ever more necessary for members and visitors of cross-cultural centers to elucidate the problems of higher education to expose the modern university as a system of power, one that treats populations differently and harshly according to their pre-identification as particularized subjects of power/knowledge.[21] The neoliberal public university as an apparatus or extension of the government, the corporation, the military, the police, and so forth gets diminished when focusing on tertiary education as simply a matter of giving more people a "better life" rather than as a contentious place where one must always articulate the larger stakes and struggles of life.[22] The Cross-Cultural Center has been at the epicenter of that battle for something "more" than what we expect from the university, pushing toward greater understanding of what is possible on the college campus. In a neoliberal moment when conservative administrators are asking students and faculty to be "civil," and participate in economic activities and intellectual community devoid of messy politics and controversies, learning for the sake of only learning becomes not only boring but dangerous in cementing legacies of oppression in our campuses, which are not (and have never been) as democratic, open, and friendly as they would appear. This essay mapped out through specific examples the ingenious complicated manner in which the Cross-Cultural Center can be the hub for imagining as well as realizing the kind of university we all want. It is a hope carried forth by the countless unflagging voices, bright minds, and nourished bodies that have traversed through the halls of this very special place that many called home.

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21 The description of Asian students as techno-savvy global citizens of the twenty-first century presents them as vectors for the institutional professionalization as well as segregation of education through a kind of techno-scientific determinism that culminated in George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind educational policy, which emphasized and funded math and science education over arts and humanities (seen as a matter of raising the United States' declining standing in the world through building the human capital for its military-industrial complex and corporate dominance).

22 Such was the case when some Asian American students accused the UC system of racial bias when it decided to eliminate certain "merit"-based tests like the SATs to make the admission process more "fair" for everyone, which supposedly meant reducing the number of Asian Americans to raise the number of less qualified other students of color. "Asian Americans Blast UC Admissions Policy." Associated Press April 24, 2009.

ON SOLIDARITY AND THE POLITICS OF BEARING WITNESS: LESSONS FROM STUDENT ORGANIZING AT UCSD

by Rashné Limki

From all factions and sectors of our dislocated society, we send you our commitment to stand with you in your hour of pain and time of struggle against the oppression that continues to target our black brothers and sisters in nearly every aspect of their lives.

We understand your moral outrage. We empathize with your hurt and anger. We understand the impulse to rebel against the infrastructure of a racist capitalist system that systematically pushes you to the margins of humanity.

And we stand with you. —electronicintifada.net

As righteous rage lights the streets from Gaza to Ferguson, there is perhaps nothing more urgent than standing firm in defiant solidarity. The excerpt above is from a statement by Palestinians expressing solidarity with the people of Ferguson in the fight against the state-sponsored killings of black people, this time that of Michael Brown. Some days prior to this statement, hundreds of thousands marched in cities across the globe to condemn state-sponsored killings of over 2,000 people in Gaza. Shows of force such as these threaten dominating powers because they cut across political lines of segregation and control—across the legibility accorded within categories of race, class, gender, and nation.

Threatened by popular wrath, however, power seeks to appease it, to appropriate the discourse of protest in order to neutralize it. This appropriation often proceeds along the lines of identity. Power addresses itself principally to the presently aggrieved, promising redress, seeking thereby to resolve the disruption. These piecemeal gestures are intended, more so, to disband solidarities, enabling a return to a safe equilibrium. In the face of such onslaught, solidarity cannot be an act or a series of acts but a situation of protest, always alert, always refusing, "the stealing of language itself."[23]

As several dangerous and regressive practices are rapidly deployed around the global, the vectors along which dispossession and death are distributed are becoming increasingly stark. Yet, even as we bear witness to these insidious enactments of material violence, the radical potential of this moment is undeniable as evidenced by the

23 From a talk delivered by Arundhati Roy at Friends House in London, 2011.

mass mobilizations for justice. For those that eschew categorical (race, sexual, class) reductionism and operate instead at their interfaces, the issue of political organizing is more complex and the process potentially more volatile. We are compelled to ask how might we envision protest so that it does not devolve into an issue of competing and subsuming interests—a strategy of inclusion that ultimately relies on relational arbitration and institutional recognition—but rather engages within the limit of these concepts in order to bring them into crisis.

My essay contemplates this question by recalling a pivotal moment for student activism at UCSD—one led by the UCSD Coalition for Educational Justice that coalesced around the budget cuts and educational restructuring of the UCs. There is no ready equivalence between the intensity of the situations (racial killings in Gaza, in cities across the U.S., and, indeed, across the globe versus the issue of university fee hikes), but the stakes, nonetheless, are high, and the lessons received may be of some pertinence. Reflecting upon this latter moment, therefore, I want to write about the work of solidarity as a politics not contained by the lines of re*presentation* but propelled, instead, by a bearing of witness to that which has been disappeared or absented by subjugating power.

The strength of the Coalition came from its representative constitution—that is, its ability to draw people from various marginalized communities across campus. But the certainty of its power, I believe, lay in its approach to make common cause with those who were present only in their unrepresentedness. This making of common cause is

neither "giving a voice to the voiceless" nor a cynical habitation of oppression. It is, instead, a politics grounded in the precarity of presence—in the knowledge that present presence and, hence, the possibility of representation, is a ploy of power to hold one's existence as instrumental until it can, finally, be liquidated.

This essay recalls the work of Coalition not to valorize it but, rather, to draw on it as merely one example of activism anchored in the space and spirit of the Cross.[24] As the Cross celebrates its 20th anniversary, it is sobering to remember that these are 20 years of survival. It is not news that spaces like the Cross are subject to instrumentalization and disappearance by institutional powers. That the Cross has, over all this time, sustained political community and thrived as a site for activism is testament to an ethos of solidarity, to its working in identification with and resistance to the precarity of presence.

In describing the work of the Cross (and the Coalition) thus, I may be projecting upon it more than it intended. I must admit that my read is, perhaps, more an effect of my own positionality as an international student (or, more precisely, as a non-U.S. citizen woman of color) within movements framed by U.S. discourses of identity and solidarity—discourses that cannot comprehend my presence. Even so, or, perhaps, precisely

24 I write about the Coalition because it was the initial site of my involvement with the Cross. But the Coalition also worked in solidarity with the Black Student Union in their response to incidents that incited racial fear on campus as well as in protest of Arizona's SB 1070 law against undocumented immigrants and the efforts to curtail or ban Ethnic Studies programs across numerous states.

so, my positionality may provide an alternate location for thought. On a recent panel on the history of Asian American activism at Oberlin College (where I received my B.A.), I described my place in student organizing as a "privileged absence"—absent because my "difference" had no location, it was forgotten, subsumed under U.S. racial, gender, and class discourse. Yet, privileged because I was present, taking up a place in a space denied to the many—my presence, in fact, absented the many—to whom those very discourses address themselves. In this circumstance, I am compelled to address absence as the only viable location for the expression of solidarity.

It is here, too, that the solidarity between Gaza and Ferguson converges with activism such as that practiced by the Coalition. Each is concerned with disappearance, albeit in different registers. Disappearance, evacuation, absenting—these are the grounds of their solidarity. Presence is a reminder of those that are made absent. In this, solidarity is an identification with absence, and only as such—as an insistence on the precarity of presence—can it be sustained as a state of protest.

ON THE POLITICS OF IDENTIFICATION

> *WE propose that our university provide funding and support for initiatives that increase its presence in the communities outside of our campuses. This includes an increase in research that actively works alongside communities in socially constructive and conscious ways. This also means outreach programs that will increase recruitment from those communities that have been historically underrepresented in our classrooms.*
>
> *WE also demand that our university partner with our state to provide more affordable, more efficient, and more reliable, environmentally sustainable modes of transportation to our campuses (e.g., electric trains, biodiesel buses, and shuttles with bicycle racks, etc.). We also request that our university make parking spaces more affordable not just for students but also for citizens of the state in order to make our public campuses more accessible to them.*
>
> —UCSDCOALITIONFOREDUCATIONALJUSTICE.WORDPRESS.COM

Walking around UCSD on the morning of March 4th, 2010, one would have noticed the campus plastered with signs such as "PUBLIC Education," "PUBLIC Cultures," "PUBLIC debate," "We the PUBLIC," etc. This project was initiated by graduate students in Visual Arts in collaboration with the Coalition, as a means to express its principal tenet—that of universal access.

The UCSD Coalition for Educational Justice was a collective of students, workers, staff, and faculty formed in the fall of 2009 in response to the fee hikes and budget cuts proposed by the UC Board of Regents. The Coalition tasked itself with increasing critical awareness on campus of the financial mishandling and the corresponding misinformation being disseminated by the Regents, as well as devising concrete protest strategies and demands to halt the onslaught of austerity measures being proposed by them. As part of this task, it produced a set of demands directed at UCSD administrators, the UC

Regents, and state legislators that was designed to check the unfettered power of the Regents to institute drastic cuts to education and employment in the UCs. As the excerpt above demonstrates, these demands were not invested in preserving and strengthening what already existed but rather in reimaging an untenable economic and socio-political structure. Indeed, instead of defining what a "more representative" inclusion might look like, it took to protesting the structural limitations that produce not only underrepresentation but also absences in the operation of "public education." In this, the Coalition sought to "make common cause" with those that are present only in their unrepresentedness, i.e., in their absence.

"Making common cause," writes Avery Gordon, "means that our encounters must strive to go beyond the fundamental alienation of turning social relations into just the things we know and toward our own reckoning with how we are in these stories, with how they change us ..." (Gordon, 1997, p. 21). To make common cause, then, is not to assert a sameness or similarity in conditions of existence, per se, but rather to pay heed to the synchronicity of the self and other(s) in producing and inhabiting a particular configuration of existence. Thus, in the case of the Coalition, making common cause with the absent necessitates not merely describing and resisting the conditions that can disappear the already present (e.g., as a result of fee hikes, job cuts, etc.) but also acting on the basis of the knowledge that the conditions of disappearance are always already in play as evidenced by the already absent (e.g., economic limitations that render even travel to UCSD difficult, as noted in the call for affordable transport above). This manifests a politics of identification over that of identity.

Identity, as it is commonly understood, is instituted by and emerges through a set of social structures. It is an effect of social positioning and positionality. While the former is an effect of "one's location with a given social reality" (Sanchez, 2006, p. 38), the latter describes the ways in which we relate to, and act upon/through, our given social positioning. Positionality, therefore, determines whether one will consent to, and remain complicit with, the status quo, or whether they will engage, instead, in transformative praxis. What is required from the perspective of political organizing and transformative praxis is a reflexivity that—in engendering a discomfort with the gaps between hegemonic structures and one's own reality—enables an identification with a similarly alienated social collectivity (Sanchez, 2006, p. 38). In this circumstance, however, individuals not only position themselves as part of a whole but also in opposition to other social groups and spaces. That is, the process of identification may also "revolve around a contradiction, a negation, a concomitant non-identification, with certain social spaces and actors" (ibid.).

It follows, then, that identification, which relies on specific positionings and positionalities to create bonds of solidarity, may simultaneously generate the politically unproductive exclusions that critics of identity politics fear. With reference to the U.S. context, for instance, it is quite obvious that black, Latino, native and Asian communities, (to name just the "official" non-white racial categories), are differently positioned with relation to each other—and that regardless of the fact that these positionings are historically and

discursively produced and imposed, they have real effects. Even a cursory knowledge of U.S. history illustrates that just as there have been instances of cross-communal solidarity, there have also been instances of genuine conflict amongst them—conflicts that are both an effect of, and of benefit to, the status quo. What, then, does it take to create and maintain an expansive and accessible political collectivity?

The Coalition, I suggest, articulated a politics of identification in relation not with a concrete (namable) collectivity but rather an imagined one. Any claim to socio-political presence that is asserted through identity and relations of identification also implies a disidentification or non-identification with those who are not present. But it is precisely this non-presence/absence that is the most productive socio-spatial positioning for the emergence and sustenance of a politics of solidarity. That is, every form of positive identification—based on "ties or connections" (Sanchez, 2006, p. 40)—that stakes a claim to presence, recognition, or representation, consolidates itself upon a history and the immanence of a coerced (socio-historical and political) absence or disappearance. Yet, this present presence is itself possible only through the non-presence or absence of others. Non-presence/absence, here, does not refer merely to those bodies that are not t/here but may yet be recalled through relations of positive identification; rather, it refers to those who exist under such extreme structural and discursive marginalization that they become either subsumed under some larger collectivity (the condition of non-presence) or remain (socio-politically) unknown (the condition of absence). What I am proposing, then, is that the Coalition sought to articulate itself through an identification with the absent(ed).

I believe that such a relation of identification enables one to claim the historical and socio-political specificities of identity without transforming difference into opposition. Difference is an inevitability to be neither erased nor valorized yet seized as the basis of identification. It is in the register of identity that difference risks slipping into otherness and antagonisms. But to appropriate difference as the basis of identification enables the constant "growing and modification of limits" (Trinh, 1991, p. 152). This requires, however, a subjective divestment from the experience of difference as the locus of political praxis. Herein lies the challenge for the activist—to develop a new subjectivity, an alternate performativity, that forgoes the security (i.e., coherence and legibility) of the subjected self, produced through identity in (nameable) difference, in favor of the chaos of an unfolding and expansive difference, one that signals the limits of discourse and the impossibility of its redemption.

If there is a commonality amongst marginalized groups it is that of subjugation. But the fact of subjugation need not devolve into conflict over the form and extent of this reality and, hence, a struggle over competing interests. Instead, the fact of subjugation underlies a precarious presence—i.e., the present(ed) possibility of recognition and representation—that reveals the systemic causes of absence/disappearance itself and serves, therefore, to disable the appropriative tendency of status quo powers. Thus, identification with absence/disappearance is crucial as political practice because it acknowledges one's own complicity in, and accrual of benefit from, contemporary social structures—a positionality that can neither be easily appropriated nor appeased

by the powers of the status quo. Protest practices, then, must serve as a form of testimony to the conditions that produce absence. This is the practice of making common cause as described above.

The practice of making common cause is manifest in the idea of "revolutionary love" as espoused by the Cross and members of the Coalition. Here, revolutionary love is not an expression of some form of liberal sentimentality but, rather, an organizing strategy as elaborated in Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000). The productivity of this idea of love is that it removes the subject from the discipline and control of ideological investments and provides in its place access to "where political weapons of consciousness are available in a constant tumult of possibility" (Sandoval, 2000, p. 142). Moreover, revolutionary love is "a synchronic process that punctures through traditional, older narratives of love ... [providing] access to somewhere else; for through this love, insofar as it acts as 'a punctum,' as a coatlicue state, [transports one to a realm] 'beyond language, i.e., beyond the mediocre, beyond the generic"' (ibid.). For Sandoval, this point "beyond language" is the possibility of third space or third voice. But continuing with the idiom I have been using thus far, this "point beyond" may also represent merely the limit of available discourse—to speak, as it were, at and to that limit. Consequently, I suggest that a politics of identification, as driven by "making common cause" or "revolutionary love," requires not a transcendence of limits but, instead, an appropriation of them.

To appropriate the limit is not to refuse or dismiss socially produced concepts and categories such as race, gender, and class but rather to speak to/through their horizon of possibility. It is at this limit that protest can take the form of radical testimony. Testimony is the act of speaking by proxy, of bearing witness "in the name of justice and truth" (Agamben, 1999, p. 34). The role of the one bearing witness is not to describe the scene or the unfolding of the event as it happened, but merely to confirm its happening. This description of giving testimony pronounces an affirmation not of what is present but rather of making the absent(ed) present. Protest as the act of bearing witness, then, must eschew the merely descriptive and, instead, must become constituted by addressing itself to both the condition(s) of absence as well as the impossibility of presence ("full representation") under existent social structures. This is what it means to speak at the limits of an already existent discourse—to confound the concepts and categories instituted by, and available for manipulation to, dominating powers.

Of course, the challenge of such practice is that there can be no templates and no easy prescriptions. Here, practice can only be ephemeral—shifting yet constant—messy and chaotic, perhaps, but thriving. Indeed, it is precisely the messy and chaotic nature of such practice that refuses appropriation. To be effective, too, such practice must be sustained. On this count, the disbanding of the Coalition perhaps marks its failure. Yet, as I have already noted, the Coalition marks but one moment in the unfolding of the Cross. Its dissolution is of less consequence than the circumstance of its existence.

The Coalition was a materialization of the ethos of the Cross as the space of sustenance and the situation of protest. I came to the Cross, finally, in my final year as a

graduate student at UCSD—as the world was confronting yet another implosion of the fantasy of global finance and students were reclaiming their places as heirs to the spirit of '68. In the circumstance of this heightened fervor, the Cross represented the space of solidarity, bearing witness to absences, disappearances, and the precarity of presence. It spoke of revolutionary love not as an appeal to harmony but as a call to arms.

The situation of solidarity is always tense, suspended across familiar and unknown ways of being, thinking, and speaking. But the Cross, in its very being, speaks radical solidarity as a means of survival. It is, thus, itself a lesson for student activism and organizing—a lesson made even more urgent as we seek ways to maintain a state of global protest.

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FALL 2000–SPRING 2005 SYNOPSIS: THE SHIFT

by Edwina Welch

The legacies of hostile climate and isolation continue during this time; notably, the campus sees bias attacks on student leaders from the Student Affirmative Action Committee (SAAC), a coalition of student of color at UCSD. State and national politics around immigrant rights, same-sex marriage, and Proposition 209 impact campus organizing and activism. There are campus-wide debates on funding cuts where programs that were central to student empowerment and voice are levied cuts in already low budgets. Within this context, racist and sexist newspapers, articles, and flyers often place the Center in the contentious role of supporting students' righteous anger and frustration while, at the same time, being called on by administrators to pull everyone together in a room to "talk" about the issues. Students take matters into their own hands and begin referenda to start a recruitment and retention center run for and by students. SIORC (Student Initiated Outreach Resource Committee) and ASP (the Academic Success Program) are formed; those programs would later combine to become SPACES (Student Promoted Access Center for Education and Service).

Demographic shift from the passage of proposition 209 begins to drastically impact underrepresented student enrollment on campus. During the 2000–2005 time periods, Black student enrollment was down to one percent of the student body. Also during this time, a notable shift of discussion around multiracial and multiethnic students is highlighted and explored in higher education and research along with the investigation of the role that intersectional theory and practice impact social justice work. With staffing changes, programming and events at the Center move from activist speakers to more training, consultation, outreach, and campus climate roles.

The contested domain of the CCC role starts in these years as the Center approaches its ten-year mark. The staff of the CCC grapples with deep shifts in implementing diversity practices. Many activists start to feel the loss of the hard-fought gains made by previous coalitions and that the Center is moving away from its original founding mission of educating activists to demand institutional change. With new staff on board, the Center creates a vision statement that defines our work as "empowering the institution to recognize, challenge, and take proactive approaches to diversity and social justice." Internally, we tell an "origin story" of activism, but changing student needs and ways of seeing diversity and social justice across groups makes this more difficult. At this time, the Center starts a Diversity Peer Education Program to give students direct experience training on social justice topics; the staff helps organize a yearlong Diversity Workgroup culminating in a day-long campus-wide conference as well as a winter mini-conference that looks at privilege, art activism, and multiracial identity; these programs continue