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Preface

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Preface

Bernadette Marie Calafell

More than ever, identities matters.

For some of us they have *always* mattered.

But now, it seems struggles and fights around identity or what some call "identity politics" are everywhere.

Whether it manifests as attacks against historically marginalized communities everyday through events like Charlottesville, the continuous killing of African Americans by police, or the increasing rise of white supremacist movements, it's clear that identity has become significant for all of us. Other identities, those of historically marginalized groups, have been the frequent target of the unethical, dangerous, and irresponsible political regime known as the Trump administration, all the while failing to outwardly acknowledge its own investment in white nationalist and supremacist movements. *Black folks are killed every day doing mundane things that the majority of us take for granted. Trans women of color continue to be killed simply for existing. Where is the outrage and outcry?*

Within the halls of academia, attacks and backlash against identity and intersectionality continue (Lethabo King 2015; May 2015). *I know these attacks quite well.* Simply speaking, empowering Others and speaking truth to power has never been so important. Thus, more than ever we need careful unpacking of power and identity, such as those included in this volume. We must move beyond simplistic constructions of "identity politics"; which itself has become a site of contest meaning and in some cases "fighting words." The analytic or lens through which these complex identities and "identity politics" are explored is through critical pedagogy.

More often than not, studies in pedagogy, and even in critical approaches, still center the experiences of a white, able-bodied, cisgender, heterosexual

male instructor who comes into a classroom of mostly white, able-bodied, cisgender, and heterosexual students. Furthermore, difference is framed as something the instructor must negotiate or “deal with.” This mythical normative instructor is also seen as value neutral, when we all know that no one walks into the classroom ideologically free. It just doesn’t work that way. *This has been my ongoing frustration as a former student and as a faculty member. When will the field catch up to shifting demographics? When will “difference” not be constructed as a problem?* As I have asked in my own work, “When will we all matter?” (Calafell 2010), meaning when will we move beyond superficial engagements with difference and the assumption that as instructors we share the same experiences or identities in the classroom? It is hard to find space or investment in a field when you fail to see yourself represented in it. Those of us who are Others are always mindful of our difference, not simply because of our own self-awareness, but because other students, staff, other faculty, and administrators will make sure we know we are out of place in a university system that was never made for us in the first place.

This volume is a step toward a vision of an intersectional approach to critical pedagogy as it offers layered and thick intersectional critical autoethnographies that attest to the experiences of varied intersectional Others in the classroom. They use their personal narratives to stand against or reverberate alongside the larger cultural, political, economic, and social landscape. The chapters included in this book provide us with vulnerable and embodied experiences from instructors who literally put their bodies and identities on the line every time they enter the classroom, especially in an environment that has become increasingly antagonist toward difference and higher education in general. During this anti-science and anti-humanities moment (or should I say movement), we need to listen to these voices as they disrupt master narratives of one-dimensional identity and simplistic framings of higher education. *They call us not only to listen, but to act and be accountable through co-performative witnessing. Will you accept this challenge? Will you accept their call for response-ability?*

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