
REVIEWS

Leslie G. Roman and Linda Eyre, eds. *Dangerous Territories: Struggles for Difference and Equality in Education*. NY: Routledge, 1997. 285p.

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This is a book by and about progressive educators working “in the margins” of the traditionally-defined academic structure, in feminism/feminist theory, people-of-color theory, queer theory, cultural critique, class analysis, or other oppositional frameworks. It is a book which everyone, regardless of their politics, should read as they attempt to make connections between the classroom to the world at large. Engaging directly with Right-wing political attempts to silence voices that speak about difference, this collection of essays analyzes and critiques the social forces and institutional structures that create a differential distribution of power in the classroom, in the academy, and in the systems that govern our educational workplace. A stunning and unsettling book, it asks that we continuously analyze the systems of power which surround us as educators, arguing that seemingly effective political solutions to social injustice may well be implicated in the perpetuation of patterns of inequality.

While the essays themselves comprise an eclectic group, the collection’s theoretically-informed analysis is committed to what Roman and Eyre term “anti-oppression pedagogies.” The collection’s range is broad, including sections dealing with questions of authority at the national level, at the institutional level, and at the interpersonal level. Its focus on the socially constructed concepts of gender, race, nation, and class provide connections among the essays, as does its emphasis on forms of liberatory education and radical pedagogies. This is not an introductory text. It assumes a reader’s familiarity with feminist, psychoanalytic, poststructuralist, and postcolonial theories, and it applies those to particular instances of resistance. Among those frequently cited are Judith Butler, Shoshana Felman, Eve Sedgwick, Stuart Hall, Gayatri Spivak, bell hooks, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Teresa DeLauretis, and Donna Haraway. In the essays, theoretical insights are applied to current debates about issues such as political correctness and backlash, and the limitations of the latter concepts are demonstrated.

The collection pays particular attention to the ways in which Right-wing strategies of containment have stalled and, in some cases, co-opted the energy of radi-

cal critique. For instance, Cecelia Haig-Brown's essay "Gender Equity, Policy, and Praxis" discusses ways in which "a particular government policy of 'gender equity' both promotes and impedes the transformative goals of feminism." An essay by Linda Eyre, "Re-Forming (Hetero) Sexuality Education," analyzes the ways in which "pedagogical practices explicitly intended to challenge heteronormativity and heterosexism" may indeed lead to increased stereotyping of gays and lesbians. In her essay "Geography Lessons: On Being an Insider/Outsider to the Canadian Nation," Himani Bannerji narrates her experiences of racism, both interpersonal and institutional, from her perspective as a woman-of-color immigrant encountering an imaginary, constructed Anglo-Canadian culture from which she is systematically excluded. As these examples indicate, the essays do not look for easy answers. Instead, they all, to varying degrees, work to complicate our understandings of and interrogate the systems of power which radical political acts attempt to unsettle. Non-Canadian readers may find the predominance of articles by Canadian writers refreshing. Further, non-Canadian readers may find that the essays encourage closer looks at the institutional, political, social, and interpersonal dynamics of their own nation.

A starting point for many of the essays is the popularized concept of "backlash" (as explored in Susan Faludi's 1991 *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*). While a few of the essays find the concept a useful tool for analysis, others point out the limitations of idea, claiming that it is a reductive concept that in fact serves normative structures by creating a blame-the-victim scenario. Roman and Eyre explore these seeming contradictions in their introduction, where they discuss the collection's development in a balanced and reflexive manner that indicates their commitment to sustained and productive critique. As radical educators, they identify their and the book's project: "we wondered how and in what ways [within the context of backlash politics] we had begun to collude unwittingly in particular Right-wing reconstructions and restorations of our universities" (1). Chandra Talpade Mohanty provides the volume's perceptive preface, "Dangerous Territories, Territorial Power, and Education." In it, she asks, "What is at stake in the way intellectual, institutional, pedagogical, and relational territories are drawn, legitimated, regulated, and consolidated in educational institutions and systems? What dangers inhere in these cartographies? To whom? What knowledges and identities are legitimated/delegitimated as a result of the struggles over territorial boundaries and borders?" (ix-x). The essays take up similar questions.

Part One, *Stating the Unstated: Nations, State Power, and Education*, analyzes some of the power structures that create ideas of national identity or that work to

shore up the same. In addition to Bannerji's essay (mentioned above), this section includes Davina Cooper's analysis of Britain's New Christian Right in "At the Expense of Christianity: Backlash Discourse and Moral Panic" and Didi Herman's discussion of the long-term existence of the Christian Right as a social movement in "'Then I Saw a New Heaven and a New Earth': Thoughts on the Christian Right and the Problem of 'Backlash.'" Jill Blackmore discusses the problems associated with establishing gender equity policies in an academy experimenting with management discourses and organizational models drawn from business in "Disciplining Feminism: A Look at Gender-Equity Struggles in Australian Higher Education."

Part Two, *Inside-Out: Transgressive Pedagogies and Unsettling Classrooms*, moves from engagement with national and statist power structures into the classroom, showing compellingly how our local and specific praxis as educators is determined by the large-scale power structures responsible for our positions as authorities in the classroom. Equally important to this section is the question of how our students are figured in relation to their culture in general and to the academic setting in particular. Richard Cavell's "Transvestic Sites: Postcolonialism, Pedagogy, and Politics" considers the use of postcolonial theoretical concepts such as borderlands/borderlines and bordercrossing as means of analyzing texts. Aruna Srivastava's "Anti-Racism Inside and Outside the Classroom" explores anti-racist pedagogical possibilities. Alice Jane Pitts' "Reading Resistance Analytically: On Making the Self in Women's Studies" examines student resistance (in the psychoanalytic sense) and identity formation in the classroom context. Patricia Elliot's "Denial and Disclosure: An Analysis of Selective Reality in the Feminist Classroom" analyzes students' denial of difference which are accompanied by disclosures of discrimination.

Part Three, *Shifting Courses, Directions, and Policies: Out from the Pedagogical Ghetto*, steps into the borderlands between the individual and the power structures that govern the individual's possibilities. Juridical discourse is shown by Dorothy E. Smith, in "Report and Repression: Textual Hazards for Feminists in the Academy," to create and limit the ways in which documents may be read, to the disadvantage of those with less power due to gender and seniority. Howard Smith discusses academic promotion based on non-traditional examples of merit and scholarship in "'What a Shame You Don't Publish': Crossing the Boundaries as a Public Intellectual Activist." Linda Eyre's essay (mentioned above) appears here, as does Leslie G. Roman and Timothy Stanley's school-based study of racial and national discourses, "Empires, Emigres, and Aliens: Young People's Negotiations of Official and Popular Racism in Canada." Celia Haig-Brown's "Gender

Equity, Policy, and Praxis” focuses on the need for reflexive and critical analysis of policy initiatives, and Jane Kenway’s “Backlash in Cyberspace: Why ‘Girls Need Modems’” connects the volume’s issues with the information superhighway, positing technology as an “important opportunity” for curricular reform and identity formation. ✱