
One Classroom: An Introduction

Friend, these are the times
that reasons fail, straight lines,
credos and the clearest maps.

Mark Vinz, "Sleepwalking," *Climbing the Stairs*.¹

I teach history to university students, and this book is about what goes on in my classroom. In the age of the culture wars, this is no longer the remote and obscure setting that it once seemed. In my classroom, as in thousands of others across the country, the student body is increasingly diverse. Related to this new diversity is an intense and potentially explosive political atmosphere. When controversial subjects enter the class—whether these are international conflicts, hotly debated political or social questions, or the clash of deeply held moral orientations or group identities—someone is likely to be offended, someone is likely to complain. The very possibility of discussing such matters in an atmosphere conducive to learning cannot be taken for granted. A class can break down, and the teacher is vulnerable to accusations that he or she has been insensitive or biased—serious charges in today's climate.

This book focuses throughout on the question of how we can teach, whether we can teach, such controversial subjects to today's students. The approach is informal and personal, with anecdotes drawn from my own classroom experience. These anecdotes are not meant simply as reminiscence or self-reflection but are used to provide a sociological view of the classroom. This is a way of countering the more abstract and theoretical, and more especially polemical, tone of many recent books about teaching.

The following chapters examine these problems from many different angles, resulting in a varied, even complex presentation,

operating sometimes on several levels at once. But each of the approaches leads back to the central problem. The teacher, the students, the subject matter, and the medium of language itself, all enter into the analysis, not only in isolation but as they interact. The task here is to dissect and reconstitute the daily, practical processes of the classroom. To accomplish this, some passages will refer to the substantive material of my courses, drawing from, say, South African, West African, or New Zealand history for examples. Other sections then will raise pedagogical issues, proposing strategies designed to prevent conflict and breakdown. In this guise we look at the difficulties that now exist for arguing by comparison, developing critical reading skills, or framing rules of discussion. As well, conceptual discussions run through the chapters, with sections examining the difficulties of using and understanding words like *racism*, *nationalism* and *imperialism*.

However various the presentation in different parts of the book, the single task throughout is to show how teachers might create favorable conditions for free and open discussion, to open out a space where there will be, as Josephine Miles wrote,

Coherence of agreement and difference,

. . .

To keep a precarious gritty life between chaos

And bland entropy, in which we can prevail.

Our mien of survival, to know our separate natures

And allow them. . .

*Collected Poems.*²

For a few faculty members across the country, this has already proved impossible. They have found the personal costs of teaching controversial courses too high, and their personal decision has been to abandon them. That such decisions now so often seem necessary is a tragedy for higher education. The resulting sanitized education can only be a travesty. Certainly, such backing off would destroy my classroom. To find a way to engage such subjects without destroying the classroom in another way, through a clash of antagonistic opinions, is an urgent task.

The courses I teach are in history, and they often straddle the boundary between social sciences and humanities. I am especially interested in what students learn about the world beyond Europe

and its interaction with an expanding Europe in modern times. Such subject matter implicates my classroom with some of the flash points of world conflict and academic controversy.

My own educational task rests on the belief that citizens of the United States do not know enough about the rest of the world, its cultures, histories, and languages. This inadequacy is especially glaring for Third World societies. Yet African, Asian, Pacific, Islamic, and Latin American societies are of increasing importance in our political and economic life. (Note here that I use the term *Third World* loosely and as a convenience. The term has no generally accepted, rigorous meaning, and debates about which societies are included or excluded, and on what grounds, are endless. I wish to bypass these debates and engage other matters.)

Education in these subjects has an important civic component. Such an education will help make democracy work better by making it more difficult to mislead the American public. In his American Historical Association Presidential address, speaking of graduate history education, Philip D. Curtin brought out the same point:

Nor is our failure to help graduate students gain a world-historical perspective just of concern to the history departments that train them. What we teach passes to a broader public, and members of that public make political decisions that are crucial for us all. From the heights of power in the White House, we find portrayed a simplistic, tripartite division of the world into ourselves, our enemies, and the rest—who do not count, even though they form the vast majority of the world's population. (*American Historical Review*, LXXXIX (Feb 1984) 1)³

The conditions of the post Cold War world will certainly require a deeper and more nuanced knowledge of the Third World. Also, with increasing numbers of United States citizens coming from "the rest—who do not count," knowing about these areas becomes part of knowing ourselves.

To teach and study these subjects is to leap into controversy. They raise, after all, some of the most difficult political and moral issues of the contemporary world. Thus, one can expect that conflicts will occur in my classroom. Though they have not taken

the extreme form that a few colleagues elsewhere have experienced, they have been disturbing enough, as for example:

- when a few students objected to an assigned book on African history, because it was not written by an African;
- when a student objected to the use of a historical document in class, because it contained racist language;
- when some students mistook illustrative quotations for my own views;
- and, more dramatically, when a fistfight almost broke out in class over a racist remark—This incident calls for a fuller account.

A few years ago, a white student, irritated at being contradicted in a class discussion, said that his critic, a black student, should shut up because he was inferior and had nothing to say worth listening to. The black student offered to fight. It was an electric moment and one I was ill-equipped to handle. My weak response was to divert the discussion and, generally, wish I could hide from the class in an imaginary hole in the floor. But a young woman in front said, "Are we really going to ignore what is being said? Why are we pretending nothing has happened?"

We took a break, and I convinced the black student that it was beneath his dignity to respond to or even to notice the opinions of someone he did not respect. In this I had the help of an older black student, whose career had given him rich experience in all sorts of situations.

The white student caught up with me after class. "They are inferior, aren't they?" he asked. "They have all the menial jobs. Why can't you say so?" I told him that superiority had to be earned by every individual, that the only possible reason to put down other people or groups was a lack of confidence in oneself, and that superior achievement earned through individual effort did not have to be claimed. I do not think I made much of an impression.

Another quite different and more recent incident also requires a full account. A student came up after class to discuss his own feelings about South Africa. He felt troubled. "I do not believe I am racist, and I believe black people should have opportunities," he said, "but I agree with the South African Conservative Party. They want to live in their own neighborhoods and have them to themselves—just like in my neighborhood. My neighborhood is all

white, and we are not against black people, but we have a right to our own neighborhood.’’

I did not blow up at him, call him racist, or denounce his views, as a secondary teacher said I should have done, when I related the incident to an adult evening class. I merely asked him whether a black family would be allowed their right to buy a house in this same neighborhood. That neighborhood, or ones like it, I conjectured, offered the best housing this family could afford. If one homeowner in the neighborhood sold to the black family, would the rest of the neighborhood accept the new neighbors?

‘‘That would be a problem,’’ said the student.

‘‘Then isn’t the black family being denied opportunity?’’ I asked.

That’s all. I think the troubled student was merely more troubled. He was thinking about it. Perhaps he has continued thinking about it. The overt behavior of people discriminating in the housing market can, with difficulty, be regulated by law. Deeply held and often unexamined attitudes are not amenable to laws or to slogans.

I make no claim that I handled these incidents in an exemplary manner. I was unprepared for them, and my main reaction was probably embarrassment, my main motivation to avoid risk for myself. Perhaps I did help the students a little. I recall these experiences, really, because of their importance for me. Both these major incidents, and a host of minor ones, alerted me to the depth and complexity of prejudice and set me to examining my own approaches to teaching in today’s changing environment.

My liberal code had been that all students are alike as students and that I should take no cognizance of their membership in different groups; that I should, if possible, not even notice that there are groups. However much this code once served as a rejection of older discriminatory practices, it is not adequate in today’s conditions. It ignores the existence of strongly and positively held group identities, and it offers the teacher no assistance in the increasingly difficult task of communicating to today’s diverse student body.

Nearly violent classroom breakdowns are, fortunately, very rare. But the little misunderstandings and difficulties of communication are ongoing daily occurrences. And to have a student come forward to talk about his private dilemmas is also unusual, but it may well be one sign of widespread bias. If so, here is a formidable challenge for teachers.

Most people have learned to maintain a surface decorum. They are too embarrassed and inhibited to say what they really think to each other, and they often do not even admit to themselves how prejudiced they are. The maintenance of such decorum and politeness is an important achievement. The attempts made on some campuses to proscribe demeaning, insensitive, and racist language operate on this level. But this is a superficial and unreliable mechanism for controlling conflict in an increasingly diverse population, and its costs to free speech rights will be unacceptable to many.

The subjects I teach, involving some of today's most controversial issues, and the way I teach, with frequent discussions of polemical writing—both tend to erode and break down the kind of reticence we depend on to get along. The idea of avoiding controversial issues altogether comes up again and again. As I have already stated, such backing away is not acceptable. These world controversies are a vital part of education. Such issues must be discussed. To omit them would be to lie to students about the world they are living in. Such discussions may also be a way to get beneath the surface, to reveal and lead students to think about more deeply held prejudices—and this is a risky process.

Recent debates about 'political correctness' and 'the canon' might seem, at first glance, to provide some guidance in meeting the dilemmas of my classroom. These debates arise out of the same problems of campus diversity and change that I face, and what is at stake in them is indeed momentous for the future of American society. How can a student body increasingly diverse in cultural background and identity be educated in our classrooms? What should such a student body be taught, especially, how should the curriculum meet and take account of the diversity of the students? What kind of society are we trying to create? How will the education we offer serve to bring about the results we want for the future of American society?

But the hotly polemical literature produced in these debates offers no guidance for dealing with real classroom situations. If we do not agree on what overall results we want and cannot measure the impact of our curricular and other academic decisions, we are certainly far from being able to arrive at any consensus about what should be happening in our classrooms. Therefore, we wrangle and accuse each other of bad faith and worse. The contributions of

debaters such as Allan Bloom, Dinesh D'Souza, and Roger Kimball, or Molefi Asante, Catharine Stimpson, and Stanley Fish, tend to be stated in sweeping and absolute terms. The debate they wage, and they cannot be divided into two unified schools, is over grand strategy for the entire educational process, nationwide.

In the summary of the 'political correctness' and 'canon' debates I give here, I will state the positions in their extreme forms that critics of the positions accuse their opponents of advocating (sometimes with some justification). These summaries are composites and cannot be ascribed fully to any of the authors I have mentioned above.

Few have ever admitted to espousing 'political correctness' as such; the term has almost invariably been used ironically, even or especially by its reputed proponents. But propositions such as the following have received a good deal of support on many campuses: that an atmosphere of racism, sexism, homophobia, and intolerance pervades the campus, so that long-disadvantaged groups defined by race, gender, religion, nationality, and sexual orientation are being attacked, insulted, and excluded from the full benefits of educational and career opportunities. Rules against bigoted language and strong anti-discrimination standards, including affirmative action, are badly needed on campuses and in society generally to protect these groups.

The opponents of political correctness have seen this description of the conditions on American campuses to be exaggerated. Their description is in stark contrast, and they charge, for example, that tenured radicals in powerful positions on American campuses today have used their great power to enforce conformity to standards of political correctness on the campus community. By these standards, any deviation from correct views on race relations, abortion, gender issues, the environment, sexual orientation, or like matters is denounced and possibly even punished. In particular, a number of campuses have promulgated regulations against the use of racist language and have punished transgressors. Such regulations are a denial of free speech, and the enforcement of 'political correctness' generally has made it next to impossible to discuss some controversial issues on campus—even though it is the very purpose of colleges and universities to foster free discussion.

The closely related debate about the 'canon' is a conflict not about demeanor but about curriculum. It is in a sense about whether the diversity of American students is something to be overcome or nurtured. Conservatives want to retain at the center of the curriculum

a body of literature and history they regard as key to our cultural tradition. They hold, especially, that a Canon of the best that has been thought and known, in particular the heritage of literature produced in Greece, Rome, and Europe, is an essential part of a liberal education. This Canon can be expanded to include hitherto excluded works from other cultural traditions, works by women, etc., but works included merely for their ideological message and otherwise inferior works assigned merely because they represent minority viewpoints have no place in it. Courses including such works are really political 'feel-good' courses with shoddy intellectual standards and inferior content.

The radicals or innovators want to make decisive changes in the curriculum, and they assert that the traditional Canon is a sexist and racist body of writing. It is the product of a narrow group of 'dead, white, European males,' and the claims of these writings to universality are thereby false. Greece was a slave society whose works are not exemplary. In any case, for many students of diverse cultural backgrounds, this body of writing represents someone else's cultural heritage, not their own. And to overcome past oppression and develop their own identity, many such students need to be given works from their own cultural background.

I have followed these debates carefully, but they do not solve the problems I meet in my classrooms. I agree with all of the positions; I agree with none of them. The traditionally canonical writings should be included in today's curriculum, but I would also strongly favor the inclusion of the history and literature of other cultures and regions. Then, too, the enforcement of doctrines of political correctness, where they exist, might well involve the denial of free speech, as does the freewheeling attack on academia from the right, as represented by such groups as Accuracy in Academia. In personal experience on my campus and in wide contacts on several other campuses, I have not found either to be as prevalent as the media coverage would indicate. I am worried equally about both.

Taken all in all, much of this discussion does not mean much to me. For one thing, as already noted, the strident and polemical tone of much of this writing is unproductive. What many of these writers have done is to conflate complex issues into simple ones, so that their readers outside the academy can understand who the villains are. These are serious questions, and, to me, such questions

require deliberation, reflection, and a broad exchange of views. The popular debates have rather recounted many anecdotes of unreasonable positions taken. Both sides recount how the other threatens liberty, high standards, free opportunity, or the integrity of academic institutions.

What is needed, it seems to me, are not horror stories but fuller accounts of the very processes of teaching and learning, by which problems of mutual understanding and communications are met, wrestled with, possibly solved. Or even if not solved, fully aired. On many campuses, indeed, something like this is already happening. Amid all the polemics, educators are proceeding to frame new sets of core and distribution requirements, which often resemble the breadth requirements of twenty-five years ago.

In these initiatives, the concept of *pluralism* is heard over and over. The term has acquired enormous currency in the United States recently, especially in the context of higher education. Perhaps the search for pluralism in education offers a chance to transcend the strident debates now going on and channel them into more constructive, less divisive terms. To evaluate this possibility, I need first to explore the meaning of the term. Along with this new popularity, it has undergone some shift of meaning. In previous usage, pluralism had at least two distinct meanings.

In the sociology of the Third World, the term has been associated with the study of plural societies, such as Malaya, Indonesia, Fiji, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, or Cyprus, in which a territory's population is divided between two or more distinct racial, linguistic, or religious communities often—usually—in conflict with one another. The quest for political systems capable of accommodating the interests of conflicting communities and overcoming endemic conflict has been a prime factor in the twentieth century histories of all of these societies. In this sense, pluralism has been something to be overcome. The term has, on balance, a negative connotation.

A markedly contrasting usage occurs in American political science. In this tradition, the term refers to the multiplicity of competing interests in American society and their successful mediation in the political system. In *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, Robert A. Dahl described the mechanism by which the overlapping diversities cutting through society prevent a tyranny

of the majority. He cites the view as popular but empirically unproven:

If most individuals in the society identify themselves with more than one group, then there is some positive probability that any majority contains individuals who identify themselves for certain purposes with the threatened minority. Members of the threatened minority who strongly prefer their alternative will make their feelings known to these members of the tentative majority who also, at some psychological level, identify themselves with the minority. Some of these sympathizers will shift their support away from the majority alternative and the majority will crumble. (pp. 104–105)

This usage of *pluralism* is, then, distinctly positive, with the emphasis on the successful accommodation of diverse perspectives rather than the unfortunate existence of deep cleavages, which divide the very society into irreconcilable elements.

In the new American usage of the term, attention is heavily focused on ethnic and racial divisions in American society. In this way, the meaning moves toward that standard in Third World sociology, even though the actual social divisions being described are more muted, less fundamental in the United States than in, say, the Punjab or Sri Lanka, where ethnic violence has become chronic. Nevertheless, in this new American usage, pluralism retains its positive content as the name for the solution to the problem rather than the problem itself. And the venue for pluralism to act out its healing influence is education, especially higher education.

As I understand the new usage, pluralism (the variant term *multiculturalism* is also used in this context) is a particular kind of educational initiative for dealing with the problems of diversity in American society. To define this pluralist option as against others, I can now recast the debate over the direction of higher education by listing four separate ways in which the United States' educational system could deal with the problems of greater and greater cultural and linguistic diversity.

- Position 1. Unilateral, forced, hegemonic assimilation to a single norm, based on white Anglo-Saxon cultural standards.

- Position 2. Creation of a common society through the mixing of a variety of cultural tributaries, with reciprocal assimilation and no one cultural tradition in a dominating position.
- Position 3. Maintenance of a mosaic society, in which the distinct cultural patterns of various groups are studied, valued, and celebrated by individual communities and by all members of the society.
- Position 4. All out ethnic and racial separatism, with these divisions the primary badges of identity in the society and with each community concerned to defend itself against oppression from other groups.

The pluralism so much talked about in higher education today is located in the two middle positions. Debate between these positions has been noisy, and there has been a strong tendency on both sides to paint opponents as extremist enemies of freedom and justice. In the heated debates on such issues as language education, the first and fourth positions thus become accusations, fears, bogeys; few admit to advocating these positions in their extreme form, but accuse opponents of doing so. On the one hand, oppressed minorities, aggrieved by exclusion and threatened by forced assimilation, seek solidarity as their best defense. On the other hand, those whose priority is the common society see strong assertions of group identity as moves to an exclusivist separatism pushing the society toward conflict.

Despite these acrimonious squabbles, the differences between many of the debaters are mainly of nuance and emphasis, their positions often close to one another. The second position emphasizes movement toward a common society, but by a voluntary and gradual process, in which the common society forms by the mixing of the several source cultures. This position is an ideal expressed by some educators; it implies an equality between cultural traditions that does not exist in the United States. The third position emphasizes retention of the cultural traditions. It is unrealistic in its assumption that cultural practices can remain fixed despite the powerful assimilative forces in the society. In the ordinary course of social change and through the efforts of educators to teach students about diversity, the third position will really translate itself into the second. What are now very heated debates over curriculum and over more general

cultural goals of education may lose their urgency quite rapidly as these nuances recede in importance.

Pluralism, in its new usage in American education, then, involves the recognition, acceptance, and celebration of cultural diversity in American life. Education for life in the pluralist society will foster knowledge and appreciation for a rich variety of culture streams which flow into American society. And, to achieve this kind of knowledge, the various cultures would be studied not only as they occur within the United States; still more important, in my opinion, is knowledge of the history, literature, and society of the various world regions which have contributed to this cultural goulash. That, at least, is where my priority is placed and where my efforts are focused.

The goals that educators on numerous campuses across the country have assigned to their faculties is an ambitious one: To head off and overcome conflict, to enable an increasingly diverse population to get along together, to right previous wrongs and achieve justice for all. All this, it seems, is to be accomplished by having our students learn about and accept our multicultural diversity.

Put in these stark terms, the pursuit of these goals seems overwhelmingly difficult. Merely putting some new courses and programs into place will not be sufficient. What courses? Who will take them? In what spirit will they be taught? This kind of educational miracle cure for our social problems seems, on the face of it, unrealistic. At least we should not expect quick results.

The quest for quick results leads to self-defeating measures. This is well illustrated by the debate over political correctness, referred to earlier, especially the attempts of some campuses to ban any and all racist, demeaning, insulting or insensitive language in student life and in teaching. Whether the tendency to enforce such standards of political correctness is as powerful and pervasive as Dinesh D'Souza and other authors have stated is open to debate. But it is clear that the phenomenon does exist, and it has always existed. This kind of self-censoring has been present on campuses for many years. Powerful interests in the society, such as religious institutions, can be sure that not many faculty will criticize them. But this kind of restraint is now being demanded on behalf of groups that were too weak in the past to claim such protection. I would regard it,

wherever it exists, as a deviant, fearful, ultimately self-defeating method of dealing with intergroup prejudice and conflict.

Quite apart from their sobering First Amendment implications, such censorship projects are futile. The task of overcoming racism, which seems to be their goal, is simply much more difficult and will be exacerbated, not diminished, by crude and facile measures of censorship. The problem of racism and the means of overcoming it are the topics of all the rest of these chapters. The impulses toward censorship of racist language, sensitivity training, and other such measures stem, it seems to me, from particular assumptions about the causes and sources of conflict among our diverse campus population.

The first relates to the new and more limited meaning of pluralism now in fashion. Its focus is still on diversity, but diversity along limited dimensions and of only certain types: race and ethnicity foremost, with gender and sexual orientation assuming similar importance more recently. Each group defined by these categories, it is assumed, has a certain perspective and is, or should be, homogeneous. Some versions of multicultural education will, I fear, consist of teaching students the correct 'perspective' for their group. We need to transcend such limited and limiting approaches. Claims that homogeneous perspectives exist for entire racial or ethnic groups are simply not plausible, and defining such perspectives is not a credible way to study human society.

The old political science version of pluralism was more interesting in this regard. It assumed that the population was diverse along many dimensions, none of them correlated fully with others. Different loyalties and identities were salient at different times and to different degrees. Alliances were formed on many different bases and they tended to cancel each other out. One implication of this model is that our present obsession with these few, severely limited aspects of diversity is quite likely to be temporary.

I am not saying that racial and ethnic divisions do not exist or should not exist. I suggest, rather, that they are not natural features of society but stem from one set of priorities. A given 'perspective' is produced by a social movement, not by an ethnic group as such.

But the tendency now is to validate certain groups defined only on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, at the expense of other kinds of alignment. In the history of our society, these groups have been oppressed, and we are rightly concerned

to end such oppression once and for all. But, again, there are no shortcuts.

One attempted shortcut is to single out one villain by assuming that bigotry stems from one source: the white, male, European, probably Protestant element whose language and behavior are under particular scrutiny in the enforcement of campus regulations. Dinesh D'Souza has charged that, on many campuses, the bigoted statements of white males are punishable while those of minorities are legitimized as an expression of grievance. Again, I am not sure how general this phenomenon is, but it is clear that it is self-defeating as a measure against racism. The white males—they are a category, not a group, and certainly do not share a single perspective—are not guilty to the utmost generation for past injustices. All human beings share the tendencies to fear, xenophobia, and prejudice. In a larger historical perspective, Turks, Mongols, Zulu, Brahmins, and many other peoples, not just white Europeans, have been conquerors or oppressors. I do not say this to belittle white oppression or to blame others but to make another point: even though, in our history, the abuses of power of whites over people of color were the main expression of this common human trait, even though, too, the anger of the oppressed is understandable, it still will not do to focus only on the one source and type of prejudice.

To be successful, the education in pluralism must oppose all kinds of bigotry. And the project must be based on free speech. My guiding assumption in all of these essays will be that liberty is the only basis for harmony in a pluralist society. Your liberty is the only basis for my liberty. As George M. Fredrickson has pointed out, even the liberty of the hitherto dominant group can provide a basis for the liberty of all the rest:

. . . America's best chance for succeeding as a cohesive multicultural nation may come from a realization that the principles on which the nation was founded . . . can serve as the ideological basis for a truly democratic and multicultural America. (*New York Times Book Review*, August 22, 1993, p. 17).

Thus, neither side in the culture wars has provided a solution to the problems I face in the classroom. I am concerned both with the group-based claims for cultural expression and economic justice

and with the preservation of individual liberty; and I want to transcend the debate as it has been carried on up to now. Given our conflicting moral orientations, religious commitments, political ideologies, and group allegiances, we simply cannot expect to arrive at consensual answers. Our answers will differ. But if we can at least ask the same questions, then a common discussion can proceed. This is not a casual statement but would involve a dramatic redefinition of what students should be learning and how they would learn it. To be in this way 'friends in our questions' might offer an answer to these dilemmas that could be sufficient for the classroom and our society. To explore whether this can be done is the central focus of this book. The strategy I will propose for achieving this goal is a collective, classroom pursuit of 'Gandhian truth,' and this approach, introduced in chapter 3, informs the entire book, providing an antidote to the positivist and relativist perspectives that many students bring with them. The chapters thus describe a certain approach to teaching this subject matter to this audience, and if they are successful they will exemplify in themselves the approach they describe.

From my perspective, my own classroom, I see the achievement of an educational pluralism as supremely difficult. I start with the daily task of reducing misunderstanding and facilitating discussion. I struggle in every class meeting to bring the diverse student audience into a single conversation, sufficiently unified and harmonious to enable all to participate and learn, while avoiding an authoritarian pedagogy that would stifle individual viewpoints. And these are, to my mind, only tentative first steps.

In any discussion of the crisis of American higher education, the commission reports and think tank surveys will no doubt get the most attention. I am increasingly convinced, though, that the experience of a single classroom can provide vital evidence for understanding these problems. The stakes are high: One payoff is the existence of a citizenry knowledgeable enough in world affairs to make democracy work in an era when foreign affairs loom large in our politics; another is the freedom to discuss and the very possibility of discussion of controversial subjects about which there exist division and sensitivity among students, on the campus, and in society generally.

Behind these rest our ability to overcome conflict, maintain harmony, open opportunities, and achieve justice in American

society. The individual classrooms that once seemed so remote and unimportant are thus becoming central locations in which some of the most important issues of our society are being fought out.

NOTES

1. Reprinted from the poem "Sleepwalking," in *Climbing the Stairs*, by Mark Vinz. Spoon River Poetry Press, 1983. Used by permission of the author.

2. Reprinted from the poem beginning "So you are thinking of principles," in Josephine Miles, *Kinds of Affection*, copyright 1967 by Josephine Miles, Wesleyan University Press reprinted by permission of the University Press of New England.

3. Quoted from "Depth, Span, and Relevance," by Philip D. Curtin, from *American Historical Review*, LXXXIX (February 1984). Used by permission of the author.