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Review

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Spivak here is offering an interesting new theory of reading. When students read books, especially books that are “culturally different,” they are identifying less with the author than with the author’s imagined reader. “The successful reader,” Spivak writes, “learns to identify with the value system figured forth by literature” (38). It is for this reason that literature has a unique power and ideological potential over the human mind. The power and potential of literature, like the ability to play the double binds of the contemporary world, however, has no ethical or political guarantee. Spivak concludes, “Literature buys your assent in an almost clandestine way and therefore it is an excellent instrument for a slow transformation of the mind. For good or for ill. As medicine or as poison, perhaps always a bit of both. The teacher must negotiate and make visible what is merely clandestine” (38). Literature has the fascinating capacity to open the mind or to close it, to create more peace in the world or to do the opposite. This position should certainly serve as a mantra for those of us working in the field of aesthetic education. But what is uncertain is exactly how this type of training—a playful “training of the imagination for epistemological performance”—compares to other types of training, for example, in the scientific method, historiography, business ethics, or even introductory philosophy. These are pertinent questions: not only for the classroom, but also for the almighty budgeting office.

Antiracist Education: From Theory to Practice

By Julie Kailin (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2002).

Reviewed by Nicholas D. Hartlep

Julie Kailin’s book *Antiracist Education: From Theory to Practice* (2002), based on her ethnographic research done in schools in a Midwestern city (pseudonym Lakeview), begins strong and finishes even stronger. This book makes the compelling arguments that “teachers have to become agents of antiracist change” (122), that “antiracist education [should] become an inherent part of both preservice and in-service teacher education” (74), and that “a critical multicultural perspective should be infused in the entire curriculum” (23). The book consists of eight chapters separated into two parts—one dedicated to theory and the other to practice.

In Part I Kailin discusses the racist underpinnings of our history and culture. She argues that “the typical ‘liberal’ multicultural approach has led not to emancipation, but to containment, giving some people the illusion of challenging the status quo, while never seriously challenging the relations of domination” (208). When discussing and combating racism, Kailin takes a structuralist approach as opposed to an idealist one, which simply “views the struggle against racism as one of combating stereotypes and attitudes that exist in the mind” (21). According to Kailin, it is essential that a “critical antiracist multicultural perspective” go deeper to examine the historical and capitalist roots of inequality. Kailin also distinguishes between “antiracist education” and “multicultural education.” Uncritical

forms of multicultural education tend to be reformist and tokenize minorities, while antiracist education frequently examines the root causes of inequality by viewing education from the perspective of the oppressed. Kailin does a tremendous job of comparing and contrasting the strengths and weaknesses of multicultural and antiracist perspectives to education. Kailin concludes Part I by examining the social context of teaching today and the current demographic, moral, and ethical imperatives that call out for antiracist education: (1) lack of teachers of color; (2) labels and practices that are used in education (e.g., the label “at-risk,” the practice of “tracking” and the program DISTAR, which was originally developed for mentally handicapped children, being used universally for Black children in Chicago); and (3) ways that racism distorts the class consciousness of teachers which can lead to teachers using and believing in the “boot strap” ideology.

In Part II of her book, Kailin focuses on the practice of antiracist education. She observes that most of the teachers she has taught in her antiracist education courses and professional development classes were not necessarily bad teachers, but that “they were unconscious or ignorant of the multidimensional ways in which white supremacy percolates and spreads throughout American culture” (13). *Antiracist Education* urges readers to examine their unconscious racism and white privilege. For instance, teachers of hard-of-hearing, hearing-impaired, and deaf education classes will learn that sign language uses racist innuendos. Along these lines, one of the most insightful and helpful aspects of Kailin’s analysis in the second part of *Antiracist Education* is her use and discussion of the term “rac-

ism without racists.” The term originates from the scholarship of Massey, Scott, and Dornbusch (1975) but continues to be further theorized by anti-racist scholars, including Bonilla-Silva (2002 & 2010). Kailin clarifies that “racism without racists” refers to the notion that an individual “does not have to be consciously or intentionally racist to perpetuate racial inequality” (93). This is similar to when liberals assert their blindness to the existence of racism.

Antiracist Education is well worth reading, especially within pre-service and in-service teachers’ circles. The book’s antiracist pedagogy grapples with political, economic, and ideological concerns that are problematic in “soft multiculturalism” or when teachers focus exclusively on responses related to agency and the human condition. Kailin’s approach, which insists on an analysis of capitalism’s role in maintaining racial inequality, is what makes her book so powerful in combating liberal racism. “Because a critical antiracist multicultural perspective examines the structural roots of inequality,” Kailin explains, “it can be an effective tool for helping people analyze and organize to counteract the problems of racism and other forms of inequality” (64).

This book offers strategies and approaches that antiracist educators and system administrators should use. In doing so, it makes the following three points: (1) teacher education programs need to (re) orient themselves to be more balanced because “an unbalanced teaching force leads to an unbalanced education”; (2) teachers need to shift from a liberal approach to administering multicultural education in our schools and adopt a critical multicultural or antiracist pedagogy; and (3) pre-service and in-service teachers

need to be provided an education (or an intervention) that will furnish ample time to begin the demystification of racism rampant in our nation's schools, as well as to arrive at antiracist *conscientization* (207). Most importantly, many readers of Kailin's book will leave it, as did I, with a new set of tools with which to analyze racism and a much clearer sense of their own need to examine the ways they perpetuate inequality.

Teaching Notes

Side by Side: Israeli and Palestinian Cinema

By Linda Dittmar

A short six-week course about Israeli and Palestinian film is a trying experience for many reasons. Americans mainly have a distorted, media-generated notion of the histories, politics, and cultures that inform these films. Standard class time does not accommodate screening whole films in class, which is important as a shared basis for feelings and discussion. A 'side by side' pattern that puts the two national cinemas in dialogue with one another invites difficult comparisons that expose inequalities in the funding, professional training, critical visibility, and distribution that mirror the political, military, and economical inequalities afflicting the region. And finally, depending on the people taking such a course, emotions can run high.

Though this version of the course focuses on fiction films because of their combined emotional and analytic power, other versions can focus on documentaries or a mix

of the two genres. The course outlined below provides just one option. It does not concern the most spectacular aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that leap to the Western mind—war, occupation, and terrorism. Instead, it addresses these issues through narratives that mostly take place inside Israel's 1967 "green line" border. As such, they invite reflection about the relation between Palestinian and Jewish life inside Israel and the political consequences of these realities for the conflict that now extends well beyond that "green line" border.

Below is the skeletal syllabus I designed, with three films for each "side," including the directors' names and dates of production, followed by brief explanatory comments.

- Week 1: Gila Almagor, *The Summer of Aviya* (1988)
- Week 2: Michel Khleifi, *Wedding in the Gallilee* (1987)
- Week 3: Joseph Cedar, *Beaufort* (2007)
- Week 4: Scandar Copti and Yaron Shani, *Ajami* (2009)
- Week 5: Elia Suleiman, *The Time that Remains* (2009)
- Week 6: Eran Kolirin, *The Band's Visit* (2007)

Weeks 1 and 2 provide our springboard: Almagor's film probes the after-shocks of the holocaust while Khleifi's shows an early phase in Jewish control of Palestinian society. Both are set in a quasi-pastoral setting but show the dysfunction invading both groups during the early years of Israel's statehood as a prelude for what follows.

Weeks 3 and 4 focus on the military and civilian violence as a complex tangle