

No Education

Curtin 108

Panel Chair: Nan Kim

Lisa Cerami (Nazareth College of Rochester)

“The Collegiate *No*: Teaching Resistance in an Election Year”

At the start of the semester, my institution issued a seemingly unprovoked reminder to faculty and staff concerning our responsibility to remain politically unpartisan in light of our tax-exempt status. “In accordance with IRS rules” an administrator wrote, faculty partisan activity could jeopardize our “tax-exempt status or incur taxes imposed on political expenditures.” Forbidden, then, was any use of resources or facilities to endorse a candidate, donate money, fundraise, publish or distribute partisan material, or “engage in any other activity that favors or opposes any candidate.” This prohibition was understood among faculty members as to prohibit the on-campus uttering of political opposition even outside the context of the classroom. In answer to the call put out by the Center for 21st Studies, I would like to reflect on the conditions of possibility for pedagogical-political refusal, the refusal of terms set by extra-curricular mandates. There are a myriad of ways in which a contemporary institutions of higher education de-prioritize their educational or pedagogical mission, in favor of corporate interests. To appeal to the sanctity of “non-profit status” undermines the capacity of an educational body to resist anti-humanist or anti-science dogma and legislation, and presents an interesting logical paradox. How can resistance manifest in the classroom situated at an institution that asserts a (fictional) ideological neutrality? My paper would reflect on this question in the form of a mediation on my experience teaching in an election year.

Xin Huang (UW-Milwaukee)

“Decolonizing Feminist Knowledge Production: Anglophone Privilege and the Gesture of Refusal”

This paper addresses Anglophone privilege in feminist knowledge production, and explores alternatives for developing reciprocal intellectual exchanges between different feminisms in multilingual forms. In particular, it explores the political and epistemological potential opened up in the gesture of refusal of translation into English. It argues that the gesture of refusal questions the unequal distribution of intellectual labor among feminists, and the presence of the other tongues is a protest that disrupts the business as usual of English as the language of global academic exchange.

This paper also regards the gesture of refusal as an invitation to monolingual English-speaking feminists to reflect and suspend their linguistic privilege, and participate in the democratization of feminist knowledge production. It notes that the gesture of refusal does not mean to promote parochialism or to ghettoize knowledge production, rather, it aims to facilitate reciprocal cross-cultural and cross-linguistic exchange. Furthermore, the gesture of refusal may take many forms some of which have been in practice, such as hybrid text, multilingual writings and publications. If the gesture of refusal helps to decenter Anglophone discourses from outside, the incorporation of non-English terms in English publications can be understood as another gesture of refusal, ones that may transform Anglophone discourses from within. This paper also suggests that the gesture of refusal needs to be supplemented with multilingual feminist pedagogy, with the development of multilingual teaching and texts, and the promotion of multilingual scholarship.