CHAPTER 8

What, Why and How Do We Do What We Do?

Antiracism Education at the University

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Introduction

The debate on the existence of race is settling on the supposition that while race as a credible biological identity marker is illusory, race as a social construct around various political projects is real (see Mills 1997; Goldberg 2015). As a social construct, invoked by those with power, different people are allocated different places in a hierarchical social order (based on variables like skin colour, sexuality, religion, gender etc.) (see Mills 1997). Such allocation and its consequences account for different forms of racism. Race and racism are concepts/structures that involve all individuals: interpretations of one's position in racialised hierarchies shape daily encounters, and any attempts to alter the patterns embedded in cultural and social structures will require a conscious effort;

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one that does not come without conflict from the system that aims to sustain itself. Putting this in context, it is important to note that anti-racism, or discussions around issues of race and racism have a relatively short academic tradition in Finland because the issue of racism has for long been ignored or denied.

In recent times there have been more and more debates on racism in Finnish politics and media, not least in social media. Racism has been addressed in connection to populist anti-immigration arguments, a discussion led by austerity measures, dwindling social benefits and most recently an increase in migration of people labelled as the Other into Finland and Europe as a whole. Such media debates often yield very limited positive outcomes because of their often seesaw-like nature. This is characterised by attacks (you are racist!) and counter-attacks (I/we are not racist…you are!) discussions. Public demonstrations against racism (in Finland) have been welcomed by demonstrations against demonstrations against racism. Accusations of racism are often followed by a strong defence citing a lack of racist intent (see Goldberg 2015), humour (see Due 2011) and trivial effect.

Furthermore, with the European Union's (EU) policy focus on multiculturalism rather than (anti)racism (Lentin and Titley 2011) and the term antiracism is non-existent in the Finnish education system (see Alemanji and Mafi 2016). Racism continues to go unnoticed in schools and elsewhere in society because progressive discussions on race and racism remain constrained in post-racial methodologies. The atmosphere created in the media and political debates trickles down into schools which are often ill-equipped to deal with such issues owing to teachers' lack of training on these issues (Rastas 2009; Alemanji and Dervin 2016) as well as a prevailing politics of denial (van Dijk 1992; Layne and Alemanji 2015) or minimisation of racism and racial consequence under a multicultural banner of equality and disregard of history (see Alemanji 2016). When racism and antiracism surface as topics both in university and in other sectors of education, they do so as part of multiculturalism or feminism. In recognition of the importance of this subject, some lower and upper secondary schools in Finland invite NGOs (e.g. Walter, Red Cross and The Peace Union of Finland- Rauhanliitto) to deliver antiracism workshops to their students and teachers (see Alemanji and Dervin 2016; Alemanji and Mafi 2016; Alemanji 2016).

Moreover, there has been increasing attempt to address racism through research in the academia, and thus antiracism is gradually

becoming a part of human sciences curricula. In the Finnish context, previous literature addressing the specificities of conceptualising and addressing race and racism in university education is close to non-existent (see Oikarinen-Jabai 2014; Alemanji 2016). In the North American context, for example, there is an extensive literature on pedagogy for Critical Race Studies (see Alexander-Floyd 2008). Although this discussion provides valuable insights to the theme, as we point out below, the differences in societal and academic contexts mean that the mainly US-based discussion cannot be simply applied in the Finnish context.

We have chosen to explore our experiences of teaching on issues of race and racism at different universities in Finland. We believe that the side-by-side reflection of experiences from two distinctly racialised positions provides insight into how Finnish classrooms are racialised. In addition, it shows different possibilities to challenge the racialised structure that shapes the positions of university students and teachers. In other words, we discuss contextualising racism to a Finnish context and race as a structure that shapes both teaching and learning about racism. We also address knowledge-power structures that shape discussions on racism in the context of university education and pedagogical means to overcome those. Responding to questions that we have presented to each other, we explore how racialisation shapes teaching about antiracism and issues of racism on multiple levels. Our shared understanding of race and racism owes to critical discussions on racism and antiracism (e.g. Goldberg 2015; Lentin 2016, 2015) that has demonstrated the shortcomings in addressing race and racism in Western societies. The point of origin for us is recognising that racialised structures are a profound part of western democratic societies, and race (as a socio-political construct) continues to define people's lives (from the perspective of what one can be, what one can achieve and how far can one go in life) in European societies. That such claims are at times seen as provocative in the scholarly debate (e.g. Andreassen 2015) highlights the need to discuss how this theoretical approach translates into a pedagogical strategy. This text is motivated by both delight and confusion over students' reactions at lectures on antiracism we have taught at different Finnish universities. Amin's teaching experience on issues of racism/antiracism, for example, stems from teaching several courses on multiculturalism at the department of teacher education at the University of Helsinki—while Minna's experience is mainly from two courses, one on multiculturalism, gender and racism

and the other on historical perspectives to racism, at the department of social sciences at the University of Turku.

Teachers, Racialised Subjects

Amin & Minna: Part of the challenge of talking about race and racism in the classroom is that we all, whether we acknowledge it or not, have a personal relation to racism and racial hierarchies. Even if we would wish to escape these, we are perceived through those ideas.

Amin: I grew up knowing I was black but like many before me, traveling to Finland (in my case) opened my eyes about what being black means and gave a chance to experience my blackness and all the baggage that comes with it vis-à-vis whiteness (Adichie 2013).

In the case of Finland, the Finnish (and Swedish) word for race (*rotu*) refers to a breed of dog or cat or cow (see Tuori 2009). I think this is an interesting twist regarding how the word race is received and used in Finland. When used across languages, the meaning and understanding of words is influenced. In this case, it does not mean that race is not recognised or relevant in discourses of race and racism in Finland. On the contrary, the word race continues to gain social relevance because of the social and political essence of defining who belongs to the dominant (Finnish) order, who can benefit from such belonging and who does not belong and as a result cannot benefit (see Goldberg 2015). In this process, Othering becomes prevalent and 'new' racial categories are born. The most important of these is the category of the immigrant which has gained reputation as target of racial attacks in Finland and around Europe following the recent economic crisis in Europe since 2008.

Going back to meaning across languages, *Black* as a colour translates into Finnish as *Musta*. So, naturally, I have always been inclined to refer to myself as *mustalainen*, meaning black man in English. However, inquiries into how a black man is called in Finnish language left me smiling, as it seemed like I had to make a choice between *mustalainen* or just *tumma* (dark). Majority opinion leans towards *tumma* as mustalainen in Finnish refers to the Romas. Before coming to Europe, I would not have been able to distinguish between the whiteness of the Roma and a 'white Finn', as growing up we referred to every white looking person (not of visible black decent) as *Whiteman* (or Whiteman woman). Interestingly, today, I still struggle to make such distinctions. However, what intrigues me in this case is that the identity of blackness was given to the Romas

long before huge groups of blacks started coming into Finland in the early 1990s (see Puuronen 2011; Tuori 2009). This identity of blackness was given to the Roma to distinguish them from white Finns and place upon their identity characteristics binding them with their name 'black people'—*mustalaiset*. Such characteristics include their inferiority, inaptness and backwardness associated with the black or African identity (see Urponen 2010). Here, the issue of race was used and continues to be used to stratify an imagined homogenous Finnish identity.

Another interesting angle with regards to race in Finland is that in Finland it is very difficult to define or describe people by the colour of the skin even though skin colour plays a role in social interactions in Finland. The fear to describe people by their skin colour stems from a fear that naming one's skin colour comes with the historical and social package that is easier left unrecalled. Adichie in her best-seller *Americanah* set in the American context (Adichie 2013) describes a scene where a cashier struggles to describe a black shop attendant, describing her looks in every way but not her black skin colour which happened to be her most notable physical attribute. I am a black, and retaining to refer to me as black does not change that social identity nor does it change or relieve me of the historical and social burden attached to my black identity. I do not only want to be black as a problem in the media or in schools.

Minna: You say you grew up without knowing about blackness. I grew up learning about Finnish whiteness without being able to name it, without knowing how to name my own whiteness. It was self-evident that as a light-skinned, natively Finnish speaking, secularised Christian in Finland, I can identify myself with the West and not with the rest (see Urponen 2010; Vuorela 2009).

In order to address racism in Finland, it is necessary to dismantle the norm that protects whiteness as an 'invisible' place of privilege. Of course, the invisibility exists only for those who inhabit it (see Ahmed 2005). Talking about whiteness (*valkoisuus*) is still relatively uncommon in Finland (see Rastas 2013), and I feel it might be easier to position oneself as white in English than in Finnish. In my view, much of the Finnish discussion lures behind euphemisms like *kantasuomalainen* ('original Finns') and *toinen sukupolvi* (second generation) that very likely bear racialised meanings.

Whiteness is of course not only about describing bodily features but about referring to an ideal that consists of features understood both

as cultural, like religion and language, and biological like skin-color or hair-texture (Hage 2000). In her classic text on whiteness, MacInthosh (1988, p. 4) explains, how 'whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal'. In other words, the ideal marks a position of privilege. Recognising this is not often a pleasant experience. In this light, talking about race makes people in Finland, like in the other Nordic countries, often uncomfortable and evokes connotations of pseudo-biological categorisations that have supposedly been thrown overboard long ago.

Amin: Right! Race today is supposed to be a thing of the past. And yet all we do, seemingly, is to talk about it. We talk (about) race when not talking (about) it; and we don't talk (about) it when (we should be) talking (about) it (Goldberg 2015, p. 1). It is hardly a secret that race has nothing to do with biological difference (Alemanji et al. 2015; Lentin 2015). However, biological difference remains central in the discussion and understanding of racism today. Race to me is primarily about skin colour although other socially constructed variables like religion, gender, and sexuality have now been dragged into this frame in the name of neo-racism (see Balibar 1992). However, whatever one chooses to refer to (what? something) as race, one thing is binding, the constructs of race and a racialised identity are products born of history and social classification (see Goldberg 2015; Mignolo 2009; Layne and Alemanji 2015). Race is and has always been a central factor in human history and daily struggles. Goldberg (2015, p. 11) highlights that race 'initially defined who was human and who was not, who belonged and who was exploitable, not only who could work but the kind of work they were licensed to do. Race identified whose bodies were alienable, who counted socially and who were disposable, who were fit to live (on) and who could be left or made to die, where and how.' This classification remains true today in Finland as in other parts of the world in varying degrees. For example, within less than two hours upon my arrival in Finland in 2008, I was informed by a fellow black friend about my position inscribed by my race when he told me that as a black man in Finland there are three kinds of jobs I can do: dishwasher, 'posti worker' (late night newspaper delivery person) and cleaner. Any aspirations above this are structurally stifled through mechanisms like language and lack of trust in the black ability to do any better. Those who spring pass such ideological racial lines are often considered to be exceptions of their race. There is a strand of internalised oppression in such thinking

(see Ahmed 2012). However, what is important to note here is that understandings of race and raced positions are not static in the sense that social structures may determine the essence of race in any social interaction. For example, following Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man (1952)*, many black people will be tempted to believe that their blackness makes them invisible because of its 'devaluing' nature. This is not true today (see Coates 2015; Goldber 2015; Mignolo 2009). Blackness is often/always invisible when it comes to awarding equal opportunities to non-whites in the most Western societies. It is hyper-visible when it comes to victimisation (ridicule, punishment etc.) (see Goldberg 2015; Mignolo 2009).

Minna: I think those are striking examples of how the social construction of race has its material effects. But how do you think such perceptions shape teaching?

Amin: In the same vein as my blackness creates resistance, it also has tremendous value with regards to my teachings on race and racism in Finland. I can use my personal life experiences as a great resource during my classes. I talk about my experiences of racism in Finland, ridicule the vainness of the racialising and use these experiences as practical examples to discuss issues of racism in Finland as well as to challenge it.

Minna: In my case, most students see me as sharing their privileged racial position. At times, I have felt that my white students feel too at ease to make uninformed comments, for instance, about 'what immigrants are like' as they assume the classroom to be an exclusively a white space. So, I think my whiteness also requires constant deconstruction.

This has made me curious of how other white teachers and researchers see their position. Oikarinen-Jabai (2014) discusses what it means to teach post-colonial theory as a white Finn. She explains having contemplated if she should explain her position by referring to her brown children (Oikarinen-Jabai 2014). The racialised position of one's children or intimate partner is likely to shape perceptions and experiences of racism (Rastas 2004). Oikarinen-Jabai discusses the possibility of showing solidarity to her non-white students by bringing up her family relations. While I see Oikarinen-Jabai's point, which is on solidarity to a particular group of students, the strategy to refer to family relations and emphasise one's troubled whiteness also leaves me wondering. In the field of queer pedagogy, there has been a discussion on the closet, i.e. concealing one's non-hetero(normative)sexuality, and coming out, revealing it. The critics of coming out have pointed that a single teacher coming out might not dismantle the normativity per se, or coming out might even strengthen

the ideas of norm and exception (see Juvonen 2014). By taking the risk of making an awkward analogy: I am afraid of the personalising and individualising effects of accounts like the one by Oikarinen-Jabai – although my whiteness might have an effect, my teaching should not centre on this in a negative light.

Teaching about race and racism and being perceived as white leaves me with questions: what does it mean to be a white antiracist? Instead of discussing extensively the literature on whiteness here (see Ware 2002), I would just like to paraphrase the point de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) make: Normative whiteness, the ideal of certain attributes perceived as neutral and superior, might be harder to grasp for those who fit into it. Yet, it does not give an excuse for a researcher or for a teacher to affirm and reproduce such norms.

Thoughts on Racism

Amin: Racism, according to Balibar (1991, p. 17), is a historically essential, socially constructed phenomenon inscribed through "practices (forms of violence—contempt, intolerance, humiliation and exploitation), in discourses and representations which are so many intellectual elaborations of the phantasm of prophylaxis which are articulated around the stigmata of otherness (name, skin colour, religious practices)—thus it organises affects (e.g. irrational ambivalence) by conferring upon them a stereotyped form as regards both their objects and their subjects".

I have always argued that racism is about othering, both structurally and otherwise, along the lines of historical and socially constructed variables (like skin colour, gender, sexuality etc.) and their implications. One could write a whole book on this topic. However, like Dervin (2014) puts it, when dealing with complex issues our goal should be to keep things simple. Goldberg (2015) warns that racism is not only about person to person discrimination or injustice. It involves structural mechanisms of power employed to give certain groups what it denies others. Racism in Finland is as complex, denied yet evident in the outlook of the society. While its victims, often members of minority groups like non-Europeans, migrants, Romas and LGBTQAs (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Asexual or Ally), continue to wail in its wake, their victimisers continue to deny its effects under the guise that racism is a thing of the past (not valid or useful today), a lack racial intent in their interaction or a joke taken too seriously.

Minna: I agree that it is indeed important not to equate race only to pseudo-biological attributes but to recognise that race has always been about attributes like religion, culture and language (see Hesse 2007). At the same time, I am hesitant to discuss LGBT(IQ) issues or cissexism and heteronormativity as parallels to racism. As discriminatory structures they might of course overlap in some individuals' lives, for instance. However, in a similar manner as race is a technology to reproduce the colonial difference, also advocacy for gay rights and for gender equality might be used to produce this difference. In other words, at times, the effects of race blend into LGBTIQ issue in a manner that strengthens the image of Europe as progress. Puar (2008) has addressed this through her neologism *homonationalism* by which she refers to a multifaceted combination of discourses and practices that associate rights discourses with West and oppression of gays with the rest, and, hence, reproduces the colonial difference. In other words, identification with a sexual minority does not dismantle a privileged position in racial hierarchy.

Amin: Good point *Minna,* there was a time when I used to say we are all victims in this fight against racism. This argument was sustained with the notion that that since racism is more about structures and systems, individuals are all victims of these structures and systems. However, I side with critics like Goldberg (2015) and Ahmed (2012) who have helped me understand that strategy of universal victimisation accommodates the victimisers while leaving the victims with the post-racial feeling that racism could be anything by anyone. I do not think anti-racism should be grounded on begging people to change. It should be grounded on educating people on the existing systemic structures and how these structures affect different people differently. In doing so people are called to change out of reason, not out of pity.

Minna: Exactly *Amin*. We do not all come from equal positions and no, there is no reverse racism—accommodating such understandings, which are fundamental in grasping racism, to the conception of Finnish social equality might still be a challenge. At the same, racism does not hurt everyone equally but selects its victims with a specific racial framework. Perhaps on some level, everybody loses—although not equally. Despite the gains produced by privilege, racism has been perceived as a loss also to people with white privilege (see Keskinen 2015; Ware 2002). In the famous words ascribed to civil rights activist Fanny Lou Hammer: "Nobody's free until everybody's free".

While it is important to recognise that racism is about asymmetrical and hierarchical power, I also think it is important not to perceive anyone as only a static victim (see Tuori 2012). Anti-racist struggles, like the Civil Rights movement and Black struggle beyond the US, provide grounds to discuss unequal power structures, but also histories of people who have tried and, to some extent, occasionally succeeded to alter them. Therefore, I have thought that education on issues of racism should not focus only on oppression but also on resistance.

Preparing a Lecture: Anti-Racist Goals

Amin: I believe there is no one way to prepare to teach any subject. Every person prepares themselves differently for different occasions. There are a few things I go through before any class or talk on race and racism in Finland. First, I remind myself that my understanding is not absolute. I remind myself that my audience is going to be 95% white. I remind myself that of this 95% about 50% believe that we are living in a post-racial time where there is no race and no racism, not especially in Finland which is exceptional in every way possible (see Rastas 2012; Alemanji 2016). I also remind myself of why I am into this antiracism—to struggle, not to win. I cannot defeat racism all by myself, no one can (see Coates 2015). I am here to struggle so that through my struggle, I could leave this place a better place than I met it, and above all through this struggle have a chance to tell the story of myself rather than have others tell it for me. When all this is done, I try to identify what aspects of racisms I will be focusing on speaking to the class.

Minna: The irony in exceptionalism at the university is that at least in social sciences, humanities and education, the Finnish universities appear predominantly white. Racism in the academia is not a topic that has been widely addressed (see Hortelano 2015). Universities are on top of a discriminatory structure of education and racialised (power) relations as they often recycle racialised knowledge (re)production and systems of domination (Kisihimoto and Mwangi 2009). I think it is very important to bear in mind this context when planning to address racism at the university.

Coming from a background in feminist theories, I draw from an epistemology that there simply are no value-neutral ways of knowing—also when talking about racism. Therefore, I see antiracism as a defining principle in education that discusses race and racism related topics.

Amin: Antiracism education is a progressive and proactive effort against all forms of racisms or racist propaganda. It involves 'critical works uncovering [the] ongoing structures of racial power to active engagements to transform those structures' (Goldberg, 2015, p. 168). From this frame, my greatest goal is to ensure that my students understand how structural racism works. They should leave my class with an understanding that we are all products of a system of inequality, where power and privilege provide somewhat it denies other. The goal here is to make them understand how they contribute or benefit from such power structures. Such consciousness is a vital starting point towards any form of social transformation. On the issues of racisms, there are no bystanders since staying quiet while benefiting and using one's power and privilege makes one as culpable to the very racisms one claims to be non-participatory to.

Goldberg (2015, p. 166) argues that antiracism is 'politics from below, a critical coalition politics of insurgency and unsettlement'. From this frame, I always remind myself that I am not going to my classes to make friends. As a politics of unsettlement, I make it my business not to sugar-code things and hide behind the veil of political correctness. I try to be very forthright and strong in my accusation of systemic racial systems that produce and sustain racism. I use everyday life examples to show how racism functions in Finland and why so much is needed with regards to uprooting racism in Finland. Such accusations are never taken lightly as students with a strong sense of Finnishness feel attacked and uncomfortable. One student once described my class as too 'confrontational'. Antiracism education should involve a mixture of exploration, interrogation, self-reflection, understanding and learning about history and institutional racism, some confrontation and a lot of support. Very often the confrontational part is left out and that is something I do not choose to do.

Another student told me that after my first class (theories of racism—the case of Finland) students left with a heavy heart but after the second class where I talked about practical ways of doing antiracism education in Finland students left happier as they now had the tools they needed to join me in the fight against racism in Finland. The first half of my class is about establishing an understanding of what racism is and how it functions in Finland both at the structural and individual levels. This section is often the toughest as I try to breakdown existing theories into simple words within a context that the students know and understand.

The second half of my class is about giving students tools that could be used in antiracism education. This involves discussing with them how and why antiracism could be done in schools as well as out of schools in Finland.

Minna: I agree. Part of an anti-racist strategy to teach about racism is to recognise different agencies, not only to discuss oppression like enslavement, but also the long tradition of Black struggle and recognition of events like the revolution in Haiti. In the Finnish context, it is crucial to recognise the historical political struggle of minorities, like Sámi and Roma. And this is of course not possible through an all-white curriculum.

In the Classroom: Setting the Stage

Amin: I teach issues of race and racism from a humanist point of view. I always tell my students that: "I am not here to teach you that racism is bad because that is the most open hidden secret". I always tell them that: "I am here to discuss issues of race and racism with them from a learner's perspective". Making them understand that we are in this together and the success of it lies in our mutual understanding and respect for each other.

I use personal experience through storytelling. One of the stories I like to tell is the story of a friend who parked his car in a spot marked for disabled. When reproached by two passers-by he tells them that his blackness in Finland is a disability that qualifies him to park his car in such a spot. I always try to tell these stories laughing and try to deconstruct each story with my students so that they can understand the meaning behind my stories.

Minna: I recognise the need to make the students feel at ease. I have come to think it is important to emphasise that in the beginning all kinds of questions are welcomed and not to try to censor uninformed comments—those need to be cleared up, of course. For instance, false beliefs that white Finns face racism from minorities, or that Muslim men exploit women, need to be clarified. One way to do this is to demonstrate how such ideas link to and reflect the historical continuum of racism. It can be a struggle to keep the discussion in class as respectful as possible. Sometimes there is a thin line between un-informedness and being offensive. As you say, mutual respect is important. My strategy has been to try to keep in mind the words by feminist and critical race theorist Philomena Essed: "I won't accept someone acting disrespectfully in class.

But I don't react by lecturing that person disrespectfully. I look for a way that enables all parties to emerge from the conflict with dignity." (cited in Jonker 2012, p. 70).

Knowing Racism?

Amin: A student once told me that "there is no racism in Finland". When I quizzed her if she really believes in this she argued that "racism in Finland is peaceful. It is not like the killings that happen in the United States of America. When people are racist in Finland" (which is often not an anomaly), she argued "they are often drunk or they don't know better, just a handful of them anyway. But no violence, no one touches anyone so you can just walk away if you feel like you are experiencing something racist".

I try hard to make the student understand that every form of racism is violent and violence is not always physical. To think that non-physical violence (e.g. psychological torture born from racism) does not qualify as violent enough is appalling. Psychological racial violence leads to long trauma and even suicide (Clark et al. 1999; Nyborg and Curry 2003).

Goldberg (2015) argues that it is very common to think that racism is always something done by a few bad apples who do not reflect the voice of the masses even though the masses benefit from the actions of these so called few bad apples. Most of the racism(s) that occur in Finland is not done by drunks. Structural racism in Finland is maintained everyday by "ordinary Finns" who sit back and benefit from the power and privilege that puts and keeps them in the position they are while others, because of their otherness, suffer in the margins. The racism that this student is referring to here is individualised racism executed through now fairly common racial attacks in Finland. It is true that such attacks are at least not yet as bloody as what happens in the US, for example in the case of the Ferguson shooting. However, it must be noted that such attacks happen daily in different forms. For example, when a 6-year-old boy is called a rapist by a group teenage girls because he happens to be non-white—this is violence. When a public figure calls for immigrant to be castrated—this is violence. When people are denied access to public spaces (jobs, housing, leisure etc.) because of their non-Finnishness—this is also violence. To think that one can just walk away from a racial incident is in itself violence. People walk away from an individual racial incident only to walk into the next because the structures sustain

and maintain these racial incidents to begin with. How can my 4-year-old daughter walk away from a nanny in her day-care who loves her but hates the blackness in her; her friends who tell her black girls smell and with people constantly asking her (white) mother in her presence where she got her (my daughter) from and that her mother did well to help save her from a life of poverty and misery in Africa. Where should this 4-year-old girl walk away to?

Racism is about violence, and teaching about violence is never easy. It involves being both confrontational and being peaceful. Knowing when to force participants to confront ignored uncomfortable realities around them

Minna: For me, your examples are telling about how whiteness can hinder perception, which is both supported by and a consequence of racial structures. The tendency to imagine racism elsewhere is not unique to a Finnish context, but the historical circumstances might even enforce it. Vuorela (2009, p. 25) points out that the indirect and often unrecognised involvement in colonial endeavours, colonial complicity as she terms, has 'made the colonial worldview linger for a long time' in Finland. There is a gap between common conceptions of racism and the ways in which critical race studies paradigm describes the phenomenon. A similar gap lies between majoritarian, or normative white perceptions and accounts by people in the receiving end of racial hierarchies. Attaching racism to single events or extremist individuals (see Lentin 2016) is not only compelling but common, and thus one of the key challenges is to discuss racism as a power structure.

At the same time, some of the students in the classroom might be personally very familiar with the racialising structures in the society, which academic research discusses on a conceptual level. I think it is a challenge to provide meaningful content to a group with diverse knowledges of racism. However, an academic way of knowing can provide at best a conceptualisation of the effects of racism as an everyday phenomenon.

Those privileged by racialised structures might not see racism without the help of contesting accounts by people on the receiving end of racist abuse, whether such accounts are academic or non-academic. Whiteness is likely to guide one's observations of the surrounding society *as well as* regulate access to situations and spaces in a racialised world. Access to white segregated spaces, or 'neutral-looking' presence in such situations provides an unfortunate opportunity to observe racism too. Thus, it appears also not only as a site of not knowing, being unaware of the

workings of racism, but also knowing in a certain way, as certain kind of situated knowledge about racism.

I have repeatedly encountered that discussing racism in the labour market provokes some white students to share anecdotes about racist discrimination. As employees they might have become aware of discriminatory recruitment practices, for instance, employers who are explicit about not hiring non-white, or they might have even been given instructions to discriminate customers of certain descent. I have heard students condemning the practices they have previously encountered, and them feeling very uncomfortable about them. I have also heard some students giving rationalising accounts on the practices they have witnessed—for instance, that it is somehow beneficial for some small businesses to have only white or only "pure Finnish" employees. These are both positions of knowing racialised practices, but in the latter case, those are perceived as normal and an acceptable part of society. In other words, students might have previous experience of racist practices without fully understanding them. I have assumed that in such cases the students might not grasp how such practices imply a pattern or structure. However, the task to reorient one's thoughts might not come easy, it perhaps requires some to change their whole worldview, to change the way they perceive the whole society (see Alexdander-Floyd 2008).

I believe antiracist pedagogy benefits from an observation made in discussions on feminist pedagogy, where some researchers have emphasised that simply distributing new or alternative knowledge does not necessarily change students' ways of thinking if the students have a need to stick to the previous patterns of thought (see Saarinen et al. 2014). It might be easy to point out racism by crazy extremists or drunken persons, but to actually grasp the racialised power-structure is different and it might be painful for someone who has always benefited from it. By this I do not mean to give an excuse to anyone, but to acknowledge the pedagogical challenge. McIntosh (1988, p. 4) observes that 'my schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture'.

Another aspect of this is mis-knowledge, a term utilised by Gail Lewis (see Tuori 2012), which refers to a situation, where, for instance, commitment to the false idea that Islam as a religion exploits women could be easily challenged with knowledge, yet, providing facts does not change the misconceptions on Islam. The term underscores how some (racist) ideas might not even appear as conscious knowledge; rather as

the way things are—and how simply providing facts does not lead to rightful "knowledge".

How, then, can one be trained to see unfair advantages or the "damaged culture" (see McIntosh 1988, p. 4)? Can university education address the worldview of students? Honkanen (2011) discusses this from the perspective of cognitive psychology. According to her, categorisations constructing self-perception affect also the processes of thinking about others. Thus, perceptions of the self shape processing knowledge on/by others, and in order to absorb new information or to combine it with previous conceptions, one might be forced to alter the ideas of the self. As you Amin said before, antiracism education should provide the participants an understanding of "how they contribute or benefit from such power structures". Because changing self-perception is not a straight-forward process, anti-racist teachers might also face resistance. Honkanen argues that it might be helpful if the pattern and the reason for the difficulty is explained to the students. In other words, it might be important to leave spaces for reflection on why perceiving racialised structures can *feel* difficult.

To Give into Emotions or not?

Amin: Talking to a predominantly white class (who are not used to having non-white teachers as it is with the case of Finland and Finnish education institutions) about racism does not come without resistance. It is easy for students to adopt a defensive stance about the topic. Often students think I am accusing them of racism as a result of them being white. I do understand such feelings but this does not deter me to change my style. I make it clear to my students in the beginning of my class that I have nothing against them as individuals and that I am not innocent (because I am black) and they guilty (because they are white). I encourage them to detach themselves from being representatives of their race as I am not a representative of mine. I encourage them to claim the positives of their race without comparing their race with any other race (see Helms 1992). Being white and possessing the privilege of whiteness does not make you guilty of racism, but what you do with your white privilege and power could make you racist. Being racist is not a fixed identity.

Minna: Although my experiences are different, I think what you describe is essential. Defensive attitude or guilt do not usually serve learning.

My experience is that the issue of guilt does not surface instantly, but that in the company of a white teacher it is easy for the majority of white

students to describe themselves as non-racists—in contrast to imagined marginalised extremist racists. Nevertheless, I have noticed that discussing the literature that explains the idea of exceptional racism and describes racism not solely as an outcome of ill-meaning acts but also as the result of well-intended action c creates an atmosphere of guilt. For instance, Rastas (2002), highlights that some of her interviewees, young people of colour in Finland, felt tired of being noticed as different—also when the attention is intended to be positive. This observation has made many students reflect their own behaviour. To some, it seems to be important to find out whether they have done 'right' or 'wrong' when they have smiled to someone who they describe as 'immigrant-looking'. While this provides an opportunity for critical discussion on whether categorisations like 'immigrant-looking' are meaningful and thus a way to dismantle the racialised boundaries of Finnishness, the question of 'right' or 'wrong' behaviour contains a temptation to focus on individual deeds rather than observing the structure. Becoming aware of one's privileges is one key element in learning about racism. Such awareness can also lead to feeling guilt or acting defensively, which in the end is not always a good thing.

While guilt "can be thought of as having a useful role to play in making redress for acts and legacies of racial (and other forms of) discrimination" (Gunaratnam and Lewis 2001, p. 143) it also has adverse effects. Gunaratnam and Lewis (2001) remind us of the black feminist discussion that has perceived white guilt as "a barrier to transformation of relations between women of colour and white women". Guilt does not translate into action and thus it is likely to have an immobilising effect. I see a risk that someone getting caught in feeling bad about their previous racialising behaviour, perhaps with good intention, leaves them helpless to take an active stance against racism in the future.

Amin: First, I am not sure if I would use the phrase "immigrant looking people" because it positions certain kinds of immigrants (non-whites) as the Other while other kinds (whites) can continuously remain in the shadows as the good or normal people. This notwithstanding, I would like to add that anger is also another essential human emotion as well like guilt and shame mentioned by Minna. My primary concern is not to save people from guilt but to help them understand the effects of racism to both the racialised and their oppressors. I have realised that there is a huge facade in education with regards to the fact that education has to be fun and participants have to be "comfortable". I respect such stance, however, I believe that learning must not always be fun

especially at the university level. Suomala and Shaughnessy (2000) reminds us that

> At the conceptual level, there has been an important transition from a knowledge acquisition view of learning to a knowledge construction view of learning. According to the knowledge acquisition view, learning involves adding new information to one's memory and teaching involves dispensing information such as in lectures or textbooks. According to the knowledge construction view, learning involves building a mental representation that makes sense to the learner, and teaching involves as a cognitive guide on authentic academic tasks, such as through discussion and guided discovery. (pp. 478–479)

With both views, the responsibility of having fun out of a learning experience lies with the learner. Bloom and Hanych (2002) add that equating learning with fun suggests that if learners are not having fun during the learning process they are not learning, thus trivialising the entire learning process. Learning is not a form of entertainment although students may get entertained through learning. At the university level, my role is not to entertain my students in class. My role is to inspire them and guide them towards achieving a higher cognitive awareness of the world. This reminds me of complaints by some antiracist practitioners in Finland with regards to some schools on grounds that students are difficult, tough, unwelcoming and "closed". In this case, I realised that antiracist practitioners often expect to be embraced with open arms. This should not be the case as antiracism aims at unsettling systemic structures that seek to reproduce itself. It is for reasons like these that I consider antiracism of any kind a struggle. Anyone involved in this struggle must understand and embrace the struggle (see Coates 2015; Alemanji 2016).

Back to the question if it is okay to be angry. Like Ahmed (2012) puts it, one must learn how to use one's anger in a positive light and an appropriate manner—one that yields most fruits for the cause. Victims of racism get angry every time they are racially abused. That is what antiracism should primarily worry about.

To Conclude

We have discussed some of the challenges involved in translating the theoretical orientation that sees race and racism as established structures of discrimination in Finland rather than exceptions into pedagogical

practices. Departing from an understanding that race is as an essential variable, shapes the everyday life of people in Finland in different ways irrespective of the variable of the racial spectrum. As a result, racism and its effects remain an important social factor that shape the lives of people in Finland with respect to access (employability, education, housing etc.) as it places different people at different points of the Finnish sociopolitical hierarchy. We believe that we have passed the point in Finland to focus on arguments that try to deny the existence of racism in Finland. In this regard, like many other researchers and critics, we are arguing that there is a need for different antiracist strategies.

We recognise that our distinct racialised positions influence our teaching about issues of racism differently. However, this does not mean that discussions about issues of race and racism are only accessible to some and inaccessible to others because of race. Our different viewpoints with regards to understanding and teaching on the issue of racism do not represent a universal approach that must be followed by all. On the contrary, our different approaches to the subject open up discussions and support claims that diverse antiracist understandings and strategies are required to combat racism, which continues to change in meaning and essence (see Goldberg 2015; Dei and Calliste 2000; Alemanji 2016).

To suggest that antiracism education should instantly be implemented through all levels of education in Finland would be a stretch. However, there is much that could be done in this regard. An understanding of how antiracism differs from multiculturalism with regards to the fact that antiracism goes beyond accommodating difference to recognising the role of power and racialised structures (see Alemanji and Dervin 2016; Alemanji and Mafi 2016; Alemanji 2016), is an essential selling point. Universities have a huge responsibility with regards to antiracism education. In Finland, for example, having more courses on antiracism especially within teacher education could go a long way to equip the new generation of graduates with a critical mind-set necessary to recognise and challenge different forms of racism. They would recognise that, as much as there is a need to be critical of others—'them', there is a greater need to be critical of the self—'us'. Such an understanding and a willingness to follow such understanding with necessary action aimed at reestablishing power (challenging power structures) is critical in attaining a more antiracist society.

To commit to antiracism as an activist or as a teacher requires that one learns to embrace the struggle of antiracism. The gains of antiracist

endeavours cannot be measured or appraised like some other aspects of education. The gains of antiracism lie in the knowing and in the hope of a better future. The knowing here refers to the fact that antiracism sees in every society a potential for that society to do better than it is doing. Therefore, calls for an end to racism are calls for the society to be better tomorrow than it is today.

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