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From Hostility to Hospitality: Teaching About Race and Privilege in a Post-election Climate

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Abstract   Now more than ever the role of the other has been put into question and marginalized in a redefinition of an "American national self-protective identity" in the current post election climate. In philosophical terms, an identity of a radical other- implies that any change, any difference, any impurity can be conceived as posing a threat to identity. If a specific group of people is identified as preventing the self from being what it ought to be, the other is identified as a security threat. One option is to willingly conform to the assigned role as a threat. The opposite option I argue in my paper is one that can be achieved through the lens of a cosmopolitan framework of hospitality. By exploring the writings of French philosopher, feminist and psychoanalyst Luce Irigary's cosmopolitan pedagogy of difference rooted in the concept of hospitality from the point of view of education, I hope put forth an alternative phenomenological pedagogy, one that connects issues of positionality with those of an embodied anti-racist philosophy of difference. By using case studies from my own classroom, I hope to elucidate how educators can implement an anti-racist pedagogy in the current post election climate, by creating spaces for dialogue where students are engaging in an authentic discourse on the nature of their positionality.

Introduction: Current Climate of Hostility in Classrooms

In September of 2017, more than 300 students marched with Black Students United to Willard Straight Hall on a Wednesday afternoon and conducted a sit-in at Cornell University with a list of demands to the University's president Martha Pollack. The sit-in was

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in response to the arrest of a Cornell student who was charged with assault after a Black student said he was punched by a group of White men who had called him the N-word. The students' list of 12 demands included mandatory coursework on "privilege and power," the hiring of additional mental health personnel of color, and the banning of the Psi Upsilon fraternity from campus and converting its building into a cultural center for Black students (Bogel-Burroughs 2017; *Cornell Daily Sun*, September 20, 2017).

In September of 2016 at the University of Missouri, White fraternity members allegedly shouted racial and sexist slurs at a Black student group, according to the *Columbia Daily Tribune*. At East Tennessee State University, a White student placed himself into a Black Lives Matter rally wearing a gorilla costume and carrying a banana dangling from a rope, according to *Inside Higher Ed.* At American University in Washington, D.C., hundreds of Black students protested after two Black women were the victims of racial incidents, with a banana thrown at one of them and a banana left at the door of the other. Further, a former Penn State student named Nicholas Tavella pleaded guilty to felony ethnic intimidation, harassment, terroristic threats, and other charges when he asked a student if he was from the Middle East, then grabbed him by the throat and threatened to put a bullet in his head, as *The Huffington Post* reported. Tavella then invoked Donald Trump as his defense, claiming the presidential candidate inspired his hate crime. Finally, but not the least, the University of North Dakota has decided it will not punish White students who in two incidents posed in blackface and posted photos on social media (Love 2016).

By elaborating on Luce Irigaray's notion of dialogue through difference, specifically as articulated in her book *Teaching* (Irigaray 2008b), I hope to show how in her attempt to reinvent experience against the scientific determination of existence, she proposed a pedagogy of difference as a way to respond to the culturally dominant logocentric logic of experience produced through the idea of sameness and the power relations instituted in it.

For Irigaray, a democratic society involves everyone working towards creating a civil world together as citizens. Human difference for her is an irreducible involvement in a personal task that, as Oramus and Garcia (2012) stated, requires three complementary energies:

> The first involves the construction of a free and fluid subjectivity as an autonomous subject who is faithful to oneself; the second, the acceptance and openness to the other through respect, tolerance, and a fecund use of difference; the third, the construction of a meeting place with the other in a shared world. (p. 113)

Using examples from my own teaching, I hope to explain how by using Irigaray's concept of dialogic hospitality in the classroom, we can move from a climate of hostility to one that welcomes and articulates the otherness of the other within an ethical framework.

The analytic framework of my research includes the phenomenology of race, liberatory pedagogy, transformative and engaged pedagogy and the ethics of hospitality. I include the phenomenologist, Sara Ahmed's (2007) phenomenological orientation of "Whiteness" and her interpretation of Frank Fanon discourse on race as it is an extremely useful tool to discuss privilege. Using her framework, I re-pose the question of privilege and Whiteness to my students as a phenomenological issue, as a question of how it is embodied historically, as a ontological background to experience. Similarly, Fanon's work on phenomenology of race explains, after all, bodies are shaped by histories of colonialism, which make the world "White," a world that is inherited or already given before the point of an individual's arrival.

The liberatory pedagogy of Paulo Freire (Freire 1970) is another framework I utilize to explore concepts of oppression when discussing privilege and race in the classroom. All

educational experiences for Freire, including those of teacher and student, have to be examined in order to deconstruct their ideological assumptions and biases. Providing Freire's conceptual tools to my students further encourages them to engage in critical interrogation and unlearning of race, class, and privilege.

Using bel hook's pedagogy of reflection and resistance I encourage my students to create spaces for reflecting on their own experiences with issues of privilege and race in terms of their own positionalities. This involves an important rethinking of the ethical relation of self and other, which has become so pivotal in how students construct identity. The prioritizing of one's ontological context and situationality is the very condition of the openness to the other, and thus of ethics. As Krzysztof Ziarek correctly elucidates it is important to note that what is significant about this orientation is that "ethics in this case is not a question of morality and of a moral culture, but involves a transformative openness enabled and energized by the encounter with difference. It involves the relationships with other human but also, more broadly, the manner of being or dwelling in the world, an alternative ethos." (Ziarek 2007, 63)

For Irigaray the other's difference provides a new way of being and experiencing the other. By putting forth an ethics of cosmopolitan hospitality as openness to the other within an embodied context, my paper challenges a traditional understanding of diversity and multiculturalism. By engaging in reflective and dialogical practices as outlined in my methodological framework a privileged position of the subject is not presupposed. Instead students are encouraged to deconstruct their own belief structures and epistemological stance on issues pertaining to race and privilege.

Ali Michael, who is the Director of K-12 Consulting and Professional Development at the Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education at the University of Pennsylvania and the Director of the Race Institute for K-12 Educators, asked the following question when talking about the current climate in academia:

> So, does the political climate produce millennials that feel so free to be racist on social media and in public, or is it because of Trump, for example, that people are being more out with their racism, or is racism something that people are feeling more willing to express and then Trump is feeding on that and also stoking it? Or maybe it's unrelated to Trump. (Michael in Love 2016)

Michael is the author of *Raising Race Questions: Whiteness, Inquiry and Education* and co-editor of *Everyday White People Confront Racial and Social Injustice: 15 Stories* (Moore et al. 2015). In an attempt to understand the issue better, Michael referenced a book by sociologist Joe Feagin of Texas A&M University and Leslie Picca of the University of Dayton called *Two-Faced Racism: Whites in the Backstage and Frontstage*. (Picca and Feagin 2007). In the book, the authors developed a theory of "backstage" and "frontstage" racism, in which Whites have been taught to be more politically correct and less overtly racist in public, but still very much racist in private. Invoking Beverly Daniel Tatum, who is a clinical psychologist and the former president of Spelman College, Michael explained that White people do not choose to identify as White because they are not given attractive options. "You can be racist; you can be ignorant or you could be colorblind. Those are the ways that white people show up," Michael noted of the three categories Dr. Tatum used.

> Then (Dr. Tatum) says there has to be a fourth way. We have to let people know you can at least try to be anti-racist. That's another identity option, because what white people do is they don't even identify with their whiteness. They don't see it as connected to them. And they don't see it as something that benefits them, and so it's kind

of hard, because it's an invisible identity that they're not willing to get. (Michael in Love 2016)

According to Michael, part of the solution is developing more teacher education programs and creating more culturally competent instructors and college professors: "Being racially literate should be a requirement for any educated person in the 21st century," she insisted.

Is it possible then to teach anti-racist pedagogy in such a way that people will not be violent toward one another? How do we as educators and academics begin to undo racism and future oppression through the classroom experience? In his book *Education, Power, and Personal Biography,* (Torres 1998) Argentinian sociologist and educator Carlos Alberto Torres problematized the virtues of a liberal education and the concept that education is a neutral and an apolitical activity. Herbert Marcuse in his 1965 essay "Repressive Tolerance" argued that educators have a responsibility to be intolerant toward policies that promote oppression and marginalize people. For Marcuse, oppressive language is a symptom of capitalism, which relies on inequality of all kinds to survive. It persists, according to Marcuse, because of the false sense of democracy instilled in people from a young age. This false democracy is founded on a definition of pluralist tolerance that values all opinions equally. Such a definition of democracy and pluralism does not serve the cause of progress and liberation, but sustains capitalism's repressive status quo (Miller 2016). To quote Marcuse (1969) further:

> This sort of tolerance strengthens the tyranny of the majority against which authentic liberals protested. The political locus of tolerance has changed: while it is more or less quietly and constitutionally withdrawn from the opposition, it is made compulsory behavior with respect to established policies. Tolerance is turned from an active into a passive state, from practice to non-practice: laissez-faire the constituted authorities. It is the people who tolerate the government, which in turn tolerates opposition within the framework determined by the constituted authorities. (p. 82)

Discourses on multiculturalism and diversity are often used to promote dialogue on equity in a world in which conflicting ideologies and viewpoints are often at odds with each other. But as Sam Miller correctly believes, on what basis do pluralists think such "fair and tolerant" discussions take place? (Miller 2016) Given the current climate courses and policies on multiculturalism and pluralism alone are not sufficient to address the history of racism and oppression that have often been codified through institutions of education and higher learning. Instead, these uncritical discourses only reinforce the point that in the absence of decentering dominant narratives in our classrooms, the inclusion of marginalized identities and experiences leaves oppressive structures intact and, in fact, insulates them from criticism (Samudzi 2016).

Unfortunately, current discourses of inclusion reinforce this notion of possession by not facilitating the proliferation of identifications necessary to rethinking and refreshing identity as more than a limit of attitude. As a result, curricula that profess to be inclusive may actually work to create new forms of exclusivity, if the only ideologies presented are those defined within standardized definitions of normalcy. The assurance of tolerance within this context implies intolerance by the fact that acceptance of the other in this case presupposes the appropriation of the other into the self, thereby annihilating the other into a projection of the self. (Rasheed 2007)

In my experience as an educator working with teachers, when discussing controversial issues in the classroom, they often continue to take the neutral position of not privileging any particular position over another, even when those positions are racist,

sexist, and homophobic. Marcuse would be critical of the teacher's neutrality not only as unacceptable but as harmful to students, because it perpetuates the erroneous belief that every opinion is equally valid. History has taught us that is not always the truth.

Marcuse posited that educators should be intolerant of racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of prejudice; to have a liberal discussion, we must be illiberal toward these things. Indeed, there cannot be an open discussion with people who are inciting violence, racism, and sexism (Miller 2016). When violence as manifested in incidences such as what happened at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, when Heather Heyer, a young activist was killed after in a domestic terrorist attack when a car drove through a crowd of mostly college students and activists protesting the white nationalist march through their college town becomes a common occurrence and xenophobic propaganda dominates the media and the public sphere, teachers cannot afford to be neutral. Donald Trump's plan to ban Muslims from entering the United States; his policies for deportations of undocumented immigrants and DREAMERS; his violent, patronizing language and misogyny; his statements describing Mexicans as "killers, criminals, and rapists"; his call to torture and kill the families of terrorists—these are real threats to real people, which should be denounced as intolerable to our ideas of freedom and equality (Miller 2016).

Hooks (1994) articulated a similar concern in her book *Teaching to Transgress*, as she believed that not to engage with issues of race, class, and gender also constitutes a political choice. The challenge to multiculturalism then is to create a space where all voices can be heard. As she said, "to listen to one another, is an exercise in recognition" (p. 41). According to hooks, when teaching enables transgressions, it is in that very movement "which makes education the practice of freedom" (p. 12). Similarly, Erickson (2015) argued that classrooms should not be "safe spaces" but places of dialogue and activism that are continuously challenging and confronting issues of social injustices in society. It is crucial then, instead of being apathetic to or fearful of current societal and political oppressions, we challenge ourselves and each other to confront systems that further oppress us. The question then becomes how do we as teachers, through our pedagogy, ethically confront the concrete political realities of our times? Furthermore, is it really the role of teachers to take on this daunting task?

Irigaray's work insists on the importance of difference and desire (rather more than need) in hospitality. One of the main theses of Irigaray's work has always been the importance of recognizing that there are (at least) two subjects. Historically, and still today, the problem has been that one dominant subject has imposed its worldview on the other. Issues of difference, for Irigaray, constitutes a new epistemology of thought, given that Western philosophy has been ruled by the paradigm of sameness (Oramas 2012). For this reason, Irigaray argued that it is essential to move on to a new paradigm, the paradigm of two; human reality is based on two, not one, she claimed. Thus, difference within human relations for her must become the principal axis for democracy, which is articulated in her book *Democracy begins between two* (Irigaray 2001). This argument is taken further in *Sharing the World*, (Irigaray 2008b) which stresses the importance of at least two worlds corresponding to the two subjects and two possibilities of transcendence:

> As soon as I recognize the otherness of the other as irreducible to me or to my own, the world itself becomes irreducible to a single world: there are always at least two worlds. The totality that I project is, at any moment, questioned by that of the other. The transcendence that the world represents is thus no longer one,

nor unique. And if the gesture of projecting the totality of a world can remain a gesture that has something to do with transcendence, to recognize the partial nature of such a transcendence is even more transcendental. (p. x)

 In *Sharing the World*, Irigaray insisted, typically, that we should nurture ourselves, that we should be authentic to our own mode of dwelling—and yet be willing to be changed by encounter. (Still 2012). This fidelity according to Judith Still, "is a precondition for welcoming the other and, if possible, for going beyond traditional hospitality which reserves a space for the guest in the place where we live, but assumes that the good guest will not transform our world or our horizon." (Still 2012, 41) In other words, a hospitable welcome for Irigaray entails the creation of a third space as a consequence of my meeting with that of the other—whoever that other might be. To quote Judith Still:

> We do not just attempt to meet the other's needs (even though that alone is of course preferable to a "closed door" policy), for we attempt to consider what it might mean to share the world. Such consideration represents a real challenge to all of us, but one that deserves to be taken seriously at least as a thought experiment. For the challenge to be met, the first step might be to listen to others and to hear what they have to say. This insight is particularly important for those in education, which is of course a form of hospitality; instead of assuming as academics (teachers, administrators or managers) that our only role is to instruct and demonstrate—which is a form of repetition of the same—we may need to learn how to listen. (41)

Returning to the initial precondition of fidelity to the self, active listening does not mean being overwhelmed by others or agreeing with them; rather, it is an experience where both dialoguers simultaneously speak and remain silent. Irigaray claimed to fully experience the other:

> I will have had to arrange for the coming of the other, to prepare a space in time in which the other can appear to me, in which I consent to receive and welcome him or her; but I cannot foresee, for all that, how the other will modify my existence—my already-have-been and thus my future—the development of my life. This will depend on the embodiment that will follow our meeting, on the engendering of the one by the other that will result from the encounter between our two singularities: of their welcoming each other, their fertilization of one another. This will depend on a hospitality offered to the other, including in myself, a hospitality that is without pre-established dwelling: entrusted to a letting be. (Irigaray 2008b, p. 93 in Still 2012, p. 50.)

 Furthermore, in order to avoid reducing difference to identity while being authentic in recognizing our obligations to the other, it is essential to frame cosmopolitanism as identical with an ethics of hospitality enabling a non-dialectical account of identity and difference in cosmopolitanism. (Baker 2009) Irigarayan hospitality goes beyond an obligatory or a moral response to an other's needs to instead an intimate sharing in difference, made possible by the cultivation of self-affection by both subjects. (Still 2012). It is via this act of intimate sharing in difference that educators can construct an anti-racist pedagogy that will allow their students to be open to the other while understanding the nature of their own positionalities.

A Narrative of Teaching About Race and Privelege: Dialogic Case Studies

I teach at a small liberal arts college in an affluent suburb. My students are from neighboring towns that can be classified as middle- to upper middle-class and predominantly White. For quite a few of them, I am the first teacher who has even brought up issues of privilege and encouraged them to think through their own oppression. My courses shed light on how social and cultural factors, like race, gender, and social class, exist in the everyday world of schooling. Students are engaged in readings that expose the inequities existing in schools. They are also asked to reflect critically on their own schooling experiences. This means taking a hard and a self-reflective look at how racism, classism, and sexism offer undeserved privilege to some, while others—inspite of their expertise and experiences—are not recognized, ignored, or oppressed.

Paulo Freire's (1970) educational philosophy emphasized that all knowledge should refuse to take the social and the cultural matrix as a given. All educational experiences for Freire, including those of teacher and student, have to be examined in order to deconstruct their ideological assumptions and biases. By providing conceptual tools to both teachers and students, he urged the critical interrogation and unlearning of race, class, and privilege. Freire called this process of learning and unlearning, action and reflection *praxis*. Its main objective is to "name" reality and act to change it. According to him, "to speak a true word is to transform the world" (p. 68). Acting and reflecting on the world in order to change it create a space of transformative thinking and a liberatory pedagogy.

After reading Paulo Frere, I began to conduct an exercise with my students to name issues of oppression in their own lives and in the larger society. It was interesting to note that in offering examples of personal stories of oppression, they almost never included oppression pertaining to issues of diversity, i.e., race, sexuality, and/or class. Below are some responses from students about their experiences with oppression and implicit and/or explicit bias:

- We had a quiz 1 day, and he thought it would be funny to make all the word problems with my name in them- but they all had a negative "story" to them. One of them was something like "Student X failed math and now she works at a fast food restaurant, calculate the number…." (you get the point). This was an instance that I was oppressed.
- Oppression refers to someone who does not possess humanity. Someone who has lost the understanding of freedom and integrity. Freire stated that these people are dehumanized and only think of themselves. When I was in middle school I lived in a Hispanic community, being Caucasian I was often confused when the other students would always speak Spanish to one another. In many instances, I was left out and looked down among because the other girls thought I would be stuck up. I was left out and lonely for a period of time. I felt like I didn't matter among my peers. I eventually made friends with some of the girls through a group project. The girls and I found out that we had common interests and were allot alike. Lucky my experience turned into a positive one, I even learned some Spanish from my new friends in the progress.
- I was taking an elective course and it required a lot of studying. My grandfather passed away during the course and I was very upset missed a few days of class and my teacher was not understanding even with the note. I ended up having to drop the class. While I do agree that education should be one of a student's top priority's life does happen sometimes and teachers need to be understanding of certain situations.

As the above examples illustrate, often my students' understanding of diversity was a "surface diversity," i.e. "the presence of different 'looking' people, without a sincere acknowledgement of different ideologies or perspectives." (Samudzi 2016) Moreover, even in their own understanding of diversity, the intersectionality of race, gender, sexuality, and disability was never discussed.

For a majority of my students, I am the first faculty of color they have met, the first Muslim, the first feminist, and the first person breaking a lot of their preconceived stereotypes, and this has caused much anxiety on their own part about thinking through their own issues of privilege. I am happy to report that the progress and growth curve in my class has been substantial from the start of the semester to the end. Students at the beginning of the semester might not know the conceptual underpinnings surrounding oppression, but by the end of the semester, they are calling out Islamophobia in the media, racism in the counternarrative to "All Lives Matter," and addressing LGBT issues in K-12 curricula, to give a few examples.

But this particular Fall 2016 semester, I noticed something stronger than the usual resistance to issues of marginalization that were brought up in class. The uneasiness generally associated with talking about issues such privilege had hostility associated with it. In articulating their discomfort with issues on "Black Lives Matter" or readings on LGBTI, students were responding with comments that were overtly and uncomfortably racist, sexist, or homophobic, almost making me wonder if the current climate was emboldening some students to voice views that they historically would have refrained or hesitated to admit in a classroom space.

As a result, I faced a twofold challenge. First, I wanted to show the relevance of these issues in the construction of their own identities and in relation to their own realities. Second, I wanted to undertake the task of deconstructing their hostility and anger in the class to a place where I could constructively work with them as well as provide them with antiracist pedagogic tools to understand their conceptual framework. Simultaneously, I was being acutely aware of my own intersectional racialized identity: as a Muslim, a woman, and a faculty of color positioned in a place of academic privilege. The lens of *intersectionality* in this context is important because it refers to the critical insight on the part of my students and myself that issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age are interconnected to one's formation of identity.

Collins (2015) defined intersectionality as a concept that "operates not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena," that in turn shape complex social inequalities. Moreover, it involves understanding how social structures and cultural representations interconnect. According to Collins, "knowledge projects are not free-floating phenomena; they are grounded in specific sociological processes experienced by actual people" (p. 1). Intersectionality then, as a form of critical praxis in my classes, combines scholarship with informed practice, where the theoretical framework is a context from which to implement action. Both scholarship and practice are recursively linked, with practice being foundational to intersectional analysis (p. 5).

I also relied on Ahmed's (2007) phenomenological orientation of "Whiteness" to contextualize my discourse on race. Ahmed advised: "Consider what 'whiteness' does without assuming white-ness as an ontological given, but as that which has been received, or become given, over time. Whiteness could be described as an ongoing and un- finished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they 'take up' space" (p. 150). How then does Whiteness involve orientation? By drawing on my embodied experiences of inhabiting a White world as a non-White, Muslim, gendered, and racialized body, I explored how Whiteness becomes worldly through the noticeability of the arrival

of some bodies more than others. Ahmed turned to Frantz Fanon's work which directly addressed the question of the relation between phenomenology and race. Take the following description:

> Where phenomenology attends to the tactile, vestibular, kinesthetic and visual character of embodied reality, Fanon asks us to think of the 'historic-racial' schema, which is 'below it'. In other words, the racial and historical dimensions are beneath the surface of the body described by phenomenology, which becomes, by virtue of its own orientation, a way of thinking the body that has surface appeal. (Ahmed 2007, p. 153)

 In this sense, Ahmed explained that for Fanon, race "interrupts" the corporeal schema. Alternatively, we could say that "the corporeal schema" is already racialized; in other words, race does not just interrupt such a schema but structures its mode of operation. Fanon's work showed, after all, bodies are shaped by histories of colonialism, which make the world "White," a world that is inherited or already given before the point of an individual's arrival (Ahmed 2007).

To illustrate the use and implementation of this phenomenological pedagogy in my classroom as a way to disrupt and re-orient my students' relationships to each other, the world, and their own place of privilege, I share examples of two classes—one undergraduate and the other doctoral—that were conducted post-election. The interactions elucidated the anti-racist conceptual tools I provided to my students in order to deconstruct the structures of how privilege and race operated in public spaces.

It was the day after the election. I walked into my 11:00 a.m. undergraduate class and asked how everyone was feeling. The responses ranged from "I'm fine" to "studying for midterms." Not one person had mentioned the results of our democratic elections from the day before. I smiled and asked them again if there was anything they wanted to share or articulate in class about any recent events that seemed to have affected them or their lives in a profound way. My undergraduate class had been struggling the whole semester trying to understand the concept of privilege, specifically as it related to issues of race, economics, sexual orientation, and disability. This was, in fact, a concept that my students were not only having a hard time grappling with but also resisting against in very personal ways. This was demonstrated by one email I received after teaching "Black Lives Matter." The email said:

> Hello Professor, I just wanted you to know that the last class really upset me, but not in the way I believe you wanted us to be, especially with that video at the end. I feel this class is becoming a left-wing politics class as opposed to an education class. I feel as if I'm supposed to carry some kind of white privilege whenever I enter the classroom. This makes me less motivated and frankly, a bit insulted. I just wanted to express that and I hope you don't find me rude but if your future classes are going to be that upsetting, I don't think I can continue. I hope you understand what I'm trying to say and I know it's not your intention to make me uncomfortable, but this is how I feel.

In response to her email, I asked the student if she would volunteer to write a reflective piece on her own analysis of why she felt so angry and uncomfortable in class while considering how epistemic oppression might play out against and within these parameters. According to Hooks (1994), the mission of an engaged pedagogy is to allow students to self-actualize, to connect "the will to know with the will to become" (p. 19). By creating such spaces of reflection and resistance in the classroom for this particular

student and others like her, I provided an opportunity to help her explore an alternate relationship to the other by re-orienting her own relationship to privilege in terms of her own positionality. Despite our diverging views and ideologies, I was using the students' resistance as an opportunity to facilitate a discussion about oppression and privilege offering this particular student the conceptual tools to examine and problematize issues of race, identity, and otherness.

In my doctoral class on philosophies of race and diversity, we had just finished studying decolonization and the problematics surrounding imperialist conceptions of race. We were discussing the critique of multiculturalism and neoliberal identity politics upon finishing the book *Interculturalism and Multiculturalism* (Meer et al. 2016), which focused on integration policies in Canada as a case study to discuss immigrant rights.

The class was comprised of a majority of intellectually curious, academically strong young professionals ranging from teacher educators to administrators to superintendents. The composition of the class was predominantly a homogeneous non-diverse student body who seemed unfazed when I walked into class and asked if there was anything they wanted to talk about. To my surprise, the same answers greeted me: "No" or "I have a question pertaining to the upcoming test." No one brought up the election. Coincidentally, we were scheduled to discuss Islamophobia in that class.

When I brought up the issue of the election, most of them expressed support for the current president. Not able to wrap my head around the reality of my students' choice, (my own implicit bias) I asked if they thought any aspect of the course itself was diametrically opposed to what was being espoused as policies by the new president. With the exception of one student who incidentally happened to be minority, the class did not seem to think there was any contradiction at all. Deeply curious, I continued to ask if what they had learned in my class to date (i.e., homophobia, Islamophobia, and other forms of oppression) informed their relationship to privilege. Their replies were affirmative and they seemed genuine in their commitment to issues of difference, especially regarding their own students or someone they knew who was the victim of marginalization. They made it a point to say that included me as a Muslim and every other Muslim in the country.

On extensive back-and-forth dialogue with them, it became clearer to me that these students did not seem to fit the racist, xenophobic, and homophobic stereotype of Trump supporters—a belief which, until then, I held. For both my undergraduate and doctoral students, I did not fit their stereotype of the "radical, terrorist Muslim" waging war on them or being oppressed by my religion. Through my own anecdotes as a Muslim talking about the Muslim ban and how it affected me personally, my students became exposed to an example of racism that problematized entrenched societal perspectives which dehumanize and marginalize people of color and other vulnerable groups in the media. I used my own example to emphasize Ahmed's (2007) point that to be not White is to be not included (extended) by the spaces you inhabit. Interchanging Ahmed's example with the TSA en route to Karachi, Pakistan, with my own experiences of being detained numerous times at customs. I suggested that my name slowed me down—a Muslim name. As Ahmed (2007) similarly said, "If we do inherit habits, we can also inherit what fails to become habitual: to inherit a Muslim name, in the West, is to inherit the impossibility of a body that can 'trail behind', or even to inherit the impossibility of extending the body's reach" (p. 161). For the body recognized as "could be Muslim," which translates into 'could be terrorist' (Ahmed 2004) the experience begins with discomfort: spaces we occupy do not "extend" the surfaces of our bodies. To quote Ahmed (2007)

That a phenomenology of "being stopped" might take us in a different direction than one that begins with motility, with a body that "can do" by flowing into space. For bodies that are not extended by the skin of the social, bodily movement is not so easy. Such bodies are stopped, where the stopping is an action that creates its own impressions. Who are you? Why are you here? What are you doing? Each question, when asked, is a kind of *stopping device*: you are stopped by being asked the question, just as asking the question requires that you be stopped. (p. 161)

 Ahmed added that those who get stopped are "*moved in a different way*" (p. 161).

My personal narratives infused with philosophical underpinnings offered my students an insight into my own experience with racialization. At the same time, they were also provided with an alternative viewpoint that led them to rethink and re-orient their relationship to problematic stereotypes and ahistorical sound bites, that they were often exposed to in the media and the larger public space. These exchanges with my students also offered me a space to negotiate my place of privilege from a place of power as an academic and a racialized identity—a Muslim woman of color. All the while, this was helping my students unlearn their own place of privilege in relation to me and to each other as well as to society at large.

In a way, articulating my experience of not being White in a White world gave my students a different viewing point, and further disorientated how racialized identities are oriented. Engaging with my students in an intersectional post-election dialogue on issues we might vehemently oppose created specific pedagogical tools to deconstruct our differences from a re-orientation of hostility to one of hospitality.

Conclusion: Towards an Anti-racist Pedagogy of Hospitality

From the above examples it becomes obvious that to engage in dialogue across cultural differences requires a notion of listening that is not just limited to oral language and words. Communication within such a context requires understanding and being sensitive to the subtle nuances that often remain untranslatable into words. (Rasheed and Welles 2012) According to Irigaray:

The matter is one of agreeing to be questioned by a different meaning, by a world whose sense remains invisible to us but which we agree to welcome, by which we agree to be questioned and touched when listening to it. Listening, then, does not amount to grasping something in order to integrate and order it into our own world, but to opening one's own world to something or someone external and strange to it. Listening-to is a way of opening ourselves to the other and of welcoming this other, its truth and its world as different from us, from ours. (Irigaray 2008a, p. 232)

As Irigaray believes, we can face up to the situation by substituting "listening to" for "looking at" in any dialogue. Listening, then, does not simply amount to understanding something in order to integrate it into our own world, but to opening one's own world to something or someone external and strange to it. Listening to is a way of opening ourselves to the other and of welcoming this other and their world as different from ours. (Rasheed and Welles 2012)

Johanna Leinius observes that given the challenges often perceived in dialogue across cultural and 'civilizational worlds,' cosmopolitanism opens up a dialogical space that is separate from intercultural dialogue because it 'involves the transformation of

self-understanding and not merely the recognition of other perspectives.' (Delanty and He 2008, 324 in Leinius 2014).

On the part of students, it involves a reflection on the role of privilege and/or oppression as well as an acknowledgement of one's positionality in relation to that. This includes the transformation of individual subjectivities towards cosmopolitanism reflexivity and practice beyond the unilateral inclusion of the 'other' into already fixed categories. (Lenius, 58)

According to Hansen (2011), a cosmopolitan orientation to the world "signifies the human capacity to be open reflectively to the larger world, while remaining loyal to local concerns, commitments and values" (p. xiii). By exploring the concept of cosmopolitanism from an education perspective, Hansen noted the conditions under which the shifting meanings of identity as Other can be understood in the classroom. He asked us to re-envision our orientation to the world, "through which people can respond, rather than merely react, to the complex and sometimes intense pressures of globalization'" (pp. xiii–xiv). Within such a context, learning can be seen as a continuous process, an unpredictable and unending way of living in relation with others, and as a transformative experience that presupposes a new orientation to the world. Although it provides, as Hansen stated, no solutions to contemporary issues and dilemmas, it does enable a way "of looking, thinking and acting, that makes possible better rather than worse responses to the world" (p. xiv). It involves "learning from rather than merely tolerating others" (p. 1).

Consequently, learning as a racialized pedagogy, on the part of my students, involved acquiring the tools to articulate discomfort within an anti-racist context. In my role as a professor, I was compelled to reflect on how to talk about privilege without alienating my students or pigeonholing them, as Michael (in Love 2016) said, into one of the undesirable categories of Whiteness in which they do not fit and that, more importantly, do not reflect their viewpoint. Hooks (1994) in *Teaching to Transgress* stated that successful pedagogy must connect the scholarly with the personal. Students need to understand how their knowledge will connect to their own lives and their own oppressions in order to engage with the material. Hooks explained what the effects of an engaged pedagogy can have on students. She spoke of speaking radically while using the oppressor's language. Initially, speakers can rethink language by inverting it to become a language of protest. Subjects can experience two acts of hearing: understanding language as the oppressors' tool, and then re-hearing it as a potential site of resistance (p. 170).

Ahmed (2007) claimed that the desire for resistance is not the same as the desire for good practice—and in my case, the desire for a good anti-racist pedagogy. Yet, both desires can involve a defense against hearing about racism as an ongoing and unfinished history that we have yet to describe fully. To quote Ahmed:

> We still need to describe how it is that the world of whiteness coheres as a world, even as we tend to the "stresses" in this coherence, and the uneven distribution of such stress. A phenomenology of whiteness helps us to notice institutional habits; it brings what is behind, what does not get seen as the background to social action, to the surface in a certain way. It does not teach us how to change those habits and that is partly the point. In not being promising, in refusing to promise anything, such an approach to whiteness can allow us to keep open the force of the critique. It is by showing how we are stuck, by attending to what is habitual and routine in "the what" of the world, that we can keep open the possibility of habit changes, without using that possibility to displace our attention to the present, and without simply wishing for new tricks. (p. 165)

Within this context, Irigaray (2008a) firmly believed that to recognize and respect the other as other can correspond to both a phenomenological transcendence at work in the construction of a future and to a transcendence that lies in someone or something which remains irreducible to us. As she further stated:

> Entering another relation to transcendence asks of of me as a professor—responsibility and effort to understand my student's point of view and vice versa. The task becomes to transform ourselves at every moment in order to respect and care about the subsistence and becoming of both myself and the other, that is two radically different subjects. The journey is now more internal and the other is no longer the one—the One—whom I have to become, even though I know that this Other is unattainable. On the contrary the Other is the one whom I must keep different from me. It is by maintaining the difference between or two subjectivities that I construct transcendence, mine and that of the other. (p. 239)

It is the primacy of this ethical relation that justifies its application to education. Education redefined as relational takes on a new meaning. The teacher still has something the student needs, but the student/other is what the teacher desires. To give priority to the ethical relation is to value discourse above comprehension. To approach the other, what I do not and cannot know is to be taught.

For Irigaray, every identity is relational. To be a subject for her, is to ultimately be in relation with someone else. Her vision of a dialogic process is contextualized in an ethics that entails what it means to be a speaking, embodied subject. The ontological occurrence of the speaking subject already contains within it the possibility of the call toward the ethical project of existing in difference. A cosmopolitan pedagogy within this context articulates a universalized claim of rights and justice, but not in such a way that reduces individual identity to a single static framework. Irigaray's concept of cosmopolitanism is one that overcomes the imminent/transcendence dichotomy. According to Eva Ziarek, maybe this is a truly cosmopolitan philosophy, in that it can converge the immanence of individual experience and the transcendence of ideas and concepts, valuing and recognizing individual difference while uniting everyone in a diverse community. (Malabou and Ziarek 2012).

In conclusion, the reframing of a cosmopolitan ethics of hospitality implies that the encounter with the other is open-ended, relational and embodied. It does not reduce the other to an image of the self. Instead, ''the other interrupts the system of cross-references of my world, re-opens my horizon and questions its finality. As such the other undoes the familiarity that was mine.'' (Irigaray 2008b, p. 97) A cosmopolitan ethics of hospitality, as an embodied anti-racist pedagogy allows a way to participate with cultures that push towards openness instead of closure and values diversity and ambiguity rather than singularity and purity (Lu 2000; Mehta 2000). It is an orientation towards the other encapsulated in the very idea of hospitality. Choo (2014) argued that the concept of cosmopolitanism as hospitality can be a force that can disrupt violent hostilities towards each other. Moreover, to push the boundaries of openness towards the other, a hospitable imagination is therefore vital.

An anti-racist pedagogy of difference within this context goes beyond Freire's 'banking education' where students are passive recipients of knowledge transfer from teacher to student. (Freire 1970) Instead by actively engaging in an embodied pedagogy of hospitality students are using the classroom as a site of social, political, ethnographic and gendered inquiry. The overarching goal being the creation of anti-racist pedagogical tools, through which students and teachers both are systematically deconstructing their own ontologies of difference in relation to each other and themselves. By re-orienting their understanding

to issues of race and privilege the aim then is to move away from discourses of 'diversity,' 'multiculturalism' and 'tolerance'. And instead, move towards a framework of embodied positionalities that take into account the messy intersectional realities of our current post election climate, while providing students and educators with a framework of hospitality that disrupts violent hostilities toward each other.

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