

THE FREEDOM INSURGENCY: A STUDY OF THE STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM MOVEMENT

Andrea Carter
University of Idaho

This paper, examines students' rights groups and their impact on higher education. With the publication of ACTA's report *Defending Civilization* after 9-11, these groups' criticisms, actions, and challenges to university and college policies respecting human rights provide implications for professors' and instructors' pedagogy and the practice of academic freedom. Four prominent students' rights groups are profiled: Students for Academic Freedom (SAF), Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), NoIndoctrination and Campus Watch. Their objectives appear to oversimplify the purpose of dialogue and the qualities of critical investigation, ironically using the language of human rights such as diversity and oppression. The work of these groups, however, can serve to further qualify the role of education in a democracy.

Thus Women's Studies are not about an academic inquiry into the nature, history and sociology of women. Instead, Women's Studies is the Party of Feminism on campus. Similarly, Peace Studies is not about a scholarly inquiry into the causes of war and peace. It is the Party of Anti-American, Anti-Military, Sympathy for the Terrorists.

—David Horowitz (2006, p. 5)

Universities and colleges promote disciplined critical analysis to prepare students as citizens of a democracy; therefore, a pedagogy that incorporates democracy is vital. Critical pedagogy creates democracy in the classroom through shared responsibility for learning between the students and the teacher (Freire, 2000). In higher education, critical pedagogies, such as feminist pedagogies and multicultural pedagogies, construct democracy in the classroom by encouraging students to voice opinions, ask questions and relate personal experiences with a focus on power and difference which influence inequality in existing social systems. The instructor facilitates student discussions with the objective of finding solutions to the problems of inequality.

While students need time to adjust to this practice, many find listening to other students' opinions, questions, and experiences strengthen their independent thinking. However, some students resist this practice (Markowitz, 2005). They find the disagreement, argument, passionate dis-

pute and equally passionate resolve to be threatening to their beliefs (hooks, 1994). These students challenge instructors to clarify how the dynamics of classroom dialogue allows students to participate in the democratic process, exchanging many points of view, even points of view which conflict with one another.

This conflict between points of view is the focus of recently emerging students' rights groups. These organizations promise students a way to protest against their instructors and institutions without participating in the democracy of the classroom. Organizations such as Students for Academic Freedom (SAF), Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), NoIndoctrination, and Campus Watch claim to fight for students' rights, providing venues for opposition and empowerment, yet these groups actually circumvent the democratic process of classroom exchange and dialogue. So the relationship between education and democracy is actually weakened when students use the services of these organizations in place of the classroom or other democratic processes. Voicing points of view has value based on the idea that a democratic society develops through the practice of interpersonal exchange. The freedom to voice opinions and question the opinions of others lies at the heart of democratic integrity. If students are unable to participate in the exchange with the very individuals they seek to address, how can education work to serve their learning?

STUDENTS' RIGHTS GROUPS

The freedom insurgency movement is the phenomenon of an emergence of groups like SAF, FIRE, NoIndoctrination, and Campus Watch. These groups function in a similar fashion to demand academic freedom and rights for students. They work to publicize and eliminate what they term oppressive teaching, courses, and university and college codes and policies. But the references for this oppression are generally gender-based, racial, and class-conscious critiques and students resist these critiques because they re-examine canonical knowledge. Since the educational process involves resistance to ideas, it's important, especially in higher education, to deal with how students reject concepts or ideas through dialogue. The service provided by these groups removes students from such a dialogue, withdraws them from the messy but intellectually necessary business of the democratic process. Students are not given the justice they want or allowed to fully participate in the education they need as citizens of a democracy.

SAF, FIRE, and NoIndoctrination share directives in their stated missions. The rhetoric in their statements implies that colleges and universities have lost their vision as ivory towers of objective, pure knowledge even when postmodern thinking has moved constructions of knowledge far away from this view. Universities and colleges, these groups argue, have turned to indoctrinating students, creating political fiefdoms for faculty, valuing only radical politics and serving faculty rights instead of students' rights (About Us, 2003). Colleges and universities would appear to be anything but asylums for free independent thought. Colleges and universities are no longer institutions that provide forums for democratic discussion and free expression; they no longer value integrity but practice political abuse (About Us, 2003). Finally, colleges and universities invade students' minds (About FIRE, 2005), attempting to recast student thinking to mirror the ideology of faculty (About Us, 2002).

FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS, FREE SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The primary focus for the students' rights

groups, or freedom insurgents, are First Amendment rights, free speech, and academic freedom. These groups contend that faculty's free speech infringes on the rights of students since faculty occupy a position of power. But free speech guarantees equal rights. Free speech in a democracy operates in an open forum without infringement to anyone. In addition, free speech is the invitation to voice criticism, to question the power that enables the rights of the citizenry. It is a means of dialogue for the whole nation with its government.

The framers of the Constitution set forth this precedent of free speech so that expressions of criticism or questions about the operation of government would not be silenced. Citizens have the right to question government to avoid the kind of undermining the colonists perpetrated against the British Empire for its tyranny. Baker (2005) concludes that despite its necessity, a government can betray its citizens, as the founding fathers determined which is why they insisted on the healthy distrust of the government. The critique of power is one of the chief mechanisms by which a democracy operates, to insure against unfair, inhumane conduct. Being a patriot means not blindly trusting in government (Baker, 2005). Such perceptive tenants have continued to enfranchise citizens because at the birth of the nation many people were not endowed with the vote or civic equality.

A high quality education that not only promoted scholarly integrity but encouraged observance and access to truth was necessary for citizens to engage in criticism and effectively question the government. Madison, Adams, and Jefferson demanded that "citizens must be educated, informed, and highly vigilant" (Baker, 2005, para. 15). The responsibility of higher education even today creates a citizenry which makes informed responses to the efficacy of the governing body.

The 1915 *Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom* by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) stipulated that researchers and teachers in higher education freely teach and publish without intrusion except by professional peer interest for ethical or quality concerns (Weidner, 2003). These principles insured that professors would maintain the integrity of scholarship while advancing the education of stu-

dents. Sometimes that integrity means defending positions considered culturally, socially, and politically unpopular. Academic freedom means freedom from intimidation; it means the freedom to develop theories and ideas without interference from the state legislature, the college or university administration, or academic departments (Hamilton, 2004). Since argument, challenge, and critical thinking can make students feel uncomfortable, the task for educators is to provide an environment that acknowledges and addresses these feelings as part of the process of critical dialogue.

Professors must uphold critical inquiry despite the frustration students may feel when challenged by a philosophy or discipline or interpretation. "A basic purpose of higher education is to endow students with the knowledge and capacity to exercise responsible and independent judgment" (AAUP, 2003, p.1). Inevitably, "in the spirit of preparing critically minded students for life in a democracy" preexisting beliefs and understandings can be opposed (Denvir, 2003, p.1). This is because fields of critical thinking have expanded approaches to critiquing systems of economic, political, and social power. In many ways this expansion has brought about further understanding of how to increase the possibilities of education and encourage a more inclusive and representative population, in short, creating a more democratic academic community of students, faculty, and scholarship. However, this expansion has also generated criticism as a response to the changes in the pre-existing traditions in terms of courses, research, and intellectual conduct. The current student freedom insurgents' movement appears to be such a response, but it does not help a student direct an outright exchange in class or confront a professor.

On the surface it appears that students have articulated the vocabulary and the ideology behind the protest against academic oppression due to faculty choices in teaching, in demeanor, in addressing students through the course or in terms of an academic environmental policy. However, the groups are headed by professionals not students. David Horowitz, the founder of SAF is the president of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture and editor of *Frontpage* magazine. Daniel Pipes,

who wrote about a Muslim take-over and the hygiene problems of darker-skinned immigrants (Johnson, 2002), founded Campus Watch and is a columnist for both the *New York Sun* and the *Jerusalem Post*. Luann Wright, a former science teacher and concerned parent, founded NoIndoctrination. Alan Kors and Harvey Silvergate are the cofounders of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) and co-wrote *The Shadow University* (Kors & Silvergate, 1998). Kors is a history professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and Silvergate is a lawyer and columnist. Ann Neal is a lawyer and the president of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA). These individuals define the academic freedom abuses, speaking for the student groups, creating the appearance of a mass student revolt. The work of these groups has actually led to the reduction of the rights of students, the rights of faculty, the temper and quality of education, and the work of colleges and universities to provide students with the practice and experience of applying knowledge as effective critical citizens responsible for the advancement and maintenance of a national democracy.

REVISITING THE CONCEPT OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION

Historically, a liberal education is defined as the study of arts and sciences based on the ancient Greek tradition of posing questions (Wallin, 2004/2003), but education is organic based on human beings, and because the course of human cognitive behavior has changed so has education. Higher education incorporated the advance of humanist philosophy within the social fabric. A liberal education is still concerned with Classical subjects of historical, aesthetic, and scientific disciplines; but the critical investigation, stances, and new paradigms of thinking have expanded the understanding of history, art, and science with political, economic, and social critiques. Most liberal arts courses maintain the inheritance of the Renaissance and Enlightenment to interrogate the nature of authority and perception (Lazere, 2004).

The transformation of traditional pedagogy into a myriad of pedagogical designs follows from this expanded educational understanding that uses

social, economic, and political critiques. Professors and instructors in higher education have more choices as they exercise academic freedom to teach in the best possible way and this includes critical pedagogies such as emancipatory, feminist and multicultural pedagogies framed in their everyday world. Paulo Freire's (2000) critical pedagogy began as a theory of equality between the students and the teacher. Teaching practice incorporated students' experiences and ideas to further learning. Critical pedagogy gave rise to a range of pedagogies that incorporate Freire's theory but maintain a more specific focus on the content and analysis of power. Feminist pedagogies, for example, focus on gender inequality, but also critiques inequalities of race and class. The advent of these pedagogies reflects the political and social changes since the passage of Civil Rights to address the past inequities in American education. "If the public is not educated, people's rights with respect to racial justice will be vulnerable to assault or insidious erosion powered by ignorance" (Edley, 2000, p. 3). Acknowledging issues of race, gender, and class must continue because infringement of human rights in America is still prevalent.

The variation and inclusion of subject matter, teaching approach, and scholarly research allows for a further democratization of a classroom even as the curriculum still provides the traditional makeup of historical, aesthetic, and scientific constructs. The missions of the universities and colleges provide for the education of a more inclusive democratic society, opening up the classroom to controversial issues as a means to further democracy. The job of educators is to work for inclusion and this demands that educators must teach the protection of human rights (Edley, 2000). Critical pedagogies in particular work to question their own practice, taking into account students' sense of oppression by the instructor. The objectives of critical pedagogies like feminist pedagogies are to allow people the freedom to engage in the democratic process by including all points of view.

The freedom insurgents' movement claims that this quality of the direction of education constitutes un-patriotic, un-American, and un-democratic activity. Although the birth of this movement began in the late 1990s with FIRE, it

appears that the other students' groups were created after the events of 9-11, and the subsequent claims of un-American and un-patriotic behavior by college and university educators emanates from a liberal political bias (Valandra 2003; Gonzalez 2001; Wilson & Cox 2001). Within this claim of liberal bias is the confusing use of the concept of "diversity" perhaps one of the most loaded terms both for the defenders of academic freedom and the freedom insurgency movement.

WHICH DIVERSITY IS DIVERSITY?

In the Senate hearing of the 108th Congress of 2003, a four-person contingent led by ACTA (American Council of Trustees and Alumni), president Anne Neal, who claims universities operate with a liberal bias, testified in support of her report "Defending Civilization," that there was a serious lack of what she and her cohorts termed intellectual diversity (US Senate, 2004). Neal previously worked as General Council and Congressional Liaison of the National Endowment for the Humanities. She and Jerry Martin, a former philosophy professor at the University of Colorado, co-authored "Defending Civilization." This report was a publication commissioned after 9-11 which alleges that the liberal bias in colleges and universities promotes un-patriotic and un-American attitudes for college students. The lack of diversity Neal refers to is the lack of representation for conservative opinions in higher education. Curiously, the term diversity borrows from the language of Civil Rights and inclusive policies to recognize how women and minorities suffered from inadequate or untenable social conditions resulting in educational deficits.

Diversity at the university was the movement through Civil Rights to include more students of color, women, and the working classes in higher education. Policies against discrimination were founded in new codes of conduct on campuses, advocating for sensitivity to human rights. Speech codes, codes of conduct including sexual harassment, and anti-discrimination were adopted out of respect for and as an invitation to a college and university population that was more powerfully representative of the country. In conjunction with diversity was the term "multiculturalism"

which captured diversity in gender, ethnicity and ability.

Neal's charge at the Senate hearing was that the term diversity should also recognize conservative thinking or political affiliation, and her belief was that this component of diversity was not addressed; thus, the academic freedom of students, students' rights to a diversity of thought, was spurned by biased academic liberals, who advocated unpatriotic and un-American stances. Therefore, students rights' were oppressed by the college or university as a whole (ACTA, 2001; US Senate, 2004; Gonzalez, 2001). Neal and her contingent told lawmakers that these human rights codes and anti-discrimination policies actually undermined free thought (US Senate, 2004).

The liberal bias argument asserts that professors no longer teach the traditional classics of Western Civilization and American History; instead, courses use critical inquiry, a method of analysis to explore inequalities of race, class, culture, and gender. Even though these critical methods are used to further understand the multiple influences shaping the humanities, Neal calls these approaches "trendy," insubstantial and without rigor (US Senate, 2004; ACTA, 2001). Her team's conclusion is that traditional courses have been entirely eliminated, rather than realizing it is the approaches to subjects of traditional study, or pedagogies, which have changed to question the traditional subjects in order to better comprehend the increasing range of scholarly concepts. Neal was supported by the testimony of three other individuals: Gregg Lukianoff, Director of Legal and Public Advocacy for FIRE, Robert Johnson, a history professor who teaches at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and Anthony Dick, an undergraduate student in philosophy and cognitive science with a concentration in neuroscience, also testified, but could only provide examples of hearsay (US Senate, 2004). Neal said the universities and colleges have crossed into territory unfit for students to learn, meaning that from her perspective the prejudice of liberal professors and instructors forces students to mold their ideas to satisfy the liberal bias. To make sure higher education reverses direction, she advised that academic freedom be controlled

by trustees. In addition to this, the codes and other policies must be eliminated as they further deny students equality to voice conservative agendas and opinions (US Senate, 2004).

During the hearing, there was no mention of the historical need and precedent for the codes and policies which were instituted to uphold the civil rights of those who were the target of racial and sexual harassment having been the target of such harassment in every setting within the culture, including education. Neal's team also did not address how the termination of codes that promote social justice would increase academic success.

PRACTICES AND QUESTIONS ABOUT PRACTICES

The students' rights groups share similar practices in the ways in which they seek justice. They offer students the means to state offenses experienced in the classroom. They also display instructors' and professors' names, courses, and descriptions of teaching behaviors and content focus deemed oppressive or autocratic. In considering these practices, however, questions arise as to the success of the methods and the true nature of the organizations' services.

Giving Students a Voice

The groups argue that it is both the faculty and the policies and codes in higher education which are at fault. Having identified these sources as the major culprits, the groups (SAF, FIRE and NoIndoctrination) provide opportunities for students to express their outrage by filling out forms or discussion threads online. In theory this activity would seem to would lead to a resolution for the student; however, it's unclear what measure of resolve students receive by filling out the forms provided by SAF and FIRE or the discussion thread offered by NoIndoctrination.

Students can go to SAF's Academic Freedom Abuse Center link (http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org/comp/complaints_form.asp) to report abuses such as an imbalance in reading lists, lectures that are only representative of one side, or grading that reflects student disagreement with a professor's politics ("SAF Complaint Center," 2003). These complaints are posted and

available for viewing. In a case of indoctrination, a student accused a professor of abuse in a peace studies course because the professor taught only non-violent approaches to conflict (Jacoby, 2005; Gitlin, 2005). Republican students claimed abuse when they received lowered grades from liberal professors (Hebel, 2004).

Students can also fill out a form for FIRE, but FIRE is only interested in complaints that have lawsuit traction. FIRE has two strategies for reparation: to file a lawsuit against the university or to write the university explaining the possibility of a lawsuit. FIRE has actually won what it terms victories solely through the threat of a lawsuit, confronting Princeton for unfair religious affiliation policies (Newmarker, 2005) and Dartmouth for punishing students who sexually harassed female students (Jaschik, 2005). FIRE has won lawsuits in cases against SUNY Brockport involving speech codes ("First Amendment," 2004) and Ohio State University for discrimination codes (Bollag, 2005).

NoIndoctrination provides a discussion thread for students to describe problems with low grades on assignments, professors' beliefs dominating class time, or the narrow focus of a particular course with a sample reading list. By providing this thread, NoIndoctrination provides a place for students to speak out ("Mission," 2003).

The problem with these approaches to airing students' problems of injustice is that the groups are actually circumventing communication between the students and the professors and instructors. Professors and instructors are unaware of the groups, their sites and their links to students' grievances. Without a dialogue, students seem to be simply adding to a stockpile of support for the assertions of the groups and their existence. For all the sincerity students are voicing, without the ear of the professor, instructor, or department, it seems as though for many students all that is offered is a chance to build up their own frustrations and then continue to be ignored.

Naming Names

Another practice shared by groups is a public pillory approach by posting names and even more intimate information about professors and instructors on their websites. NoIndoctrination

posted the names of 85 professors (Marcus, 2003). But the students' claims of abuse and cruelty at the hands of professors didn't take into account the general balance represented through the variety of different ideologies on college and university campuses (Hamilton, 2004). Campus Watch documents anti-Israel and anti-American teaching, especially in history, political science, Middle Eastern studies departments, and even a women's studies conference because it included pro-Palestinian speakers (Ahmad, 2005). When Campus Watch posted dossiers of specific professors, the professors were harassed (Steinman, 2002; Ahmad, 2005) and even received death threats over the telephone (Ahmad, 2005).

Although SAF doesn't post profiles or lists per say, they do direct students to investigate their professors in ways that seem to stretch respect for privacy. Students are instructed to find the political party registration of faculty in social studies, humanities, and any fields dealing with social, political, or economic issues; examine the reading lists for classes; have a sympathetic faculty inform on missing texts; interview other students on abuse; identify the funding for student activities; and list commencement speakers over the past 10 years ("SAF Handbook," 2003).

The public pillory approach appears to suggest crimes have been committed by the professors since the use of the pillory is associated with guilt. The listing of names may seem like a kind of justice, but are the students benefiting from this in the classroom? Directing students to investigate their professors seems to encourage the bias of the students. In effect it seems to be using one bias against another rather than giving students an opportunity to learn.

To Serve the Students or To Serve Something Else?

Through reflection and analysis, there seems to be a stockpiling of information on colleges and universities without any concrete justice for students. Could all of this proof that colleges and universities are working against the success of students be serving a different purpose, a purpose for the people who are in charge of the groups?

FIRE appears bent on eliminating legally

required university speech codes and policies which were created to end racial and sexual harassment and discrimination on campuses nationwide (O'Neill, 2003). In their case against Ohio State University, although the code against discrimination is still in effect, a Christian group at OSU has been allowed by special precedence to claim sincere religious conviction as justification to discriminate against gays and lesbians from joining (Bollag, 2005).

The primary focus of SAF seems to be David Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights and his Student Bill of Rights. The Academic Bill of Rights is a legislative text written by Horowitz which wrests academic freedom from faculty and places it in the hands of administration and trustees (the same position as Anne Neal of ACTA in her Senate hearing). It warns faculty who have the intent to indoctrinate students and charges faculty with the task of only transmitting knowledge to students ("Academic Bill," 2003). This bill is pending in fourteen states as well as the U.S. House of Representatives (House Concurrent Resolution 318 and House Resolution 609, National and Legislative Texts, 2005). This legislation is in direct opposition to the AAUP's Academic Bill of Rights. The AAUP describes Horowitz's logic as "inappropriate and dangerous" in that the bill "seeks to distinguish indoctrination from appropriate pedagogy by applying principles other than relevant scholarly standards" (AAUP, 2003, Academic Bill of Rights, p. 5).

Finally, the objectives of Campus Watch are stated unapologetically to promote pro-Israeli and pro-American stances in the study of the Middle East (About Campus Watch, 2002). Campus Watch has also entered the congressional arena. It successfully lobbied for the passage of HR 3077 which cuts Title IV funding for Middle East Studies in higher education (Ahmad, 2005).

LANGUAGE HIERARCHY, AGENCY STRUCTURE AND A RECRUITMENT OF TERMS

The language tactics employed by the freedom insurgents relies on the inherent design of dichotomy value, by which narratives are told and which are not, and how terms are destabilized

when a force is threatened (Taylor & Hardman, 2004). The English language construction has a built in system of rank and comparison which makes for a kind of automatic assumption that fuses "good" with being "the most important" and those not considered "the most important" as "not good" (Taylor & Hardman, 2004). This kind of over-simplified value system is used in stressing the "good" of students which leaves faculty as "not good" in the system of ranking. This dichotomous thinking directs attention in narratives where stories of the warrior, and those in charge of making war, are glorified (Taylor & Hardman, 2004). Alternative stories are disposed or silenced since acceptance of the traditional stories are "good" and non-acceptance is "not good." It is these subtleties of thinking which emancipatory pedagogies question and challenge.

Unfortunately, even when the existing structures are challenged, in terms of language or leadership, the challenge can be overpowered (Taylor & Hardman, 2004). This is the case in the use of terms "oppression" and "diversity" used to challenge the system. Once, these terms were part of the alternative narratives fighting or circumventing the hegemonic design. But these terms have been overtaken and now serve the dominant narrative.

In using the word "oppression" the accepted definition has changed through use by the freedom insurgents. Oppression is actually a control over groups that are not in power. Yet there doesn't appear to be a lack of traditional teaching methods based on a transmission model. Instructors practicing critical pedagogies generally experience student resistance because students have never been exposed to ideas of feminism, race consciousness, or classist critiques previously in their educational history or at the college level. The claim of oppression also begs to be questioned in terms of a liberal/conservative divide. There appears, nationally and in the university culture, a nearly equal population on either side. It also seems unlikely that liberal professors can simply turn out great numbers of liberal citizens stamped in their mold; "if liberal college professors and administrators have long indoctrinated students, how do we explain then that [the US] is the way it is—

fairly balanced between liberal and conservative views” (Knight, qtd. in Kehe, 2004, p.12).

Another term undermined by the freedom insurgents is “diversity”. A touchstone of multicultural and progressive educators, the term and concept of diversity like the term oppression has changed meaning. Diversity chiefly defined the positive celebration of the differences in ethnicity, culture, gender, and physical ability to be honored and respected. Diversity was a means for expanding the power to groups who were constitutionally valued but politically, economically, or socially unable to share power. Ways of teaching, expansion and inclusion of texts and topics which reflected the difference in terms of classroom population, and recognition of America’s national “face” vastly improved the nature of college and university education. The term “multiple perspectives” stands as an inclusive concept that recognizes a range spanning from the right to the left.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Instructors using critical pedagogy must continue their conscientious interrogation of their practice, to recognize and attend to the possibilities of oppressing when occupying a place of power as a teacher (Lather, 1992). Jennifer Gore writes (1992) that teachers practicing critical pedagogies will better serve their aims by recognizing “humility, skepticism, and self-criticism” in working toward the aims of sharing power in the classroom (p.68). This demand to welcome criticism of one’s practice needs to be made clearer to students as classrooms engage in demanding debates.

The academic problem with Horowitz’s SAF and the other groups is their promotion of an ideology which views teaching in an elemental manner without recognizing how teachers work to question their practice. Concepts such as patriotism and nationhood, for Horowitz, lack a complexity because all that is needed is a transmission of terms. This simplicity is exemplified in Horowitz’s comments that professors’ and the academy’s liberal bias discourages college students from dedicated nationalism. But it seems that an honest examination and dialogue that engages in the difficulty of democracy is really the focus of his con-

demnation. “For Horowitz, the slippery slope begins with questioning one’s country, which leads to criticizing it, and potentially concludes with committing treason” (Denvir, 2003, *Leftist Agendas*, p. 6).

The irony is that Horowitz’s seemingly sympathetic corps, conservative students, do want exposure to multiple perspectives. Denvir’s (2003) extensive conservative student survey revealed that “most [of the students] seemed to respect political diversity among the professoriate and the right to academic freedom despite their objection to ‘liberal bias’” (Student Conservatives, p. 1). Students even defend critical scholars like Noam Chomsky because of the need for a range of ideas (Denvir, 2003). So is the academic freedom of faculty, the freedom of pedagogical expression and design to bring about critical inquiry, truly oppressing students?

In any system, a position of power can offer the ability to oppress. What seems ultimately important in answering this question is that healthy pedagogies always require critique. Critical pedagogies recognize the ease with which a teacher’s power can enable oppression, so a constant analysis of practice and empathy for students new to critical critique is paramount. Markowitz (2005) explains that “we accept as ‘truth’ that which reaffirms our limited conception of self,” so looking to “other” experience challenges people’s conceptions which result in fear (p. 42). But working through the fear can help students build character and stand up for their ideas. If a group or a teacher does that work for the student rather than allowing the student to do that work independently, there is really no character to build, and ultimately, no democracy, just people unable to express themselves (Gitlin, 2005).

REFERENCES

- AAUP. (2003). Academic bill of rights. Retrieved May 30, 2005 from <http://www.aaup.org/statements/spchstate/statementsbillofrights.htm>
- About Campus Watch. (2002). Retrieved June 20, 2005 from <http://www.campus-watch.org/about.php>
- About FIRE. (2005) Retrieved May 30, 2005 from <http://www.thefire.org/index.php> arti-

- [cle/4851.html](#)
- About Us. (2002). Retrieved May 30, 2005 from <http://www.noindoctrination.org/aboutus.shtml>
- About Us. (2003). Retrieved May 30, 2005 from <http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org>
- Academic Bill of Rights (2003) Retrieved May 30, 2005 from <http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org>
- ACTA (2001) Defending civilization: How our universities and colleges are failing America. Retrieved July 14, 2004 from <http://www.goacta.org/publications/Reports/defciv.pdf>
- Ahmad, M. I. (2005) Campus watch. *Spinwatch*. Retrieved June 15, 2005 from <http://www.spinwatch.org/modules.php?name=Encyclopedia&op=content&tid=321>
- Bollag, B. (2005) Choosing their flock. [Electronic version] *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 51 (21) A33+.
- Baker, C. (2005). Ward Churchill and the imminent destruction of American higher education. *Dissident Voice*. Retrieved June 20, 2005 from <http://dissidentvoice.org/Feb05/Baker0207.htm>
- Denvir, D. P. (2003). Reluctant foot soldiers: America's undergraduates rebuff opponents of academic freedom. [Electronic version] *Academe*, 89 (3), 33-39.
- Edley, C. (2000). Intellectual workers and essential freedoms. [Electronic version] *Academe*, 86 (5), 23-25.
- First amendment (2004) *Administrator*. [Electronic version] August 2004, 5.
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. NY: Continuum.
- Gitlin, T. (2005) Permission to speak freely. [Electronic version] *Mother Jones*, 30, (2)
- Gore, C. (1992). What we can do for you! What can 'we' do for you: struggling over empowerment in critical and feminist pedagogy. In Luke, C., Gore, J. (Eds.) *Feminisms and Critical Pedagogy*. Pp. 54-73. NY: Routledge.
- Gonzalez, R. J. (2001). Lynne Cheney-Joe Lieberman group puts out a blacklist. *San Jose Mercury News*. Retrieved June, 20 2003. <http://www.commondreams.org/views01/1223-05.htm>
- Hamilton, K. (2004). Academic freedom's thin line. [Electronic version] *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 21 (2), 34-36.
- Hebel, S. (2004) Patrolling professors' politics. [Electronic version] *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 50 (23) A18+.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress*. New York: Routledge.
- Horowitz, D. (2006). Willful misunderstanding. *FrontPageMag.com*. Retrieved May 1, 2006 from www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org
- Jacoby, R. (2005). The new pc. *The Nation*. Retrieved April 4, 2005 from www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20050404&s=jacoby
- Jaschik, S. (2005). Freer speech at Dartmouth? Retrieved June 15, 2005 from <http://www.thefire.org/index.php/article/5655.html>
- Johnson, J. (2002). Campus watch web site witch hunts Middle Eastern studies professors in the US. *World Socialist Web Site*. Retrieved June 15 2005 from <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/dec2002/camp-d30.pdf>
- Kehe, M. (2004). Brainwashing on campus? *Christian Science Monitor*. 96 (125) 12.
- Kors, A.C., & Silvergate, H.A. (1998). *The shadow university*. NY: Free Press
- Lather, P. (1992). Post-critical pedagogies: a feminist reading. In Luke, C., Gore, J. (Eds.) *Feminisms and Critical Pedagogy*, pp.120-137. NY: Routledge.
- Lazere, D. (2004). The contradictions of cultural conservatism and the assault on American colleges. [Electronic version] *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 50 (43), B15+.
- Makson, L. (2005). CUNY promotes anti-Christian hatemonger. *FrontPageMagazine*. Retrieved June 15, 2005. <http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org>
- Marcus, J. (2003). Online 'blacklists' of anti-US faculty win. *Times Higher Education Supplement*. Retrieved June 20, 2005 from http://www.monabaker.com/pMachine/more.php?id=1238_0_1_0_M
- Markowitz, L. (2005). Unmasking moral dichotomies: Can feminist pedagogy overcome student resistance? *Gender and Education*, 17(1), 39-55.
- Mission (2003). Retrieved May 30, 2005 from <http://www.noindoctrination.org/mission.shtml>
- O'Neil, R. (2003) ...but litigation is the wrong response. [Electronic version] *Chronicle of*

- Higher Education*, 49 (47), B9+.
- National and Legislative Texts (2003). Retrieved May 30, 2005 from <http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org>
- Newmarker, C. (2005). Princeton recognizes Christian group initially denied campus sanction. Retrieved June 20, 2005 from <http://www.thefire.org/index.php/article/5656.html>
- SAF Complaint Center (2003). Retrieved July 12, 2005 from <http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org/comp/listComplaint.asp?by=date>
- SAF Handbook (2003). Retrieved June 20, 2005 from <http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org/texts/SAF%20handbook%20final%202.pdf>
- Steinman, J. (2002). University professors labeled anti-Israeli by Campus Watch site. *Chicago Maroon*. Retrieved June 15, 2005 from http://maroon.uchicago.edu/news/articles/2002/10/29/university_professor.php
- Taylor, A., Hardman, M.J. (2004). War language and gender, what new can be said? Framing the issues. *Women and Language*, 27 (2), 3-19.
- US Senate (2004). Is Intellectual diversity an endangered species on America's college campuses? [Electronic version] *Hearing Before the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, 108th Congress*. GSPO.
- Valandra, E. C. (2003). Remember 9-11! [Electronic version] *American Indian Quarterly*, 27 (1&2), 420-428.
- Wallin, J. D. (2004/2003). Searching for a liberal education. [Electronic version] *Academic Questions*, 17 (1), 73-78.
- Weidner, D. J. (2003) Academic freedom and the obligation to earn it. [Electronic version] *Journal of Law and Education*, 32 (4), 445- 473.
- Wilson, R., Cox, A. M. (2001) Terrorist attacks put academic freedom to the test. [Electronic version] *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 48 (6), A12+.

Andrea Carter has taught composition and literature at community colleges in the Pacific Northwest, focusing on alternative discourse/multi-genre writing. She holds a B.A. from UCLA, a M.A. from UC Davis, and is working to complete her Ph.D. in Education at the University of Idaho. She currently teaches interdisciplinary humanities and technical writing courses at the University of Idaho in the English Department.