumnus featured in a Rainbow promotional video, summed up the distinctiveness of its realness culture, especially in comparison to other multicultural settings on campus:

> Multiculturalism at Rainbow Theater is about true respect and
> engagement with diversity, an attempt to understand power that keeps

us apart. Rainbow brings people closer, not in a melting pot into whiteness. Rainbow gives you the chance to affect someone who isn't from the same background and get that respect. The university puts a Band-Aid over multiculturalism. Rainbow deals with *hard* issues through *community,* not through a lens or test tube. [Italics used to show Kai's vocal emphasis]

When this video played in one of the first Rainbow classes, many students snapped their fingers to show agreement with what was said, especially when Kai asserted that Rainbow fostered a multiculturalism that refused assimilative whiteness. This quote draws attention to a sentiment that most Rainbow students shared in surveys as well—that dealing with multiculturalism in other university spaces often felt contrived, guarded, or cautious. In other words, traditional classroom discussions talk around their realities by trying to excise the emotional substance of racism (and the students drew connections between that containment and whiteness[26]). Students in Rainbow understand that communicating about race in Rainbow is, in the emphasized words of Kai, "*hard*" because it not only involves witnessing difficult emotions in yourself and others, but also reconciling those feelings enough to work with and for each other in the theater productions. Therefore, although realness culture did not require students to engage in the labor of emotionally sanitizing their race talk, it still required them to perform a different type of emotional labor—sitting with and reflecting on intense or difficult feelings.

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[26] As articulated earlier in this chapter, students link emotional containment in the classroom to cultural whiteness, but I think that whiteness serves as a proxy for interconnections of middle-class status, heteromasculinity, and intertwined colonial dualities of culture/nature, civilized/savage, reason/emotion, Western/Other, and masculine/feminine.

In Rainbow's realness culture, any emotive qualities are allowed in conversation; students can perform flat or dynamic affects, and the collective affect of the room constantly moves between elation, somberness, playfulness, and seriousness. I call this constant collective movement the *affective swings* of Rainbow. Whereas Rainbow class usually starts with an informal, party-like atmosphere like the one described at the beginning of this chapter, the group discussion that follows often covers sobering topics, such as the social context of one of the plays they're performing, a current event that also relates to social justice, or a lecture on the work that needs to get done to meet their deadlines. To illustrate these affective swings, consider how Mr. Taylor addressed the Don Sterling scandal[27] in the following discussion. Unlike the sociology classes where several students flatly spoke about the same scandal to focus on Sterling as an antiquated example of "real racism" of which they were not associated, Mr. Taylor asked students to look within themselves and understand how they also harbored feelings of alienation, distrust, and hate. A heavy somberness pervaded the room as other students described doing "internal work"— read: emotional labor—to heal wounds of racist thinking. Mr. Taylor followed up: "If people are stepped on, do you do anything about it? When we have things happen here that are racist, we have to stand up, not just sit back. Am I making sense?" Most students nodded and snapped, while others replied "mmmhmmm." As the students sat

[27] The girlfriend of Don Sterling, the CEO of the LA Clippers at the time, secretly taped Sterling professing a series of bigoted beliefs about African Americans in general, and his African American players in particular. She leaked the tape and the subsequent negative press resulted in his forced resignation and fines from the NBA.

in a heavy silence, Mr. Taylor slowly looked around the room and finally asked: "Do you feel me?" Most students responded with "mmmhmmm" and several others snapped their fingers.

Mr. Taylor let the mood remain quietly somber for a little longer, and then exuberantly added: "Every culture has great gifts! I need you and you need me. There are doors you can open and ones I can open. I like eating different foods— wow! [28]"As he imitated himself happily eating foods[29] from a variety of cultures, the tension in the room broke and students burst into laughter, small group conversations, and a few dances. This affective swing from somber to playful typified Rainbow's emotional habitus and it is distinctiveness from the affective explosions of the traditional classrooms. Whereas the latter signified a *leaking out* of non-normative emotions that must be contained to adhere to flat affect, the affective swings of

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[28] Understanding cultural diversity as simply a celebration of different foods and dance is a hallmark of uncritical forms of multiculturalism and humanism. Even though Rainbow uses of both of these discourses, they are often paired with criticism of structural racism.

[29] Mr. Taylor regularly mimicked himself dancing and blissfully eating foods such as fried chicken, watermelon, and macaroni and cheese. On one occasion he added, "Now you know I'm a brother and I love me some chicken!" The first time he did so I was struck because I had just heard a black student in a traditional classroom say that she never eats watermelon in front of white people for fear of fulfilling a stereotype. Mr. Taylor' lack of shame in performing that food consumption exemplifies the safety of Rainbow, one marked by the lack of a burden of representation during class time. In Rainbow, whiteness does not mark the cultural center, and therefore, playfully dancing, expressing anger, or happily eating is not judged as excessive or shamefully fulfilling a stereotype. Instead, it just is what it is; or in their terms, "real." As such, Rainbow operates as a space where black students can "keep it real" (i.e., sincerely perform blackness (McLeod 1999) without fears of fulfilling stereotypes) and Latinos can proudly "feel brown" by disidentifying with the shame that whiteness places on passionate emotional displays (Muñoz 2000).

Rainbow indicate that there *is time given to collectively witness* a variety of emotions. As a majority of the written surveys showed, this range of expression felt more honest to students than the constrained expressions of the traditional classroom. Because of the allowances granted in realness culture, no Rainbow interviewees reported the need to engage in emotional labor of containment or perform flatness. However, Rainbow students *were* doing emotional work; they were being asked and led to perform somberness and to reflect and engage in introspection. Their feelings were not simply from them, they were also "invited" (Peterson 2011). That said, because they wanted to perform those feelings for each other (to show support and solidarity), they did not think of those invited feelings as labor, as a management of their emotionality like the students "keeping it in" in the traditional classroom did.

In addition to the allowance of varied emotional expressions, realness culture was marked by students' use of both colloquial and academic language to express their thoughts and feelings. Students also frequently shared incomplete and inarticulate thoughts, starting sentences with words like, "it's kinda hard to explain" or "IDK" (text lingo for "I don't know"). Such sentences displayed a certain amount of vulnerability that students in the traditional classrooms (with the exception of Nora's class) were much less likely to express for fear of looking stupid or inarticulate. In Rainbow, those less articulate thoughts were not only welcomed, but also encouraged. For example, while discussing whether or not to do more plays about prisons, one student said, "This might be too personal, but…I have experience with this." Mr. Taylor nodded for him to continue. The student explained that he

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volunteered for a team of lawyers who were defending a 17-year-old boy awaiting trial. When describing their visit to prison, he said, with a shaky voice, "It was *fucking scary* in there. He was younger than me but living in there and getting his *ass beat every day*." Mr. Taylor nodded and coaxed him to continue: "You're keeping it real; I like that." With that encouragement, the student went on to describe how the state pushed an informant bargain on the defendant, without care for the violent retaliation he would face as "a rat" in both prison and his home community. Other students stopped him to ask questions to better understand the case, or to add similar stories from their own lives. This particular moment in class represented the conversations that developed when hesitant students were encouraged to speak, and to speak with whatever language they had available to them. When students acted a bit tentative, both Mr. Taylor and student facilitators would lean in towards those speakers and encourage them with words like "keep going," "I see you," or "be real." Other students also joined in to encourage students who struggled for words by nodding their heads or snapping their fingers. Snapping fingers[30] especially happens when students got choked up or angry in front of others.

Because Rainbow students did not have to make their comments fit within the emotional and intellectual constraints of flat affect and academic language, realness culture fostered higher participation levels in Rainbow than the traditional

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[30] Rosman (2015) traces finger snapping as a form of applause or encouragement to poetry groups, starting with the beatniks. I have also witnessed finger snapping in this way at poetry slams, Leftist activist meetings, and Quaker meetings.

classrooms. Moreover, the call-response[31] component of realness culture amplified

the participation rates. Even when Rainbow students were not holding the speaking

floor, they were verbally responding to calls or non-verbally engaging with the each

other by nodding, finger snapping, clapping, and/or imitating air horns. In another

classroom study, Boone (2003) found that Black students engaging in call-response

sat up more, talked more frequently and loudly, and automatically and authentically

engaged with course topics to understand its relevance to their lives. Call-response

seemed to have a similar role in Rainbow for students of all racial and cultural

backgrounds. Because of the expectation to constantly participate verbally or non-

verbally, call-response forced students to continually engage with one another, listen

carefully, and seek relevance to their own lives. In other words, "getting real" about

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[31] Call-response developed and continues to evolve in primarily African-American
cultural spaces (most specifically the Black Church, but also in HBCUs), everyday
interactions, and literature (Boone 2003, Foster 1989), and it is also a key feature in
African and African-American sonic traditions such as rock-n-roll, blues, and jazz
(Baraka 1980, Southern 1997, Wilson 1983). In this speech pattern, speakers initiate a
call (explicitly or implicitly) to those listening, and the listeners respond collectively,
albeit with individually stylized responses. Call-response is a reciprocal speech
pattern—every call begs a response, and each response itself constitutes a call
(Kochman 1990). Because of the reciprocity in this form of conversation, call-
response blurs the line between speaker and audience (Smitherman 1977), as well as
student and teacher (Foster 1989, 1995). As such, it fosters democratic education
relationships between teachers and students (Freire 2000). Rainbow exhibits this too;
speakers (students, student leaders, or Mr. Taylor) regularly invite others into call-
response, blurring lines between teacher and student. Common examples of call-
response in Rainbow include "Rainbow, rainbow!" (a cheer signifying group
belonging, pride, and also a call to attention), "Do you feel me?," "Hell-o?!" "Can I
be real for a minute?" and "One mic!" For Black students in Rainbow, who often
remarked on how culturally isolated they felt at UCSC, this familiar speech pattern
and way of interacting in a classroom made them feel welcomed and a sense of
belonging.

the subject at hand was taught, encouraged, and performed by the interactive imperatives of realness culture. Moreover, "getting real" constituted emotional labor; witnessing strong feelings in others and reflecting on the meaning of those feelings for the self and others took effort.

The students also used call-response to check for and build emotional resonance and release. For example, when speakers in Rainbow got a sense that others were not paying attention to them or mirroring their emotions (because of moments of flat affect), they often used call-response like "Hell-o?" or "You feel me?" to see if students were being affected by their comments or performances. Likewise, the audience members regularly snapped, clapped, or called out to performers whose words resonated with or moved them. In this way, call-response supported Rainbow's larger goal: to allow one's heart and mind to be affected by others, and to perform in ways that do the same to and for others. In the words of Kai (a Rainbow alumni quoted above), "Rainbow gives you the chance to affect someone who isn't from the same background and get that respect." Affecting and being affected was emotional labor, a labor that would serve students in theatric and coalitional pursuits.

Boone (2003) argues that call-response builds a supporting learning environment and sense of collectivism. Through call-response, students "are strengthening each other's confidence, encouraging each other's performance as speakers, identifying with one another through common experiences, and overall simply serving to uplift and motivate one another" (Boone 2003:222). Call-response

has a similar effect on belonging and collective support in Rainbow. For example, when Rainbow students flub their lines, can't find words, or get choked up mid-speech, other students immediately start snapping loudly or calling out supportive lines like "You got this" or "I see you." Calling out to one another, especially those who show vulnerability or raw emotions, gave Rainbow students a sense that any emotional display was honored and that their peers really cared about one another. That lack of shame and sense of care built trust and a sense of affective belonging that also encouraged students to take risks and invite authentic sharing of thoughts and feelings. Students in the traditional classrooms did not report this sense of care and concern and that seems to me why Rainbow has a distinct reputation on campus as a space where students can talk openly and honestly about race with people from different backgrounds. That said, performing "realness" was still a cultural achievement—learning to show support, care, and listen closely was an emotional labor taught to Rainbow students through its culture. But that doesn't mean that the "realness" wasn't sincere or honest; Rainbow students desired connecting across difference in those ways.

Realness culture fostered affective belonging for all Rainbow students, but especially for students of color who in traditional classes felt more performative pressures to contain strong emotions, perform flatness, and come across as respectable students. Every time I sat with Rainbow students to advertise upcoming shows, I witnessed them describing Rainbow as a safe place for students of color at UCSC, and the interviewees echoed this sense of safety and belonging. For African-

American students, part of this comfort came from the familiarity and valuation of call-response speech patterns. But the emotional culture of realness also plays a role in fostering belonging for multiple groups of color. For example, because a lot of the Black cultural features that shape Rainbow's realness culture (e.g., call-response, verbal and non-verbal audience participation) are also features of hip hop culture and slam poetry spaces, Rainbow's realness culture is also "culturally relevant" and "culturally sustaining" to a wide array of students (Ladson-Billings 2014, Paris 2012). Also, Muñoz (2000) argued that "what unites and consolidates oppositional groups is not simply the fact of identity but the way in which they perform affect, especially in relation to an official "national affect" that is aligned with the hegemonic class" (68). I extend Muñoz to argue that the reason Rainbow Theater offered students of color, and some white students, such a powerful sense of safety and belonging was because it encouraged a variety of emotional performances beyond those constrained by flat affect and its ties to whiteness, middle-class status, and heteromasculinity. "Keeping it real" meant a relative freedom from the politics of authenticity *and* respectability (i.e., from the shame placed on emotional performances beyond disinterest and indifference). With many more options for emotionality, students felt they could honestly talk about race with their peers.

Moreover, the supportive environment and affective belonging built by realness culture also built an intimate bond among the Rainbow students, an interracial bond that they refer to as the "Rainbow family." Because realness culture encouraged students to be vulnerable in front of one another—and get attention and

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respect in return—the more they did so, the more they felt intimately connected to one another. In turn, this bond fostered more good faith dialogue among Rainbow students; when they saw each other as kin, they were more likely to trust, listen carefully, and allow themselves to be mutually moved by one another. Racial paranoia inhibits good faith dialogue because it pre-conditions dialogue by building suspicion, distrust, and fear of others before dialogue even begins (Jackson 2010). But realness culture and the family bond it fostered directly undermined that cultural conditioning in the classroom. I think that the traditional classrooms could foster greater dialogue among students, as well as a feeling of belonging and entitlement to classroom space, if they adopted some features of realness culture.

In closing, even though the term "realness" suggests a lack of conditioning, students in Rainbow still *learned to "be real"* by listening closely, showing vulnerability, exhibiting compassion, and reflecting. Even though the students contrasted their "realness" with the emotional labor they performed in their traditional classrooms, Rainbow still taught and encouraged emotional labor in order to be seen as "real." The reason for this difference between noticing and not noticing emotional labor rested in their desires—Rainbow students wanted to learn how to connect across difference and work toward a common goal. Because their emotional labor fulfilled that desire, they didn't feel alienated from it like they did in the classroom.

Conclusion

In the traditional classrooms, students brought to their college classroom the norms of flatness that they inherited from years of dominant schooling practices (Rendón 2009), and even when instructors invited them to emote more. As such, students felt that there was both a right *thing to say* about race (i.e., something that used the academic language of their readings) and a *right way* to say it (i.e., in a flat affective tone). For most of the class period, a vocal minority of students dominated conversation and the majority of students stayed quiet and non-verbally performed disinterest or indifference. Periodically, the affect of the room changed suddenly and briefly—what I call an affective explosion—with students performing a variety of emotions in their speech and bodily language. I highlight these sudden shifts to compliment interview and survey data from students that showed that students engaged in emotional labor to compose their bodies in ways that aligned with the flat, normative affect of the classroom. In plain terms, they tried to "keep it in." Students most frequently did this emotional labor by staying silent, and some also found that they could perform flat affect as long as they avoided talking about personal experiences or using colloquial language to talk about race (I will address this further in the next chapter on pedagogical practices). In that way, relying on academic language helped them contain their feelings about race and racism, often in order to come across as an appropriate student. When they used academic language, they didn't "sound stupid" nor come across as "too emotional."

The performance of silence and flatness had different performative meanings and effects based on race and gender. For example, when white men performed flat affect, they faced legibility issues—the combination of flatness, whiteness, and masculinity impeded others from reading them as non-racist, even when they performed non-racist sociological scripts. While there were students of all racial identifications who chose to stay silent to avoid offending someone else, students of color most frequently remained silent or avoided talking about race beyond academic language to maintain an image as a good student—someone who didn't get too emotional and who looked smart. Women and students of color felt an enhanced burden to perform this way because of the historical articulations that continually mark women and people of color—especially women of color—as emotionally excessive and irrational. Silence was the best option to maintain the image of an appropriate student. In turn, this disproportionate silence meant that students of color often got *talked about* more than they were *talked with*—producing a sense of alienation among students and a sense that what they are talking about are "matters of fact" less than "matters of concern" (Gray 2013).

Student silence was compounded by the oppositional affective-discursive pulls of racial paranoia, aversive racism, diversity culture, and sociological knowledge. Unsure of how to talk about race without offending one another, students often chose to remain quiet and/or contain their feelings rather than talk about race in a way that felt more honest for them. Many of the interviewees expressed remorse about this silence and desire for an honest classroom conversation about race that

wasn't stalled by fears of offending. But only a few students wanted to excise

emotion from their conversations to avoid that impasse; most desired a conversation

that could also address the elephant in the room—the emotionality of race. The

emotional containment that students engaged in produced an awkward tension that

was palpable in the room. When I have reported these findings to other sociology

students (in classrooms and in research assistantships), they have readily commented

that these findings put words to that awkward tension that they have felt in many of

their classrooms. Rabinowitz (2002) regrets not foregrounding tension and discomfort

in her queer theory classrooms. Without doing so, unaddressed silence and tension

filled her classroom and inhibited students from gaining knowledge through that

tension. Students in the traditional classrooms also desired a way to learn about race

through *tension* and discomfort.

Deconstructing race without addressing its emotional components does not

"dull[] its sharpest talons" (Jackson 2010:85), nor does it help students understand the

myriad ways that emotions constitute the "lifeblood" of race (Holland 2012). Public

feelings about race are rampant and palpable, both inside and outside the classroom,

and norms of emotional containment further suppressed those feelings. I worry that in

introductory sociology classes—the only place where many students will carefully

and critically engage with issues of race in multicultural settings—this containment

and performance of disinterest and indifference will bolster some students' conviction

that we live in a post-racial society (i.e., if people are not moved by talking about

race, then it must not matter to them that much). I agree with Gurin et al. (2013) that

collectively witnessing racialized feelings is an important part of fostering honest interracial dialogue. Talking about race—an emotionally-laden phenomenon—without "getting emotional" inhibits students from connecting their personal and collective feelings and experiences to the content of their classes. By trying to divorce thinking about race from feeling about race, students use their critical thinking skills to deconstructing a racial construct that only lives in the classroom, not in the rest of their lives. It's an approximation and a miss—an "uncanny valley[32]" of the social sciences. Good social science should explain the world as it is in order to make it into what it should be. Containment not only stalls our conversations, but it also stalls our sociological knowledge and its ability to inspire justice-oriented action in students. Moreover, rather than addressing public feelings about race, cultures of emotional containment reproduce racial paranoia, melancholia, and aversive racism.

Rainbow Theater's classroom offered an alternative space for imaging and practicing multicultural dialogue, one that foregrounded "keeping it real" (i.e., addressing the emotionality of race). In Rainbow's realness culture, the collective affect of the room constantly moved between elation, somberness, playfulness, and seriousness, and students employed both colloquial and academic language to express their thoughts and feelings. Students also frequently shared incomplete and inarticulate thoughts, and hesitant students were encouraged to move through their vulnerability and continue speaking, usually by fellow students' non-verbal calls. In

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[32] The uncanny valley is a term developed by roboticist Masahiro Mori to describe an eerie or disgusting feeling that arises when people face a human replica that appears close to reality, but not quite so (Meth 2014).

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short, Rainbow students learned a different kind of emotional labor, the performance of care and connection. That is, students modeled for one another how to stay with difficult feelings of race in order to connect across difference. Moreover, because Rainbow students did not have to make their comments fit within the emotional and intellectual constraints of flat affect and academic language, realness culture fostered high participation levels and the call-response component amplified that participation. Call-response also cultivated an atmosphere where students encouraged themselves to constantly engage with one another by listening carefully, showing empathy, and seeking relevance to their own lives—to "get real" about the subject at hand. But being real wasn't easy; it was work, but a form of labor that they wanted to become skilled in.

Realness culture also used call-response to check for and build emotional resonance and release, a method that supported Rainbow's larger goal—allowing one's heart and mind to be affected by others, and performing in ways that do the same to and for others. Calling out to one another, especially those who exhibited vulnerability or raw emotions, gave Rainbow students a sense that any emotional display were honored and that their peers really cared about one another. That lack of shame and sense of care built trust and affective belonging—the Rainbow "family"— that, in turn, encouraged students to take risks and invited more honest sharing of thoughts and feelings, even those that made others feel uncomfortable. These were the conditions for what students often referred to as a "safe space" and a "brave space" and what Leonardo & Porter (2010) would call a "risk discourse."

Such belonging was not only a crucial condition for good-faith dialogue, but it is also vital for giving students of color a sense of belonging in the college at large. Numerous studies have shown that students of color struggle with a lack of belonging in predominantly white colleges and universities (Zambrana & Hurtado 2015, Eng & Han 2003, Plant & Devine 2003, Solorzano et al. 2002, Suarez-Balcazar 2003, Feagin et al. 1996) and between 22-29% of students of color have reported exclusionary conduct at UCSC (UC Campus Climate Survey 2013). Most Rainbow students' surveys and interviews indicated that dealing with multiculturalism in other university spaces often felt contrived, guarded, or cautious—a "test tube" or "Band-Aid" approach to diversity that was not only restrictive and dishonest, but also normatively white. Conversely, those students indicated that the range of expression allowed in Rainbow felt more sincere and real. That fullness of emotional expression also gave students an appreciation for how difficult honest interracial dialogue about race was. They learned that it involved both witnessing difficult emotions in yourself and others, and also reconciling those feelings enough to work with and for each other in the theater productions. Even though they described that all as "realness" (and thus seemingly unfiltered and unconditioned), Rainbow taught them how to do that labor. It didn't feel laborious to them because it aligned with their desires to connect and work across difference. Some may conclude that realness culture worked in Rainbow because the program self-selects students with those desires, but students in the traditional classroom desired that connection and learning across difference and through comfort.

In sum, these findings demonstrate that classrooms have cultures—an emotional habitus—that condition both teaching and learning and thus have effects on how students discuss race. Because public feelings also shape discourses about race (Holland 2012), we can never extract those feelings from our conversations and "objectively" deconstruct race without feelings getting involved. Moreover, the findings in this chapter show that classroom cultures can reinforce and/or transform those public feelings in ways that influence the qualities of classroom discussions and the interactions between students.

The comparison between the emotional cultures of the traditional classroom and Rainbow demonstrate the reach and transformation of affect-discourse, or the interwoven influences of colonial discourses (Lugones 2007, Quijano 2007), diversity discourses (Brown 2004, Ward 2008), racial paranoia (Jackson 2010), and aversive racism (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005). In the traditional classrooms, the norms of flatness reproduced affect-discourse by a) pushing students to avoid candid dialogue that could possibly move through impasses, and b) not interrupting assumptions about emotionality and irrationality that put disproportionate pressure on women of color to stay silent. In Rainbow, realness norms transformed affect-discourse by coaching students in how to engage in candid dialogue with one another by both expressing and reflecting on strong feelings and what they have to teach. As such, students often moved past impasses and false consensus. These findings not only show that feelings both shape student experiences in the classroom and bolster discourse, but also that classroom cultures can transform the way that students are conditioned to engage with

one another about race. They can move past impasses when certain norms are practiced. In some ways, because Rainbow does not resemble a traditional classroom at all, their norms were easier to establish. But in the traditional classroom, teachers need to combat the flat affect that has been conditioned in students for over a decade of schooling (Chávez & Longerbeam 2016 and Rendón 2009). While I have privileged student experience in my observations and interviews, it would be instructive in further studies to examine the experiences of teaching assistants, lecturers, and professors to understand more of what conditions their work and the norms that they aim to establish in their classrooms.

In the next chapter, I move to a more sustained examination of classroom culture and norms, investigating and contrasting the pedagogical practices in the traditional classrooms and Rainbow. More specifically, I examine the pedagogical use of storytelling and experiential knowledge in learning about and discussing race and racism. Just as emotional habitus conditions the way that students discuss race, these pedagogical practices also shape the qualities of conversations and lead to reproduction and transformation of affect-discourse in classroom settings.

Chapter 4 – (Contested) storytelling: Practices, politics, and possibilities of learning through experience

Introduction: Utilizing experience in pedagogy

In the last chapter, I documented how classrooms have emotional cultures—and contrasted the distinctive cultures of the traditional and Rainbow classrooms. I discussed the feeling tone of each space and how that affected how one could normatively feel and emote in each of those spaces. I also investigated how students were taught and/or encouraged to feel and express emotions to match those norms. In this chapter, I turn to examine pedagogies and the practices of learning. Experience-based learning, both in the form of sharing experiential knowledge from one's life and the experience of doing that sharing, was a key theme for Rainbow, core, and sociological classroom practices. However, the value of experiential knowledge, and the assumed tolerance for its usefulness, varied greatly between the classroom types. In Rainbow, the experience of learning together and sharing experiential knowledge was itself the object and objectives of study. In the traditional classrooms, where the object of study was objective knowledge about race and racism, the value of experiential knowledge was contested.

Experiential knowledge has long been considered important for sociological knowledge. For example, Marx (1848, 1867) relied upon laborers' experiences to theorize the machinations of capital, Weber (1912, 1930) relied on individual experiences to theorize consciousness and Protestant Ethic, The Chicago School

made its mark in sociology because of its focus on field observations and studies of small group experiences (which, in turn, became the basis for their ecological understanding of cities) (see, for example, Park 1950), and symbolic interactionists and ethnomethologists also emphasized the rich social significance of everyday experiences (Goffman 1959, Garfinkel 1967, Blumer 1986).

Experiential knowledge has also been foundational in sociological studies of race. At the turn of the 20th century, W.E.B DuBois' (1996) developed of the concept of "double consciousness" to show how one's life experiences and positionality affect their consciousness, evaluation of knowledge, and research priorities. Feminist theorists, especially feminists of color, have built on the foundations of DuBois and other theories of experience to add concepts of standpoint epistemology (Hartsock 1998), Black feminist thought (Collins 2000), mestiza consciousness (Anzaldúa 1999), post-positivist realist theory of identity (Moya 2002), and critical realist theory of identity (Sánchez 2006). The personal experiences of those theorists—as women, and often lesbians, of color—gave them insight into the social world that made them question and critique many assumptions made in crafting the pre-existing social theories created by (mostly white and heterosexual) men.

Perhaps the best-known instantiation of the role of experience in sociological knowledge comes from C. Wright Mills (1959) who emphasized the pedagogical use of experiential knowledge with the concept of the "sociological imagination." As such, sociology should strive to teach students how their personal troubles and biographies are tied to public issues and historical conditions. Similarly, Paulo Freire

(1968) emphasized that the pedagogical importance of experience in several ways. First, experience should serve as the basis for students' inquiries and understandings. Second, students should learn through dialogic experiences wherein all parties have knowledge to teach and learn from one another, and through which students develop critical consciousness of what conditions the social world and produces inequality. Third, students should put their dialogue and critical consciousness into experiential praxis. With that informed practice, students learn how to build the social world they desire. Building off of Freirian theory, social psychologists find that storytelling and critical reflection on experience in multicultural groups can be a great learning tool, but that students need to be coached in communication and psychological tools in order to work through intergroup anxiety, connect personal experience to social conditions, and collaborate in actions to shape their world (Gurin et al. 2013). Similarly, Sánchez (2006) cautions that teachers must guide students in how and what to learn from experiential knowledge; without that guidance, using experiential knowledge risks rearticulating the discursive slippages that align and reduce women and people of color to nature and irrationality.

The pedagogical practices of Rainbow, sociology, and core courses built on these traditions of critical social thought by emphasizing that reflection upon individual experience can illuminate patterns in broader society. For example, sociology students were introduced to Mills' theory of sociological imagination (1959)—as almost all introductory sociology classes do—and core students read parts

of Freire (1968) in their first couple weeks of class[33]. Although no one in Rainbow

explicitly stated so, its practices were clearly influenced by Freire as well[34]. But

talking about and learning from experience with a multicultural group was not

straight forward nor without difficulty. Public feelings about race and the uneven

performative concerns for women and people of color (i.e., appearing too emotional,

too personal, or too irrational) complicate the process of sharing experiential

knowledge in the classroom. That said, the practices that framed storytelling (i.e., the

conditions under which experience was discussed) varied across classroom contexts

and resulted in different interactional outcomes. In the traditional classroom, those

conditions made sharing experience a fraught endeavor, one that enhanced intergroup

anxiety and tension, uneven silences, and sanitization of race talk. In Rainbow, those

conditions countered intergroup anxiety and resulted in a good faith among students

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[33] In response to shifts in higher education objectives for incoming students (i.e., on cultivating active learning and addressing social conditions and diversity), Freire (1968) is more commonly used in introductory sociology classes and educational programs for frosh students.

[34] Many of Rainbow's practices seem to be influenced by Augusto Boal's (1981) book *Theater of the Oppressed,* an expansion of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* For Boal, multicultural theater blurs the distinction between actors and audience, making everyone a participant in the theater (e.g., this materialized in Rainbow's call-response practices discussed in the previous chapter). With active participation as an organizing frame, Boalian theater aims to develop a critical consciousness in its participants as they act out, witness, reflect on, rescript, and redo skits based on social injuries and inequality. Boal (1981) argued that this interactive theater serves as a rehearsal for, and imagination of, more egalitarian social interactions in the future. Rainbow students engaged in much of this reflection as well, but I did not see any rescripting or redoing of scenes from established plays. However, many of the scenes written by the collaborative poetry and dance troupes had imaginative, futurist scenes that did rehearse more egalitarian or retributive scenes.

during dialogue, sincere recognition and knowledge of one another, and intimate

bonds that inspired students to do coalitional work. In what follows, I examine the

different conditions under which experienced was discussed and the results of those

differences. Because silence during discussion was one of those results, I rely more

in this chapter on student commentary (especially from interviews) to understand

those conditions and how the students responded to them.

Discursive management of experience in traditional classrooms

Ambivalence about experiential knowledge's value

While several core course assignments asked students to reflect on personal

experience vis-à-vis the assigned texts for class, the traditional classrooms' the

primary pedagogical practices revolved around describing, analyzing, and

synthesizing written arguments, mostly based on formal studies or essays[35]. In the

case of arguments about race, most made claims about race in terms of conditions and

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[35] In this chapter, I focus on the telling of personal stories and their friction with the traditional classroom's focus on "data stories" (i.e., social scientific studies and essays). However, personal and data stories were not the only stories utilized; the core classes also assigned a novel for students to read in addition to scientific studies and essays—*The Madonnas of Echo Park* by Brando Skyhorse. Although it is beyond the scope of this essay, I will briefly mention that students really enjoyed reading this book and their body language and speed of conversation indicated more engagement with the text than most formal studies they read. Moreover, in discussing the novel, students did not use categorical language to make generalizations about groups of people (like the formal studies did). Instead, they talked more about particular characters in the book and the way that social forces differentially influenced the dilemmas and actions that characters took. In that regard, the sociological understanding they gained from the book reflected "complex personhood" and detailed "conjuring" (Gordon 1997).

structure, with generalizable effects visible at the population level. Although

storytelling about personal experience was not the primary pedagogy, students still

told stories about their experiences with race, regardless of whether or not their

instructors prompted them to do so. In other words, their go-to mode of understanding

social structure was through personal experience[36]. Even when instructors asked

students to focus their attention, analysis, and commentary on the arguments of

assigned readings, most students still tried to understand and evaluate those

arguments through their own experiences. Therefore, the value of experiential

knowledge in the traditional classrooms was quite contested and negotiated.

Moreover, this contestation stemmed from larger theoretical and pedagogical

tensions. In the both classroom types, there was a tension between generalizability,

scientific objectivity, and personal experience, and in the core course, there was a

tension between Freirian intentions and Writing Program objectives[37].

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[36] There is legal precedent for naming, locating, and remediating racist structure through personal experience and injury (Perry 2011). Berlant (1997), Brown (1993), Cheng (2001), and other scholars warn that understanding race and racism through the lens of personal injury ends up atomizing and individualizing it. Doing so renders the social conditions that shape experience less tangible, and also erases power differences. As such, race becomes a power-neutral aspect of personal experience, one in which those most privileged through institutional racism can still claim injury.
[37] Core courses fulfill two pedagogical goals for UCSC. First, they aim to build community in the colleges by dialoguing (in relatively small groups) about readings related to the college's theme. In the college I observed, the standard curriculum revolved issues of diversity and inequality. One of the first readings of class is an excerpt from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000) and in discussing it, the instructors emphasized that their college curriculum privileged subjugated histories, perspectives, stories, and arguments in order to counter hegemonic erasures. The second goal of the Core courses is to fulfill the first round of composition requirements at UCSC. These standardized requirements are dictated by the Writing

Students in the traditional classrooms found great educational value in talking about personal experience with their peers. They often shared stories about their personal experience, and although most of this happened during small group discussions, when students did so in large group discussions, I observed a marked change in engagement—heads raised, backs straightened, eyes moved in the direction of the speaker. As most of the students I interviewed explained, these stories grounded the abstract concepts or disembodied studies of populations they read for class. For example, Leila, a Sociology student said:

> "We can all sit in Soc 10 and look at the same exact slides, hear the same exact words, but what I understand and what the person sitting next to me understands from that is totally different. Because I've had past experiences where past readings or past learning influence me to believe what she said means this, while somebody else can be the total opposite."

Department and revolve around building the skills necessary for effectively reading and writing arguments. The emphasis on fulfilling the writing requirements meant that most of the content was discussed in regard to argumentation. However, the argumentation framework often existed in tension with the Freirian framework of privileging subjugated stories, perspectives, and arguments, especially because racial subjugation has often been achieved through discursive denial of the validity, objectivity, and rationality of people of color's stories and assertions (Quijano 2007, Hill Collins 2000). I will discuss this discursive overdetermination in more detail below. In sociology discussion sections, the pedagogy revolves around describing, analyzing, and evaluating the readings that students have been assigned for each lecture. For the classes I observed, most of the readings were sociological studies and historical accounts. During section, the teaching assistants helped students prepare for writing papers by breaking down the argumentation of particular readings. In addition, TAs often asked students to develop their sociological imagination by reflecting on the real life implications of particular arguments and/or to evaluate an argument based on their own experiences. Most of this reflection happened in small groups and without the teaching assistant's guidance in interpretation.

Leila's words summarize what the majority of my interviewees also experienced in diverse classrooms. That is, according to their accounts, hearing diverse stories and interpretations helped them realize: 1) that many of their experiences were significantly different than other classmates, 2) that their racial identities were derived from those differentiated experiences, 3) that one's experiences influenced one's interpretations of studies or arguments, and thus 4) that experience was embedded into published arguments. The students' claims about the value of storytelling and experiential knowledge is corroborated by research from social psychologists on intergroup dialogue. Gurin et al. (2013), a collaborative team of scientists who published both a meta-analysis of previous research on interracial dialogue and the findings of a multi-campus study of their "intergroup dialogue model," argue that storytelling is a good dialogic devise because it "involves freedom of expression, open-endedness, and imagining oneself in another person's situation" and that "it helps students from both privileged and less privileged backgrounds personalize and understand each other" (81). In short, when students heard one another's stories (whether they were similar to or different from their own), they learned about what had socially conditioned and shaped their lives and the lives of others.

Even though an overwhelming majority valued storytelling for the reasons above, that valuation came with ambivalence, difficulty, and contestation. Some students devalued and rejected experiential knowledge as overly opinionated, too emotional, and personal (and thus sociologically irrelevant and distracting from the purpose of the class). For the latter students, the purpose of the class was to learn

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about sociological patterns and structures, as well as how to argue effectively. From this understanding (underpinned by the Cartesian mind-body split), relevant and important discussion revolved around data collected, analyzed, and presented in studies and argumentative papers. Moreover, these students assumed that studies and arguments that were "based on facts" were de-personalized, objective, devoid of emotion, rational, and logical. Some students strongly rejected *any* associations of personal experience with social knowledge. For these students, exemplified in the following quote, experience was not "real evidence":

> "In my view, a positive [conversation about race] does not take into account personal experience or opinions. Discussions should be backed up with evidence from text or research done on an issue…[Our] core class fits the description of a positive race/racism discussion because [our instructor] made us avoid our personal opinions and instead make real arguments with real evidence." (core student survey response)

While there were a few students who were split into neat "pro" and "anti" experiential knowledge camps, most of the students felt ambivalently about its value and appropriateness for class. Many of the interviewees held that experience constituted important sociological information, and yet they simultaneously wrestled with the legitimacy of the mind-body split, questioned the validity and appropriateness of experiential knowledge, and acknowledged that experiential knowledge was contested in their classroom. The simultaneous rejection and acceptance of experiential knowledge is exemplified in an interview exchange between me and Ryan, a sociology student:

Ryan: "[Experiential knowledge] becomes more, like, emotional and less like—OK, remember we were talking about like these racial constructs and like structural racism. And we were trying to look at these things in your story, but telling like a very basic, emotional story that you just want to rant about or something like that—people are just kind of ranting their opinions."[38]

Christie: "Hmmm, so you get the sense then that if a feeling is involved that it isn't structural? That, or that it sort of isn't about—"

Ryan: "—I mean not that it can't be. I just feel like that's the experience I get a lot when that happens. But not saying that, like, there isn't a lot there to be learned from and that personal experience isn't like something to learn from, it's valid."

Ryan's quote above exemplifies the common ambivalence towards experiential knowledge, labeling it in contradictory ways—valid, related to structure, basic, emotional, ranting, and opinion. The rejections of experiential knowledge from Ryan and other students in the surveys summarized it as distracting from the purpose of class, lacking the validity of facts, resulting from biased opinion, and thus antithetical to argumentation and irrelevant to debates. Moreover, many students worried that sharing personal experience might mark them as less capable of academic work, a cover-up for their ignorance or lack of "right" knowledge (i.e., the knowledge presented in their written texts), and coming across as ignorant was a constant threat they wanted to avoid. That said, like Ryan, many of the students who rejected experiential knowledge one moment, found value in it in another moment (for the reasons listed earlier).

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[38] Ryan not only critiques the use of experiential knowledge in class, but *how* it is said by students who use it. I will examine this aspect of the contestation later in the chapter.

The students' contestation over experiential knowledge's value is one also debated by social scientists and humanists. Joan Scott (1992) famously critiqued the epistemic value of experience in social research, arguing that experience should not be "the origin of our explanation, but that which we want to explain" (37-38). Scott suggests that using experience as evidence makes identities seem self-evident and obscures the discursive technologies that produce types of experiences, subjectivities, and identifications with those subjectivities. For Scott, talking about experience inhibits learning about the social conditions that produce that experience. Sam, one of the Core instructors, discouraged students from sharing personal stories for these very reasons. While I understand the difficulty in translating personal stories into lessons about social construction, my observations and interviews lead me to believe that students do gain sociological insight from experiential knowledge, and a number of scholars in sociology agree. For example, Gordon (1997) argues that fiction can "conjure" more of social forces than our standard categories and Becker (2007) argues that stories "show analytical dimensions and possibilities that social science has often ignored that might otherwise be useful" (6). Similarly, when students in the traditional classrooms valued storytelling and experiential knowledge, they didn't usually do so on the basis that experience is *the* preeminent authority on social knowledge (although a minority of students do think that). Instead, they understood experience as constituting one type of knowing—a type that can, and should be, called up in the classroom to instantiate, support, substantiate, and/or evaluate the written arguments assigned for class. As Leila's quote above attests to, through

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listening to multiple interpretations of a text, along with the experiential knowledge that informed those various interpretations, students came to understand that the world they experienced as a kid was not inevitable or "just the way it is." Instead, they understood it as constructed, and constructed in relation to the experiences of their peers.

The students' positive orientation toward the epistemic value of experience aligned more with Paula Moya's (2002) post-positivist realist theory of identity, an oft-cited work for scholars of feminist and critical race pedagogies (see for example Mohanty 2003, Macdonald & Sánchez-Casal 2002). Moya directly challenges the dismissal and delegitimation of experience that followed Scott's famous essay. Rather than dismissing experience's epistemic value because it is shaped by discourse, Moya argues that we should examine and explain experiences in order to draw out the social conditions (i.e., material, ideological, identitarian) that produce different types of experiences and interpretations of those experiences. She argues that when diverse groups of people speak of their different experiences, they refer just as much outward as inward. Facilitators can push students to focus on that *outward* expression in order to denaturalize the social conditions that often become taken for granted when interpreting experience. "Experience *in its mediated form*," she argues, *"contains an epistemic component through which we can gain access to knowledge of the world"* (Moya 2002:39, her emphasis). Similarly, Sánchez (2006) argues that while discourse shapes reality, "reality is not reducible to our discourses" (34). As

such, engaging with experiential knowledge can be a source of both social conditioning and possibilities for disruption, resistance, and liberation.

Scott (1992), Moya (2002), and Sánchez (2006) are ultimately concerned with experiential knowledge's role in developing students' critical consciousness (i.e., whether or not experiential knowledge helps or hinders students' understanding of the social conditions that shape our lives). In other words, their attention to experiential knowledge is a question of students' understanding and not necessarily one of students' *engagement* with one another in the process of building that understanding. Gurin et al. (2013), the collaborative team of social scientists who developed the intergroup dialogue model, advocate for students to share experiential knowledge and stories in order to cognitively develop critical consciousness, *but also* to develop the communication and psychological processes necessary for fostering motivated, low-stress interracial dialogue and collaborative work[39]. Moreover, Gurin et al. (2013) advocate for particular facilitation of storytelling and interpreting those stories in order to foster desired communication and psychological processes. In short, Gurin et al. (2013) emphasize that the exchange of experiential knowledge about race is often emotionally charged and in need of facilitation in order to maximize learning about the content, communication, and the self (internally and in relation to others), and to

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[39] Developing communication and psychological processes is a vital step in helping white students work through "aversive racism," or avoiding close contact and collaborative work with people of color (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005). Developing critical consciousness without the attendant communication and psychological processes will not inspire contact and collaboration.

transform "intergroup anxiety" into "affective positivity" toward multicultural conversations and collaborative work.

My investigation of storytelling practices and experiential knowledge in traditional classrooms builds off of Gurin et al.'s (2013) focus on tension and difficulty in multicultural conversations to emphasize the affective, racialized, and gendered aspects of contestations over experiential knowledge's value. These contestations are not new, nor unique to college classrooms. Rather, they reflect a centuries-old construction of racial and gender difference, and policing of that difference, through judgments of people of color's emotions, especially those of women of color (Lugones 2007, Quijano 2007, Collins 2000). In the next section, I will examine how the pedagogy of the traditional classrooms allowed this discursive articulation between experience, emotion, and race and gender difference to overdetermine sharing of personal experience in the traditional classrooms. It led many students (especially women and students of color) to avoid talking in general, or to only talk about race with the academic language[40] provided to them in the studies they were reading, even when that language did not adequately represent their experiences. Their concerns created a gap between experiential and academic knowledge—a gap that need not be in place because the individual and the social are so mutually constitutive. That gap not only signified a difficulty in translating academic and experiential knowledge, but in effect it sanitized race talk and produced

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[40] By "academic" language or knowledge, I mean the abstract terms and concepts that the authors of their assigned texts used to develop their arguments.

an awkward tension that pervaded most conversations and inhibited student learning, development of sociological imagination, and evaluation of sociological knowledge.

Contested experiential knowledge: Tension, silencing, and sanitizing race talk

In the former chapter, I explained that discursive articulations between emotionality, race, and gender created different performative concerns and outcomes for students in the traditional classrooms. Similarly, concerns about the appropriateness of sharing personal experience fell disproportionately on women and students of color in the traditional classrooms. Like non-flat emotionality, devaluing experiential knowledge has been traditionally grounded in the Cartesian mind-body split with its attendant constructions of race and gender difference. Lugones (200i7), Quijano (2007), Spivak (1999), and Wynter (2003) have shown that modern liberal ideals of objectivity and rationality were constructed through a colonial deferral that mapped racialized bodies onto the mind-body split and nature-culture binary. In that mapping, European men constructed themselves as objective and rational through imagining women and colonial Others as opposite of that—closer to nature, and thus inherently more emotional and incapable of rational thought. As such, people of color's stories have been questioned, edited, and/or outright dismissed by white audiences and gatekeepers throughout US history, and labeled as too personal, emotional, and irrational to be considered objective science or evidence in court

(Clair 2016[41], Peterson 2011, Lowe 2005, Spivak 1999, Wynter 2003). These discursive constructions followed students into the classroom and made the sharing of experiential knowledge a fraught endeavor, especially for students of color, when the pedagogical practices privileged reading, discussing, and writing about written arguments. Sarita Srivastava (1994) argues that anti-racist workshops that ask students to share personal experiences set up people of color for a micro-level voyeurism and vulnerability that reproduces macro racial dynamics wherein white people are always already discursively granted a sense of authority and objectivity. Moreover, Srivastava argues, this symbolic privilege materializes when white students reject, disregard, or devalue people of color's stories about racism as overly emotional, personal, or irrelevant.

Similar to the uneven performative pressures on affective flatness, the historical racist and sexist articulations with devaluing experience and emotion rematerialized in the classrooms when students of color felt obliged *not* to talk about experiential knowledge, fearing that doing so would label them as too personal, too emotional, or less capable of academic work. That is, the focus on discussing formal arguments gave them the sense that if they shared something from their personal lives, doing so would seem like downgrading the conversation (because personal stories tend to use more colloquial language and a larger range of emotions than formal arguments). While none of the white male students I interviewed worried

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[41] Clair (2016), reviewing Matlin (2013) and Morris (2015), argues that whites have sought out "authentic" stories from black intellectuals when those stories were thought to serve whites' interests.

about this, every student of color and most women I interviewed expressed concerns about this overdetermination and self-censored accordingly. For example, Regina felt that the vocabulary for explaining her experience didn't match the sociological vocabulary of her assigned texts, and thus she feared that sharing her experience would mark her as "dumb." Rahm also felt that explaining experiential knowledge was at odds with success in class since instructors wanted to hear students skillfully use academic language. Reflecting on a choice of paper prompts, one of which asked for critical reflection on experience, Rahm chose the prompt that avoided analyzing experience. He felt that he couldn't do justice to his own story with academic language and thus chose not to speak about personal experience at all, even when his experience gave him reason to interpret and evaluate arguments differently than his peers. Many interviewees and survey respondents, especially women of color, reported that they did not talk in class if it meant that they might "get emotional." In Regina's words, "I'm afraid I'll break down talking." Knowing that his stories were always already read as too emotional for class norms, Rahm asked himself, "What's the point of sharing?" He chose to speak only about the arguments made by authors, censoring any interpretations or relevant experience for fear that it might come across to others as too emotional, personal, or opinionated.

Many students felt similarly to Regina and Rahm, stating that conventional ways of speaking and writing in social sciences tampered the value that they placed on storytelling and experiential knowledge, relegating it to secondary or irrelevant knowledge. Because the traditional classrooms' pedagogy and evaluation criteria

revolved around reading, writing about, and discussing written arguments, experiential knowledge often seemed *undervalued by the pedagogy itself*, even when teachers asked students to reflect on experience. Thus, the pedagogical practices discouraged students, especially students of color and women, from speaking about their personal experience and how that knowledge affected the way they interpreted and evaluated the abstract knowledge presented in the assigned written arguments. This is unfortunate because not only did students report that they learned from comparing and contrasting their experiences with their peers' experiences, but neuroscience research shows that learning is maximized when students build on foundational knowledge that they already have in place (Zull 2002). Experiential knowledge could be that foundational knowledge from which to build.

Another way that the historical racist and sexist articulations with devaluing experience and emotion rematerialized in the classrooms was through the policing of *how* experiential knowledge was shared in class. For example, Ryan's ambivalent evaluation of experiential knowledge showed a distaste for and shaming of emotional expression in that sharing: "We were trying to look at these things in your story, but telling like a very basic, emotional story that you just want to rant about or something like that—people are just kind of ranting their opinions." This quote represents an important affective component to the contestation that other students cited too. That is, Ryan saw experience's epistemic value, *but only as long as that knowledge was expressed with a flat affect*. Not only did his judgment encapsulate the mind-body split and its historical racist and sexist articulations, but it also echoed contemporary

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patterns of white "tone policing" of anti-racist and feminist critiques (Tomlinson 2010). While some students agreed with Ryan's tone-policing assertion that "emotional" displays of personal experience derailed the conversation away from sociological significance, most students didn't feel this strongly, they *just understood flat affect as a norm* of academic classrooms and thus *felt invested* in maintaining it in order to be perceived as a good student.

Because both devaluing experience and its racist articulations exist discursively (and thus exceed individual, racialized bodily performance), no one knew who was on what side, and almost everyone was on both sides, of a racial conflict that rarely called itself a racial conflict. However, when white men challenged experiential knowledge's value or tone-policed, students did recognize the racism and sexism of that challenge. When I observed direct, verbal challenges, white men most frequently cast experiential knowledge as just opinion, overly emotional, too personal, and/or less relevant than allegedly objective arguments. That said, the challenge did not map neatly onto racial performances. My interviews and surveys showed that students of all identifications felt ambivalently about experiential knowledge's value and its method of expression. In one class, the most regular challenges to experience's epistemic value came from a Latino student, and in the anonymous survey, the two staunchest repudiations of experiential knowledge came from Latinas (a surprise for both me and my research assistants when coding). It's important to note that those contestations are largely discursive (i.e., historically-deep and widely-held ideas, reinforced through classroom norms and practices, that are

both at and above the level of the individual body or subject). As such, publicly

sharing experiential knowledge and debating its value is overdetermined—women

and people of color are always already read as overly emotional and irrational, and

white men are always already read as rational and objective (Srivastava 1994).

Moreover, the broader culture of racial paranoia means that a lot of people of

color are suspicious of racist sentiment in whites and are looking for indications of

that racism (Jackson 2010). When people of color assert the value of abstract over

experiential knowledge, they still sanitize and manage race discursively. However,

students did not necessarily see or interpret those instances of students of color

devaluing experiential knowledge as moments of managing race by erasing the

embodied experiences of that violence and the affective intensities it produces.

However, when white bodies (like Justin's in the example above) devalued

experiential knowledge of racism, the other students interpreted him as devaluing

people of color in general. His phenotypical whiteness made *him* suspect rather than

the uneven performative constraints put into place by discourse. In practice, this

obscured the discursive and affective managing and sanitizing of race talk that was

reinforced by broader cultural and classroom norms and discourse.

Remaining silent, self-policing, or tone-policing to maintain norms and

practice pedagogy appropriately amounted to discursive management and sanitation

of race talk. Tone policing is a broader cultural phenomenon that discredits the

legitimacy of impassioned arguments by disregarding the impact, urgency, and

magnitude expressed through strong emotions (Tomlinson 2010). In the classrooms I

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observed, the norms of only flatly speaking about race through disembodied arguments of populations often made race and racism into matters of abstract academic debate. This is a discursive type of management of race and method of control that happens when the university includes and recognizes of difference (through gender and ethnic studies), but only on its own terms of objective science (Ferguson 2012). To *privilege the abstract,* especially in the context of multicultural discussion of a text, sanitized knowledge about race, erasing the fact that race is a logic enacted differently (and often violently) on bodies, *bodies and souls present in those discussions*. Leonardo & Porter (2010) warn against this intellectualization of race where race becomes an "interesting topic" rather than a lived experience; doing so commits symbolic violence in the classroom.

For example, Yvonne described a particular moment that exemplified this sanitation and erasure[42]. The class was discussing an article about the school-to-prison pipeline and Justin, a white student, continually interrupted Napo, a Latino student with personal experience in militarized schools. Napo used colloquial and somewhat colorful language to express his indignation about that schooling, and when Justin interrupted Napo, he did so with a flat tone and used academic language to recapitulate the text's argument. Describing her own commentary on this event, Yvonne said:

> "[Justin]…was like, 'I know, I've read.' And I was like, 'But mijo, you haven't lived. You don't get it!'...'Napo has his experiences, he lives in a very rough town, just let him, let him talk, he knows what he's talking about and

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[42] The other students I interviewed from this class also talked about this particular moment as a crisis of experiential knowledge and recognition.

you...you need to step aside right now, and like let him talk, because he has lived whatever you're talking about, and like you have not!'"

Yvonne did *not* argue that Napo's experiential knowledge was more or less authoritative than the abstract knowledge from the text that Justin referenced in his interruptions. But she was arguing that those types of knowledge were qualitatively different and that, in the context of a multicultural discussion section, the people with *both* abstract and experiential knowledge should be given more talk time because they will bring greater context, nuanced understanding, and lived implications and instantiations to the abstract knowledge presented in academic articles.

Moreover, what seemed crucial for Yvonne was honoring experiential knowledge in the classroom *resisted* making knowledge about race into matters of sanitized, abstract academic debate. When Justin continually interrupted Napo to assert abstract knowledge over experiential knowledge about criminalizing students, Justin (with the support of classroom norms) contributed to normalizing the violence of the youth control complex (Rios 2011) that was enacted on bodies in that room, making it into an "*interesting*" matter of an argument or fact, rather than a matter of *concern* and *personal import* for fellow students, and for society at-large. In moments like this, students of color (and their experiences) were *talked about but not talked with*, producing a gap between recognition and surveillance. This is one example of what Ferguson (2012) calls "managing race" by being taken "seriously" in the academy. Likewise, Leonardo & Porter (2010) trouble this intellectualization

of race talk in college classrooms and assert that it exercises symbolic violence in a place meant to deconstruct racist relations.

This gap (between recognition and surveillance) reproduced the tension that already pervades many interracial dialogues in the US and re-rehearsed colonial forms of symbolic violence. Napo called that the "awkward tension" that defined all of his sociology classes, and scholars use several different terms to describe those uneasy feelings: "intergroup anxiety" (Gurin et al. 2013), "racial paranoia" (Jackson 2010), and "aversion" (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005)[43]. I label that tension as the (largely unnamed, unacknowledged, and unaddressed) circulation of "the erotic life of racism" (Holland 2012)—desires for recognition, inclusion, forgiveness, reconciliation, etc. In other words, tense contestations over experiential knowledge and emoting were racial tensions that were rarely labeled racial tensions and students often found the source of that tension difficult to pinpoint[44].

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[43] I group racial paranoia and aversion in here because the talked-about-but-not-with gap reflects broader avoidant behavior in multiracial settings (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005) and a sense that people are not honestly talking about race with one another (Jackson 2010).

[44] Because both devaluing experience and its racist articulations exist discursively (and thus exceed individual, racialized bodily performance), no one knew who was on what side, and almost everyone was on both sides, of a racial conflict that rarely called itself a racial conflict. However, when white men challenged experiential knowledge's value or tone-policed, students *did* recognize the racism and sexism of that challenge. When I observed direct, verbal challenges, white men most frequently cast experiential knowledge as just opinion, overly emotional, too personal, and/or less relevant than allegedly objective arguments. That said, the challenge did not map neatly onto racial performances. My interviews and surveys showed that students of all identifications felt ambivalently about experiential knowledge's value and its method of expression. In one class, the most regular challenges to experience's epistemic value came from a Latino student, and in the anonymous survey, the two

Gurin et al.'s (2013) intergroup dialogue model tries to avoid that discursive

lack of recognition, label racial tension, and learn from that tension by carefully

coaching students in how to listen carefully, investigate their emotional responses to

what they hear, and pair what they hear in stories with academic knowledge that

contextualizes that experiential knowledge. Accordingly, fewer gaps develop between

academic content and experiential knowledge and students feel heard and seen by one

another (i.e., they are talked with not about)[45]. Colonial and modern discourses that

have articulated and continue to articulate experience and emotion with racial and

gender difference pervade American culture and the academy, but classrooms can

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staunchest repudiations of experiential knowledge came from Latinas (a surprise for
both me and my research assistants when coding). It's important to note that those
contestations are largely discursive (i.e., historically-deep and widely-held ideas,
reinforced through classroom norms and practices, that are both at and above the level
of the individual body or subject). As such, publicly sharing experiential knowledge
and debating its value is overdetermined—women and people of color are always
already read as overly emotional and irrational, and white men are always already
read as rational and objective (Srivastava 1994). Moreover, the broader culture of
racial paranoia means that a lot of people of color are suspicious of racist sentiment in
whites and are looking for indications of that racism (Jackson 2010). When people of
color assert the value of abstract over experiential knowledge, they still sanitize and
manage race discursively. However, students did not necessarily see or interpret
those instances of students of color devaluing experiential knowledge as moments of
managing race by erasing the embodied experiences of that violence and the affective
intensities it produces. However, when white bodies like Justin's devalued
experiential knowledge of racism, the other students interpreted him as also devaluing
people of color in general. His phenotypical whiteness made *him* suspect, and in the
process, obscured the discursive and affective managing and sanitizing of race talk
that was reinforced by broader cultural norms and norms of the classroom.

[45] Without facilitation to fill those gaps and encourage recognition, I'm concerned
that students will not maximize their learning, and worse, label their experience in the
classroom "negative." When students report negative evaluations of multicultural
conversations about race, they are more likely to develop antagonistic racial identities
(Hurtado 2005).

create conditions that help students confront, undo, and learn from those discursive and affective barriers. The intergroup dialogue model builds collective norms and gives students tools that help them learn from experiential knowledge despite the broader discursive and affective constraints (Gurin et al. 2013). While the intergroup dialogue model has proved effective at fostering conditions of productive multicultural dialogue, it may be difficult to scale this model up since it consists of four students and two facilitators. That said, Rainbow also created conditions that helped students learn from experiential knowledge, and they did so in a class of about 100 students. Rainbow's practices also led to some of the relational and action outcomes of the intergroup dialogue model (Gurin et al. 2013). In the next section I will outline how Rainbow built these conditions, as well as the effects of those conditions.

Story and experiential knowledge in Rainbow

Learning through triangulating stories

Even though Rainbow is technically a class and a set of productions, Mr. Taylor called Rainbow "a process" of getting to know one another and building community. A crucial aspect of that process was the practice of storytelling or giving testimony. The pedagogical purpose of telling stories through productions was to give testimony to stories rarely heard in mainstream media, traditional theater, or history books, and thus confronting and correcting hegemonic historical erasure, Eurocentrism, and white supremacy of popular media, theater, and public education.

This storytelling pedagogy built off of similar projects of testimonio in Chicana/o

Studies and slave narratives in African-American Studies (Nance 2006). Sharing

these stories aimed to speak truth to power by educating students and audience

members about events that mainstream history irregularly mentions, and when it

does, often in ways that essentialize the experiences of subjugated peoples and/or

represent those experiences through a lens of deficiency (Solórzano & Yosso 2002).

Like the traditional classroom, experience was a key theme in Rainbow, but students

learned from experience[46] without the troubles I observed in the traditional

classrooms. In this section, I will explain how storytelling was framed in Rainbow

and how those conditions built the capacity for good faith dialogue, sincere

recognition and knowledge of one another, and intimate bonds that drove students

toward for coalitional work.

While the value of experiential knowledge was contested in the traditional

classrooms, it was fully valued in Rainbow. Mr. Taylor and other Rainbow students

implored each other to "tell your story," and "listen to those stories for what they can

teach you." Mr. Taylor and Rainbow students believed that they had a lot of

experiential knowledge about social difference and the lived experiences of

inequality, and that by sharing these stories with one another, they broadened their

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[46] In addition to learning through experience via storytelling and experiential
knowledge, Rainbow practices also emphasized experiential education through
improv theater games and the experience of actually producing plays together. The
improv games functioned as a friendship bonding ritual and a rehearsal for taking
risks in front of one other. As such, those games contributed to the fostering the
conditions for good faith dialogue and intimate bonds between students.

social awareness and critical consciousness. Harold, a student new to Rainbow, explained that he had learned about race from his formal education, but "hearing from other people helped me learn; it's important." I observed a lot of this lateral learning through storytelling both informally (i.e., outside of class activities) and through structured activities during class[47]. Similar to storytelling's benefit in the traditional classrooms, storytelling taught Rainbow students that their experiences were socially constructed, and constructed in relation to the experiences of their peers. In the words of Raquel (a student leader of Rainbow): "We read the plays to build meaning together and learn from one another." Rainbow students' life experiences and standpoints affected how they interpreted the plays they produced, and therefore students broadened their social awareness and consciousness through listening to different interpretations of the plays and the personal experiences that undergirded those interpretations. In total, Rainbow's emphasis on telling stories to teach and learn fostered some of the vital communication processes of the intergroup dialogue

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[47] Rainbow leaders implore students to tell their own stories to each other during "family" time, a period when students sit with a multicast and multicultural group and discuss questions posed by student leaders. Supplicating students to "be vulnerable and open" in answering these questions, student leaders routinely remind everyone that "what comes from the heart, goes to the heart." Storytelling happens organically and informally due to the sheer quantity of time that students spend together at Rainbow class and rehearsals. While the majority of this time is formally productive (i.e., organized by class activities, discussions, or rehearsals, there's also a lot of "hurry up and wait" since students often postpone activity until all other cast members, collaborating team members, or classmates arrive at a particular activity (and often those who are absent are involved in another meeting or activity related to the production). A lot of storytelling happens after the rehearsals end at 11 PM and all the Rainbow interviewees cited these times as the ones where they discussed race and racism most.

model: dialogic communication (engaging self and appreciating difference) and critical communication (critical reflection and alliance building) (Gurin et al. 2013).

However, even though Rainbow students obliquely learned about the social through triangulating stories from different positionalities, their ability to articulate social conditioning in language was enhanced when students who majored in the social sciences or humanities used their academic language to interpret stories. In Rainbow, frosh through seniors mix in class, and along with that age difference they also bring different levels of disciplinary knowledge to their readings of the plays. Similarly, to how traditional classroom students learned from hearing their peers' different interpretations of arguments, Rainbow students gained knowledge of social conditions by hearing plays interpreted by students from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. For example, while discussing interpersonal dynamics between the characters in *Ladies in Waiting*, Elias, a fifth-year Rainbow student and literature major, brought his understanding of historicity to his reading of the play, explaining that the power dynamics between characters were all shaped by the logics of mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex in the 21st century. Many Rainbow students major in disciplines in the social sciences and humanities and they don't leave that knowledge at the door when they come into a Rainbow class or rehearsal. Their academic knowledge enriches their interpretations of plays and their attention to story and experience allows them to ground that academic knowledge in the concrete, understand the dense overlay of the individual and the social, and connect across difference.

Ignorance as opportunity: Productive tension of pride and humility, caution and risk

When listening to one another's stories, Mr. Taylor also encouraged students to not only honor what they know from their experience, but also be humble about what they didn't know from experience. As such, ignorance was not treated as a liability as it was in the traditional classrooms (where students worried about seeming dumb for not knowing something or not having the right sociological vocabulary to explain their experiences). In Rainbow, *ignorance was an opportunity* to learn, grow, and connect. This positive orientation towards ignorance invited students to take risks, fostered good faith dialogue, and thus decreased racial paranoia (Jackson 2010) and other fears about saying the "wrong thing."

For example, Melissa, an actor raised in a conservative Christian family, said that Rainbow's imperative to "tell your story" (with both pride and humility) encouraged her to take a risk and express the inner turmoil she felt about playing a lesbian character. Playing the character forced Melissa to challenge the homophobic beliefs she was raised to have. But doing so wasn't simple reconciliation—her church had also instilled pride in her Samoan culture and values of justice and equality, the same things that brought her to Rainbow. Moreover, she knew that harboring homophobia was shameful at UCSC (in general), and Rainbow (in

particular)[48]. However, Rainbow's imperative to proudly and humbly tell one's story, as well as its positive orientation toward ignorance, gave her trust that her cast, several of whom identified as queer, would support her process of unlearning homophobia and realize that that process was bigger than learning the "right" thing to say. I use this particular story to emphasize the relative freedom and willingness to take risks that Rainbow students felt; they were relatively unburdened with paranoia and they had good faith that their peers would support them in the difficult work of unlearning racism, sexism, and homophobia. Whereas it was more common in the traditional classrooms for students to report feeling scared of saying anything that might offend or "not be right," Rainbow encouraged students to wrestle with what they've been taught (even if they knew that such beliefs were made a problem at UCSC) and maintain humility about what they do know (whether those views are hegemonic or critical).

As I described in the previous chapter, Rainbow encouraged "realness" from students—encouraging students be vulnerable in front of others, admit to what they struggle with, and meet each other where they are at (in terms of their knowledge, critical consciousness, experiences, and politics). The combination of realness

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[48] I don't share this passage to condone homophobia nor condemn its taboo status at UCSC. Nor do I want to give the impression that Rainbow is a space where homophobia goes unchallenged. Quite the contrary, Rainbow is a space where many students report confronting the homophobia they have been conditioned to have. Likewise, most instances of passing homophobic speech will be met with a "check." "Check" is a term that a lot of students in critical consciousness circles use to denote when one student confronts another student for making a comment that reflects racist, sexist, or homophobic ideologies. Because Rainbow mostly have good faith in one another, and want to educate one another, "checks" are levied with leniency.

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culture and norms of proudly and humbly telling stories allowed students to see and

be seen as they feel they are, reducing the fears they had to perform in a certain way.

In other words, it quelled the students' fears of being judged for saying the "wrong"

thing and it afforded students the opportunity for recognition on their own terms, a

sense of recognition that students in the traditional classroom often did not feel

(because the academic language used in arguments did not adequately capture their

experiences). As such, Rainbow's combination of realness culture and storytelling

pedagogy allowed for students to recognize "racial sincerity" (Jackson 2005) among

their peers. Whereas authenticity politics presumes knowledge of others before

interaction, makes subjects into objects, and does boundary work through narrow

representational judgments, racial sincerity implies that social interlocutors presume

one another's humanity, interiority, and subjectivity. Racial sincerity refers to a dual

recognition that people cannot be predetermined by social categories even as those

categories have shaped them to the core (Jackson 2005). As such, practicing and

recognizing racial sincerity requires *telling* one's own story and *carefully listening* to

other's stories to understand the dense overlay of the individual and the social.

Rainbow's pedagogy of telling one's stories and humbly listening to other's stories

for what they have to teach accomplishes this racial sincerity. By telling their own

stores, Rainbow students are not confined by the filters for interpreting their

experience that they must use in traditional classrooms (i.e., the academic terms that

make generalizations and describe patterns of groups).

Realness culture also allowed students to honestly respond to the stories of others, and that often meant that students shared how the stories of others affected them negatively. In Melissa's case above, she had to face her cast members' responses to her story, an emotional labor of both risk and humility that is necessary for effectively engaging difference for social justice aims. However, because Rainbow conversations are premised on learning from one another's stories, and because realness culture and the positive orientation toward ignorance fostered a sense of good faith in others, sharing honestly about the pain one feels from another's story did not silence anyone else or discourage people from sharing. Instead, it invited more good faith dialogue that countered the inward retreat of racial paranoia (Jackson 2010) and aversive racism (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005). Moreover, the combined emphasis on realness, pride, humility, and ignorance-as-opportunity achieved two of the intergroup dialogue model's relational outcomes of "intergroup empathy" (defined as "when individuals respond to the experiences of members of other social groups by feeling what they feel or reacting emotionally to their experiences") and "motivation to bridge differences" (defined as "identity-based knowledge sharing and exchanges" that "involves reciprocal exchanges for mutual benefit") (Gurin et al. 2013: 107, 109).

Sharing stories and building bonds

Getting to know each another through telling and listening stories of one another's lives also built an intimate bond among Rainbow students—the "we" and

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the "family" to which Rainbow students regularly referred. In turn, that intimacy

fostered more honest dialogue and a further commitment to working for and with one

another in a coalition[49]. This commitment is another outcome to the intergroup

dialogue model: "intergroup action" or "collaboration across differences of people

working toward a common cause" (Gurin et al. 2013:115). This coalitional process

(i.e., intimacy leading to coalitional work) was exemplified in a discussion about

whether or not Rainbow should perform *Ladies in Waiting* (DeAnda 1994), a play

that takes place in a women's prison. One of the central characters in the play is

Lana, a white woman who found herself in prison because of she took part in prison

abolition activism. The play revolves around Lana developing friendships with

fellow prisoners. Olivia, a long-time Rainbow student, said she agreed with others

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[49] Rainbow students also practiced building coalitions by working together and committing to telling stories of *all* marginalized communities, regardless of their own ethnic and racial identities. In Mr. Taylor's words, these were "everyone's stories" that "need to be heard" and that represent "cultures that are falling off" (read: not adequately represented because of Eurocentrism, white supremacy, and elitism in mainstream media). As Melissa, a Samoan-American student said of playing a Colombian-American undocumented immigrant: "I don't know what it's like to be undocumented, but that shouldn't stop me from understanding what the story is about, and why the story is important, why it needs to be heard." During one class reflection, several students claimed that putting on the plays together "made everyone my family," "brought people together," "opened my mind," and "was a great opportunity to learn." Moreover, the collaborative nature of Rainbow productions fostered a conviction among students that their productions are "everyone's stories" (i.e., that a multicultural group of producers, stage managers, and technological crew members invest in producing each show as their own, even if a play is centered around one particular racial group's history). This concept of "everyone's stories" produced a tension where students simultaneously identified with particular racialized histories and, because of their dedication to producing one another's stories, also resisted the impulse to divide potential solidarities by rigidly identifying with racial categories. I will examine the epistemological significance of "everyone's stories" and coalitional identity more in the next chapter.

that they should perform the play because "ally-ship is a process, not something you do overnight and what I like about this play is that it shows a white woman getting to know the people she's trying to be an ally for. She had to know these people to be allies. That's what we do in Rainbow too."

Similarly, The Santa Cruz Feminist of Color Collective (SCFOCC) describe their own process of building solidarity as one cultivated through storytelling: "an intense process of learning one another's histories of migration, colonization, exile, and displacement" and "holding a space for our pain and trauma" (2013: 25). Jacqui Alexander (2005) also argues for the importance of storytelling in building coalitions:

> "We would need to become fluent in each other's histories, to resist and unlearn an impulse to claim first oppression, most-devastating oppression, one-of-a-kind oppression, defying comparison oppression. We would have to unlearn the impulse that allows mythologies about each other to replace *knowing* about one another" (Alexander 2005: 269, her emphasis).

Rainbow's practice of learning through storytelling fostered the kind of knowing Alexander describes, a knowing developed through intimate face-to-face interaction and compassionate listening, contrasted with the abstract knowledge about groups of people that students in the traditional classrooms gained (because of the emphasis on discussing written arguments about groups of people). Moreover, SCFOCC argues that sharing stories generates "the sentiments guiding our collaborative efforts" (2013: 25). Similarly, when I describe the coalitional bond created in Rainbow, I describe an intimate bond, a set of "sentiments guiding" and inspiring students to desire, engage in, and commit to coalitional work with one another. This intimate bond (built through storytelling) that affectively guides

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students toward action is consistent with the intergroup dialogue model, which shows that coalitional action results when students develop "affective positivity[50]" (Gurin et al. 2013:76).

Rainbow's pedagogy emphasizes rehearsing this coalitional work by producing theatrical stories together, and Rainbow students showed up, literally and figuratively, for one another's productions even when their own casts weren't performing. In literal terms, they often put their commitment to sharing one another's stories, and doing so well, before their personal interests in rest, relaxation, and individual studies. For example, they stayed at rehearsals after the required hours, brought food and beverages to other casts' rehearsals, showed up early to set up, forwent a much-needed break to attend multiple showings of one other's plays, and more often than not, did all of this quite joyfully, at least in their outward performance. Their involvement with Rainbow took up almost all of their free time, and although it physically exhausted them, it also spiritually uplifted them because of the love and attention they gave and received from one another. In turn, many students ended up doing more to contribute than what was expected of them. Outside

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[50] In the intergroup dialogue model (Gurin et al. 2013:79), dialogic communication processes of engaging self and appreciating difference mix with critical communication processes of critical reflection and alliance building to lead to the psychological outcomes of affective positivity and cognitive involvement. Affective positivity is defined as positive intergroup interactions and emotions in interaction and comfort in intergroup interaction and cognitive involvement is defined as complex thinking, analytical social thinking, multiple perspective consideration, and identity engagement. In turn, these psychological outcomes lead to interactional outcomes of intergroup understanding (sources of intergroup inequality and attitudes toward diversity), relationships (empathy and motivation to bridge differences), and action/collaboration.

of Rainbow, their coalitional bond expanded through other practices—they worked together in various student groups, putting on educational events and political actions, and then showed up in visible numbers at those events and actions.

Conclusion

Experience was a key theme in both the traditional classrooms and Rainbow. In the traditional classrooms, students felt ambivalently about the value of experiential knowledge and this was due to the main pedagogical practices of the classroom and longstanding discourses that linked, and continue to link, the emotion-reason binary with racial and gender difference. Because its practices emphasized individual work and grading (i.e., reading and writing alone) and then collectively discussing arguments of essays, students believed that the focus of the class was on "right" knowledge (i.e., the abstract, academic knowledge presented in formal, written arguments) and thus talking about experience risked positioning the storytelling student as inappropriate or less academically capable. Moreover, because of discursive overdetermination and tone-policing (sensed or explicitly stated), sharing experiential stories felt especially risky for students of color and women, and therefore many of them chose not to speak in class or only talk about the written arguments assigned for class (even when those did not adequately represent their experiences). Not only did this rematerialize racism and sexism in the classroom, but it also sanitized race talk by making it into discussion of interesting facts where students talked about one another (at times authoritatively), but not necessarily with

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one another. This often led to a lack of recognition among fellow students and a gap between experiential knowledge and academic knowledge. Out of that gap grew an awkward tension that permeated the discussions, fueling intergroup anxiety, racial paranoia, and aversion, and thus inhibiting good faith dialogue and learning from that tension. It's important to note that that tension was produced at a much broader, discursive level, and that the practices of the traditional classroom often reproduced that tension during discussion.

In Rainbow, the storytelling pedagogy helped students learn about the social through listening to stories from students of different positionalities and then "triangulating" those stories to understand the social conditions that connected their stories and led to similar and different outcomes. Many Rainbow students with social science and humanities majors enhanced that understanding by interpreting and explaining stories with the academic knowledge they gained in other classes. As such, Rainbow becomes a ground for both experiential and interdisciplinary knowledge exchange.

Rainbow's storytelling pedagogy not only built intimate bonds through exchanging stories, but it also created a productive tension between pride and humility, and caution and risk, that posited ignorance as opportunity for learning. Experiential knowledge was fully valued and Rainbow leaders and students implored one another to proudly tell their stories and humbly listen to others for what they could learn. As such, Rainbow created a positive orientation toward ignorance that encouraged students to take risks and engage in good faith dialogue. It also reduced

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racial paranoia, aversion, and intergroup anxiety because students were not afraid of admitting their ignorance, saying the "wrong" thing, and thus being labeled as dumb, racist, sexist, transphobic, etc. (in regard to something they didn't understand but wanted to). In addition, storytelling built an intimate bond among Rainbow students, a bond that also motivated students to engage in coalitional work. Collaborating across difference to produce "everyone's stories" was an exercise in that coalitional work, but Rainbow students also showed up for other Rainbow students who were planning other events and political actions on campus.

I understand why many sociology instructors feel reluctance in encouraging students to share experiences in the classroom—doing so can obscure the social forces that condition and create experiences, and thus naturalize difference. But individual experiences are incredibly relevant to sociological study. Social forces and conditions move and materialize through individual experiences, and when students feel compelled to share experiences, it is because they start to recognize social forces at work in their experiences, albeit incompletely. Their sociological imaginations are stimulated. Learning is maximized when students build off of what they already know (Zull 2002), so it makes sense pedagogically to build off the experiential knowledge of the social world that they bring into the class, even if this knowledge is full of common sense assumptions that naturalize difference, individualize problems, and justify inequality. With careful facilitation, instructors can guide students in naming the social forces at work in their stories, and thus work against the very American meritocratic tendency to blame individuals for their circumstances (Gurin

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et al. 2013). This is an example of the sociological imagination put to work and the Freirian ideal that the core instructors strove towards. A lot of storytelling in the traditional classrooms happened during small group discussions, so the instructor rarely had the chance to pull out the sociological significance in those stories. That lack of facilitation around experience led some students to conclude that the storytelling in those moments was a waste of time, something not related to the topics of the class. To me, this suggests the need to expose students to more sociological and feminist theories of emotions and experience in the classroom (c.f., Ahmed 2004 and Moya 2002) and develop more facilitation tools that can draw out the links between the personal and the social. This facilitation can also expose the mind-body split as not only faulty conceptually, but also implicated in the dismissal of social problems as individual faults or anxieties and constructive of racial and gender differences.

All disciplines tell stories, they just practice different narrative conventions for telling them and have different criteria for assessing their value. In sociology, we most commonly use ethnographic descriptions, interview excerpts, statistical charts and tables, historical narratives, and theoretical explanations to tell our data stories— our "reports of society" or "representations of society" (Becker 2007). Within those data stories, sociological narrative structure relies upon categories, generalizations, patterns, conditions, and debates to illuminate "structure" or "the social." And, sociology distinguishes itself from the humanities because our storytelling relies on data that can be undeniably seen and rationally argued (Gordon 1997).

But because there are many methods for "telling about society," and all that telling happens within an interpretative community of makers and users of stories, the value of different storytelling methods is often negotiated (Becker 2007). In the traditional classrooms, students understood themselves as mostly *users* of social science stories, stories that were made for other *makers* of sociological (or psychological) knowledge (with the exception of the novel assigned in the core class). Even when students valued social scientific methods of storytelling, they also pushed back by staying silent or inserting their personal stories and firsthand experience into discussions of scholarly arguments and debates. Students' silence and/or pushback suggested that sociological approaches to storytelling left something to be desired— something that ties abstract theories or concepts about structure to the textures and actions of everyday life. I agree with Avery Gordon's prognosis: that sociology needs to develop ways of studying and telling that more fully conjure social life and account for complex personhood[51] (1997). Moreover, students also desired a method of storytelling that gestured towards utility and making change.

I believe that Rainbow's methods of storytelling can teach sociology a lot in both of these regards. First, Rainbow emphasized storytelling as an interaction of making and using representations of society, of telling, sharing, and listening to stories. When students are makers of stories, they determine how to tell them—how to blend ways of knowing, experiencing, analyzing, and connecting. No story is ever

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[51] I will elaborate on learning about complex personhood through story in the following chapter.

free of discursive restraints, but when students are charged with telling their own stories instead of interpreting their stories through the parameters of an academic text, they have more freedom on what to include in the telling, and as such, they have the potential to "conjure" more than traditional sociological categories do (Gordon 1997). Second, Rainbow's storytelling goal was to move and be moved, to let oneself affect and be affected by others. Because Rainbow's pedagogy emphasized proudly sharing and humbly listening to stories for what they have to teach, it pushed students to richly conjure social life through their own stories, to build a public archive of that conjuring through multivocality, to gain knowledge of one another (and society at-large) through triangulating multiple stories, and to take responsibility for the knowledge gained by acting in solidarity with other storytellers.

Last, the storytelling conventions of traditional classrooms and Rainbow differ in their orientation towards knowledge and ignorance. The traditional classrooms assume that they are informing the actions that students engage in both in and out of the classroom. In the case of the traditional classrooms, those pedagogical practices stem from the Marxian imperative of "lifting the veil" and uncovering the truth of social structures, and then using that right knowledge to inform and engage in right action. With this pedagogy, students assume that their job is to seek right knowledge, speak with certainty and authority, and effectively argue to prove their point. In short, they assume that their job is to make statements rather than ask and investigate questions, or to probe into what cannot be said or known through traditional sociological categories. For many students, this pedagogy, whether the instructors

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want it to or not, leads many students to seek right knowledge, believing that their instructor has the authority of knowledge and that their job as students is to assimilate that knowledge and reproduce it thoughtfully in papers or exams. Despite its Freirian approach, the students in the core class were especially fixed on getting right knowledge in order to write strong arguments.

In the case of Rainbow, the pedagogical practices were not concerned with "right" knowing as much as they were interested in sharing experiential knowledge (from both the past and present) that rarely gets shared, honored, and valued in public spaces. Accordingly, everyone is *simultaneously* considered knowledgeable and ignorant. In some ways, students are supposed to embrace what they know in their hearts and mind from experience and to share that with their peers, always in an attempt to emotionally move others and to heal both personal and collective wounds. At the same time, students in Rainbow encourage themselves to be curious about others, to be humble about what they don't know, and to listen to others to learn from the knowledge of their peers.

In this regard, the traditional classrooms and Rainbow fundamentally differ in their orientations towards ignorance. In Rainbow, ignorance is constantly cited as an opportunity to listen to, learn from, and connect with others. With the exception of Nora's core class (where Nora encouraged students to seek out there "blindspots" and students regularly admitted their ignorance and asked one another to help them understand), students in the traditional classrooms had a sense that ignorance was a liability and they worked to gain right knowledge to cast out their ignorance and

conceal their ignorance for fear that it will mark them as a bad student, an ignorant person in general, a racist, or as politically ill-aligned with the teacher and other students in the class. When oriented toward "right knowledge," most students either sat in silence to conceal their ignorance or engaged in what Pat Gurin (2013) calls "serial monologues" that publically performed their right knowledge. Because ignorance is considered an opportunity to learn in Rainbow, students engaged in good faith dialogue and felt safe to express their curiosity and ask questions of one another, actions that directly quelled intergroup anxiety, racial paranoia, and aversion.

Overall, a consequential difference between the different classroom types is their object and objectives of study. In the traditional classrooms, the object of study is race—a thing in and of itself, a depersonalized structure—and the objective of the class is to make declarative statements about race-as-structure. In Rainbow, the object of study is stories and the objective is to build intimacy and relationships through the act of telling and producing stories. As long as those relationships stay intact, its classroom becomes a "brave space," one where students can overcome barriers of intergroup anxiety, racial paranoia, and aversion. They learn from each other and through that, foster a desire to work for each other.

Considering that pedagogical approaches have different aims, undergirded by different presumptions about knowledge, the next chapter turns toward explicit and deeper exploration of the interlocking relationships between affects and discourses as they manifest in the knowledge formations that students use to conceptualize, understand, and discuss race with one another. Those "felt understandings" differ

according to the combined influences of emotional cultures and pedagogical practices used in the traditional classrooms and Rainbow.

Chapter 5 – Felt understandings: Affective workings in knowledges about race

Introduction

In chapters 3 and 4, I described emotional cultures and pedagogical practices in classrooms, and explained the effects on student's multicultural interactions. In this chapter, I will examine the *affective-discursive repertoires*[52]—the felt understandings—available for students' discursive practices. It is important to understand here that by "available" I do not mean that in anything is possible, nor that students consciously choose to perform certain discursive practices or not. Rather, I want to emphasize that, under certain conditions[53], the familiar and habitual forms of affect-discourse are neither permanent nor natural. That is, there is "wiggle room"— spaciousness and pliability—in discourses, and thus in how students perform discursive practices. Therefore, in this chapter also investigates how emotional cultures and pedagogical practices encourage or privilege some knowledge formations more than others, and in turn, how certain knowledge formations, both

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[52] Diana Taylor (2003) and Ruth Frankenberg (1993) have used "repertoire" to think through tension between freedom and constraint brought about by culture, discourse, and difference.

[53] There is no one supreme discourse that wins out in interpellating subjects and inciting them to enact certain practices and use certain languages. Rather, multiple discourses, as well as public feelings, circulate simultaneously, making different demands on what bodies should normatively do in particular contexts. Sometimes the incitements of different discourses—colonial, diversity, neoliberal, etc.—contradict one another, illuminating gaps in the ability of any one discourse to determine the outcomes of its circulation. See, for example, even as neoliberalism is a global discourse, there is no one form of it. Rather, the historical conditions of different locations create different "neoliberalisms" (Ong 2006).

inside and outside of the classroom, travel with particular affects and public feelings that bolster those knowledge formations. Since student learning involves a lot of feeling (from exposure to the unfamiliar, interaction across difference, adherence to classroom norms, concern about grades, and discipline), it is especially important from me to account for the entangled nature of discourses and affects. Understandings are always felt and feelings always articulate with understandings.

Because of the simultaneous circulation of multiple discourses (e.g., colonial, diversity, and neoliberal discourses) and multiple public feelings about race (e.g., paranoia, melancholia, erotics, aversion, melodrama), I define the term affective-discursive repertoire as a constellation of ideas and feelings that shape how people can conceptualize and understand race and racism in a given context. For me, the distinction between "conceptualizing" and "understanding" helps to clarify the need for the term "affective-discursive repertoire." Conceptualizing refers to forming an abstract idea in one's mind, but understanding goes beyond that abstraction; it involves gauging the significance of a concept, judging the utility or truth of a concept, and applying the concept for explanation. In other words, *understanding is a social practice* because such cognitive actions are always embedded in social relations and thus conditioned by the standpoint (Hartsock 1998) of the thinker, the legibility constraints of discourses (Foucault 1990, Butler 1990), and the public feelings (Cvetkovich 2003) and structure of feeling (Williams 1977) that shape a particular moment in history. Public feelings about race and racism—erotics (Holland 2012), melancholia (Cheng 2001), paranoia (Jackson 2010), melodrama

(Williams 2001), wounded attachments (Brown 1993), aversion (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005), and others yet to be labeled—shape the social terrain in which people think about race and racism. Therefore, when someone engages in the mental tasks of understanding (i.e., gauging significance, judging utility and truth, applying), those actions are simultaneously shaped by feelings related to race and racism: loss, anger, pride, (dis)trust, guilt, disgust, hope, reluctance, and desire for recognition and representation. Thinking about race and feeling about race cannot be pulled apart.

In addition, I created the term "affective-discursive repertoire" to combine insights from several other scholars into a singular term. The "affective-discursive" part speaks to the interconnected and co-constitutive nature of affect and discourse, with discourse gaining its disciplinary power and potency through the twin circulation of language and affect (Berlant 1997, Ahmed 2004). That is, disciplinary technologies such as surveillance, containment, normalizing judgments (Foucault 1979, 1990) function through and produce certain affects—paranoia, shame, anxiousness, guilt, disgust, animosity, etc. In other words, discursive legibility is achieved when ideas become materialized through practices that are thick with affect. I use "affective-discursive" as one word to emphasize this inextricable nature of discourses and affects, an assertion supported by Ahmed's (2004) concept of "affective economies." Accordingly, Ahmed (2004) argues that words, ideas, disciplinary practices, feelings, and bodily sensations circulate together, both fortifying and/or destabilizing the social significance of one another. While Ahmed's (2004) concept of affective economies helpfully links discourses and affects, this

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concept alone cannot help me understand which knowledge formations about race students take up and enunciate in their classrooms, and why they do so in some classes more than others.

Frankenberg (1993) used the term "repertoire" to refer to the variety of understandings about race, power, and privilege that white women used to make sense of their social identity (e.g., ethnicity, culture, class), and I use "repertoires" to refer to the *stock* of ideas and feelings that people have available to them to make sense of race when they are subjected to and positioned by a variety of different discourses about race, and when they move through multiple contexts with different norms for talking about and interacting around race. Before entering into their college classrooms, students bring with them a variety of feelings and ideas about race, some of which are commonly shared because of popular culture, mass media, and standardized public education curriculum. They also bring other thoughts and feelings about race that are particular to their upbringing and standpoint (i.e., differentially shaped by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, political affiliations, geography, education, cultural practices, etc.). When students interact in the classroom, they mix their individual and shared repertoires in order to wrestle with the new information and knowledge formations offered in their curriculum. I argue that the emotional cultures and pedagogical practices of different classrooms affect which part of their repertoires students focus on and enunciate. In other words, students have the *capacity* to think and feel about race in a variety of ways, but our

classrooms encourage and privilege the use of some knowledge formations more than others. At times, that use is contrary to sociological teaching objectives.

To describe that use and enunciation process, I often refer to students "selecting" or "pulling" particular understandings about race from their affective-discursive repertoires. By referring to students as the subjects who enact the verbs "select" and "pull," I do not mean to suggest that they do so with free will and without discursive and affective constraints. Instead, I endeavor to describe the *combined work that affect and discourse do to position students* in ways that make particular understandings of race more appealing, alluring, or advantageous to them when acting within the disciplinary constraints of different classroom contexts. Most of that selection of and attachment to particular knowledge formations is an unconscious process for students.

Because classroom cultures and practices affect which knowledge formations students pull from in their repertoires, there are some distinct differences in felt understandings between Rainbow and the traditional classrooms. At the same time, because of the mainstream discursive overlap described above, there are also some common, shared felt understandings in both the traditional classrooms and Rainbow. Therefore, I will start by discussing a felt understanding that overlaps in both Rainbow and the traditional classrooms—the understanding of *racism as intentional, individual prejudice.* This understanding, as Bonilla-Silva (2003) and Perry (2011) argue, is readily available in America culture, and therefore is also readily available in students' repertoires for understanding race. I will extend Bonilla-Silva and Perry

by explaining how public feelings of race—specifically erotics (Holland 2012), paranoia (Jackson 2010), and aversion (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005)—encourage students in particular, and America at-large, to repeatedly select this understanding from their repertoires and recirculate it in their interactions.

While students in both the traditional and Rainbow classrooms operationalize individualistic notions of race, they also rely on understandings that are specific to their particular classroom practices and emotional cultures. A felt understanding that students in the traditional classrooms regularly pull from their repertoires is *racial difference as binary categories*. I will explain how the traditional classroom practices and emotional cultures magnify particular public feelings of race—the erotic life of racism (Holland 2012), melancholia (Cheng 2001), paranoia (Jackson 2010), melodrama (2001), and aversion (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005). In turn, the amplification of those public feelings encourages students to select and reuse binary understandings of race as a method of coping with those feelings and "doing sociology" correctly (i.e., what they perceive to be doing sociology correctly). While using those understandings do help students with these goals initially, they also hamper students from fully recognizing classmates, grasping sociological concepts of race (specifically as morphing, intersectional socio-historical constructs), and appreciating a decolonial logic of difference.

A felt understanding unique to Rainbow is *race as culture or community*, and its attendant understanding of *racism as interconnected struggles*. The collaborative storytelling practices and norms of emotional realness highlight the complexity and

nuances of racial subjectivity and thus encourage students to select understandings of race and racism that can account for that perplexity. Those understandings, when paired with Rainbow's practices and emotional culture, also encourage students to build a public culture—the Rainbow community or "family"—based in multicultural witnessing of interconnections. As such, Rainbow students more fully appreciate and reproduce decolonial logics of difference in their interactions and story productions. Students in both Rainbow and the traditional classrooms come to their classrooms seeking understandings of race and racism that exceed what they've been exposed to in popular culture, mainstream media, and standardized public education. The understandings of race as culture or community, and racism as interconnected struggles, seem to fulfill students' desire for a more holistic understanding of race and racism, one that speaks truth to power, collectively resists reproduction of racism, attests to both historicity and futurity, and reflects the affective components of race and racism.

The findings and conclusion of this chapter suggest that sociology needs to further develop and emphasize knowledge that accounts for the affective components of race and racism in order to render a more sophisticated understanding of how race—something that simultaneously operates through institutional, interactional, symbolic, and psychological mechanisms—functions in society. Moreover, I argue that understandings of race that incorporate affect are more likely to give students a sense that sociological discourses fully recognize their experiences, grant fuller meaning to their lives, and catalyze their critical consciousness in the direction of

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coalitional, anti-racist action. Social constructionist and racial formation theories explain that institutional policies, collective practices, and ideologies work together to create racist effects (Omi & Winant 1994). Sociologists since Marx (2013/1848), and later Freire (2000), have focused our pedagogy on using the tools of deconstruction to expose false consciousness, replace it with a critical consciousness, and catalyze counterhegemonic action. For example, Bonilla-Silva (2003) concludes his tome with a call to expose the racist material consequences of colorblind ideology. Like Bonilla-Silva, many of us have faith that with critical consciousness of racist policies, practices, and ideologies, students will see race's fictitious foundations, fully recognize one another, and work together to undo those policies and practices.

I agree that exposure to material reality is vital for anti-racist education and action, and at the same time, I think that race operates at a much deeper level than racial formation theory acknowledges. Affect is a strong, productive social force (Clough 2010, Gould 2009, Ahmed 2004), and it both runs through and exceeds the categories we rely on to map racial formations (i.e., policies, practices, ideologies, representations). Cheng (2001) argues that grief of racist injuries exceeds the legal grievances we file to fight against racism. But without addressing the grief, what's left in the wake is racial melancholia, a public feeling that continues to haunt us and hinder our progressive goals. Therefore, without concerted attention to the affective components of race and racism, our efforts at more fully understanding race and its machinations give up the ghost. Deconstruction hasn't "inoculated us all against [race's] most hazardous features, dulled its sharpest talons" (Jackson 2010:85), and so

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we need to develop more intellectual and interactional tools for recognizing the affective components of race. Doing so can "conjure" more and thus generate more complex understandings of the social (Gordon 1997). As "evocative and compelling" knowledge, it can also catalyze that knowledge in the direction of anti-racist action across difference (Gordon 1997:22). Developing interactional tools to guide our discussions of emotionally-laden material can also lay the foundation for anti-racist action because knowing how to, and feeling comfortable with, emotional conversations about race is crucial for engaging in anti-racist work across difference (Stockdill 2003). In this chapter, I will explore several different understandings of race and racism used in the classrooms I observed, and the varying attention to affect that they play. Regards of whether these knowledges explicitly recognize feeling, they are still thick with affect that shapes how people negotiate and co-construct those knowledges, as well as how they employ them in classroom interactions.

In both: racism as individual prejudice

Students in both the traditional classrooms and Rainbow often understand racism as intentional, individual bias or prejudice. This widely-held understanding of racism (defined as a set of bigoted beliefs, biases, and prejudices held by individuals) is produced and reinforced by white desires to ignore systemic privilege (Wellman 1977) and a national memory of slavery, the Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement, and Jim Crow that cast racism as an issue of ignorant, old ways of thinking (Bonilla-Silva 2003, Jackson 2010, Perry 2011, Peterson 2011). This remembering—through

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documentaries, history books, film, and literature—paints a picture of racism wherein hateful, white bigots discriminate against and subject Blacks victims to violence (Williams 2001). The common phrase "I'm not a racist" or debates about whether or not someone "is racist" reflect this understanding of racism. Accordingly, racism is thought of as the collection of acts done by racist agents, an identity that can either claimed or denied by the accused "racist." This understanding of racism downplays or fails to conceptualize the existence of institutional and structural racism, and thus how people who do not intend to "be racist"—and maybe even deplore racism— participate in "practices of inequality" that create racist effects (Perry 2011). In order to push people to understand racism as institutional and structural in addition to individual prejudice, Perry (2011) helpfully argues for a "post-intent" understanding of racism wherein well-intentioned whites and people of color participate in "practices of inequality." Similarly, Bonilla-Silva (2003) makes a distinction between racism (as institutional and structural) and prejudice (as individual) and emphasizes that point by giving his book the pithy title of *Racism without Racists*. That book is now in its 4th edition and is widely assigned to undergraduates. Yet, more than a decade after its first publication, I still observed students reproducing an understanding of racism as individual prejudice, even when encouraged to think about it differently. While the clever terms offered by Perry and Bonilla-Silva do push people to understand racism in a more structural way, I argue that students repeatedly select "racism as individual prejudice" from their repertoires because that

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understanding is bolstered by "erotic" (Holland 2012) and "paranoid" (Jackson 2010) energies that amplify and enhance its discursive legibility and allure.

One key example to illustrate the affective investment[54] in understanding racism as individual prejudice happened during a core course discussion of the essay "Talking about racism: How our dialogues get short-circuited" by psychologist Paul Wachtel (1999). In his essay, Wachtel argues that white people often check out during multicultural dialogues because they are labeled or implicated as racist. For him, "real racism" is intentional, individual prejudice and discriminatory behavior. Wachtel thinks that "racism"—as a term, a concept, and an accusation—is too fraught with images of intent, hatred, bigotry, and violence. Accordingly, because many white people today do not *consciously* harbor bias or hatred, nor engage in overtly bigoted violence, they shut down and/or get defensive when conversations align their whiteness with racism. Wachtel argues that rather than intentional, individual prejudice, well-intentioned whites are most guilty of ignorance about institutional racism and indifference to the problems of people of color. Thus, he argues, well-intentioned whites play a part in reproducing racial inequality through their deep sense of otherness, their paucity of care and concern, and their lacking sense of

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[54] The "affective" investment that I refer to here includes investments such as "the possessive investment in whiteness" (Lipsitz 1998) but is also broader than investments based on identity- and privilege-based interests. For example, affect is a condition in our racially-organized society, producing public feelings of race like racial paranoia (Jackson 2010) and racial melancholia (Cheng 2001). Those feelings shape interactions and the way people of all racial identities think and feel, and not always in ways that can chalked up to identity-based interest.

responsibility in changing racial inequality. To be clear, even though these practices of ignorance and indifference reproduce racial inequality, Wachtel does not label them "racist."

This essay elicited strong feelings and passionate disagreements from students in this class. The discussion began with Gabby, a white woman[55], briefly restating the argument. Then, rather than focusing on ignorance and difference, she posed the question, "Is it bad to call someone a racist?" Multiple hands immediately raised, indicating a strong desire to comment on this question. Zoe, a white woman who regularly pointed out subtle forms of racism and railed against white privilege, lamented that Wachtel's argument just recenters dialogue around white people's feelings and that white people would be offended by being called ignorant or indifferent as well. Next, Annie, a Black woman who regularly espoused colorblind ideology, asserted that people throw around the word "racism" too nonchalantly and thus strip it of the powerful meaning it once had. Toby, a white man, agreed that the label "racist" shuts people down but emphasized that there are still racists, recentering the discussion about who properly deserves the term "racist" and not on the issues of ignorance and indifference that still implicate whites in racist practice. Lloyd, another white man who talked a lot in class, also focused again on who is deserving of the term "racist," calling it outdated because "people have certain opinions, but

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[55] In recounting this conversation, I included the racial identity of speaking students. Doing so shows that the epistemic position of students did not neatly map onto racial identity. Both students of color and white students felt invested in holding on to the term "racist" and debating who was most deserving of that title.

they are not racists." Nolan, another white man, restated that the label shuts white people down, and Annie added her agreement. Again, Zoe chimed in, exclaiming that regardless of intention, doing something that perpetuates racism is racist. Sarah, the white woman instructing the class, tried to bring the discussion back to questions of ignorance and indifference, asking what the students thought of that distinction from "racism." Despite this invitation, students (both white and of color) reselected and invested in the felt understanding of racism as individual, intentional prejudice. That is, they chose to refocus their comments on the label "racist," what it really means, and who really deserves it, and none of those comments linked indifference or ignorance to practices of racism. Only Nolan tried to discuss indifference, admitting that he had been indifferent to racism at times, but other than Sarah thanking him for that confession, no other students commented in response.

This particular conversation is an important one to focus on because the students were given the opportunity to discuss racism in de-individualized, unintentional terms, but instead of exploring these less rehearsed understandings of racism, they chose to focus back on a familiar understanding of racism—one in which individuals with racial biases and hatred (i.e. "the racists") perpetuate its existence. They hold on to the importance of the *label itself*—that there are some people who are racist and they are the only ones deserving of such associations with racism. Of course, students disagreed on who is worthy of such a label, but nonetheless they were invested in the label itself. In addition to being so rehearsed, there is an affective component to the knowledge formation of "racism as individual prejudice."

Erotic and paranoid energies encourage students to re-rehearse that understanding, reinscribing its discursive legibility and make it "stick[56]" for students.

Sharon Holland (2012) defines "the erotic life of racism" as an economy of feelings that glues structural relationships in place through quotidian practices. More specifically, racism is reproduced through an economy of desires—wanting something from another in order to define the self (e.g., wanting privileged one-way access to the other, desiring recognition of humanity, wishing for a time after race). These desires—and the pleasures they ostensibly promise—reflect historically-frozen ideas of race from the past; and in turn, the pursuit of fulfilling those desires reproduces those frozen meanings of race in the present. The conversation cited above exemplifies the desire for historically-frozen meanings of race. The students who spoke, save Zoe, had a desire to understand "real" racism as quintessentially tied to memories of an imagined past. In this imagined past[57], racism was a disease of the heart and mind that infected white people, causing them, as individuals, to wreak havoc on individuals of color. Our typical narratives teach that both the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement served as triumphant cures to this disease, collective

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[56] I borrow the verb "stick" for this purpose from Ahmed (2004). For Ahmed, the paired circulation of particular feelings, ideas, and objects create "grooves" as they recirculate together, encouraging them to keep circulating together, and eventually to "stick" to one another. She uses the example of bears and fear to illustrate this idea. People are taught to fear bears but because the association between bears and fears is so common, people eventually think of fear as inherent to bears rather than something taught to them. Fear "sticks" to bears.

[57] I refer to this equation between past forms of racism and racial prejudice as "imagined" in order to account for the structural and institutional scaffolding of racism that is misremembered when older forms of racism are remembered in terms of bigotry, hatred, prejudice, and discrimination of and between individuals.

efforts that mostly wiped out an old way of thinking and feeling. Individual, intentional prejudices today are considered instances of willful ignorance, a stubborn attachment to old ways of thinking (Petersen 2011). Eng & Han (2003) argue that white racial identity is formed through a desire to forget racism of the past and Bonilla-Silva (2003: 79) finds that whites desire a time outside of racism, and that imagining racism as a thing of the past—specifically as slavery—fulfills that desire. In the conversation above, white students definitely dominated the conversation and equated "real racists" as individuals espousing old beliefs, but the students of color who talked also focused their comments on the label "racist," calling it outdated for the same reasons. Sharon Holland (2012) argues that both blacks and whites participate in disavowing during race talk in US. She describes this disavowal as a desire to be elsewhere, and thus an inability to truly be with what is: "Race talk always wants to be somewhere else: beyond black and white ("Can't we all get along?"); beyond the self ("I'm not a racist, but"); beyond the situation ("I wanted to say something, but") (Holland 2012:32).

These desires and disavowals make one slice of their repertoire—the part that understands racism as the possession of individuals—louder, clearer, and more legible. When we consider the ubiquity of racial erotics that Holland describes, the legibility of more nuanced and complex understandings (e.g., Wachtel's argument that whites are indifferent and ignorant and thus consciously ignore, justify, and/or participate in practices that reproduce racial inequality) cannot compete with simpler ideas and the feelings those simpler ideas fulfill or alleviate. Well-intentioned white

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responsibility and complicity in racism is lost in the fray. The collective memory and images of bigoted white racist agents resonate and hold our attention, and as Holland writes: "We often only have eyes for the spectacularity of racist practice, not everyday machinations that we in turn have some culpability in" (2012:27).

In the conversation described above, the label "racist" holds importance for students and they attach to it because it provides a sense of safety through definitive knowing—racism can be located in and blamed on a relatively small group of people hell-bent on its continuity. By condemning "the racists," students can feel like they are doing their part in undoing racism; they can rest assured that they are on the good side of history and they can avoid thinking through the messy, everyday moments where they may be, or have been, called upon to act in some way to confront racism. Understandings of racism that locate it in impersonal institutional policies and practices, ideas, quotidian interactions, feelings, or any combination of the former do not simply place blame and project uneasy feelings of responsibility on an easy target. More complex understandings implicate well-intentioned people (white and of color) in the (unknowing and unintended) reproduction of racism. These understandings can be quite anxiety-provoking in their uncertainty—racism is everywhere at once and yet hard to pinpoint and immediately resist.

This anxiety reflects and is amplified by the existence of racial paranoia. John Jackson (2010) explains that "racial paranoia," or the uneasy sense of suspecting racism without being able to confirm it, is a public feeling that has pervaded race talk in the US since the Civil Rights Movement made overt racist speech taboo and

shameful. Jackson argues that the continuation of racism in the US despite this taboo

leads Blacks to look carefully at white speech acts for indications of racist beliefs and

attitudes. Whites, according to Jackson, are scared of being seen as racist and thus

choose not to talk candidly about race in the company of people of color[58]. Jackson

argues that the ultimate source of paranoia is whites' ability to conceal their "de-

cardio" racism, or racism that lives in hearts and minds. Jackson is then defining

racism, in part, as individual prejudice as well.

While I very much agree that whites are often afraid of the racism embedded

in their own beliefs, I also think that racial paranoia has epistemological

consequences that affect both whites and people of color. "Racism without racists[59]"

is anxiety-provoking because it implicates everyone and everything, making racism

into a massive problem that can't be simply shamed away. An understanding racism

as individual prejudice makes racism both easier to locate and easier to police, and

that's appealing to both whites and people of color. Fear selects simplicity, and

therefore "racism as individual prejudice" becomes the most desirable knowledge

formation in the repertoire. In the conversation described above, most white students

avoided talking about the ignorance and indifference, and when considering the

feelings that accompany such understandings, I think whites return to individual

prejudice of "real racists" because 1) ignorance and indifference implicate them in

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[58] Gaertner & Dovidio (2005) also find that many whites with unacknowledged biases actively avoid all interactions with people of color beyond casual small talk. They call this avoidance "aversive racism."

[59] This is the title of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's (2006) book that troubles individualized understandings of racism in colorblind ideologies.

racism even when they don't intend racism, 2) ignorance and indifference are hard to

see in oneself (e.g., how do you learn to recognize what you don't know, don't see, or

don't already care about?), 3) that unknown entity provokes anxiety, and 4) ignorance

and indifference are both shameful (e.g., ignorance is a common diagnosis for the

beliefs of "real racists" and indifference suggests a cold lack of care and concern).

All of these emotionally-laden concerns, fueled by public feelings of racial erotics

and racial paranoia, lead students, both white and of color, to reselect the felt

understanding of racism as individual, intentional prejudice from their repertoires.

In traditional classrooms: racial difference as binary categories

In addition to reselecting the felt understanding of racism as individual,

intentional prejudice, students in the traditional classrooms also readily understood

difference in binarily-opposed categories of oppressor and oppressed (e.g., whites and

people of color, men and women, heterosexual and homosexual). I will first describe

what that selection from their repertoires looked like and how it affected their

understandings of power, inequality, and intersectionality. Next, I will discuss how

pedagogical practices, emotional cultures, and public feelings of race encourage

students to keep selecting that understanding of race (and other forms of difference)

from their repertoire.

When students relied on binary categories, they understood difference's

unevenness of power as a series of static hierarchical couplings, wherein privileged

subjects have complete power. For example, during discussion one student defined

heterosexism as "when heterosexuals dominate non-heterosexuals and try to make them feel bad." During another discussion, the students' dialogue showed an implicit definition of gender based on an absolute power hierarchy. Specifically, they were discussing a sitcom skit where a man pled with his girlfriend to have sex and she rejected him. Despite the fact that this was a humorous enactment of a negotiation that sexually-active couples of all orientations regularly engage in, and moreover, that the man asked for consent without manipulation and that the woman rejected him with both confidence and humor, the students labeled the skit sexist because it perpetuated stereotypes about "men wanting sex" and "women being sex objects." No one commented on the individual agency of the woman, nor the collective agency produced by norms of consensual sex. The only debate the students engaged in was whether this particular skit was "as bad" as other sexist skits on TV. Sam, the instructor, asked them to get out of the habit of reducing their analyses to "this is good" and "this is bad." Despite his direction, many students began to talk over one another about various shows that were more or less sexist, settling on the show *Guy Code* as "the worst."

In terms of racial difference, students often collapse that difference into a whites-people of color binary, wherein whites are labeled as oppressors and people of color as oppressed. At times, this collapsing of difference into a binary makes sense for articulating uneven power because specific racisms (i.e., anti-Blackness, Orientalism, settler colonialism) all normalize and uphold notions of white supremacy and material forms of white privilege (Smith 2012). However, students used this

binary even when discussion revolved around a specific form of racism or a particular

group's experiences. For example, when discussing articles on particular group

experiences (e.g., Asian women, young Black men), the students often referred to the

subjects of the article as "people of color" rather than the specific group referenced in

the article, and thus generalized the findings for all people of color, or more

frequently, all women of color. When students overlay the white-people of color

binary with the oppressor-oppressed binary, they understand that whites have

absolute power and people of color have very little or none, and thus racism is only

reproduced by white agents. Sarah, one of the core instructors, emphasized this a lot,

saying things like, "I'm in the camp that only white people can be racist" and "White

people set racism up, so it's our responsibility to change it."[60]

Students regularly pulled that binary understanding of racial difference from

their repertoire, and even when trying to make sense of racism between people of

color. For example, after screening a dramatic reenactment of a Latino ICE agent

raiding an undocumented Latino family's house, one student said, "I hope this doesn't

offend anyone, but it's like white people put races against each other." The wording

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[60] This wording troubles me because it seems to place all agency with whites and
deny it to people of color, despite the existence social movements led by people of
color to change racist policies and practices. Some students even understand that the
point of their learning about racism's history is so that, in the words of one student,
white people "don't repeat atrocities." Sarah intended the wording to draw attention
to racist structure—whiteness as an unmarked racial category and the institutional
policies and practices that confer privilege on those marked by that category. But
because students readily think of "being racist" as overtly expressing and practicing
racial malice or prejudice—an orientation none of them willingly claim—they had a
hard time understanding that she was trying to emphasize racist structure more than
individual actions.

of this comment shows that the student had potential to understand racism in less binary ways, that its structure offers bargains to people in exchange for not seeing commonalities. Trying to pull that understanding out, Lilian, the instructor, repeated something I heard her say multiple times throughout the quarter: "It's way more complicated than just white people oppressing people of color. It's more complicated." She then directed them to think about the social construction of legality and citizenship, as well as the concept of hegemony, trying to help them see how power is exerted through institutional policies and practices, and as such, Latinos can enact and enforce racist state policies and practices against other Latinos. Even though the students were invited to think about race in this more complicated way, they had trouble reconciling such examples with their binary understandings.

Because students pulled binary understandings from their repertoires, they also struggled with articulating the existence of different types of racisms (e.g., anti-Black racism, Orientalism, settler colonialism (Smith 2012)), the relationality of different forms of racism to each other and white supremacy, and race's interlocking formation with gender, sexuality, and class[61]. To push students towards more complex understandings of difference and power, the core instructors organized the curriculum around intersectionality—a paradigm for analyzing difference and inequality that meant to disrupt the supposed cohesiveness of racial categories and show their instability when simultaneously considering gender, sexuality, class,

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[61] My reading of students' understandings is based off of my methods (classroom observations, surveys, and interviews), and thus limited, since I did not read their papers.

religion, ability, etc. (The Combahee River Collective 1977, Davis 1981, Anzaldúa &
Moraga 1987, Crenshaw 1991, Anzaldúa 1999, Hill Collins 2000). However, doing
so proved very challenging as students continually tried to fit intersectionality within
a binary frame and thus missed its destabilizing critique.

For example, I saw this difficulty with conceptualizing relationality and
intersectionality in a discussion of an Audre Lorde poem, "Who Said It Was Simple."
Lorde's poetic works were central to the development of women of color feminisms
and Black feminist thought (Collins 2000). When asked to describe the poem's
meaning, two students suggested "everyone oppresses everyone" and "we're all
fucked." The rest of the class erupted in laughter. Lilian, the instructor, smiled and
cleverly asked, "but are we all fucked in the same way?" "No!" they resoundingly
called out, continuing to laugh. One student, Leon, didn't laugh and instead earnestly
tried to understand the meaning of intersectionality, asking if the poem was trying to
say that "feminism was wrong because it says that men have all the power." Lilian
explained that his question indicated that he was trying to understand through judging
feminism as good or bad, and that they were trying to just understand what was going
on without judgment. She added, "Lorde's idea is that even though we're oppressed,
we can sometimes oppress others." Several students still expressed confusion and
asked for examples. Renee, another student, offered the example of the slave and
slave master: "the white man oppresses slave men, so not all men are oppressors,
some are oppressed." Other students nodded showing some understanding.

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This conversation illustrates how students tried to "do sociology" well (i.e., describing and explaining uneven power and inequality) by using the analytical frames that we present them with (e.g., race, gender, class, feminism). But when they understood those frames as binarily opposed categories of oppressor and oppressed, they struggled to understand a nuanced explanation of power—intersectionality. In so doing, they assigned absolute power to one side of the binary (i.e., oppressor, oppressed, black, white, men, women) and thus had trouble seeing the instability and pliability of categories, as well as the contradictions and situatedness of power. To maintain their binary knowledge formation, they either disregarded categories all together in favor of a power-neutral understanding of intersectionality (i.e., "everyone oppresses everyone" and "we're all fucked") or they disregarded one form of power in order to capture another form of power (i.e., disregarding gender in the slave-slave master example in order to understand the power of race).

In another class, the instructor Sam tried to explain intersectionality, but the students had trouble understanding it outside of binary thinking. He split the class into two groups—one that stayed with him for a lecture and one that interpreted the college's murals with Tara, the course assistant. In his lecture, Sam explained the history of identity politics in the 1960s and how those led to the emergence of women of color feminisms and the concept of intersectionality. He explained that Lorde's poem ("Who Said It Was Simple") also emerged from that intellectual and activist tradition and that it called attention to the problem of "either/or identity movements," as well as adding oppressions together to define the experiences of women of color.

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He continued, explaining that "categories become a problem," and that Lorde was advocating for new way of thinking about difference that didn't replicate top-bottom and domination-submission models. Students took notes and seemed to listen carefully. As he finished up the lecture, the students packed up and went outside with Tara to tour the college's murals—artwork that commemorates the collective struggles and activists after whom each of the dorms were named. When Tara asked them to interpret the meanings of each mural, I was struck by how little they incorporated of the lecture that they just took careful notes on. Their comments only drew attention to one form of power, not multiple ones, even though the symbols in the murals indicated issues of race, gender, and (sometimes) sexuality. When we walked back into the classroom, the high level of energy in the room struck me. Sam and the other half of the students were engaged in a loud debate about the same lecture he had just given again. Multiple students talked at once, adding comments about how "it's human nature to dominate others" and that there are always "top and bottom dogs." Even though they were repeatedly exposed to an understanding that destabilized binaries, they kept reselecting a binary understanding form their repertoires. Moreover, they excitedly defended the binary, top-down understandings, indicating an affective investment in those understandings.

As the quarter progressed, many students understood intersectionality as multiple forms of oppression, but their interpretation of intersectionality was limited by an understanding of power in terms of binary categories. Some call this common move the "additive" model of intersectionality (i.e., they tried to account for multiple

forms of power by adding the effects of power of seemingly separate and coherent

categories). For example, students often referred to women of color as experiencing

"double jeopardy"—oppression from racism and sexism. They imagined an actual

intersection, much like the overlapping portion of a Venn diagram, as the definition

of a more specific category (e.g., working-class Latinas, white men) and reassigned

the seeming cohesiveness of race to its overlap with gender (e.g., making Black

women as a cohesive intersectional category). They also tended to rank the

overlapping categories according to relative oppression, a tendency that Hancock

(2011) calls "the Oppression Olympics." For example, I overheard a small group

discussion where students claimed that Asian women did not have it "as bad" as

Black women because they had higher class status. Whereas the founding scholars

meant for intersectionality to trouble the simplicity of the oppressor-oppressed binary,

students regularly propagated more detailed oppressor-oppressor binary categories in

the name of intersectionality[62]. Intersectionality, when understood as the theoretical

basis for super-categories, preserves the fixity, specificity, and certainty of older

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[62] One instructor, Nora, worked intentionally with the students' binary understandings
of difference in order to shift their understanding towards more nuanced
understandings of power. She had students fill in tables for each system of
oppression, with the columns "non-target," "oppression," "target," and "internalized
oppression." Her purpose, which she repeated often to students, was to get them to
think from "multiple frames of reference" and "as an ally" so that they could
investigate each system of oppression from perspectives of those targeted and not
targeted by them. As a result, students saw contradictions in power, their perceptual
blind spots, and their complicity in producing some forms of inequality. They still
understood difference in terms of binary categories, but because they were looking at
them from multiple perspectives at once, they did not make the conceptual leap
toward ranking oppressions that I witnessed in the other classes.

monolithic categories of race, gender, and class[63]. Students' reselection of rigid

binaries from their repertoires regularly surprised me because they also regularly

criticized representations of particular groups as being stereotypical (and thus

adhering to narrow, rigid definitions), saying things like "not all Latinas are cholas"

or "Asians are always good at math and I'm sick of hearing that." Those criticisms of

stereotypical representations show that students have the *capacity* and *desire* to think

about race in less rigid, more complex, and in short, non-categorical ways. Yet, they

kept reselecting binary understandings. Why?

One possible explanation as to why students return to binary categorical

understanding of racial difference—as well as its accompanying additive version of

intersectionality—is their cognitive development. Many traditional-aged college

students (18-22) are in a developmental stage where they cannot cognitively grapple

with concepts that are not literally and figuratively black and white (Lindemann &

Anderson 2001, Bean 2011). However, if that were the only factor, Rainbow students

would also have relied on categorical knowledge, and as I will show later, they did

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[63] Other scholars have pointed out this super-categorical deployment of intersectionality in both academia and the non-profit sector. Jane Ward (2008) writes that this fixed categorical understanding of intersectionality has become widely used in both sociology and women's studies, as well as in the non-profit sector where neoliberal philanthropy encourages intersectional super-categories because they can be understood as "shared—and therefore predictable and commodifiable—group experiences, political needs, and consumer preferences" (43). Not only does this intersectional category framework reify the naturalness of race, gender, and sexuality, but it also re-centers white women as the norm and "produces an Other, and that Other is always a Woman of Color (WOC) who must invariably be shown to be resistant, subversive, and articulating a grievance" (Puar 2013:374).

not[64]. There is a strong affective component undergirding the traditional classroom student's investment in and reliance on categorical understandings of race, and moreover, their classroom practices and emotional cultures encourage students to reselect those understandings from their repertoires.

First, categorical understandings of race can facilitate coping with racial paranoia and aversive racism. As I argued in earlier chapters, the emotional culture of the traditional classrooms, as well as their focus on academic arguments, encourages students to say the right thing in the right way, and in so doing amplifies racial paranoia in the classroom. John Jackson (2010) argues that whites and Blacks feel different types of racial paranoia: Blacks worry about white "racist wolves in sheep's clothing" (81) and whites worry that they will be labeled as racist (Gaertner & Dovidio's (2005) work on aversive racism also confirms the latter). Accordingly, whites heavily censor what they say in multicultural settings to avoid such labeling. Although Jackson argues that this latter form of paranoia corresponds with white practice, both whites and people of color survey respondents reported this kind of censoring (and the worry about "saying the wrong thing" applies to topics of race, gender, and sexuality). When race is understood as a category with definitive boundaries and meanings, students can more easily decipher what kinds of comments might be interpreted as racist, and what kinds of comments will be readily recognized

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[64] Moreover, if cognitive development was the cause for categorical thinking, we would not expect to see students taking up and proliferating ideas about gender fluidity and queer sexualities. At UCSC, those terms are commonly used.

as non-racist or anti-racist[65]. Therefore, because racial paranoia creates an erotic

desire to be recognized by others as non-racist (or non-sexist, non-homophobic),

racial paranoia also produces an erotic desire for racial meanings that are simple,

certain, and bounded. In other words, categorical understandings of race make it

easier to figure out what "the right things" to know about race are, and what the right

scripts to rehearse are. As such, categorical understandings are pleasurable because

their simplicity allows for certainty and an avoidance of scrutiny. This is a typical

manifestation of aversive racism—avoiding any actions or thoughts that may

implicate one as prejudiced (Gaertner & Dovidio 2005). Racial paranoia and aversive

racism encourage students to pull categorical understandings from their repertoires in

order to cope with that paranoia and aversion. They are *felt* understandings.

Moreover, these felt understandings hinder students from fully understanding and

collectively discussing more nuanced or ambiguous meanings of race—meanings that

reflect the complexities of race as a sociohistorical construct—and thus hamper

sociological learning objectives.

Other public feelings about race also influence why students kept pulling

categorical understandings of race from their repertoires; in particular, categorical

understandings can serve as an attachment point for "racial melancholia" (Cheng

2001). Like Gordon's (2008) notion of haunting, Cheng (2001) explains that racial

melancholia has developed because of the US's failed attempts to fully address and

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[65] I make the distinction between "non-racist" and "anti-racist" here to mark the
difference between behaviors that help people avoid the label of "racist" and those
that specifically mark people as being actively involved in dismantling racism.

heal racial wounds. This failure is due (in part) to the cultural and legal assumption that collective grief (in its highly personalized and ineffable forms) can be transformed into concrete grievances and, ostensibly, litigated away. But, as Cheng argues, "grief" and "grievance" are not synonymous terms and thus the grief of collective wounds can never be truly healed by legally addressing grievances. Racial melancholia emerges from that gap, and refers to the collective and permanent identification with loss and wounding (i.e., of full humanity, equality, or inclusion). In addition to identification with loss, Cheng (2001) also describes racial melancholia as a despondent worldview (at least in terms of race) that develops when collective grief continues to resurface—unhealed—and hauntingly attaches to contemporary cultural forms. This despondent worldview came through when students suggested that intersectionality meant that "everyone oppresses everyone" and "we're all fucked." I also saw melancholia reflected in students' reduction of American colonial history to "it's just human nature to hate people" and "there's always a top dog."

Like the gap between grief and grievance from which melancholia emerges, there is an affectively-rich gap between students' experiences of race and the academic arguments around which conversations about race in traditional classrooms are based (i.e., discussion of institutional policies, practices, and representations that (re)produce particular racial formations). There is a loss there, a miss from which melancholia re-emerges and attaches. Melancholia's identification with loss pairs well with categorical understandings of race, and when classrooms do not attend to that loss (because they focus on cold institutional policies and practices), students

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search their repertoires for understandings of race that do articulate loss. When understood as a category, race seemingly has definitive, knowable parameters. And since categories imply clear boundaries and order, the complexity, uncertainty, and messiness of constantly changing racial formations, subjectivities, and meanings get reduced to the first common denominator—the original wound, the wounded, and the wounders (e.g., the student's continual use of oppressor and oppressed even after being reminded that it's more complicated than those terms, or Sarah's comment that "white people set up racism so it's our responsibility to change it"). Even when discussing contemporary racial formations, students often use categorical understandings of race that display this frozen definition of racism. For example, when discussing a Winona LaDuke article on the current use of Native American mascots and commodification of indigenous cultures, the students focused their discussion on a small portion of the text, an aside, where LaDuke references European settlers' introduction of alcohol into Native American communities. Rather than discussing the main topic of the article—a practice that they may be immediately implicated in—they chose to talk about an original wounding.

Holland (2012), building off findings from Bonilla-Silva (2006), argues that this frozen definition of race is reinforced by a common white practice of equating racism with slavery, a racist ordering that "arrests time rather than attests to its futurity" (19). I did not observe this frozen definition of racism-as-slavery, but I did notice students continually returning to a white oppressor-oppressed people of color binary, one frozen at the beginnings of colonialism. Holland (2012) refers to

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historically-frozen definitions of racism as erotic. Although I do not clearly see

Holland's tie between the erotic and frozen definitions of race, the concept of racial

melancholia offers some suggestions. Accordingly, when racial grief persists without

reconciliation, we keep returning to what has never been truly and collectively

addressed nor resolved, and we look to others to heal those original wounds (through

recognition, inclusion, forgiveness, reconciliation, etc.). Because the emotional

cultures of traditional classrooms discourage students from articulating that loss in

language or emoting in ways that express it, and because the inequality measures we

use gesture towards loss but don't name it directly, loss continues to circulate

unnamed and drives students to look for understandings in their repertoires that can

attend to those feelings. Categorical understandings of race, because they are defined

through clear, original wounding relationships, label that loss, and then dovetail with

racial melodrama to allow for both feeling that loss and locating responsibility for it.

The oppressor-oppressed binary in students' repertoires can also allow them to

attend to feelings of race because it mirrors a longer tradition of black-white

melodramas in the US (Williams 2001). Williams (2001) argues that American mass

culture has continually relied upon the "elastic mode" melodrama to understand race

and grapple with its moral dilemmas—"leaping" between fiction, film, theater, and

news. I also see it "leaping" to students' application and manipulation of academic

knowledge. Black-white melodramas deploy a "Manichaean logic of good and evil"

(William 2001:299), call upon sentimentality to generate sympathies and antipathies,

and condense changing and interlocking racial formations (and the complicated,

affectively flat institutional policies and practices that constitute them) into neat

categories of individual victims and villains that keep reproducing frozen racial

relations (e.g., the beaten Black man, the threatened white woman[66]). Black-white

melodramas have emerged in times of great social upheaval, promise to make sense

of rapidly changing and confusing social landscapes, and "articulat[e] truth and virtue

at precisely those junctures where truth and virtue are most vexed" (Williams

2001:300). Therefore, in addition to allowing students to attend to feelings of racial

loss, melodramatic themes cleanly comprehend rapidly changing social landscapes

with both their heads and hearts. As they try to make sense of great "ambiguities of

race[67]" in the 21st century (Holt 2000), students substitute a white-people of

color/oppressor-oppressed melodrama for the more traditional black-white ones. So,

while the categorical understandings temporarily relieve uncomfortable feelings that

come with ambiguity, melancholia, and paranoia, they also reinforce those feelings by

reasserting a clear, dualistic conflict.

    The white-people of color/oppressor-oppressed melodrama also has an erotic

pull to it because, as simplified as it is, it offers to recognize the continual impact of

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[66] In American black-white melodrama, black visibility and virtue are only legible
through suffering, and white virtue is always tied to black suffering (whether it's a
case of white women's supposed virtue serving as the justification for white violence
against black men, or the white virtue of "saving" the injured black body).
[67] For example, the simultaneity of the Obama presidency, disproportionate mass
incarceration of African Americans, racialized achievement gaps, racialized and
gendered pay gaps, Black Lives Matter movement, rampant anti-Mexican and anti-
immigrant sentiment, widespread Islamophobia, 99% rhetoric, Tea Party
proliferation, trans- awareness and phobia, etc.

racism on people of color and the continual privileges and supremacy granted to whiteness. This recognition seems especially important in a time where mainstream media stubbornly debates whether or not white privilege or a post-race state exists. Continuing to debate these facts is itself a blow to recognition, but the melodramatic binary offers witness and recognition (of suffering[68]). It makes sense then that students who wholeheartedly disagree with the notion of a post-race nation (as all the students in sociology class asserted) and who are preoccupied with offending anyone (as the majority of students in both core and sociology classes expressed in class, interviews, and surveys), would pull out the melodramatic binary from their repertoire and invest in it as a counter-move to rampant colorblind racism in media and popular culture.

When students are exposed to new knowledge, they build their new understandings off of what they already know (Jensen 2008, Zull 2002), and thus they use the affective-discursive repertoires they already have in order to interpret and incorporate new academic knowledge of race. I think that they unconsciously return to historically-frozen meanings and select categorical understandings from their repertoires because the recirculation of unresolved grief continues to haunt them and they want some sort of moral guidance in how to ethically resolve feelings of loss,

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[68] Racial melodrama also reflects broader patterns in the US of seeking recognition and making citizenship claims through injury and victimhood (Berlant 1997, Cheng 2001, Williams 2001). As Berlant (2000) writes: "[Sentimentality] operates when relatively privileged national subjects are exposed to the suffering of their intimate Others, so that to be virtuous requires feeling the pain of flawed or denied citizenship as their own pain" (in Williams 2001:43).

despondence, pain, and anger (e.g., the above examples where students kept returning to thinking in terms of good and bad). Social constructivist theories of race, and racial formation theory in particular (Omi & Winant 1994), ask students to understand race as a phenomenon that has been slowly constructed through time, with some older meanings and practices falling away, some recirculating, and newer ones emerging from changing contexts. These theories can and do obliquely attend to haunting and melancholia (i.e., that there's a little of the old imbedded in the new (Holt 2000), that there are legacies and logics of the past that reappear and reconfigure in the present (Smith 2012)). However, the rhetorical devises and methods (i.e., historical comparison of case studies) we use to teach these theories rely upon a linear notion of time and locate race in disembodied policies, cold institutional practices, and representations (Omi & Winant 1994); and like the importance placed upon grievances in the legal system, individual and collective feelings exceed those policies, practices, and representations. When race's unresolved feelings (e.g., grief, loss, anger, ressentiment[69]) and erotic energies (i.e., desires for recognition, inclusion, forgiveness, reconciliation) are not attended to intellectually (i.e., not directly and fully theorized and discussed in their academic texts and lectures), students unconsciously heed them by selecting a concept from

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[69] *Ressentiment* is a concept taken from Nietzsche that refers to "the moralizing revenge of the powerless" (Brown 1993:400) and melodrama often deploys it (Williams 2001).

their repertoires that can help them grapple with that missing feeling: the oppressor-oppressed binary[70].

In the introduction to this study, I established that our problems in communicating about race often result from *how* we have those conversations rather than a lack of conversations. Similarly, Holland (2012) argues that coming together is not the key to bridging differences and divides; more often, coming together reproduces older frozen ideas of racial difference. When students understand their racial subjectivity according to frozen oppressor-oppressed categories, they undermine their coalitional potential for anti-racist practice. As Holland (2012) writes: "When we make claims for ourselves and others as racialized beings we invariably put an end to connection and therefore reproduce the very difference that we seek to ameliorate" (27). While Rainbow students occasionally use categorical understandings of race, they more readily understand it as culture or community, an understanding that allows them to develop a more nuanced understanding of race and to imagine and invest in coalitions.

In Rainbow: race as culture and community

"Black people were not [Ida B. Wells'] mass, her mob, her public, her population, or a statistical collection of potential lynching victims—they were

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[70] Of course, there are theoretical and political dilemmas that result from this return to oppressor-oppressed binary. Holland (2013) suggests that our use of oppressor-oppressed categories reinforces racial difference, even when we try to challenge the ties between power and difference through deconstructive theorizing or political practice. Moreover, that binary further entrenches past pain in present identity politics, fosters *ressentiment,* and undermines the ability to imagine and work towards a future "that triumphs over this pain" (Brown 1993:406).

her community. Emboldened by community commitment, Wells-Barnett dared to speak the forbidden and go where she was unwelcome. In her work, we see the power of deep feelings wedded to social justice agendas, as well as a bona fide commitment to a widening of the civic space that might enable neighborhoods and nations to move beyond coexistence to interdependent living." – Patricia Hill Collins (2009)

Using "culture" and "community" as capacious terms

While observing Rainbow, I was struck by how many times I heard students use the terms "culture" and "community," and how little they used the terms "race" or "racial." When students invoked "culture" and "community," they did so to refer to many different groupings—racial groups, ethnic groups, subcultures, working-class neighborhoods, and themselves: the Rainbow class and "family" to which they all belonged. Sometimes those groups seemed to map neatly onto one another and at other times not so much. Even though students used "culture" and "community" to refer to all of these different groups, students rarely used other descriptive words to specify who belonged or was included in the "culture" or "community" to which they referred. As such, they were mostly capacious, floating signifiers. Even the "the Rainbow community," which derived much of its meaning from its distinction from the rest of UCSC, was a rather capacious term in that it referred to past, present, and *future* Rainbow students yet to join. In the following sections of the chapter on Rainbow's felt understandings, I will describe Rainbow's uses of "culture" and "community" and then explain why students repeatedly selected that felt understanding from their affective-discursive repertoires. I will conclude with several sections on the coalition- and community-building effects that resulted from the

combination of those felt understandings, collaborative storytelling pedagogy, and realness culture.

Even though students were talking about race constantly in Rainbow, I only observed three conversations where someone used the term "race" or "racial" specifically. Instead, they regularly used the terms "culture" and/or "community" to refer to race, directly or obliquely. For example, when discussing whether or not to use colorblind casting in a particular play, one student said that the advantage of doing so would be "bringing in more cultures," even though what he meant was that the actor did not need to visually represent a character with a particular racial identity. The terms "culture" and "community" are not only used in discussions, they are also used in the official Rainbow literature. Of the seven performances that Rainbow produces each fall, three of the six performances[71] are specific to racially-identified groups in the US—African-Americans, Chican@/Latin@s, and Asian-Americans (or what one student referred to as "the basic food groups"). On its website, Rainbow describes each of these plays as focusing on the "social, cultural, spiritual, and community issues that are affecting the [African American, Chicano/Latino, or Asian American] community." Quite commonly in their discussions, Mr. Taylor and Rainbow students said that Rainbow's power was in telling and hearing stories about "our cultures," "learning about other cultures," and "connecting with other cultures."

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[71] The other four performances are specifically multicultural and multiracial—two spoken word poetry troupes (Poet's Corner and Outreach), a dance troupe (The Rainbots), and a multicultural play troupe (5th Element). Two other multicultural and multiracial teams technologically support the performance pieces—Tech Crew and Rainbow TV.

In many of those instances, students use the terms "culture" or "community" as a synonym for a racial or ethnic group, such as "the Black community" or "the Filipino community." Also, when discussing a play on school shootings, the students (white and of color) talked about the shooters arising from the toxicity of "white culture" and masculinity.

While some uses of "culture" or "community" were proxies for either "race" or "ethnicity" (which allowed students to discuss the particularities of certain racial formations and experiences), other instantiations were more capacious, malleable, and blurry. For example, I heard multiple conversations where students toggled back and forth between different uses of "my community"—referring to race or ethnicity in one moment and then their mixed hometown neighborhood in another. Moreover, students often said that Rainbow was "our community" and a safe space for discussing issues in "our communities." Given that a great majority of students in Rainbow were students of color, the use of "our communities" often worked as a stand-in for the term "communities of color," and especially when Rainbow students contrasted Rainbow (as a space for people of color) with UCSC (as a white-dominated and hostile school for students of color).

Even so, the equation with "our communities" and "communities of color" was a fuzzy one because white students, albeit not many, actively participated in Rainbow. In the year I observed, almost every cast had at least one white member and "tech crew" had several white members. In other years, I've noticed that several white students also served in leadership roles where they represented Rainbow in

public settings such as high school visits or emcees for Rainbow performances. In a Rainbow promotional video that showed footage of a protest aimed at keeping Rainbow funded, one of the speakers featured was a white person who spoke passionately about the need to provide a place on campus where students could share stories from and give voice to "our communities." Students of color at the protest cheered after that speech. Therefore, "our communities" does not map neatly onto "communities of color;" whites can be included in that grouping, but not as unquestionably as students of color. For example, I did witness several moments in rehearsals where whites representing "our communities" was contested. One example involved the critique of a white Rainbots dance team member. While most students of color who gave critiques praised her performance as, among other words, "dazzling," I also overheard a few students wondering if her dancing was culturally appropriative. In another example, a white student actor played a character who was a recent Mexican immigrant with a thick accent. Because the white actor couldn't do the accent well, she rehearsed all of her lines with her own, Standard English-speaking voice. During the critique, several students of color in the audience said that they "just didn't believe" her performance and I overheard many comments about the poor casting call. These were the only instances where I saw Rainbow students actively negotiating who belonged within the communities being represented in their performances. Most other uses of those terms were mostly vague, and the students did not seem concerned about the lack of definition. Thus, what "our communities" referred to was not clearly cut. In contrast to racial categories that have clearer

boundaries that mark membership, the terms "culture" and "community" were much more fuzzy signifiers. Their meanings were less certain and existed in a space between knowing and not knowing, definition and lack thereof.

Despite their lack of specificity, the terms "culture" and "community" still *meant* a lot to students, in both senses of the word (i.e., the terms had both broad linguistic significance and heartfelt significance). But despite how much attachment students had to these terms, they did not use a lot of specific language to define the parameters of that meaning. Instead, there was a sense that everyone knew what was being referred to, a "something" meaningful rather than an empty, catch-all term. Some scholars criticize the term "community" because of its lack of definition and the way that it is deployed in neoliberal multicultural discourses to flatten power differences, ignore collective injury, and reduce racial inequality to "cultural" factors (Ahmed 2012, Duggan 2003, Gordon & Newfield 1996, Mamdani 2004, Ward 2008). But when Rainbow students used "community," they did so to refer to a critical "something" that resembled a racial sincerity politics more than racial authenticity politics (Jackson 2005). While authenticity politics is an objectifying process that works to narrowly define the boundaries of a racial community through use of the particular signs, sincerity politics refers to less definitive, more felt cultural politics that still articulates racial subjectivity and belonging. In other words, authenticity politics adjudicates "a realness verifiable by the eye" (Jackson 2005:195) while "sincerity's math is mystical" (227)—referring to cultural politics of realness that is felt, ambiguous, and unverifiable exchanges. When Rainbow students used "culture"

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or "community," they too were referring to "something" real, shared, and felt, but not something easily definable nor observable. Like sincerity politics, some of that ambiguity and fuzziness in Rainbow's "culture" and "community" came from students' inabilities to see inside one another, something I will discuss below in terms of complex personhood (Gordon 1997) and active subjectivity (Lugones 2010). But Rainbow students' reluctance to clearly define and label "community" also came from an inability of all of us to "see" and "observe" the social conditions that simultaneously exist above, in between, inside, and through individual bodies. In the following sections, I aim to describe the social that students in Rainbow are getting at when they use the fuzzy terms of "culture" and "community"—a complex picture, from their triangulated vantage points, of intersectionality, complex personhood, active subjectivity.

Using "community" enunciated understandings of complex personhood

The students' selection of "culture" and "community" stemmed from Rainbow's realness culture and collaborative storytelling practices. Under these circumstances, students continually reselected this felt understanding because it allowed them to articulate more "real" experiences of race in their stories. What the students called "real" mirrors what Gordon (1997) calls "complex personhood." Accordingly, complex personhood offers the "respect that comes from presuming that life and people's lives are simultaneously straightforward and full of enormously subtle meaning" (Gordon 1997:5) and acknowledges that people "remember and

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forget, are beset by contradiction, and recognize and misrecognize themselves and others" (Gordon 1997:4). These are the subtleties and nuances that students wanted to articulate in their storytelling, and "culture" or "community" gave them more space to get at that messiness than the more rigid boundaries of categorical understandings that defined race and explained its relationship to power in more definitive ways (e.g., oppression, injury, harm, domination). Similarly, "culture" and "community" helped students articulate "active subjectivity" (Lugones 2010) in that they accounted for subjectivity beyond the binary understandings of victim-victimizer and oppressed-oppressor that only define racial subjectivity in terms of one-way racial subjection. Therefore, even though the terms "culture" and "community" have less precise definition than categorical understandings of race, their blurriness does not mean that they are less sophisticated understandings of race; on the contrary, these fuzzy terms can generate more "accurate" accounts of racial subjectivity. Like racial sincerity politics (Jackson 2005), Rainbow's use of "culture" and "community" carved out a space of agency and humanity amidst overdetermined categories that often define race as something you can measure, know, put parameters on, and essentialize.

For example, "culture" and "community" account for differences within racial groups, and that was vital in Rainbow since characters in plays and poetry performances experienced and responded to racism in a variety of ways. The same was true with the students—they too experienced and responded to racism in different ways, and because the class was so diverse, Rainbow students regularly witnessed varying perspectives from people of color, something that they regularly referenced

as a unique experience at UCSC (i.e., in other classes they were often the only person

of their race and/or they felt that they had to represent their racial group to a mostly

white audience). The blurriness of "culture" or "community" attested to the diverse

responses to racism that terms like "complex personhood" and "active subjectivity"

also point to.

Rainbow's performances and discussions of "culture" and "community" also

reflected "realness" in that they accounted for race in terms of pain, loss, and

oppression, but also in terms of pride, love, strength, hope, struggle, perseverance,

and camaraderie (to name a few). As the students regularly put it, Rainbow

accounted for the "negative" and "positive" aspects of race. As such, they pulled

"culture" and "community" from their repertoires to accommodate an understanding

of race not solely based in deficiency or loss but also in resistance and a struggle for

dignity, belonging, and liberation[72]. Because race is wrapped up in ideas about

family, blood, and belonging (Holland 2012), and because the violence of racism

permeates everyday practices (Hartman 1997, Perry 2011), pleasure and pain are

often conjoined in quotidian life (Hartman 1997, Holland 2012). Students selected

"culture" and "community" because its elasticity reflected that reality and the tension

between subjectification and "active subjectivity" (Alvarez et al. 2014). Those

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[72] When race is more strictly understood as a category, it can connote deficiency because often what defines a racial group in a study is a common denominator of loss or lack (i.e., a gap in an inequality measure from whites or another relatively privileged group), and thus eschew recognition of dignity and resistance. For example, one student asked whether a white author who enumerated a list of her white privileges was bragging.

complex, and often contradictory, feelings are also part of students' repertoires; therefore, when Rainbow leaders beckoned them to "be real" and "share their stories," they searched for terms that can help them articulate those complex feelings.

Whereas students' use of categorical understandings in the traditional classroom had them mired in racial melancholia and paranoia, Rainbow students selected "culture" and "community" to pair themes of loss with "positive" themes and thus help students to work through melancholia while also honoring struggle and attesting to futurity. "Struggle" is a concept that productively holds oppression in tension with liberation, loss in tension with belonging, and grief in tension with pride[73]. Students' stories of their cultures and communities account for and commend that tension, and Rainbow's affective swings—the time given to collectively witness a variety of emotions—arose from this epistemological valuing of complex personhood and active subjectivity. As a result, discussions that are emotionally-heavy are also life-affirming and inspiring, rather than draining. In such cases, racialized trauma can become productive (Kwan 2015) because it encourages and empowers students to struggle for racial justice and to do so collectively.

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[73] Building off of intersectional feminist theories, recent feminist scholarship finds renewed value in working with tensions. The Santa Cruz Feminist of Color Collective (2014) argues that holding space for tensions is "productive," allowing people to fully engage difference and build strong coalitions. In articulating "hip-hop feminism," Durham et al. (2013) argue for engaging "percussive tensions" between "competing and often contradictory political and cultural projects" (724) in order to disrupt colonial logics of difference and creatively generate new coalitions and collective projects for liberation.

In addition to helping students understand and collectively work through the mixed responses and feelings of complex personhood and active subjectivity, students chose "culture" or "community" from their repertoires because those terms allowed them to understand race as something that is always articulated with other dimensions of difference, and in their stories, it's often impossible to separate out their experiences into neat categories of race, gender, class, etc. To illustrate, often when students talk about "my community," they describe a whole (i.e., the community with which they identify) that is composed of multiple forms of difference to which they are also related. For example, one student said: "In my community, we have people of all different colors, we have people of all different genders." "Culture" and "community" also helped students articulate race (and other forms of difference) as interlocking processes of power that act upon people—and that people actively resist and reproduce—rather than static categories that correspond with taken-for-granted identities (i.e., a woman, a Latina). In other words, as students tried to make sense of their intuitive understanding of intersectionality and relationality, they selected "culture" and "community," rather than categorical understandings, to get at relationships across difference and gendered differences within racial groups.

Coalitional consciousness enunciated by using "community"

The storytelling pedagogy made such an understanding imperative because through telling stories students recognized their multiple identifications, (dis)loyalties, and complicated relationships to power. For example, in a discussion

about eroticizing women in their communities, Zac (an Asian-American man) described the demeaning, fetishized ways that men talked to his girlfriend (an Asian-American woman), and how those comments affected him as well—it hurt him to hear her being disrespected. Because he saw her as part of his community, he understood that this was a form of oppression particular to Asian-American women, but he also saw himself as related to it. As such, rather than an additive notion of intersectionality that understands difference as discrete categories of identity and belonging, his use of "community" to simultaneously conceptualize race and gender more closely resembled Puar's (2007) concept of assemblages. As a relational concept, assemblages does not conceptualize difference as neatly categorized into oppressed and oppressor. Rather, race, class, sexuality, gender, religion, and nationality all co-constitute one another, and what those constructions look like constantly shifts and reconfigures depending upon historical and situational context (Puar 2007). Similarly, when Zac used "community" he drew attention to a web of relations that produced his complicated relationship to race, gender, and sexuality vis-à-vis his girlfriend; he was neither "the oppressor" nor "oppressed," but he was implicated in his girlfriend's struggle. It was also his struggle, but not one where he was targeted firsthand. The logic of difference in assemblages, and in the students' use of "community," is more capacious and productive of coalitions than that of categorical understandings of race and additive models of intersectionality (i.e., where melodramatic oppressor and oppressed are the legible forms of relations). The

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students' stories and use of "community" show that they have the capacity to use logics of difference that can grapple with that complexity.

Collaborative storytelling and realness culture not only encouraged students to use "culture" and "community" for the above reasons, but they also brought students' attention to "common contexts of struggle" (Mohanty et al. 1991), adding another reason for students to pick those more capacious terms to understand race and racism. I understand common contexts for struggle to be racial neoliberalism (Goldberg 2009) and racial capitalism (Robinson 2003, Leong 2013), as well as the common experiences with biopolitical and/or necropolitical disciplinary technologies (Foucault 1990, Mbembe 2003) particular to those contexts (e.g., containment, displacement, disposability, and legibility through utility (Goldberg 2009, Wacquant 2009)). Rainbow students regularly used the vernacular "same struggle" to refer to these interconnected struggles within and between communities, and I commonly heard statements like, "These are issues facing our communities—same struggle." Most of the collaborative poems written and performed by the Poet's Corner and Outreach troupes[74] depicted "same struggle," or the disciplinary technologies and common contexts of struggle in neoliberalism (e.g., the school-to-prison pipeline punishment,

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[74] Of all of the Rainbow productions, the collaborative poetry pieces written and performed by the Poet's Corner and Outreach troupes resonate the most with students, evidenced by the roaring applause, stomping, snapping, clapping, cheering, and call-responses heard from the audience members throughout the performance. When the Rainbow students reflected on Show and Tell—an entire Saturday dedicated to back-to-back dress rehearsals—most of the students commented on how much they learned and were moved by the poetry performances of the Poet's Corner and Outreach.

mass incarceration, neighborhood occupation by police, forced migration, displacement).

Not only were those common contexts or "common differences" (Mohanty 2003) the subject matter of poems, they were also reflected in the actual structure of the collaborative poems. That is, a collaborative poem revolved around a common topic (i.e., common contexts, biopolitical technologies) that was written by two or more poets (often with different intersectional identities). Each poet wrote and performed individual verses that reflected their particular experience with and/or subjection to those common contexts and all the poets collaborated in writing a collective refrain that referred back to the common contexts. Often, all the poets recited the refrain in unison in a way that symbolically reinforced the common contexts, or what they called "same struggle." For example, Outreach team members Kiara (an African-American woman) and Jimmy (a Latino man) wrote a collaborative poem with the common refrain "now that's a miscarriage." The poem described "slow death" (Berlant 2007), or the continual subjection to necropolitical technologies (Mbembe 2003). Each time they returned to the refrain "now that's a miscarriage," the audience was reminded of the literal and symbolic forms of death and loss that have structured both Kiara and Jimmy's lives and communities. Like a miscarriage, their youth and potential for growth had been continually threatened by premature death and loss. In each verse, Kiara and Jimmy described the particularities and commonalities of their experiences with race- and class-based subjugation—inherited disadvantages, cycles of poverty, broken homes, untreated

mental illness, lethal violence, misrecognition, double-consciousness (DuBois 1996), incarceration, and perseverance. They ended with Kiara's individual lines that drew attention to neoliberal policies (i.e., shrinking welfare programs, the War on Drugs) that punish the poor, and poor people of color disproportionately (Wacquant 2009), as well as racist and classist rhetoric that blames poverty on supposed cultural deficits rather than structure: "The garbage cans are waiting/The destiny of the seeds/of Reagan's Era/is the terror of extermination/but they'll be waiting to say that we OD'd/Now that's a miscarriage." When students collaborated to write poetic stories, they recognized similarities and differences with the factors affecting their lives and their emotional responses to those factors. Because students were producing stories about common contexts that cut across racial categories, albeit with particular racialized manifestations, they turned to the term "community" from their repertoires because it could account for that common-particular reality and tension more than categorical understandings of race could.

Using "community" was building community

The Rainbow community itself—what students call the "Rainbow family" or "our community"—is produced in several ways. First, it is constituted when students contrast Rainbow as a safe space for students of color at UCSC, a campus they regularly refer to as alienating or hostile for students of color. But more so, it is constituted as an interactional effect of realness culture, collaborative storytelling pedagogy, the capacious terms students use to articulate interconnected struggles, and

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gathering around affective intensity. Affect "serves as the foundation for the formation of public cultures" (Cvetkovich 2007:10) and affective economies—the circulation and accumulation of particular affective states and emotions—produce subject positions to which people feel they belong (Ahmed 2004). Accordingly, subjectivities and cultures are constituted through feeling, as well as resulting from subject identification or cultural norms. When students publically feel together in Rainbow (through sharing "real" stories and working together to produce and witness those stories), they are not just collectively validating and empathizing with one another's experiences, they are becoming coalitional, multicultural subjects and creating public cultures[75]. "Spit"—the term that poets use to describe the way they speak their lines—conjures up the affective intensity felt when poets forcefully articulate indignation, rage, wariness, pride, sadness, fear, alienation, love, and passion regarding interconnected struggles and common contexts. That affective intensity is also matched by the audience; its energy palpably jacks up when the poetry teams get on stage, showing that the collaborative poems clearly resonate with the students more than other performances. The types of affect and their intensity both reflect the common contexts of "same struggle" and draw Rainbow students into a coalitional bond that defines the Rainbow community itself. By saying that the

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[75] Muñoz (2000), Eng & Han (2003), and Alvarez et al. (2014) all argue that people of color are drawn together through shared feelings of injury and loss. Cvetkovich (2003) also argues that feelings form publics, and adds that feelings associated with trauma can be more varied and "positive" than loss and injury. Similarly, Kwan (2015) finds that Cambodian American students' intergenerational trauma is productive, leading students into political work.

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affective component of the poems reflects the common contexts of their communities (i.e., "same struggle"), I mean that the emotions they articulate arise from similar disciplinary experiences with biopolitical and necropolitical technologies. If we think of racial subjugation as a form of governmentality—wherein biopolitical and necropolitical technologies act upon bodies to shape, control, and discipline those bodies into particular agents and subjects (Foucault 1990, Mbembe 2003)—then affect (the embodied registration and aspect of social forces) plays a large role in that process. Disciplinary technologies (e.g., surveillance, containment, normalizing judgments) function through and produce certain affects—paranoia, shame, anxiousness, guilt, disgust, animosity, etc.—and those *feelings* are more commonly shared and relatable than the *particularly racialized materializations* of those technologies. For example, surveillance is a haunting technology that functions through and produces paranoia, fear, shame, and animosity, whether that surveillance is exercised by ICE agents, NSA agents, local police officers, social workers, teachers, or school administrators. Rainbow's collaborative poems not only topically reflected the common contexts, but they also strongly resonated with students because they mirrored and cathartically "spit" back those common feelings. By coalescing around common feelings, while also nodding to particular racialized experiences, Rainbow's production and witnessing of collaborative poems affectively beckoned students toward one another and into collectivities—what they call "our community" or the "Rainbow family." They also encouraged students to feel attached to using capacious terms like "culture" and "community" to articulate same struggle.

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When Rainbow students attend to the diverse feelings attached to complex personhood, active subjectivity, and common contexts (what they call "realness")—and do so together—they collectively work through both pain and pleasure, forging a public culture and an identity based in multicultural witnessing. Therefore, when they use the pronoun "we" and speak of "our culture," they are often referring to that public culture at UCSC. Membership in that culture and community is not automatically defined by racial identity as much as it is defined by resisting norms of emotional containment, producing diverse stories of racial subjectivity, and collectively witnessing the myriad feelings that accompany those stories. The Rainbow culture can hold an understanding of race that is at once about difference and also interconnection, similar to what Anzaldúa advocates for with the concept of "Nos/Otras," a productive tension between "us" and "others" (Alvarez et al. 2014). For Holland (2012), eros is a productive energy that keeps reproducing old racist logics. But the requirements for belonging to the Rainbow community work against the "projects of belonging[76]" that reproduce old, historically-frozen racial meanings (Holland 2012:3) and "the oppressive logic of colonial modernity, its use of hierarchical dichotomies and categorical logic" (Lugones 2010:742). Rather than reifying a sense of natural racial difference through projects of belonging, the eros functioning in Rainbow bonds people together through honoring difference, and

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[76] Holland refers to two kinds of relationships as racial projects of belonging—family/blood relations and relations developed through identifying with others either by community imposition or personal choice.

fosters a sense of belonging not predicated on older racist logics of blood, but on critical multiculturalism, collective witnessing, and coalitional work.

Conclusion

To summarize the chapter, students in both the traditional and Rainbow classrooms regularly defined to racism as intentional, individual prejudice. This is not surprising when we consider how widespread such understandings of racism are in national mainstream discourses of racism (Perry 2011, Bonilla-Silva 2003); students have been immersed in such understandings through popular culture, public education, and mainstream media. But I argue that repetitive exposure to such understanding is not solely responsible for students' perpetuations of those understandings; public feelings of race circulate with that understanding and nudge students toward selecting and reusing it from their repertoire. Specifically, the public feelings of erotics (Holland 2012) and racial paranoia (Jackson 2010) urge students to understand racism in a way that makes it simple to define, locate, police, and distance oneself from. "Racism as intentional, individual prejudice," an understanding that is certain and clear-cut, allows students to do all those and therefore they affectively invest in that understanding and reselect it from their repertoires. Although this affective-discursive practice was commonly present in both the traditional classrooms and Rainbow, several practices also encouraged students to loosen their grip on this understanding. For example, the core course instructor Nora continually asked students to reflect on what they do not know and how that ignorance might lead them

to perpetuate oppression without intending to do so. In Rainbow, Mr. Taylor constantly prodded students to "be humble" and to "ask yourself what you need to learn from this." These two directives urged students to assess the ways that they are implicated or complicit in particular types of racist practice, regardless of their intentions, and thus to understand racism as something broader than intentional, individual prejudice.

While students in both classroom types often understood racism as intentional, individual prejudice, students in the traditional classrooms also understood racial difference as binary categories. In this framework, students understood racial difference, and the uneven power conferred through that difference, as a white-people of color/oppressor-oppressed binary wherein whites' absolute power overshadowed the agency of people of color. Such a conceptual framework inhibited students from understanding both the destabilizing critique of intersectionality and the interlocking relationships between different forms of racisms. Also, the unchecked circulation of racial paranoia, melancholia, melodrama, and erotics—enhanced by the culture of emotional containment and pedagogical focus on arguments about racial formation— encouraged students to emotionally invest in binary thinking and thus continually reselect it from their affective-discursive repertoires. Like "racism as individual prejudice," categorical understandings of race can help students cope with racial paranoia and aversive racism. The simplicity, certainty, and boundaries of categorical understandings make it easier for students to interpret what comments will be understood as racist or not. As such, those understandings also inhibit students from

engaging in more nuanced discussions about race and racism (such as intersectionality and colonial logics of interconnected racisms).

The definitive, knowable parameters of categorical understandings also serve as an attachment point for racial melancholia. That is, because the US continues to disavow that racism is and has been an organizing principle for state policies and national belonging, the oppressor-oppressed ordering of categories accounts for wounding, the continual haunting of those wounds, and who is responsible for that wounding. When students erotically return to what hasn't been healed, they importantly counter colorblindness and centuries of unattended wounds, but they also freeze race in the past and do not account for how it has, and will, change. The simplicity of categorical understandings and their oppressor-oppressed ordering mirrors a longer American tradition of making sense of race through black-white melodramas. Like these melodramas, categorical understandings more easily supply students with moral guidance in how to understand and resolve feelings of loss, despondence, pain, anger, etc. Because the traditional classroom culture and pedagogy focuses on flatly analyzing the disembodied policies, cold institutional practices, and representations that constitute racial formation processes, they do not attend directly to these collective feelings. Like the grief that exceeds collective grievances and fuels racial melancholia, a number of public feelings exceed social constructionist understandings of race. Without attending to those feelings, students seek out felt understandings from their repertoires that attend to those feelings.

Categorical understandings attend to them, but with the cost of forwarding frozen understandings of race too.

In contrast to the traditional classrooms' use of categorical understandings, students in Rainbow most commonly used the terms "culture" or "community" to understand race and racial subjectivity. At times, Rainbow students used those terms to serve as direct translations for a racial group, ethnic group, or for people of color as a whole, but other times they used the term in much more vague ways that did not included specifying terms about who belonged (as terms like "the Black community" or "Hmong community" do). Like sincerity politics (Jackson 2005), Rainbow students eschewed the specification of boundaries to "culture" and "community," and rested between knowing and not knowing, certainty and uncertainty.

Given the norms of realness culture and collaborative storytelling pedagogy, Rainbow students selected "culture" and "community" from their repertoires for a number of reasons. First, those felt understandings allowed students to better understand racial subjectivity as an active, agential process that produces complex personhood. Because categorical understandings think of subjectivity in terms of subjection to racist structure, they miss that complexity. A lot exceeds categorical definitions of race, and the terms "community" and "culture" can better capture that excess and attend to students' diverse feelings about race and racial identity.

A second reason that Rainbow students selected "culture" and "community" from their repertoires is that the fuzziness of the terms helped students articulate with other forms of difference. This allows students to see how various forms of difference

are relational and encourages students to forward a decolonial logic of difference—one that holds "us" and "other" together in the same term and identification. By thinking of themselves as "communities" they also understand their struggles as connected and they label that connectedness "same struggle." Both the topics and structure of the collaborative storytelling (most obvious in the poetry performances) bring Rainbow's attention to the common contexts and interconnectedness of oppression. Common contexts cut across racial categories, albeit with particular racialized manifestations, and the term "community" can account for that common-particular reality and tension more than categorical understandings of race can.

In addition to understanding race as relational, the combined interactional effect of using that term "community" within the context of the Rainbow pedagogy (i.e., telling and witnessing each other's stories of "culture" and "community") is the Rainbow community itself (i.e., what they affectionately call "the Rainbow family" and what I call their coalitional bond and public culture). Rainbow's performances, especially the collaborative poetry ones, allow their students to gather around affective intensities—strong, shared feelings that arise from similar experiences with biopolitical and necropolitical technologies. The feelings that neoliberal disciplinary technologies function through and produce are more common than the particularly racialized (and gendered, sexualized, and classed) materializations of those technologies; and the collaborative poems topically reflect the common contexts of those technologies and affectively mirror the common feelings they function through and produce. When Rainbow students publically feel these together, they build a

public culture, community, and identity based in multicultural witnessing of interconnections and coalitional action. The term "community" connotes connection and belonging, and partly because of the warmth of the term, "community" helps students foster understandings of race (and other forms of difference) in a way that constantly reminds them of relationality and common contexts. As such, "community" beckons them toward coalitional identification and building.

Membership in the Rainbow community is not so much based on racial identity as it is based in participating in that witnessing[77]. As such, belonging to Rainbow's "we" resists colonial logics of difference that emphasize categorical cohesiveness and hierarchical, dichotomous thinking (Lugones 2010). That logic of belonging works differently than the erotic "projects of belonging" that Holland (2012) describes. Instead, Rainbow's community belonging maneuvers erotic energy away from reinvestment in frozen meanings of race and towards understandings of difference that account for relationality, complex personhood, and active subjectivity. As such, Rainbow's erotic practices function more like what Lorde (1984) articulates than Holland (2012). Accordingly, that erotic energy provides students with power that "forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference"

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[77] This Rainbow identity is similar to "women of color" as a political identity-formation rather than an identity-marker (Alvarez et al. 2014). As a political identity-formation, the SCFOCC "work to see ourselves in ways that exceed these fixed categories through the process of building coalitions" (2013: 26). Rainbow's "we" and "family" also exceeds these fixed categories through their collaborative pedagogy.

(Lorde 1984:56). In other words, Rainbow's erotic practices (that emphasize

connection, love, care, attention, witness, listening, humility, mutual responsibility,

and joy) foster a coalitional bond and make a decolonial logic of difference (Lugones

2010) more pronounced in students' repertoires. Categorical understandings, because

they emphasize rigid difference and absolute dichotomous hierarchies, attract and

reproduce the erotic life of racism that Holland (2012) describes.

I imagine that some readers of this study would commend the use of "culture"

or "community" for theater classes, but find it inappropriate for a social science

classroom[78]. While it may seem inappropriate for sociology to use blurry concepts

such as "culture" or "community," such elastic concepts may be increasingly

important for understanding contemporary social relationships. In her 2009

presidential address to the American Sociological Association, Patricia Hill Collins

(2009) made a case for the intellectual and political potential that the construct

"community" has for sociological scholarship. Accordingly, the expansion of free

trade and the world wide web mean that everyday people are increasing in contact

and made aware of one another, and therefore "seeing new connections among and

across individuals, groups, categories, and theories is the hallmark of contemporary

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[78] Some social scientists and humanists have criticized the term "community" because of its use in neoliberal multicultural discourses flatten or ignore power differences between racial groups or reduce racial inequality to "cultural" factors (Ward 2008, Duggan 2003, Gordon & Newfield 1996). Rainbow's understanding of a multicultural community draws attention to power by emphasizing struggle, albeit without attaching to one-of-a-kind forms of oppression. With this kind of understanding of difference and power, ensuring justice means always investigating interconnections and engaging in coalitional work (Mohanty 2003, Alexander 2005, Alvarez et al. 2014).

patterns of interdependence" (Collins 2009:23). In this context of increasing

transnational and mediated communities, people exist in, identify with, and

participate in a variety of social groupings and (often contradictory) configurations of

power. Sociology's more traditional categories for understanding those groups and

relationships to power (i.e., race, gender, class, sexuality) have less analytical and

explanatory power when people's lived experiences constantly exist in the overlap or

excess of those categories. Therefore, sociology needs more flexible constructs that

can account for contemporary social relations—those defined by global

interconnectedness and changing-same patterns of inequality (e.g., the simultaneity of

the Obama presidency, mass incarceration of African Americans, and

#blacklivesmatter). "Because flexibility is both the hallmark of contemporary social

relations and a characteristic of the construct of community," Collins (2009) argues,

the construct of community "may be especially suitable in helping people manage

ambiguities associated with changing configurations of intersecting power relations"

(24).

The affective-discursive repertoires of young Americans can hold rigid,

categorical understandings of race *and* relational ones. Our students are immersed in

and have been socialized through a variety of imagined, transnational, and mediated

communities specific to this historical moment, and as such they are regularly made

aware of global interconnectedness (through their own migratory histories, news of

war and terrorism, music mash-ups, etc). This immersion primes them for *both*

decolonial relational thinking *and* colonial logics of difference. Categorical

understandings squander their potential for thinking relationally because they emphasize a "logic of separation and ranking" (Collins 2009:24). "Community," a construct that holds similarity and difference in tension, links relational thinking and social theories that try to understand those complex relationships (Collins 2009). Therefore, while Collins (2009) argues for the intellectual and political usefulness of "community" for both sociology and progressive social movements, I also think it is especially appropriate and helpful for teaching sociology. Most people who take introductory sociology classes will not major in nor pursue academic careers in sociology (Zipp 2012), and thus it is less important to recapitulate our disciplinary history (e.g., the categories and theories we've historically used) than it is to expose students to sociological imagination with the most contemporary, flexible, and useful frameworks we have for interpreting and intervening in today's world. Teaching that kind of sociological imagination is especially vital in rapidly changing social contexts like those we are currently experiencing. In times of great change and uncertainty, people often grasp for security by erecting physical and symbolic boundaries that disavow or control their connectedness, evidenced most recently by Trump's election and his comments after the Charlottesville protests and killing, Brexit and other European nationalist movements, and Filipino President Duterte's drug abuse policies. Categorical understandings of difference—because they reinforce separation, boundaries, and ranking—are not only less useful for understanding global connectedness, but they are also vulnerable to manipulation and apt to separate potential anti-racist coalitions. That is not the kind of tools for thinking we want

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sociology students to leave with. The construct of "community" has the "ability to invoke relational thinking, help people deal with change, negotiate boundaries, and harness political aspirations" (Collins 2009:25-26). For those reasons, I think it, or other more capacious terms, are important to emphasize in our sociological classes.

This chapter documents how classroom cultures and practices make it more or less likely that students' affective-discursive repertoires will reproduce or rupture societal discursive practices about race, community, and belonging. For example, those in the traditional classrooms were more likely to find themselves stuck or at least unable to move beyond frameworks of fairly strict categorical defaults; they demonstrated the reach of hegemonic affect-discourse. But Rainbow students were more likely to avoid impasses of affect-discourse and transform the ways they had been conditioned to talk about race with one another. This suggests that classroom practices and cultures enunciate certain nodes of affective-discursive repertoires, making some knowledge formations (i.e., strict categorical versus pliable understandings) more legible and desirable than others. This is extremely important, and while the data are modest and preliminary, they nonetheless suggest that it is possible for classroom conversations to break through affective-discursive barriers and not only move past impasses, but also forge novel ways of building multicultural communities and coalitional bonds. Reaching beyond the usual conventions of difference that encourage separateness between individuals and groups toward understandings that are genuine and encourage recognition of difference is significant. In the next and concluding chapter, I will conclude this study by using

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three vignettes to summarize the simultaneous reach and transformation of affect-

discourse in both the traditional classroom and Rainbow.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion: Rethinking teaching and learning about race

> "[In college], I have learned to start sentences with "I feel like…" or "I think it's interesting that…" I've learned to define people and their experiences. I've learned to use and misuse detached academic words like "diversity," "privilege," and "safe space" in my arguments and conversations. But I've never been asked to see my relationship to the people we defined. I was never asked to use "love" in the place of these impersonal words we leaned on. I have written about gay marriages, black cinema, Asian images, woman's rights, but never about love. And never with love…And in the classrooms, rather than trying to understand and love, we learn to define and patronize other people and their experiences." – David Byunghyun Lee (2014)

Introducing concluding thoughts

In this study, I show how individual, collective, and public feelings about race have shaped the emotional cultures, pedagogical practices, and knowledges used in traditional and Rainbow classrooms. Working both with and against normative discourses and practices, feelings also affected the students' interactions in those different classroom spaces. Often times, the traditional classrooms were filled with tension and interactional dynamics that mirrored discursive formations, public feelings, and macro-level patterns of racial inequality, and all of this happened within a classroom context that aimed to deconstruct racism and a university context that claimed to celebrate diversity, equity, and inclusion in its official publications and messaging (e.g., websites, banners on campus, emails to the entire campus list serve). To summarize, because students in the traditional classroom were overwhelmed with hiding their ignorance and/or their sincere feelings and actual experiences, they resisted engaging in dialogue to address the questions they had about race and racism. Even though they desired an honest conversation that addressed the tension they felt

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around race, they their fear of being seen as racist and/or an angry person of color kept them quiet and reserved. These fears, enhanced by an emotional culture of flatness and a pedagogy focused on individual work and formal arguments, pressed students to continually use individual, intentional understandings of racism because they helped them cope with racial paranoia and melancholia.

Rainbow's realness culture, storytelling practices, and knowledge formations often pushed back against the normative conventions of race talk in national conversations about race, and as such, it provided a public space for multicultural conversations about race that students identified as more honest and complex than those that they had in traditional classrooms. Its realness culture and collaborative storytelling pedagogy urged students to embrace tension, see ignorance as an opportunity to learn, and work together to learn from one another and find common contexts of struggle. The combined influences of its culture and practices urged students to use the terms "culture" and "community" to understand the common contexts for their particularly racialized experiences. As a result of these factors, the Rainbow classroom transformed the impasses that result from racial paranoia, melancholia, and aversion and forged a different erotic energy around racial belonging, one that brought students into a coalitional bond and a multicultural, anti-racist public. In short, the traditional classrooms often exemplified the reach and reproduction of dominant affect-discourse that stalls conversations about race and Rainbow often exemplified transformations of affect-discourse, more open forms of dialogue that inspired a coalitional desire in students.

That said, I want to emphasize that in making these distinctions I do not intend to create a binary where Rainbow represents a space of empowerment, tolerance, and freedom, and the traditional classroom represents opposing features of alienation, rigidity, and constraint. In some ways, neoliberal management of race and its attendant public feelings reach both spaces, influencing students' actions and dialogue in both spaces. At the same time, each space also points to, and aims to widen, the limits and fissures of diversity discourse. Feelings play a crucial role in both of those processes; they amplify diversity discourse's disciplinary power, but they are also deployed critically to exploit the fissures and eek out something different.

To disrupt any semblance of a clear-cut binary between the traditional classroom as a stand-in for the total reach and reproduction of national affect-discourse and Rainbow as the representation of the total transformation of affect-discourse, I will use several vignettes below to demonstrate the persistent reach of national affect-discourse, the limits to total transformation, and the critical possibilities in both classroom spaces through several vignettes below. Social construction is always in process and thus neither site represents a space of total reach nor total transformation.

Vignette 1: The cautionary tale of Hana

My eight years of teaching in the sociology department includes interactions with dozens of students who crossed over between traditional and Rainbow

classrooms. Indeed, part of the impetus for this study came from the impression that

Rainbow students left on me; they stood out amongst their peers as confident, critical,

compassionate, and politically active. When I inquired more about their involvement

with Rainbow, they said that Rainbow was less about theater and more about learning

about race and other forms of difference from each other. They also claimed their

conversations about race were really different than the ones they had in sociology

classes. This piqued my curiosity and contributed to my desire to use Rainbow as a

case for this study.

During the time that I formally observed Rainbow, only Hana, a first-year

student, overlapped in both Rainbow and one of the traditional classrooms I observed;

she starred in a prominent role in the 5th Element play *Dreamers* and attended a core

class. From my perspective, Hana represents a cautionary tale about Rainbow—some

of the key terms of its rhetoric and practices closely resemble those of colorblind

discourses and some students may use that resemblance in service of ignoring

privilege and flattening power. Hana *loved* Rainbow, but her feelings about her core

class ranged from ambivalence to loathsomeness. When I asked Hana about these

polarized feelings, she explained that her core class discussions made too many

generalizations about groups of people when they used the language of racial

categories and that doing so drew rigid distinctions between people and caused people

to either shut down, engage in conflict, or see themselves as different (and that was

dangerous). When I asked her for an example of this, she brought up an article that

explicated general features of whiteness through interviewing white subjects. She

hated the article so much that she made a point to tell me about it twice, once outside

of a formal interview. For Hana, being told by an article what whiteness meant

offended her as a white person. I was not present for the class discussion about that

article, so I don't know if the distinction between whiteness as a social construction

and identification with whiteness was not explained or simply lost on her. Either

way, she felt "attacked" by the article and discounted it immediately because she

didn't identify herself as white (she preferred thinking of herself as Portuguese

American). From her perspective, as soon as you label people according to race, you

"draw a line in the sand" that precludes friendship and connection. Her negative

reaction to being identified as white, not so ironically, is not only common for whites,

but a hallmark of whiteness (Bonilla-Silva 2003, Frankenberg 1993, Tatum 1992,

Tatum 1997).

As such, Hana preferred colorblindness and she found that in Rainbow. I was

surprised that Hana came to that conclusion because I constantly heard Rainbow

students criticizing colorblindness and linking it to racism's reproduction. Yet, when

I reflect more on Hana's words and my observations of Rainbow, I understand how

the practices and language used in Rainbow could be interpreted as emphatic

colorblindness. That is, many Rainbow practices, especially in the affective domain,

mirrored diversity discourse. For example, celebration is a big theme in both

Rainbow and neoliberal diversity discourses, and celebration tends travel with warm,

fun, and light-hearted feelings, feelings not associated with conflict, criticism, and

self-consciousness. For Hana, talking about race in core meant talking about power,

conflict, and shame, and feeling disconnected from peers and self-conscious. She

preferred feeling equal and connected to her peers, and proud of herself, and

Rainbow's use of "culture" and "community" instead of race helped her ignore her

racial subjectivity and identify with her Portuguese heritage. She saw Rainbow's

lessons as those of celebration and tolerance, twin features of neoliberal diversity

discourse as well.

Rainbow challenged Hana by its long hours of rehearsals, but, in her eyes, it

didn't challenge her by asking her to critically self-reflect on her racial identity.

However, from my view, Rainbow did ask her to critically reflect on her identity and

what it meant for representation in the *Dreamers* play that she was cast in. For

example, after their dress rehearsal, several students in the audience said that they

"didn't believe her performance." Although their reasons cited used vague terms, it

was clear that the students felt that it wasn't right for Rainbow to cast a fair-skinned

woman with a very white, middle-class English accent to play a dark-skinned refugee

with a thick Spanish accent. Hana, however, did not critically reflect on

misrepresentation; she chose to understand it as isolated criticism from "haters" who

were intolerant of diverse representations of immigrants. Moreover, she understood

such "hating" to be antithetical to Rainbow's values and ideals. Unfortunately, that

was a missed opportunity for Rainbow leaders to facilitate a conversation about

historical patterns of whites representing of people of color in theater and film, and

the systemic erasure that it produces. This points to one of the limits of Rainbow's

collaborative storytelling pedagogy; sometimes the imperatives of their productions

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(e.g., rehearsing, getting fitted for costumes, running through lighting cues) rush their conversations. In this case with Hana, the rushed debrief of dress rehearsal meant that Rainbow leaders did not facilitate a discussion around what they had to learn from this tension and conflict. More often than not, those critical conversations did happen, but because of a rush to prepare for upcoming shows, they didn't "get real" about the issues with casting Hana in that role. The combination of that missed dialogue, Rainbow's humanist language, and its emphasis on belonging to the whole "family" had consequences—it allowed colorblindness to sneak in and reproduce itself in the context of Rainbow.

But that particular case was an anomaly. More often than not, Rainbow leaders and fellow students jumped on these "teachable moments" and used them to help students interpret stories in terms of broader racial politics or instances of systemic racism. Hana's story brings attention to the ways that Rainbow's discourse and practices teeter on a knife edge between hegemonic diversity's focus on celebration, tolerance, and individuality, and the somber, critical perspectives and explanations of systemic inequality that sober up feel good diversity. For the most part, riding that knife edge is a productive affective-discursive tension where, in the words of many Rainbow students, they explore "the positive and negative aspects of race" or the various faces of complex personhood in a racist society. The feel-good feelings buoy them from slipping into despondence and the "real talk" of critical perspectives keeps them from slipping into blissful denial. That said, Hana provides

a cautionary tale, a reminder that they are *riding* that knife edge—it's a process—and if they waver too much from the critical, they'll slide into colorblindness.

Hana's story necessitates a clarification of where the critical edge of Rainbow lies. In short, it's multidimensional. First, the critical edge results from the knife-edge described above, which is also supported by the emphasis on belonging to the Rainbow family. Together, those forces make critical reading and examination alluring. Second, the critical edge emerges out of Rainbow's reliance on peer-to-peer learning through dialogue. That is, because Rainbow involves students of multiple ages and multiple disciplinary backgrounds, students with knowledge from social sciences and humanities bring that to bear in their interpretations of plays and poetry, and thus decrease the chance of students interpreting those texts through individualist lenses. Third, the critical edge comes from the practices of triangulating stories and collaboratively writing poetry together. Just as students in the traditional classrooms reported, comparing and contrasting stories of their experiences made them realize that their lives had been constructed both similarly and differently. Realizing the commonalities among stories from different subject positions, especially in collaborative poetry writing and performing, drew attention to common contexts of struggle (Mohanty 2003). Moreover, these effects happened without needing to use the language of sociology to make the criticism direct and clear. In other words, students didn't necessarily need sociological vocabulary to be able to make sociological observations about patterns of inequality and the conditions that brought those patterns into being. Last, the critical edge derived from Rainbow's narrative of

what it does—bringing people together to tell stories that haven't been heard, and to do so to create awareness of inequality and bear witness to the struggle for equality. Mr. Taylor and student leaders constantly make comments about what they are doing and the importance of doing so. As the next vignette will demonstrate, this messaging is important to transforming colorblindness and the management of diversity in the university.

Vignette 2: Clarifying Rainbow politics to university officials

By describing a conflict between a prominent university official, Jennifer Smith, and Rainbow students, this second vignette elaborates on the tension between diversity discourse in Rainbow and its critical edge. The story begins with an important symbol: the Rainbow sweater. Every year Rainbow students print a sweater for that year with original artwork from a member, and the sweaters certainly mark belonging and pride in Rainbow. As soon as the sweaters arrive, students put them on excitedly and wear them regularly around campus. Outside of class, when one Rainbow student sees another Rainbow student in the sweater, they wave or yell "Rainbow, Rainbow!" to each other. But the sweaters also signify hard work and putting in time with Rainbow; you can't buy a Rainbow sweater, you have to *earn* it by spending dozens of hours in class and rehearsals. Therefore, the sweater means more than a sense of belonging, it means that you know how to "do" the norms, values, and practices of Rainbow. This story, then, is about Jennifer Smith wearing a

Rainbow sweater and how according to Rainbow students there, she didn't "know what it means to wear that sweater."

Mr. Taylor gave Jennifer Smith a Rainbow sweater when she came to the opening night performances the year I observed Rainbow. He took a moment to acknowledge her and all of the support she gave to Rainbow, although he didn't specify what kind of support that was. He and Raquel, the Rainbow president, hugged Ms. Smith and gave her the sweater. She was already wearing a sweater from a previous year, but she immediately put on the new one and wore it throughout the performance.

Fast forward into the spring of that year when Rainbow students and Ms. Smith met again, this time at a protest held by the graduate students' TA union[79]. In preparation for the protest, the university ordered riot police from UC Berkeley to assist them, and as such, riot police (in full gear) lined the other side of the street across from the picketing union members, and more sat waiting in a converted school bus up the road. Undergraduate students, many of them from Rainbow, came to join the protest and help union members in shutting down the two entrances to campus. Jennifer Smith was also there, negotiating with a union leader, and wearing a Rainbow sweater. At one point, she spoke over a loud speaker, warning the union members to desist from blocking the entrance or risk encounters with the police officers. Aghast by someone in a Rainbow sweater uttering such words, the Rainbow

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[79] The protest was meant to put pressure on the university to increase pay for graduate students who were bargaining a new contract.

students there grouped up and started calling for Ms. Smith's attention. When they finally got her attention, they told her that she was misrepresenting Rainbow by calling upon riot police to interrupt a peaceful and legal protest. They continued by saying that Rainbow represented social justice and interrupting racism and classism, and that anyone wearing the sweater should know that and act accordingly. I couldn't hear what Ms. Smith said in response, but whatever it was did not appease the Rainbow students and they let her know that. A couple of them yelled "shame!" at her. Eventually, Ms. Smith turned her sweater inside out.

The Rainbow students' actions here demonstrate that Rainbow's diversity discourse challenges the hegemonic articulations of neoliberal diversity discourse. In other universities, diversity discourse has created spaces of belonging for marginalized communities that serve as technologies of incorporation and control (Ahmed 2012, Ferguson 2012). This case suggests that UCSC officials also supported Rainbow as space of belonging and recognizing difference through storytelling, but not as a group that actively criticized and resisted university policies that reproduced injustices. But the Rainbow students at that protest made sure to not only interrupt that assumption—they don't just gather to tell stories for the sole sake of recognition, they do so to learn about how inequality is produced in everyday life and how to interrupt the reproduction of inequality. What is more, the students also used belonging to Rainbow (as signified in Ms. Smith's sweater) as a way to maneuver politics in their favor (i.e., to meet the TAs labor demands). It's beyond the scope of this project to judge if that encounter had any bearing on what later

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ensued (i.e., the arrest of a union leader at that protest, the eventual increase in wages and benefits for TAs). However, this story does demonstrate a fissure in diversity discourse at UCSC, a moment where the university's support for Rainbow was shown to be contingent upon performing tolerance and belonging within its limited space of Stevenson College and where Rainbow students disrupted and resisted that limited form of multiculturalism and its management of diversity. And they mobilized feelings—belonging and shame primarily—to clarify their politics and enact a transformation of diversity discourse.

Evan, a seasoned Rainbow student and a sociology major, once told me that he didn't think Rainbow was "political enough," explaining that the class did not do enough to educate students about how their differences related to uneven access to power and privilege. Evan also thought that Rainbow did not engage students in enough direct political action outside of class. While the cautionary tale of Hana gives credence to Evan's assertions, her conclusions do not represent what most students get from Rainbow, which is a critical, coalitional politics that starts and sustains in the affective realm. I think that the coalitional bond and understandings of "same struggle" that Rainbow fosters is not only political, but also foundational to engaging in any multicultural, direct political action. The coalitional bond constituted a form of infrapolitics (Scott 1987, Kelley 1994), a politics that does not necessarily look like politics in the traditional sense (i.e., visible, public challenges to power and demands made of the state). Infrapolitics refers to politics that exist under the radar and their effects consist of actions like reclaiming terms or public spaces, cultivating

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the emotional experience of defiance, and/or affectively motivating change. Rainbow's coalitional bond was political in the sense that it resisted the discursive push to think of struggles as separate, particular, distinctive, and relatively worse (or better) than others. The bond motivated people to resist, and to resist together, across difference. It motivated students to understand their struggles as connected, and it inspired students to show up (informally and formally) for one another, like they did in the aforementioned protest. Rainbow students tended to feel accountable to one another, or Mr. Taylor's words, they felt like they were each other's "brother's keeper." Moreover, their bond motivates them to get involved in organizational work outside of Rainbow; they join and start new student groups, organize political events on campus, and show up in great numbers to those events. Rainbow students' involvement in other campus activities spreads its uplift to other aspects of campus, cultivating feelings of belonging for students of color and increasingly shaping the campus in their image.

Rainbow's politics are at once spiritual, cultural, interactional, institutional, and—most importantly—affective. Realness culture and storytelling practice make Rainbow an uplifting space that forges a coalitional bond defined by a faith and a practice of being in community. Those feelings form an affective economy (Ahmed 2004) that pulls bodies toward one another rather away from one another or inward. And that uplift restores students' capacity to act (Deleuze & Guatarri 1980). Therefore, while not all Rainbow students will agree or demonstrate that the space is political or properly critical, the bond they create in that class makes them more

politically attuned to one another's struggles and builds more of a collective sense of connection to and investment in one another's struggles. Rainbow's coalitional bond is both a feeling in the air and sentiment that many students articulate in language. At times, as Hana's stories warns, that feeling travels alongside and mixes with the feel-good aspects of diversity discourse that derive their pleasure from the absence of worry and concern about inequality. When pleasure is tied to that absence, it loses its critical edge, but that is not its only nor its most common route. The pleasure in Rainbow's coalitional bond most often travels with critical attention to inequality; it's an uplifting feeling that comes from being a part of something bigger than yourself and struggling to create ideals together. That process in Rainbow is at times fun and ecstatic, at times somber and quiet, but almost always that affective density is mobilized for educational purposes.

Vignette 3: "Am I a bad POC for not feeling outraged?"

This third vignette comes not from my research sites, but from reporting on my results to a group of seniors in our sociology department, some of whom had been students in the sociology and core courses I observed for this study. At the end of the lecture, a student posed a question in response to my findings about normative flatness and emotional containment in the tradition classrooms: "Am I a bad POC [person of color] for not feeling outraged?" This question made me realize that in delivering my findings, I had created a binary between the traditional classrooms and Rainbow wherein Rainbow represented freedom from constraint and the traditional

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classroom represented the imposition of constraint. Such a strong distinction was not my intention and it begs me to clarify my argument regarding feelings, normativity, and emotional labor in the classroom, and moreover, the role they play in reproducing or transforming affect-discourse.

I do not mean to make an argument that emoting is wholly positive and containment is wholly negative for learning, fostering honest conversations about race, and overcoming common impasses in national conversations about race. Nor do I mean to attach the expression of feelings, and freedom of that expression, to any particular group of students. I found that white students and students of color contained feeling in the traditional classroom, and likewise, individual members of both groups constituted a vocal minority that emoted in a range of ways while talking in class. Most students, though, white and of color, stayed quiet and flat while the vocal minority spoke. Moreover, many of the reasons that students gave for staying quiet and flat, or feeling like they had to, echoed diversity discourse and racial paranoia's valuing of tolerance and careful speech, as well as the racist and sexist articulations of Enlightenment ideals that positioned emotion and reason as antithetical to one another (Rendón 2009). The latter put extra performative pressure on students of color, especially women of color. As such, students' containment was incited by affect-discourse and then reinforced and reproduced by classroom norms. Students recognized that containment as labor, something they were consciously doing, because it seemed like something they *should* do, even when there was lots of talk at the beginning of the quarter about fostering an honest dialogue about race that

exceeded the confines of national conversations about race. Moreover, students

craved a conversation that surpassed the impasses of national conversations, they

wanted something that could help them connect across difference and make sense of

the ambiguities and ambivalences of race in the 21st century (Holt 2000). Because of

that desire, many students told me that they felt their containment was a labor that

was inhibiting their desires.

That said, flatness did not necessarily signify constraint and emoting did not

necessarily signify freedom. For example, the student who posed this question did

not equate flatness with constraint; rather, he seemed to say that expressing outrage

seemed like what he *should* do (i.e., what is normative). His observation about

normativity points to the ways in which diversity discourse cuts both ways. On the

one hand, its focus on sensitivity and saying the right thing (Brown 2006, Ward 2008)

produces a racial paranoia (Jackson 2010) and aversive racism (Gaertner & Dovidio

2005) that makes silence and flatness normative. But on the other hand, diversity

discourse's push for granting voice, recognition, and authenticity (Gray 2013) incites

subjects to tell their stories, express their truths, and "be real." Emoting, in that latter

case, can also be normative. The sensitivity trainings made popular by diversity

discourse are materializations of its seemingly contradictory incitements—be careful

and speak your truth. With sensitivity trainings postulated as solutions to racism

(Brown 2006, Ward 2008), leaders of these trainings implore individuals to share

feelings about race and racism, but they do so unevenly. Often the underlying

assumption in these trainings is that white people need to become sensitized to and

empathetic with the struggles of people of color (Brown 2006, Leonardo & Porter 2010, Ward 2008). As such, these trainings ask for expressions of struggle from people of color and expressions of empathy from whites, a two-parted incitement that leads to vulnerability for students of color and voyeurism for white students (Srivastava 1994). Thus, expression and containment are two sides to the same diversity discourse coin, and the question "Am I a bad POC" is the normative at work.

I do not mean to reproduce that normativity in my argument about the flatness in traditional classrooms and realness in Rainbow. Clearly, as this student's question illustrates, norms of flatness can feel more freeing for some students than norms of more outward expression. But I am not making an argument about what students liked or preferred—indeed students in both Rainbow and the traditional classrooms liked their class—I am making an argument about what was normative in those spaces and what that normativity produced as effects—namely silence, especially from women of color, and an awkward tension and sense that they were avoiding something crucial for understanding the workings of race. For many students in the traditional classroom, the norms of flatness produced the need to do emotional labor to keep in some feelings they had about the topic at hand. For the students I interviewed, they *noticed* containment as labor because it countered what they were desiring, which was an honest conversation where they could wrestle with the difficulties and complexities of race. They doubted arguments about post-race

colorblindness and wanted to dig in more to the difficulty that lied beyond feel-good norms of diversity.

Moreover, I do not mean to mean to cast Rainbow as a space of freedom for all students, nor as another iteration of diversity discourse's emphasis on recognition, voice, and authenticity (Gray 2013). First, Rainbow does not promote visibility and recognition for its own sake, as diversity discourse promotes. Mr. Taylor and Rainbow leaders constantly remind students that they are telling stories in service of exposing and bearing witness to inequality, and that doing so is vital to survival, dignity, and self-definition for members of marginalized groups. And, as Rainbow students' involvement in other student groups and university politics show, their work of producing stories together also serves as a rehearsal for working together on issues outside of Rainbow. That is the ideal of participatory theater that Boal outlines in *Theater of the Oppressed* (1979).

Second, Rainbow is not a space of total freedom, absent of norms and instructions in how to feel. Students *do engage in emotional labor* by being humble about what they know and don't know, and by "checking" themselves and others about the power of certain words. They call their culture "realness," but that doesn't signify individual freedom from norms and work; it signifies the labor of taking risks, telling your story to people you hardly know, listening carefully, and sitting with difficult feelings that arise from other people's stories before responding. Together, they share in vulnerability and doing so is instrumental to their bond. It is also politically useful, an invited feeling (Peterson 2011). Therefore, doing realness *is*

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labor, but because it is a labor that they desire, define together, and invite of one another to overcome the impasses of diversity discourse and racial paranoia, they don't notice it as effortful and normative. Nonetheless, realness is normative, but one that they willingly sign up for. I'm sure that Rainbow self-selects students who want to engage in more intimate and difficult conversations with their peers, people for whom emotionality serves as a medium for learning (Chávez & Longerbeam 2016, Rendón 2009). Moreover, I am sure that a lot of students who go to Rainbow auditions (its first day of class) witness dozens of slam poets "spit" rhapsodic poems and conclude that belonging in Rainbow would require them to gush emotions. For many students, like the one to whom this vignette owes gratitude, such an impression would likely turn them away. In that way, realness culture, especially as it comes across on the first day of class, is exclusive. That said, a lot of students audition by prefacing that they are quiet and not interested in performing, but would like to join Rainbow for the community and for the opportunity to support a play backstage. At the end of the quarter during a reflection exercise, but there several students admitted that they never thought they would like a "touchy feely" setting like Rainbow. These students attest to the emotional labor that Rainbow requires, but not necessarily in a way that precludes quiet students from joining in and belonging.

Last, I will clarify that "realness culture" is not the same as authenticity politics that would indeed give the aforementioned student that he was "a bad POC." Rainbow students articulated realness as the invitation to express a range of feelings, flatness included. In fact, often flatness and somberness filled the room, and often for

an uncomfortable amount of time. That said, if flat affect filled the room for a while, it prompted the leaders to ask the students what they were thinking, feeling, and that they could "be real" here if they wanted to. That invitation always prompted more discussion that otherwise would have only existed in their individual minds. Therefore, while students were invited to talk and emote, the type of expression they performed was not dictated or differently rewarded or reinforced. Perhaps this can be said because Rainbow included a lot of effusive students who broke the ice and modeled a wide variety of emotional expressions in a classroom setting. Moreover, seasoned Rainbow students showed interest and engagement with those different emotional expressions, encouraging and calling back to speaking students through verbal and non-verbal communication. That is not simply authenticity politics where certain expressions and symbols are deemed "real" and others not. Authenticity politics draws narrow boundaries around what is normative (Appiah 1996, Jackson 2005), therefore "sincerity politics" better summarizes realness culture in Rainbow because it describes vernacular uses of "realness" where subjects invoke a sense of authenticity yet buffer that with a respect for mystery and indeterminacy of one's interiority and individual stylization of racial identity and meanings. Authenticity politics dictate, but sincerity politics invite dialogue as Rainbow does.

This vignette is important for clarifying that affect works in service of reproducing and transforming dominant discourses, and therefore, simply inviting students to emote does work to overcome common impasses in conversations about race. That is, if students in the traditional classroom just emoted more, that affect

could actually strengthen the reproduction of dominant discourses in the classroom. For example, if a student yelled or cried every time someone said "the wrong thing," that affect would likely bolster dominant diversity discourse by urgently reinforcing the notion that defeating racism means replacing justice and redress with sensitivity, respect, and careful speech (Brown 2006). Emoting itself, or forcing oneself to emote when it doesn't feel sincere (e.g., "Am I a bad POC for not feeling outraged?") is not transformative, but dialoguing around the feelings that people think should or should not have can be a way of further illuminating the social forces shaping their experiences. That is a primary goal of teaching sociology, but in order for that dialogue to transgress common impasses, classrooms need the right conditions. With norms that support students in expressing more-than-flat affect, examining their feelings and those of others for the purpose of learning (rather than knowing or performing "the right thing"), and using language that accounts for both commonality and particularity of experience and conditioning, sociology classes can reach their disciplinary goals by feeling together.

From the uncanny valley toward a felt sociological imagination

In the end, Rainbow teaches me that working with feelings can facilitate sociological objectives by pushing students to wrestle with the complexity of race in all of its varying and overlapping forms—in bodies, institutions, symbols, and structures. Thinking through feelings does not automatically individualize understandings of racism, it can complement and elucidate structural arguments

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rather than detracting from them. Attending to feelings in sociological knowing creates more nuanced and complex sociological understandings. In short, it helps us better "conjure" the social world and account for "complex personhood" (Gordon 1997).

Diversity discourse creates a rugged terrain for those of us who try to engage in critical pedagogies and teach about the social conditions that produce racism. In the case of Rainbow, producing plays and telling stories without contextualizing those stories or drawing out their social conditioning risks falling into a valley of recognition for recognition's sake (Gray 2013). And yet, there are risks to continually laying out a structural argument without attention to feelings—we can fall into an "uncanny valley." From robotics, the term "uncanny valley" refers to an unsettling feeling that arises when people encounter robots that resemble humans but lack the crucial aesthetic features needed for them to seem perfectly "real." Similarly, talking about race—something that is full of emotion—without showing any of that emotion approaches the real but misses something crucial, and in doing so that talk produces a strange feeling in the classroom. Moreover, this feeling intensifies when students of color are talked about, but not with (because of a fear of seeming "too emotional"). Students gave different names to this strange feeling (e.g., awkward tension, elephant in the room, sanitized talk), but I prefer "uncanny valley" because it conjures up the feelings that arise from the inherent contradiction of diversity discourse and its management of race and race talk—seeing race without

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seeing the violence that racism enacts on bodies, or, seeing racist violence without seeing the structure that produces violence.

In some ways, we could say that sociology is somewhat attached to the uncanny valley. That is, in an effort to elucidate invisible social forces at work in our everyday lives, sociology works to make the familiar strange, and that is where our critical edge lies. But I wonder if we could keep the critical edge that comes with making the familiar strange, but without producing unsettling feelings that suggest that our sociological stories miss something crucial, the textures of everyday experience of structure. I want to conclude by suggesting that we can have the best of both worlds—critical edge and resonance—by expanding upon what our "telling about society" (Becker 2007) looks like. Sociological knowledge, like all academic knowledge, is an act of abstraction, objectification, and translation between makers and users of knowledge (Becker 2007). Science transforms things that exist in context into decontextualized objects—"things we know" (Gordon 1997:22)—that will demonstrate what the scholar wants to show in their study, and this is true even in sociology, a study of context (Becker 2007). Sociology's imperative to observe, show, and prove means that the discipline cannot pay attention to, let alone "conjure," the "ghostly" parts of social life that exist in between the real and imagined, the individual and the institutional, the psychological and the social, the past and the present and the future (Gordon 1997). Feelings and other textures of lived experience are lost in that objectifying process (notwithstanding several fields within sociology that make feelings and everyday experiences their object of study). Thus, when our

sociological representations tell about society through our categorical objects, they approach the real—like the robot—but miss something important.

As feminist theories have shown, the process of scientific objectification creates a power relationship between the object and its observer (Barad 2003, Spivak 1999, Wynter 2003). This is definitely true in sociology classes where the students are often the objects of sociological knowledge (or at least closely related to those objects) *and* observers of that knowledge of themselves-as-objects. When students continually reference their personal experience in sociology classes, they do so to wrestle with this two-parted position of object and observer; they translate sociological knowledge in a way that looks more familiar. Telling stories is an act of resistance to scientific objectification, an effort to add texture and feeling back in to abstract knowledge, and a search for a sincere way to tell a sociological story about themselves that does not fall into the uncanny valley. I think we should embrace these student efforts in service of sociological objectives.

In other words, we can still make the familiar strange, but I think we should follow the lead of comedians in doing so. That is, comedians also make the familiar strange, but rather than using objectification processes to do so, they call upon context, texture, feelings, common experiences, and everyday assumptions. For example, when comedians tell stories, they paint a picture for the audience, a picture that is quite familiar and consistent with the audience's assumptions about the world. In fact, the image they create is so familiar that the audience does not realize it is being led toward an unexpected conclusion—the punchline. The punchline is

"strange" only insofar as it makes the audience realize how arbitrary our social circumstances are. In other words, what we take for granted or see as unremarkable—the familiar, the "normal"—is actually pretty strange. And by extension, that also means that things don't have to be the way they are; they could be different. That tension between the familiar and strange is what pleasurably tricks an audience into momentarily seeing the invisible social forces that led them, unexpectedly, to the punch line. Moreover, that comedic elucidation of social forces does not require objectification, indeed it requires an analysis of messy entanglement. In the end, the audience sees a more complicated picture of context, a sociological imagination with higher definition. As comedians do, we can make the familiar strange without losing site of the textures of everyday life.

In introductory sociology classes, we tend to teach our students as if they will be makers of sociological knowledge; therefore, we don't necessarily translate our sociological representations from those meant for makers of sociological knowledge into those meant for users of sociological knowledge (Becker 2007). Most students who take introductory sociological courses will not become PhDs nor majors (Zipp 2012); therefore, it makes sense to approach students as both makers and users of knowledge, and to translate more of our sociological representations for public use. That translation process does not necessarily mean "dumbing down" material, but it does mean bringing in texture, feeling, experience, and messiness back into sociological stories. Moreover, involving students in that translation process turns abstract knowledge into culturally relevant material (Ladson Billings 2014).

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The sociological imagination (Mills 1959) essentially asks students to do that translation work too. We can facilitate that translation process by mixing the methods and genres we utilize as sociological representations. Becker (2007) suggests that referencing sociological journals and books (meant for makers of sociological knowledge) as the basis for *all* classroom conversations limits the usefulness of that knowledge and precludes what can be understood as sociological. Therefore, he suggests assigning a variety of texts (e.g., photographs, films, observational notes, plays, journal articles, book chapters, ethnographic studies) and alternating what kinds of texts and genres we use to ground our class discussions and written assignments (Becker 2007). Similarly, Gordon (1997) suggests using literature to "conjure" more of the social and make "complex personhood" more legible. Accordingly, the fictive "enable[s] other kinds of sociological information to emerge" (Gordon 1997:25) by producing an "ensemble of cultural imaginings, affective experiences, animated objects, marginal voices, narrative densities, and eccentric traces of power's presence" (25). I have seen this development of sociological knowledge through the core course's reading of a novel and through Rainbow's plays and stories. Students developed a sociological imagination through discussing the gaps in a story line, the quandaries a character faces, or the subtle body movements and affectation in a voice.

I agree with Gordon and Becker's suggestions and think that by utilizing a variety of ways of telling and knowing about the social (Becker 2007), we can bridge the gap and address the shortcomings of both Rainbow and the traditional classroom.

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Perhaps sociology has become fixed on telling stories through its categories and terms to gain the mark of scientific objectivity and validity, eschew any dismissal of special interests (especially in controversial topics), and thus leverage objectivity in the service of critical, justice-oriented intervention in policy and practices. Yet, the critical and the felt need not be separate because "somewhere between the extremes of art and science lie history and biography" (Becker 2007:10) and the sociological imagination describes that space where histories and biographies overlap (Mills 1959). In her development of the concept of "haunting," Gordon (1997) also argued for sociology to reinvest in the sociological imagination, explaining that feelings between bodies and over generations weave history and biography together. She implores sociology to tell more "ghost stories" and I agree. Doing so can construct a sociological pedagogy that weds the best of Rainbow and the traditional classrooms together.

We should engage feelings in our teaching because feelings are there any way—in our students, ourselves, and our sociological knowledge. Sociological storytelling is always already melancholic. That is, our categories, like the scene from *13th* that I opened with, point to continuation—the long duration, stubborn reproduction, and uncanny resemblance of hierarchy, injustice, and suffering through time. We can lose sight of that long view when we focus our observations and analysis on what we can see in the present moment (e.g., institutional policies, common practices, attitudes), but our imperative to show how categories are reproduced, refashioned, and transformed reflects the long view. Our bodies do too;

that is, the haunting awareness of sustained suffering has settled in our bodies over generations and lives in feelings and sensations that often exceed expression in language. When we discuss race and racism in particular moments, that melancholia resurfaces. We can utilize documentaries (like *13th*), novels, and photographs to help us bridge that gap between what we can see in the present (i.e., from our sociological methods) and what we know in our bodies (and what we desire words to describe). And we can discuss those feelings—the unsettling invasion of the past into the present, the realization that we can change things but that it happens slowly and imperfectly, the recognition that we may not be able to know what the right thing to do now is. As in Rainbow, we can acknowledge and channel those feelings toward a humble sociological imagination and a coalitional desire to act, however imperfectly. To channel those feelings toward those ends, we need to speak directly and give voice to the melancholia—the felt long view—that our categories and our bodies represent.

When we incorporate more "ghost stories"—more *felt sociological imaginations*—into our pedagogy, we can resist intellectualizing race or "turning social relations into just the things we know" (Gordon 1997:22). Doing so ignores racism's violence (Leonardo & Porter 2010) and downplays an activist framework in scholarship (Ferguson 2012). Moreover, *felt sociological imaginations* are more "evocative and compelling" than sociology's standard way of telling stories through categorical objects (Gordon 1997:22); they produce affects that move and motivate students while meeting sociological objectives of critical analysis. That is, "ghost stories" bridge the sociological imperative to clarify, lift veils, and show cause with

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"making common cause with our objects and subjects of analysis" (Gordon 1997:21). "Making common cause," Gordon (1997) writes, "means that our encounters must strive to go beyond the fundamental alienation of turning social relations into just the things we know and toward our own reckoning with how we are in these stories, with how they change us, with our own ghosts" (21-22).

Therefore, incorporating more felt sociological imaginations would mean that students leave class with a deeply felt sense of their entanglement in the world and the impact of history on their lives and the lives of their peers. Gordon (1997) argues that such felt understandings also inspire a sense of shared responsibility and draw attention to "a something to be done" (202). Given the ways that Rainbow students "make common cause" (i.e., telling moving stories of "our communities," articulating "same struggle," building intimate bonds through that storytelling, and publically supporting one another's political projects), Gordon's work is helpful in that that telling about society in ways that resemble the fictive will not only "conjure" more (and thus generate more nuanced sociological knowledge), but it will also inspire a deeper sense of responsibility and motivation for action. Making common cause with objects of analysis in sociology will not, and should not, look just like it does in Rainbow Theater, but we can find our own way to make the familiar strange, throw the critical into relief, and make common cause. Let's feel-think our way there.

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