—————————●—————————

What Is "Racism" in Antiracist Education?

Racial Healing: Confronting the Fear Between Blacks and Whites
Harlan Dalton. New York: Doubleday, 1995. $22.50. 246 pp.

The Trouble With Friendship: Why Americans Can't Think Straight About Race
Benjamin DeMott. New York: Atlanta Monthly Press. 1995. $22.00. 214 pp.

Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism: A Developmental Approach
Louise Derman-Sparks and Carol Brunson Phillips. New York: Teachers College Press, 1997. $17.95 (in paper). 162 pp.

The End of Racism: Principles for a Multiracial Society
Dinesh D'Souza. New York: Free Press, 1995. $16.00 (in paper, with new Preface). 700 pp.

We Are All Multiculturalists Now
Nathan Glazer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 1997. $19.95. 173 pp.

"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" and Other Conversations About Race
Beverly Daniel Tatum. New York: Basic Books, 1997. $24.00. 261 pp.

LAWRENCE BLUM, *University of Massachusetts, Boston*

Antiracist education must operate with a conception of "racism." A commonly held definition is that racism is a system of advantage and power of white people over people of color. Reviewing this set of recent books on antiracist education, I argue that this definition is both too broad (white privilege is an important race-related injustice yet is not racism) and too narrow (not all racist actions contribute to a system of advantage or power). The definition's focus on effects rather than individual prejudice paradoxically blinds us to the manifold racial and nonracial causes of racial disparity and injustice, and constricts educational inquiry. The definition also masks the range and plurality of moral, civic, and social aims of antiracist education—reducing racial stereotypes,

learning respect for persons of different races, intervening in racist incidents, promoting interracial tolerance and understanding, recognizing one's racial privilege and responding constructively to that recognition, committing oneself to making one's local environment a more hospitable place for persons of all races, battling racial injustice. A broadened conception of antiracist education goes hand in hand with a more complex understanding of racism itself.

Race in America has garnered extraordinary attention, both scholarly and popular, in the middle and late 1990s. Journalists and academics have attempted to reframe our understanding of race, racism, and culture. Antiracist educators have sought models for opposing racism and delivering on the promise of a truly democratic society.

The books on race and racism under review emerge from several distinct discourses and disciplines. Louise Derman-Sparks and Carol Brunson Phillips's *Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism: A Developmental Approach* stands squarely within antiracist education. The authors are early childhood specialists and teachers of teachers. Beverly Daniel Tatum is a psychologist and antiracist workshop leader. Her *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" and Other Conversations About Race* concerns racial identity development and is meant to have direct implications for how to teach about race and racism.

Benjamin DeMott is a cultural critic and academic; Harlan Dalton is a law professor. Both their books—the former's *The Trouble With Friendship: Why Americans Can't Think Straight About Race* and the latter's *Racial Healing: Confronting the Fear Between Black and White*—are nondisciplinary works of broad-ranging cultural observation, criticism, and prescription.

Dinesh D'Souza's *The End of Racism* and Nathan Glazer's *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* grow out of debates that raged in in the early and middle 1990s about multiculturalism. D'Souza, the John M. Olin Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, a prominent conservative think tank, is a quasi-scholarly popular writer. His earlier work, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Sex and Race on Campus* (1991), was a best-selling polemical attack on multiculturalism on college campuses. The work under review here—likewise a widely reviewed best-seller—follows the general public shift of attention from multiculturalism to race in the late 1990s. It is a polemical attack on liberal views of race and racism, including antiracist educational initiatives.

Nathan Glazer, a distinguished and influential sociologist of ethnicity, brings together a variety of concerns about race and multiculturalism in *We Are All Multiculturalists Now.* Retreating from the anti–affirmative action stance of his 1975 work, *Affirmative Discrimination,* Glazer now laments the failure of dominant American cultural, educational, economic, and political institutions to integrate blacks into American life as full equals. He sees a necessity for race-sensitive governmental action to advance that process. Glazer views a failure to deliver on the promise of the powerful antidiscrimination legislation of the 1960s as having led to educational multiculturalism. Blacks have

turned to Afrocentric and multicultural curricula, demanding educational attention to Afro-American experience, and even separate black academies. Glazer sees these developments as resulting from despair and frustration over the failure of integration, and also as leverage to address the distressing, continuing state of black inequality in American society.

Diverse domains of discourse about race have much to offer one another. In this review I will focus on two points of contact: first, the ways that an educational perspective provides needed attention to the dynamics by which individual persons make use of their understanding of race and racism to bring about social change; second, the ways that much education-centered literature operates with an insufficiently complex understanding both of the concept of "racism" and of the social dynamics of race and racism in society. The discussion will suggest a broader and more pluralistic conception of the appropriate goals of antiracist education than one finds among many antiracist educators today.

This prevailing wisdom is given particularly effective expression in Derman-Sparks and Phillips's *Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism*, which describes a course the authors (the former white, the latter black) co-taught for ten years at Pacific Oaks College (apparently during the late '70s and '80s), with a week-by-week description of readings, activities, and pedagogy. The course aimed to help students come to grips with American racism and to become antiracists. The authors supply powerful testimony from students over the years about their personal transformations in recognizing racism, and their engagement in action on their newfound commitments. The authors also provide a general perspective on racism, which they use to frame their discussion of antiracist education.

Derman-Sparks and Phillips operate with a developmental model of racial identity explained more fully by Beverly Daniel Tatum in *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?"* Tatum covers a broad range of race-related topics, from the title essay on why black students in racially mixed high schools tend to hang out in racially exclusive groups, to helpful advice on instructing young children (black, white, and others as well) in the realities of race while preventing children of color from being disabled by the negative messages generally attending such realities. This work is a treasure of wisdom and insight on race and racial development.

"Why Are All the Black Kids . . . " is framed by parallel accounts of the development of racial identity that Tatum draws, in the case of blacks, from William Cross (1991, 1995) and Robert Carter (1997), and in the case of whites, from Janet Helms (1990, 1995). Tatum has herself become identified with these racial identity development theories through a series of influential articles on which this book expands.

In brief, Tatum's view is that blacks are not initially explicitly aware of their racial identity but have internalized the negative associations placed on them

by a white-dominated society. Through experience they are forced to recognize that racial significance. They then immerse themselves in their group and its culture, with hostility toward the dominant group turning later to distance and disinterest. They then become secure about their racial identity, and are able to form relations across racial boundaries. Finally, they become committed actively to advancing the interests of their racial group.

Whites go through a mirror image of this process, beginning with no awareness that they have a racial identity at all, moving to guilt and shame at its recognition, then a resentment against people of color (for making them feel guilty), and, finally, a search for a healthy form of white identity.

Harlan Dalton's *Racial Healing*, though not focused specifically on education, schools, or young people, is nevertheless, like Derman-Sparks and Phillips, and Tatum, concerned with processes of communication and personal change in the racial domain. Dalton aims to promote racial understanding on a general social level. He confronts first whites, then blacks, with realities he sees each group as needing to face in order for dialogue between them to be fruitful. Dalton delivers hard truths and pointed insights with personal honesty, openness, and hopeful encouragement. He urges readers of all races to see the necessity for and possibilities of a social order that respects cultural diversity yet strives to embody social justice and equality.

HIGHLIGHTING WHITE PRIVILEGE

Derman-Sparks and Phillips, Tatum, and Dalton all place a concern with "white privilege" at the center of any serious understanding of the racial situation in the United States. As Dalton aptly says,

> We have long since grown accustomed to thinking of Blacks as being "racially disadvantaged." Rarely, however, do we refer to Whites as "racially advantaged." . . . [E]ven though acknowledging White skin privilege is difficult, awkward, and discomfiting, real progress depends on it. For to ignore the reality of race-based privilege is to deny the very meaning of race in our society. (p. 7)

While "It isn't fair that blacks cannot move to whatever neighborhoods they can afford" (racial disadvantage mode) may superficially seem equivalent to "It isn't fair that whites can move to whatever neighborhoods they can afford while blacks cannot" (racial advantage mode), there is a great psychic and educational difference between the two.[1] The first allows the white person to stand outside this system of discrimination, while the second places her right in the middle of that system as a beneficiary. Feeling implicated in that second way is much more likely to make her feel she must come to terms with that system and her place in it, and Derman-Sparks and Phillips give eloquent testimony to how this perspective has prompted deep self-scrutiny in some of their

white students. The perspective of "white privilege" is entirely lacking in D'Souza, Glazer, and DeMott, notwithstanding their otherwise widely divergent racial ideologies.

That *The End of Racism* lacks this element is hardly surprising. For D'Souza, blacks are *not* racially disadvantaged (though they *once* were). D'Souza covers a wide range of topics in this vast book. However, the central argument of the book can be summarized thus: Blacks were once excluded from American society by racist ideology. That ideology grew from a false but understandable and even rational attempt on the part of Europeans to explain the superiority of their civilization to that of Africans. Inherent racial characteristics were adduced to explain the differences in civilization level.

Eventually this racist ideology was discredited by science, and race is no longer an obstacle to black opportunity in the United States. This does not mean that whites do not still think of blacks as inferior. They often do, and sometimes falsely resort to genetic explanations of this inferiority. (D'Souza is critical of his ideologically conservative allies, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, for their racialist argument in *The Bell Curve*.) However, the real cause of current white belief in black inferiority is the inferior attainments of blacks in society in proportion to their numbers—their higher crime rate, lower educational achievement, higher out-of-wedlock birth rate, and the like. And the cause of *these* behaviors is, in turn, "black culture" (rather than black genetic makeup), a set of norms prevalent within the black community that opposes mainstream American values. Under slavery and to some extent segregation, such a culture might have been functional, says D'Souza; but now it is dysfunctional.

In the Preface to the paperback release of his book, D'Souza, responding to many criticisms of the book, mildly regrets using the expression "black culture." A racial group cannot have a culture, he rightly says, and clarifies that what he meant was "African-American culture" (not, for example, the culture of immigrant Haitians or Africans). It is the "pathologies" of African American culture, not of blacks as a multiethnic and multinational racial group, that cause black misery and white fear, contempt, and resentment. (The new preface pinpoints what D'Souza claims to be commonalities in the black middle and lower classes, thus denying a class basis for the behaviors he sees as dysfunctional, and supporting, if one accepts his premises, the idea that "African-American culture" is a purely ethnicity-based culture.) So the rerelease of the book essentially reiterates without apology the main thesis of the original.

D'Souza's book is not entirely without merit. It contains much useful information. It provides a clearer grasp of the difference between race and culture than some of the other books under review here. Yet its distortions, confusions, contradictions, sloppy thinking, and downright racism vitiate it as a serious work on the subject of race, and the fact that it was virtually a best seller is a cause for some alarm.[2]

Like D'Souza, Glazer lacks any recognition of a notion of white privilege. This may be more surprising in Glazer's case, as he is concerned about continuing black inequality in American society (though Glazer tends to focus more directly on racial segregation than racial injustice and disadvantage, without examining whether these can be equated). *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* is permeated with the assumption that whites should lament their failure to help blacks become full members of a racially integrated economic, political, and social order; yet it lacks any recognition that whites might benefit from that failure, or that white privilege is actually part of the system needing to be dismantled if full racial equality is to be attained.

The lack of recognition of white privilege is most glaring in Benjamin DeMott's *The Trouble With Friendship*, the most racially hard-hitting of these three works. DeMott powerfully and unflinchingly describes the systematic nature of racial injustice in the United States, tracing its roots in slavery. DeMott deftly unearths some of the cultural blinders—American individualism, new cultural imagery of black-white friendship, the marketing, and commodifying, of multiracial amity—and new social realities—especially the rise of a substantial black middle class—that mask this injustice. DeMott sees blacks and whites living in very different circumstances, and he draws liberally on the educational anthropologist John Ogbu (1978) to explain these differences as due to the lower "caste" status to which blacks have always been relegated in our society, notwithstanding that a substantial number of blacks have been able, especially in recent decades, to break out of this status and enter what he calls the "opportunity society."

DeMott presents his argument in a witty, sarcastic, and engaging yet passionately felt manner. Clearly he means his book to be a wake-up call to white Americans (and, to some extent, to middle-class blacks); all need to face the distressing and unpleasant racial reality of our society and to take the radical steps necessary to dismantle the system of caste-based injustice under which we all live. Yet DeMott does not portray whites as direct beneficiaries of the injustice, as possessing a privilege attached to their skin color, or racial classification, alone, though he assembles all the social data necessary to take that step. In a sense, his relentless attack on black-white personal relations—"the myth of friendship," as he refers to it constantly throughout the book—portrays blacks and whites as radically "other" to one another. This tone pervades his description of blacks' lives, and lends itself to whites distancing themselves from blacks and from racial injustice, in precisely the way that Dalton, Derman-Sparks/Phillips, and Tatum, with their educational focus on how one delivers a message in such a way that it can be heard and acted on, are so concerned to avoid.

STAGES OF RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AS IMPLICATED
IN CONFRONTING RACIAL INJUSTICE

Tatum and Derman-Sparks and Phillips also emphasize that an individual's ability to acknowledge racial injustice and racism is strongly bound up with how that individual thinks about and perceives herself racially. For example, a teacher can present all the facts of interracial alliances so central to the Underground Railroad, to the defeat of apartheid in South Africa, to the civil rights movement, and to many forms of struggle for racial justice, hoping thereby to contribute to historical understanding as well as to the antiracist goal of alliance in political struggle. Yet a black student in a mode of identity involving disconnection from whites and immersion in black history, black culture, and black peers may not be able to hear or take in this perspective. Similarly, powerfully delineating the facts of racial injustice and oppression in the United States, as DeMott does, may not register on a white student stuck in a mode of racial resentment.

Whether or not these modes of thinking and feeling warrant the conceptually and theoretically loaded label of "stages of racial development" that both Tatum and Derman-Sparks and Phillips give them, they do present a vital perspective that any teacher, and indeed any individual engaging in dialogue with others about race, would benefit greatly from familiarizing herself with.[3] Indeed much miscommunication, frustration, defensiveness, and hurt feelings in the charged arena of interracial conversation about race could be avoided by reading Tatum's lucid account of modes of black and white racial identity modes and development. Neither Glazer's sociological, nor DeMott's cultural-critical, modes of discourse readily provide a place for these educational and communicative dimensions of antiracist understandings and commitments.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "RACISM"?

Tatum, Dalton, and Derman-Sparks and Phillips all put forth remarkably similar conceptions of racism, one widely held by antiracist educators and activists. All are concerned to reject a view they see as common, especially among whites, that identifies racism solely with racial prejudice or hostility. On that view, if a person is free of racist motivation, he or she has no further reason for concern about racism. Tatum says that racism is a "system of advantage based on race," a definition she draws from David Wellman (1993). That system advantages whites and disadvantages blacks, but does not rely solely on white racial prejudice to do so. Dalton agrees with the idea of systemic advantage but locates racism in the beliefs (including culturally acceptable ones) that sustain this system of advantage. Derman-Sparks and Phillips begin chapter 1 with the statement, "Racism is an institutionalized system of power."

What does the idea of racism as a system of power or advantage imply for individual actions, beliefs, attitudes? To put it another way, what does the definition of "racism" imply about *when* acts, beliefs, remarks, and persons are "racist"? As Derman-Sparks and Phillips note, this issue is important because antiracist education is directed toward the individual, rather than directly toward the system of advantage itself. Derman-Sparks and Phillips say that racism on the individual level "consists of attitudes and behaviors that carry out and maintain the power relationships of racism." As examples they mention membership in the Ku Klux Klan, sending one's children to all-white schools to avoid integration, and ignorance about the history and traditions of people of color. All these actions or nonactions serve to sustain white advantage, whether they are intended to do so or not.

Derman-Sparks and Phillips summarize their view with a formula that both they and Tatum rightly attribute to many antiracist educators: "Racism equals personal prejudice plus institutional power" (p. 10). But the examples both books give do not conform to this definition, for they do not all involve prejudice. Indeed, the point of their shared definitional focus on system and institution is to recognize that racial advantage/power does not actually depend on personal prejudice. School personnel of racial goodwill may still carry out policies that disfavor racial minority groups.

Tatum and Derman-Sparks and Phillips explicitly, and Dalton implicitly, favor the system-centered definition of racism over a purely individual-centered one because it allows racism to encompass not only people's intentions, or the goodness of their heart, but the *consequences* of their actions. While (some) whites moving out of mixed neighborhoods may be motivated primarily by a desire for better schools for their children, their actions do contribute to residential and educational segregation, which usually has negative consequences for blacks. As Derman-Sparks and Phillips say, in a hypothetical response to such persons, "I don't question your motives, but when we look at the consequences of the move we see 'White flight'" (p. 75).

Derman-Sparks and Phillips see as an advantage of their definition of "racism," that "[t]he analysis leaves White students without a way to think of themselves as nonracist" (p. 75). White students cannot opt out of the conversation, thinking of "racial problems" as someone else's. They must recognize that they themselves are implicated, a precondition for their being willing to take responsibility for racism, and ultimately to commit themselves to antiracist activity. Derman-Sparks/Phillips later state this point as a primary goal for white students—to acknowledge racism as a white problem, not a black problem.

This is to say that Derman-Sparks and Phillips, and Tatum less definitively, identify racism with white privilege. Dalton initially appears to do the same, yet he says, "We should delete the word 'racist' from our vocabulary" (p. 169), especially in relation to persons, for it conjures up images of bigotry. It thus

allows most decent white people to breathe a sigh of relief that they are not racist and thus to "fail to recognize that they collectively are more responsible for preserving and entrenching the racial pecking order than are the relatively few jerks who spew venom or act out of hatred" (p. 170).

So Dalton thinks that the semantic associations of the term "racist" are very different from those of "white privilege," and, indeed, that linking the two will make it much *harder* to achieve the goal shared by both Derman- Sparks/Phillips and Dalton—getting whites to acknowledge privilege. Hence the two books make precisely opposite empirical claims about the relation between how the term "racist" is to be defined and the achieving of their antiracist goals.

In a sense both may be right. Students in a class are a captive audience, and teachers (such as Derman-Sparks and Phillips) have some chance of bringing them around to adopting their definitions of key terms, even if these are somewhat out of line with ordinary usage. It is much more difficult to get the general public—Dalton's target audience—to accept such a definition. Still, Dalton's linguistic sense about "racist" seems to me correct, and should sound a cautionary note to Derman-Sparks and Phillips's confidence that conflating white privilege with "racism" will have the effect of transferring the moral opprobrium of the latter term to the former, rather than turning white people away from acknowledging their racial privilege. (If Dalton's view is to be coherent, however, he must think that "racism" and "racist" have very different meanings, the first referring to institutional advantage or power and the second to bigotry.)

Derman-Sparks and Phillips's definition of individual racism is fraught with other difficulties. If every act that contributes to or sustains the racial advantage of an advantaged group is to be called "racist," we are encouraged to condemn equally a policy of excluding blacks from employment because one does not want to work with them, and a white coworker using a racial stereotype that offends her black coworker. The definition blurs the moral difference between attempting to make blacks feel unwanted in an institution in hopes that this will discourage other blacks from applying to it, and, out of ignorance, paying insufficient respect to black culture in a classroom. The term "racist" carries an implication of moral opprobrium that renders it appropriate to the first action in each pair (the intentional race-based exclusions) but not the second (unintentional stereotyping, unwitting failure to honor culture). The insight that the latter actions may contribute in some small way to blacks' feeling and being excluded from central social institutions may be an important one educationally; but it seems misleading to express it through the label "racist" or "racism."

Certainly one vital aim of antiracist education, with which all three books are concerned, is that whites recognize that private actions can have social consequences which, taken on a large scale, have deleterious consequences

for blacks. This is a more general goal of social justice education in general. In a society with a legacy of racial injustice and division, one's choice of career, friends, neighborhood, and mode of worship may have a racial significance that one might wish it not to have. The civic dimension of education requires that we face the public consequences of "private" actions. However, it is questionable whether labeling all such behaviors "racist" is the best way to bring students to engage with this civic dimension of their lives.

While the three books' shared definition of "racism" may be too broad, in another sense it is too narrow. Not all of what we ordinarily think of as racism does help to sustain a system of racial advantage, nor do we fault these manifestations of racism solely because they do so contribute. Suppose in a majority black school a low-status white student uses an antiblack racist epithet. Teaching this student why this is wrong and how it can be hurtful to black students is an important educational task; but to say that his making this remark helps to sustain a system of white power might well be stretching a point. (The case would be very different in a white-dominated school where the maker of the remark was a high-status member of the community.)

Tatum also rightly notes that, for example, being asked for "the black point of view" (if one is black) involves being treated not as an individual but primarily as a member and representative of a group, that this very seldom happens to whites, and that it is often obnoxious and objectionable.[1] Yet such actions do not typically reinforce racial hierarchy to an appreciable extent. In any case, they are objectionable simply because they involve not treating someone as an individual; that is enough to make them an appropriate target of antiracist education. If these actions also contribute to racial hierarchy that is a *further*, and distinct, reason for condemning them.

Antiracist education narrows its sights when it confines itself, as Derman-Sparks and Phillips's theoretical position implies, to events and incidents with the social weight of systemic racial injustice. Instances of racial ignorance, insensitivity, and stereotyping—and even of unquestionably racist remarks and epithets—may have little bearing on structures of power and advantage; yet they are hurtful to other persons based on their racial identity and are thus important targets of antiracist education.

Defining racism as the "maintenance of racial advantage" makes it difficult to elucidate the plurality of individual, civic, and political goals—righting systemic injustice, reducing prejudice, treating members of other races with respect and as individuals, contributing to racial harmony and understanding, learning skills of intervention in racist incidents—appropriately falling under the rubric of "antiracist education." For instance, encouraging students to take class time to relate incidents of racial prejudice or stereotyping that they either witness or of which they are a victim, then having the class analyze what makes these incidents racist and brainstorm about what the student might have done in the moment, or what might now be done, to address the

situation—these activities would constitute forms of antiracist classroom practice that would teach a greater understanding of racism, encourage students to take racism more seriously, begin to teach skills of intervention, and help students see fighting racism as a civic responsibility. All these are important goals of antiracist education but most are at least partially distinct from challenging the maintenance of racial advantage.

CAN PEOPLE OF COLOR BE RACIST?

Dalton's, Tatum's, and Derman-Sparks and Phillips's definition of racism implies not only that all whites *are* racist, but that people of color are *never* racist. Tatum recognizes the touchiness of this issue, but sticks to her guns. People of color can be *prejudiced*, she says, but they do not systematically benefit from racism; reserving "racism" for the behavior of whites is a way of reminding us about the power differential between whites on the one hand and all groups of color on the other (p. 10).

This is a troubling and, I think, ultimately counterproductive way to look at racism. If one reads through the litany of hate crimes published periodically by *Klanwatch* (a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks white supremacist and hate groups), some are committed by people of color against people of color of other groups, or against whites. Most people would regard these actions, and the motivations that prompt them, as racist, and rightly so.[5] Many blacks, whites, and others would so regard the white supremacist ideology of the Nation of Islam, and the anti-Semitic remarks of some of its spokespersons, including Louis Farrakhan. To guarantee that nothing a person of color can do, say, or think about someone from another racial or ethnic group counts as "racist" borders on either trivializing or excusing the race-based hatreds, hostilities, and acts of discrimination of people of color. It makes constructive conversation between whites and persons of color all the more difficult, defeating an important aim of antiracist education itself.

If what Tatum calls "prejudice" on the part of people of color were to be treated as a serious moral evil and accorded vital classroom attention, perhaps the "prejudice versus racism" difference could be regarded as largely a semantic matter. But—reflecting the views of many who share her perspective—Tatum does not take this route. "Racism" is clearly meant to name a morally and educationally serious matter; "prejudice," while not a good thing, is a much lesser concern. If so the prejudices of people of color will not be taken seriously, morally or educationally.

Derman-Sparks and Phillips take the withholding of "racism" as applicable to racially prejudiced hostility and actions of people of color (which they call "pro-racism") one step further, by implying that it is merely a reflection of the racism of the dominant group, namely whites. Yet the racial hostilities and prejudices of one nonwhite racial group toward another may stem from a

multitude of causes—fear of those who are different, stereotyping, economic competition, racialized anti-immigrant nativism, an overzealous defensive protectiveness—that may have little to do with white racism. Derman-Sparks and Phillips's view deprives people of color of full responsibility for their own racial prejudices and hostilities by saying that, ultimately, they are white people's fault.

To affirm that people of color can be racist is not to deny Tatum and Derman-Sparks/Phillips's central point that power relations should play an important role in our understanding of racism and of what is objectionable about it. Racism is indeed a much more serious matter when a racist has the power to put his hostilities into practice than when he does not. Students need to understand this. Racism of whites against blacks and that of blacks against whites is not morally equivalent, as racial conservatives often claim.[6]

However, it is arbitrary of these authors to confine this insight about power to the macro-social level. Why should the fact that whites are the generally dominant racial group be the only relevant form of power relation? In some cities and institutions blacks hold substantial power (even if they lack the economic resources that once accompanied that power). Latinos, for example, have sometimes complained of racial discrimination by blacks in excluding them from jobs and influence in those contexts. Similarly, a white child in a predominantly Latino school excluded from social life because of racial hostility is still a victim of racism, even if in the outer society whites as a racial group are more powerful than Latinos as a racial group.

POWER AND ADVANTAGE

In an aside, Tatum makes an important point about the relation between power and racism. After citing the "prejudice plus power" definition of racism, (see above, p. 867), she says she prefers Wellman's definition of a system of advantage based on race. This is not, however, because the latter does not require prejudice. Rather, Tatum says, it is because she prefers to highlight the idea of advantage, since many of her students and workshop participants do not personally feel powerful.

Tatum implies that this definitional choice is a personal preference of hers, that there is no substantive difference between a "power"- and an "advantage"-focused definition. But Tatum's observation about her students' feelings suggests otherwise. Many white people—poor and working-class whites (the two categories have some overlap)—do not possess the kind of social power envisioned in Wellman's definition. It is in fact misleading to speak of "whites"—as an entire group—as possessing social power, a point that Derman-Sparks and Phillips make later in their discussion. Most whites are as far from this power as are blacks.

However, whites as a group still benefit from a racial *advantage*. At every class level, whites are treated better than blacks at that same economic level. The advantage may not always be very significant compared to the other disadvantages suffered by particular white persons. (See discussion of this below, p. 875.) But, while power might not be wielded, advantage based on race accrues to these whites. Hence the "power" and the "advantage" definitions of racism are by no means equivalent.

THEORIZING THE MULTIPLE SOURCES OF RACIAL DISADVANTAGE AND ADVANTAGE

A related problem with the "racism as institutionalized power" conception is, ironically, that it makes it more difficult to understand the economic, political, and social situation of different "racial" groups—the very phenomenon the definition was meant to capture. Both Tatum and Derman-Sparks/Phillips want to emphasize that racism is about results rather than intent; it is about the victimization and disadvantage of particular racial groups. But members of these groups (and educated persons generally) need to know what *causes* their disadvantage or oppression. Are jobless blacks and Latinos in urban centers jobless because companies have moved overseas to take advantage of cheaper labor costs? Are they jobless because employers refuse to hire them for available positions? And if it is the latter, is the reason that employers exclude them because, operating from racist stereotypes, they do not regard blacks or Latinos as reliable workers? Or is it because they think their customers will think this even if it is not true? Is it because they have found through experience that the black and Latino applicants who have been hired are in fact less skilled than comparable applicants from other groups? Or do they think, based on their actual experience, that, independent of skill level, young blacks and Latinos bring culturally based attitudes not conducive to effective job performance?[7]

These are all very different kinds of reasons, having quite different relationships to "race." It is true that *all* of the decisions result in disadvantaging urban blacks and Latino job seekers, and thus the black and Latino communities. But if we just say, "Well, the decisions are all racist then," we will not be encouraged to try to understand the actual causes of—hence the remedies for—the oppressive situation of black and Latino communities. In particular we will not be encouraged to see which of these causes concern race, which class-related factors, which social stereotypes, which actual trends in job preparedness, which "purely economic" factors, and which other social or cultural factors that have some link to race. The sociologist William Julius Wilson's well-known and influential views (put forth most recently in *When Work Disappears*)—that economic and social disintegration among urban black communities is due much more to economy-related rather than directly racial factors—are difficult even

to put out on the table if one defines "racism" as the totality of factors leading to the disadvantage of racially defined groups.

On DeMott's analysis, to take another example, the plight of blacks has very little to do with contemporary white racial attitudes or standard behaviors. That plight is largely a legacy of the "caste" status to which blacks have historically been relegated. DeMott's idea of caste involves an assessment that the black community has suffered a kind of damage, a damage traceable to white racist institutions, practices, and attitudes, yet no longer entirely dependent on their continuance. On his view, short-term solutions, or ones focused on discrete "problem areas," have little chance of making inroads into dismantling this racial caste system; whites and blacks alike must be prepared for longer-range and more radical structural change. DeMott cites the influential black educator and psychiatrist James Comer, whom DeMott regards as appreciating the required systemic and long-term perspective: "[T]hree generations of continuous access [to the developmental school experience] are necessary if a family is to gain the type of education that will allow them to function successfully in the postindustrial economy"[8] (p. 93f).

DeMott's, or Wilson's, analyses may or may not be right about the causes of lower-class black social misery. But we do not even allow such views to be explored if we just *define* all black disadvantage as a manifestation of "racism."

The "black community," like any racially defined community, is affected by many sorts of forces—economic, cultural, political—that may have little to do with race per se. Not everything that happens to black (Latino, Native American) people happens *because* they are black (Latino, Native American). The relevant factors may intersect in complex ways with race, and pointing to a specifically "racial" element may be impossible. Thus "race"—and racism —cannot be the only lens through which we should teach about the full human reality of this community (or other communities of color).

All the authors under consideration here recognize the multiple sources of racial injustice when it comes to particular cases. Derman-Sparks and Phillips talk about the flight of industry from urban centers, and tax laws in the 1980s, continuing (though somewhat muted during the Clinton presidency) into the present, that favor the top 1% of taxpayers over others. Derman-Sparks and Phillips recognize these factors as contributing to further immiseration of urban blacks. Yet they categorize the factors simply as "New Faces of Racism" (p. 19), implying that it is the same factors operating, only under a different guise, rather than recognizing the qualitative distinction between class-based and race-based factors.

Antiracist educators must be open to exploring this entire range of factors and the full multidisciplinary range of literature analyzing the situation of different races in society. Social analysis should not be driven by an educational philosophy. Antiracist education should encourage students to probe this

complex intellectual terrain, so that students aiming to continue the historical struggle to correct for historic injustices can gain a realistic sense of their own possibilities.

THE ANALYSIS OF RACIAL INJUSTICE AND THE
MULTIPLE GOALS OF ANTIRACIST EDUCATION

Different analyses of racist structures yield quite different roles for the individual (especially the white individual) in dismantling those structures. An emphasis on the centrality of white privilege to sustaining racial injustice implies that each white individual can make a direct assault on those structures in her own actions. This is a corollary of the view that racism is essentially a white problem, a view the adoption of which Derman-Sparks and Phillips state as a central aim of antiracist education. Both DeMott and William J. Wilson (in different ways) challenge the idea that if white people would just realize their responsibility to renounce their racism and their participation in racist structures, racial justice would be the result. Glazer's sociological approach analyzes social and political forces that lead to black disadvantage; the implications of his analysis for individual action is not, nor need it be, a touchstone for that analysis. All of these authors' (differing) diagnoses place the locus for significant dismantling of racial injustice in governmental action or widespread shifts in cultural attitudes. Efforts of individuals to shed racial privilege, or to get involved in community activism— salutary as these efforts are—will not necessarily contribute materially to such dismantling.

Part of the problem with Derman-Sparks and Phillips's conception of antiracist education is the ambitious view that dismantling racial injustice should be the sole criterion for antiracist educational initiatives. I have suggested that antiracist education be envisioned as encompassing a broader set of goals. Derman-Sparks and Phillips describe a white student who, as a result of their course, came to be empowered to challenge racist remarks she hears from other whites. This is tremendous progress for this student, and an important manifestation of an activist stance toward racism. Yet challenging racist attitudes may have some impact on those attitudes without (if either DeMott or Wilson is on target) having much impact on the larger forces sustaining racial injustice. Nor should this student's educational and moral progress in the racial arena be faulted for not doing so. Derman-Sparks and Phillips are right that every individual can do *something* about racism; but only if what counts as helping in the struggle against racism is defined much more broadly than the ambitious goal of dismantling racist structures.

Consider for example Derman-Sparks and Phillips's favored goal of white students' recognizing and attempting to do something about their white privilege. This indeed is a significant goal of antiracist education. For example, having students go in interracial teams of two to stores, in which whites are

frequently treated much more invitingly and respectfully than blacks, can be very eye-opening for white students. They can then discuss in class ways of refusing favored treatment in the future. Yet such acts of refusing privilege are likely to have little impact on racial subordination. In this regard, challenging the store workers who treat the black student unequally is a step closer to making a dent in such structures, though one should still not attribute too much social impact to it. Yet either of these actions may be vital and even dramatic steps in a particular student's development in an antiracist direction. Thus what is most likely to unhinge racist structures need not coincide with what is personally and educationally most significant. Yet all are important goals of antiracist education.

WHITE PRIVILEGE (REVISITED)

That race is only one among, and is intertwined with, social factors of many sorts should play more of a role in our understanding of "white privilege" than our authors articulate. Many of the forms of white privilege cited by the authors are, at least in part, *class* privilege rather than distinctly *racial* privilege. It may be true that well-dressed black customers are more likely to be followed around by security guards in a department store than are white customers. But they are *less* likely to be followed than are blacks dressed in a way that store security takes to indicate poor or working class status; and comparably dressed white customers are *more* likely to be seen as security risks than whites wearing fine dresses and suits. In many venues working class white people are given the message that they are not wanted, not as smart, not to be trusted financially, and not as reliable as middle-class people.

None of this is to deny white privilege, which I agree must be a central concern of antiracist education. But it does mean that, as Derman-Sparks and Phillips acknowledge, there are several—even many—forms of privilege, and race is only one of them. Taking all of these forms into account, a heterosexual, educated professional black man may have a good deal less social disadvantage overall than a poor, gay, white woman.

Derman-Sparks and Phillips say at one point that only a few whites "gain the full economic, political and cultural benefits of racism. This subgroup includes those who are affluent, male, adult, and generally Protestant" (p. 24). This remark rolls all the different forms of privilege—gender, religious, class, age—into one, masking those differences by calling the whole package "racial." In her book *Facing Up to the American Dream* Jennifer Hochschild shows that professional black Americans are often more concerned about race than are poor blacks, whom one might think suffer more from racism. Hochschild is making the point that professional blacks run into many forms of subtle racism and have much to be dissatisfied about concerning their situation.

It seems most natural to express Hochschild's point by saying that, whereas poor blacks suffer from a complex interplay of racial, class, educational, and cultural disadvantages, professional blacks suffer from racial ones alone (to oversimplify a bit). But Derman-Sparks and Phillips's way of talking about racism and white privilege makes this impossible to say. Antiracist education must be conceptualized so that it is clearly distinct from (though complementary to) education for religious tolerance, against sexism and homophobia, for economic justice, and the like. Important as it is, antiracism is only one dimension of the much larger terrain of education for social justice, and for other moral and social goods as well—tolerance, civic responsibility, treating persons as individuals, loyalty to worthy institutions, and the like.

RACE AND CULTURE: ANTIRACISM AND MULTICULTURALISM

As mentioned, the books under review here represent a shift in public focus from issues of culture and multiculturalism to those of race and antiracism. Derman-Sparks and Phillips rightly note that Americans often confuse *race* and *culture*, or ethnicity. "Blacks" are a racial group, "African Americans" an ethnic or cultural group (though these designations are not always used in a manner that sustains this distinction). "Whites" are a racial group, "Irish Americans" an ethnic group. Race highlights a group's phenotype and implies that this phenotype indicates important inherent group distinctness (generally understood as inferiority or superiority) from other groups. A group's evolved culture can be *affected* by the way the group has been treated as a racial group—much of African American culture contains elements of resistance to or reaction to racial domination, for example—leading to one source of confusion.

D'Souza's historical perspective allows him to distinguish clearly between a racial and a cultural way of looking at a group. He rightly says that the concept of "race" has become increasingly discredited, and that much prejudice against blacks, for example, is directed against their (alleged) cultural, rather than racial, attributes. Derman-Sparks and Phillips, on the other hand, reflect what I think is common usage when they continue to speak of prejudice against a group based on culture (understood here as a group's values and behavior) as "racism."

Yet, while it is certainly true that dominant-group scholars and commentators often, out of ignorance or prejudice, fail to appreciate the strengths of subordinate-group cultures, the move toward equating virtually all criticism of a group's culture with "racism" is misleading and counterproductive. Many observers (e.g., Ogbu [1978], Fordham [1996]) have noted an aspect of black urban youth culture in schools that involves construing academic achievement as "white" and resisting it. Whatever its origins, such cultural norms are damaging to the black community. It is not *always* "blaming the victim" to

criticize a cultural dimension of a racial group's collective life, as Derman-Sparks and Phillips imply (p. 16); doing so cannot be equated with racism. Ironically, given his understanding of the distinction, D'Souza plays into the tendency to see any criticism of a racial group's culture as racist, because his own portrayal of black culture is so unrelentingly negative—shot through with age-old racist stereotypes (blacks as criminals, academically weak, lazy). Despite his claim to have forsworn racism, one cannot help but suspect that his own attitudes toward blacks partake of racism.

Tarring all criticism of culture with the brush of "racism" precludes investigating whether (as DeMott [drawing on Ogbu] would claim) resistance to academic achievement stems from the caste-like status to which African Americans have been relegated. Some destructive or limiting aspects of a group's culture may themselves be a product of racist treatment; yet they are still important to criticize and explore how to change or modify. While it is wrong to think that certain behaviors inhere in a group's "racial essence," it is not always wrong to see behaviors as manifesting a group's culture. The distinction between race and culture is vital to sustain.

Just as race must be distinguished clearly from culture, so the goals of antiracist education and multicultural education should not be permitted to swallow up one another. Educators must sustain a clear sense of the differences and the relations between these. Glazer clearly recognizes the difference between policies such as affirmative action meant to bring about racial justice, and educational initiatives to teach to all students the ways of life and contributions to the nation of distinct cultural groups. (He thinks the latter —the "multiculturalism" of his title—is here to stay and he applauds its greater inclusiveness; yet he also sees it as bound up with abandoning ideals of integration and assimilation to which he retains some loyalty, with the risk of ethnic boosterism driving historical claims, and other undesirable consequences.)

More generally, the educational promotion of racial justice, racial tolerance, interventions in racist incidents, and other *antiracist* goals are distinct from the *multiculturalist* goals of respect for cultural distinctness, appreciation of the value of different national and world cultures, and the valuing of cultural plurality and its enrichment of national life." These goals often reinforce one another; but an exclusive focus on one set can serve to hide the other. In particular, a tepid form of purely celebratory or "feel-good" multiculturalism can relieve us from the necessity of facing up to taking racism seriously in our curricula and pedagogy, a necessity that Derman-Sparks and Phillips and Tatum convincingly impress upon us.

CONCLUSION

Bringing antiracist education into closer dialogue with studies of racism from other disciplines and discourses helps reveal the strengths of an educational perspective. That perspective highlights the developmental and identity dimensions of individuals' relation to an understanding of racism, and to commitments to counter it. At the same time, this dialogue enriches our understanding of the racism with which antiracist education is concerned. It should serve to remind us of the manifold factors involved in the perpetuation of racial disparity and injustice, and that not all causes of such injustice lend themselves readily to individual action to correct them.

At the same time, antiracist education should view itself as serving a plurality of important moral, civic, and social ends—such as reducing racial stereotypes, learning respect for persons of different races, intervening in racist incidents, promoting interracial tolerance and understanding, recognizing one's racial privilege and responding constructively to that recognition, committing oneself to making one's local environment a more hospitable place for persons of all races—not so directly linked to battling the structures of racial injustice. A broadened conception of antiracist education goes hand in hand with a more complex understanding of racism itself.

Notes

1   All three books draw their illustrations of white privilege from an influential essay by Peggy MacIntosh (1989). Other examples include being able to be successful without that having to be taken as reflecting on one's race; being able to look sloppy without that being taken as a sign of poverty or bad values of one's race; being able to get a taxi when one wants one; being able to browse through a store without being treated as suspicious.

2   D'Souza compounds the implausibility of his account by framing it in a larger context of "cultural relativism." He sees this doctrine as explaining both the failure of society to recognize the truth of his overall account of black failure and white attitudes, as well as the failure of governmental attempts at redressing racial injustice, which failure D'Souza sees as intensifying black misery. "History shows that the principles of the civil rights movement developed as a direct outgrowth of cultural relativism" (p. 169). But the centuries-old struggle for equal rights for black Americans has been grounded not in relativism but in the universalist and American civic doctrine of the equal dignity and worth of each human being.

3   Later in her book, after the presentation of the modes of racial development, Tatum distances herself from a strong notion of "stages" as developmental absolutes, as she recognizes that adults who have traversed all the stages in their youth might consciously choose to identify with the outlook of an "earlier" or "lower" stage. They might, for example, distance themselves from others of their race in order to facilitate conforming to (admittedly racist or at least ethnocentric) norms at one's workplace; or (an example she does not use) opt for a separatism or Afrocentrism that rejects the racial universalism of the highest stage. Also, Tatum

acknowledges that not every individual of every race necessarily passes through every intervening stage on the way to a more developed one.

4 Blacks may, in general, bring different experiences and points of view to a discussion; and the desire for this diversity is one valid reason for favoring ethno-racial diversity in educational settings. However, this is not to say there is one "black point of view"; rather, there are many.

5 The philosopher Jorge L. A. Garcia argues compellingly, in a series of articles (1996, 1997), that race-based animosity and hatred is a central paradigm of racism, independent of the racial groups that are the subject, and the target, of the animosity, and independent of the power relations between the persons, and groups, involved.

6 The argument of this and the following paragraph is made in more detail in Blum (1999).

7 These questions are drawn from Wilson's (1997) discussion of why inner-city employers choose their employees, and how this is related to the race of the applicant. Wilson notes that these attitudes are largely shared by both African American and white employers (p. 136).

8 The Comer quote is from Finnegan (1990).

9 For a fuller discussion of the distinction between antiracism and multiculturalism as educational goals, see Blum (1997).

References

Blum, L. (1997). *Multicultural education as values education.* Working paper of the Harvard Children's Initiative. Author's copyright.

Blum, L. (1999). Moral asymmetries in racism. In S. Campbell & S. Babbitt (Eds.), *Philosophy and Racism.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Cross, W. E., Jr. (1991). *Shades of black: Diversity in African-American identity.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Cross, W. E., Jr. (1995). The psychology of nigrescence: Revising the Cross model. In J. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

D'Souza, D. (1991). *Illiberal education: The politics of sex and race on campus.* New York: Free Press.

Finnegan, W. (1990, September 17). A street kid in the drug trade, part II. *New Yorker*, 66.

Fordham, S. (1996). *Blacked out: Dilemmas of race, identity, and success at Capital High.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Garcia, J. L. A. (1996). The heart of racism. *Journal of Social Philosophy, 27*, 5–45

Garcia, J. L. A. (1997). Current conceptions of racism: A critical examination of some recent social philosophy. *Journal of Social Philosophy, 28*, 5–42

Glazer, N. (1975). *Affirmative discrimination: Ethnic inequality and public policy.* New York: Basic Books.

Helms, J. E. (1990). *Black and white racial identity: Theory, research, and practice.* Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Helms, J. E. (1995). An update of Helms's white and people of color racial identity models. In J. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Herrnstein, R., & Murray, C. (1994). *The bell curve: Intelligence and class structure in American life.* New York: Free Press.

Hochschild, J. (1995). *Facing up to the American dream: Race, class, and the soul of the nation.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

MacIntosh, P. (1989). White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies. In M. L. Anderson & P. H. Collins, *Race, class, and gender: An anthology* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Ogbu, J. (1978). *Minority education and caste.* New York: Academic Press.

Wellman, D. (1993). *Portraits of white racism* (2nd ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press.
Wilson, W. J. (1997). *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.