Book Reviews

Giroux, H. & McLaren, P. (Eds.). (1994). *Between borders: Pedagogy and the politics of cultural studies.* New York: Routledge, 280 pp. (Softcover).

For those who may be new to the study of the rather abstruse terminology of postmodern critical pedagogy, reading the very accessible applications of theory which most of the writers in *Between Borders* provide in their analyses of cultural texts is a good way to gain an initial understanding of some of the recurring themes of this body of theory. The text's introductory chapter by Lawrence Grossberg, for example, provides educators with a particularly lucid explanation of the connections between cultural studies and education theory. Grossberg begins by providing a defence of cultural studies, based upon insights from Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, in which he argues that its theories must always be a response to a particular context. He suggests, for instance, that cultural workers must go beyond a simple discovery of the "racist, sexist, xenophobic, and homophobic dimensions of our social and cultural lives ... to understand the complexities of how such structures and representations work within the field of forces that constitute the domain of cultural struggle" (p. 6). And he observes that the "question of cultural studies is not so much whom we are speaking to (audience) or even for (representation), but whom we are speaking against" (p. 9). Throughout the book all of the writers have been quite clear about the institutional organizations they are speaking against, whether these be the New Right of the Reagan/Bush era (Giroux, p. 32), the instructors of prejudice-reduction workshops in universities (Mohanty, p. 155), or homophobic educational legislators in Britain (Watney, p. 168).

Having established his defence of cultural studies, Grossberg then proceeds to address the issues of culture and identity which will be of significance to most of the authors in the text. He remarks, for example, citing Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979), that "difference itself, as much as identity, is an effect of power, of other social and cultural practices and processes" (p. 14). Grossberg adds to this notion of difference the idea of "plural identities" (p. 15), which never settle into a fixed pattern, to explain how the construction of ethnicity involves the mapping of structures of mobility and placement where people can locate and identify themselves and where the possibility exists through social agency and the struggle for power

to, in McLaren's words, "devise different assemblages of the self," to develop "nomadic forms of individual and collective agency" (p. 16).

A good example of how critical pedagogues can enable their students to establish new identities and to practice nomadic forms of agency can be found in Henry Giroux's "Living Dangerously: Identity Politics and the New Cultural Racism." Giroux's argument against the New Right in the United States is that its members wish to essentialize and preserve racial differences within self-contained cultural and social borders to prevent the "forging of new identities within new spaces or spheres of cultural difference" (p. 33). He quotes Patrick Buchanan, for instance, who asks, "Who speaks for the Euro-Americans? Is it not time to take America back?" and Frank Kermode who refers to the advocates of a progressive politics of difference as "a noisy crowd of antiphobes, antiracists, and antiwhites" (p. 33).

To illustrate his argument that cultural racism needs to be resisted through a critique of the New Right's identity politics Giroux then deconstructs Hollywood's attempt in the film, *Grand Canyon*, to render whiteness invisible as a symbol of ethnicity. In his analysis of the film he points out that it represents whiteness "as a major category to normalize definitions of class, race, gender, heterosexuality, and nationality" (p. 43). And when he develops his notion of a pedagogy of representation, Giroux asks, "Whose interests are being served by the representations in question in, for example, *Grand Canyon?* Where can we situate such representations ethically and politically with respect to questions of social justice and human freedom? What moral, ethical, and ideological principles structure our reactions to such representations?" (p. 49). These kinds of questions can help critical pedagogues and their students to interrogate and resist the assumptions underlying media productions of the new cultural racism.

David Trend's article on "Nationalities, Pedagogies, and Media" points out that in Media Studies it is important to problematize the "static view of national identity" (p. 235). Trend agrees with Homi K. Babha that nationality is a fiction "people tell themselves about who they are, where they live, and how they got there" (p. 235). Debates over educational reform and multiculturalism, he therefore believes, need to be informed by a recognition of the complicated and highly contested texts of nationality as these appear in a variety of media. Trend observes, for instance, that, in movies such as *Driving Miss Daisy* and *Dances with Wolves*, American "filmmakers seek to conjure up a shared national past" (p. 231), while, at the same time, "implicity in [the] American attitude of benevolent world domination is a vision of global agreement and sameness similar to that purportedly existing within the U.S. itself. The spread of U.S. culture throughout the world is

[thus] viewed as healthy and just" (p. 232). An acceptance of the principles of multiculturalism in United States high school Media Literacy classrooms he argues, therefore, might help to counter some of the effects of the American film industry's imperialist efforts toward global cultural homogenization.

Simon Watney's "School's Out" is to my mind the strongest example in the book of the contextualization of cultural studies theory to bring about a powerful critique of oppressive identity formations. Watney's intent is to liberate gay and lesbian students and teachers from the heterosexist representations of them to be found in recent British educational legislation. As he explains, "it is vitally important that lesbians and gay men should be able to understand the mechanisms of displacement and denial that inform heterosexual projections about us as people, for these projections determine the world in which we must live ourselves" (p. 170). In an era when over 60% of Britain's heterosexual men and women believe that gay men should be allowed to adopt children and "80% of women believe that no gay person should be barred from any job on the basis of his or her sexuality" (p. 172), the arguments which are being raised in Britain and the United States over health education by the advocates of "family values" must be contested by anyone who cares about the physical and mental well-being and the democratic rights of gay students and teachers.

My only significant reservation about *Between Borders* concerns the article by one of its editors, Peter McLaren. Many of the articles brought together by Giroux and McLaren examine in detail such postcolonial issues as identity formation, cultural representation, literacy praxis, and decolonization. Two particularly noteworthy instances of these postcolonial critiques are Abdul R. Janmohamed's discussion of Paulo Freire's border pedagogy and Kenneth Mostern's interpretation of Frantz Fanon's revolutionary narrative. Nevertheless, there is a significant gap between the postcolonial deconstructions carried out by these writers and the resistance postmodernism advocated by Peter McLaren in his article on "Multiculturalism and the Postmodern Critique: Toward a Pedagogy of Resistance and Transformation." This gap I believe results from McLaren's desire to side with Mas'ud Zavarzadeh and Donald Morton in their rejection of lucid deconstruction in favour of retaining some of the totalizing power of Marxist discourse. For Morton and Zavarzadeh, postcolonial critics such as Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak are at the top of their list of ivory tower theorists who refuse to attempt political transformation in the classroom. Their criticism of Spivak, for instance, is that by mixing Marxism, deconstruction, feminism, and subaltern studies, she practices a generic

politics which they feel is widely palatable and therefore harmless in the academy.

McLaren wishes to perform analyses of the material and global relations of oppression in his critique of multiculturalism. Thus, he obviously does not want to be accused of political fence-sitting or of ivory tower theorizing as he attempts to use textual criticism to attack real world problems. It is understandable, therefore, that he would want to "get outside the admixtures and remnants of languages – the multiplicity of stereotypical voices that already populate [the educators'] vocabulary and fill up all the available linguistic spaces – in order to find different ways of appropriating or mediating the real" (p. 212). However, by attempting to create a new critical space for himself beyond textuality, whether intentionally or not, McLaren necessarily distances himself from the valuable poststructural critiques of imperialism's totalizing narratives that have been performed during the past decade by a host of postcolonial theorists. And, at the same time, I believe he has inadvertently rejected the poststructural brand of textual criticism that is exemplified in many of the arguments against imperialism that have been clearly and powerfully elaborated throughout *Between Borders*. The chapters by Giroux, Trend, and Watney, for example, demonstrate how to perform deconstructions of the underlying assumptions of whiteness, American cultural imperialism, and heterosexism without resorting to Marxism as a totalizing narrative. If McLaren's desire to confront multiculturalism's "capitalist agenda" means that he must "Always Totalize!" (p. 206), then I would argue that his resistance postmodernism does not provide as liberating a language for critical pedagogy as do most of the other essays in his book.

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Pajak, Edward (1993). *Approaches to clinical supervision: Alternatives for improving instruction*. Norwood, ME: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 336 pp. (Hardcover).

Morris Cogan is generally credited with formulating the original model of clinical supervision while working with the Master of Arts teaching program at Harvard University in the mid 1950s. Unlike many educational innovations Cogan's ideas have endured, since a variety of writers have, over time, constructed a number of new supervision models that reflect, at least in part,