Proceedings of International Conferences on Philosophy of Education (2013-2017)

Volume II

Edited by
Prakash Iyer

KNOWLEDGE, POLITICS AND EDUCATION

Azim Premji University

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Section III

Introduction

This volume consists of nine papers that discuss issues on the interaction between knowledge, politics and education in democratic societies. These papers take up issues related to the aims of education, the organization of knowledge in a curriculum and the identity and role of teachers and pedagogy. Most of them invoke or rest on some debates in philosophy of education in the past few decades, that have come up in the criticism or defense of liberal education.

Individual autonomy is a primary aim of education and learners' ability to think by themselves has to be developed in order for them to grow up to be free individuals. This aim has its roots in liberal education. Critics of liberal education, particularly progressive educationists, insist that if individual freedom is the objective then the very notion of schooling goes against this objective. They argue that the restrictive and regimented character of schools, in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, results in children learning to be obedient and subservient to others' opinions. They argue that it is important to focus on the manner of teaching, where children make choices themselves, and gain the ability to question and criticize rather than be silent acceptors of knowledge from the school curriculum. Children should decide what they want to learn and when. This is a different conception of curriculum and learning, that has in turn been criticised. How do we expect a child to know enough to take decisions for herself? Doesn't she have to learn in order to be able to be free? Critics of progressive education also point out that this view mistakes autonomy for freedom, and conflates two different concepts. Autonomy is a capability of human minds to think by themselves, whereas freedom means the absence of obstacles from the world outside (or internal to the

mind). So keeping children free from all obstacles in school or otherwise does nothing to develop their ability to be free. Children should enter the conversation between generations and this can happen only by them learning substantive human knowledge that has developed over centuries.

This leads to the second concern. Does the curriculum have to be organized on the basis of disciplines, or can we break out of the shackles of this knowledge by organizing it in a different manner? Critics of this disciplinary organization of curriculum argue that children are being taught strictly determined tools and methods attached to disciplines. That results in them thinking the same way that previous generations did. Disciplinary knowledge is insidious and it is the "means by which society perpetually re-creates the conditions of its very existence" by "a systematic socialisation of the young generation." (Durkheim 1956: 123 -124). Is discilinary knowledge that dangerous? What purposes do disciplines serve towards the development of individual autonomy?

An alternative way of organization people argue is theme-based curricula. It is difficult if not impossible to organize curriculum in themes and cover everything children need to learn. That apart the premise that multidisciplinary subjects would do away with discipline based thinking is self-contradictory. To be multidisciplinary, themes need to be consciously built to include multiple disciplines, and children have to be taught how to deal with questions raised by different disciplines. This anyway presumes the acceptance of disciplines. How can we be multi disciplinary without learning individual disciplines?

If the problem is despotism of learners' minds, maybe curriculum organization is not the reason. Maybe it is pedagogical methods. If a discipline is taught in a way that

encourages children to learn what humans have achieved so far, understand it and critically reflect on it, then knowledge would not be accepted unquestioningly. This way of teaching would neutralize the possibilities of education becoming conditioning or indoctrination of children into various disciplines. Supporters of curriculum organized along disciplines, argue that learning diciplinary knowledge does not necessarily mean unquestioning acceptance of all that is said. That may be caused by bad pedagogy.

A third issue is that inordinate focus on formal curriculum and pedagogical methods alone leads us to imagine the school as an insulated environment that can and would lead to the formation of good, autonomous individuals. But schools and people in schools reside in particular social contexts, and prevalent social injustices percolate into the school environment, influencing practices and traditions in schools. For example, if so-called upper caste dominates so-called lower castes in society, this domination could translate into an insistence that children of the so-called lower caste accept popular knowledge unquestioningly. Politics and political stands influence the teacher's view towards children, the way teaching as a profession is seen and the identity of a teacher is imagined.

These three concerns, autonomy as an aim of education, organization of curriculum and the percolation of prevalent societal injustices into the school, raise further issues about knowledge, politics of knowledge, curriculum, teaching, learning and assesment that papers in this volume deal with.

The first section of this volume begins with O'Hear's eloquently strident criticism of critics of liberal education. Most critics are concerned with individual freedom, and suggest alternatives that would safeguard and nurture freedom. "An education stressing or aiming at freedom

can, however, be seen in rather different and incompatible ways.", O'Hear says. He analyzes a range of criticisms that invoke liberalism as "despotism of the mind" and either say liberalism controls individual freedom (A. S. Neill, John Holt), or corrupts children's natural selves (Rousseau), or provides useless knowledge (Bacon) or rejects knowledge from the past in its entirety (Dewey). O'Hear points out subtle but serious mistakes that could be made in conceptualising education that safeguards individual autonomy and egalitarianism in a plural democratic society. He says freedom of individuals and social groups have to be conceptualised differently when we think of education.

Dhankar raises some critical issues with public political discourse that amount to injustice of a specific kind: distrust and lack of confidence in people's ability to deliberate rationally. He demonstrates how, with the intention of maintaining harmony and peace, public intellectuals and politicans often deliberately confuse concepts, blur truth and even communicate information they know to be untrue. He argues that this does not fulfill the moral notion of truth, which he says, "...is not about the correctness of the statement one makes, rather it is about the 'correct communication' of what one happens to believe." He argues that being epistemically careless, disregarding standards of justification, or wilful "epistemic obfuscation" is a distrust in people's rational autonomy. Both in public political discourse and in education, he says we need to trust people's ability for rational deliberation, and be wary of two enemies of truth: political correctness and bullshit (defined by Frankfurt as communication of a standpoint, rather than only truth).

Rata's paper takes up the general concern that standard forms of knowledge that curriculum is based on in democratic societies is an attempt to homogenise the

powerless by the powerful. She argues that there is no reason to view disciplinary knowledge as "knowledge of the powerful"; rather the already marginalized would be further excluded from the mainstream if they did not have access to disciplinary knowledge. She says the ability for abstraction, which is an essential part of learning academic disciplines, helps learners take a step back from their context and reflect on it. This creates a dialectical approach to prevalent knowledge and the need to fight possible "tyranny of the present" (Bailey, 1984) possible. She elaborates on the implications of a dialectical approach on pedagogy.

Stojanov builds a critical account of egalitarianism as a response to social injustice. By definition egalitarianism would be in opposition to discrimination of any kind, but over time societies have developed some forms of positive discrimination that are necessary to help the underprivileged or the disadvantaged. Stojanov critiques different conceptions of egalitarianism that societies have taken up over time, like luck egalitarianism (to compensate "brute, bad luck" that disadvantaged people grow up in) and minimal egalitarianism (some minimum capabilities have to be developed in everyone). Stojanov argues that both these notions fail to lead to social justice and cannot be normative principles, especially for education. He argues that respect egalitarianism (equal treatment coming from a sense of respect for all) is reliable and would ensure social justice.

Section II comprises two papers specific to the Indian context.

Heredia makes an intriguing and compelling beginning by pointing out to the inherent tension between an "envisioned future" and an "idealized past" when we imagine a national education. He then foregrounds social justice as the main concern in Indian education, and highlights how some

acts towards justice could lead to injustice elsewhere. He then applies this idea of social justice to education, and describes various forms of preoccupations with pedagogical principles. The quest for the perfect principle interferes with the knowledge that pedagogy is a creative act and it cannot work merely with the help of pedagogical principles. He then projects possible ways in which this analysis could help resolve particular practical problems that are rife in India.

Madan responds to a particularly complicated notion of how the way the intersection of class, caste and gender are interpreted, could lead to an obfuscated or misleading response to injustice. He analyzes data from the National Sample Survey (2009-10) to bring to our attention how certain classes dominate enrolments in higher education across different caste groups. But the proportion of women in varies within across different castes, within the same class. Such a pattern where injustice becomes more complex when different disadvantaged groups intersect, it is important to think of a theoretical explanation for this so that one can take up appropriate responses to resolve the injustice.

Section III takes up specific issues related to teachers and teaching. McLaughlin observes and analyzes empirical data to understand teaching as a profession. Using criteria to identify a practice as a profession, she dissects the notion of school-teacher community and describes the various forms this community takes. She then analyzes some important features of the environments teachers reside in to arrive at her answer of the normative question: what ought a good teacher-student environment be like? She arrives at the idea that teachers should belong to "communities of practice" where they are able to constantly learn and keep improving themselves. She describes various methods and benefits of each form of the community and argues that learning ought

to be central to teaching as a profession. From this analysis she points out various benefits of construing teaching as a learning profession.

Gopichandran argues that neo-liberalism has resulted in significant changes in the way teacher's work is envisioned; a movement from professionalism and bureaucracy to market, managerialism and performativity. This leads to a control and command approach to teachers, rather than an approach that encourages commitment. She analyzes the idea of teacher professionalism in three parts: professional knowledge of teachers, professionalisation of teachers and teacher professionalism. From a detailed analysis she arrives at the conclusion that there is a strong imposition on the teacher to form certain kinds of personal and social identities that are not robust or natural. Their work in developing this identity is largely emotional and teachers expend considerable energy in "forming, shaping, constructing and re constructing notions about themselves as teachers" in constantly changing contexts and expectations from society.

Siddiqui argues along with Dewey and Ambedkar that different social groups and communities have a lot to learn from each other, rather he says that learning from others is a necessary part of education. Pace Thorat he argues that educating students in a way that they learn from each other is an educationists' endeavor. This in turn would involve bringing them into situations where they have to recognize their own prejudices, and confront them in a way that they eventually act differently. To this end, Siddiqui says, an epistemological or rational view of a person limits this process to being only cognitive. Borrowing from feminist theory, he says that there is an "ontological centrality to the relation of the self and the world". He relates this to Ambedkar's strong recommendation that principles and

rules merely tell us what we ought to do (and not do), whereas the need is to develop like-mindedness for which we have to get people to be in constant communication with each other and participate in each other's activities. He concludes that education needs to work on the triad of caring relationships, ethical action and knowledge of democratic principles, and an unequal attention between the three would "skew the educational process".

This volume takes up three categories of papers from the conferences in PoE over 5 years. Hopefully this volume will retain the momentum the conference events created, and contribute to the educational discourse.

Video recordings of these presentations are available in our YouTube channel, Azim Premji University.

Section I

Liberal Education, Human Nature and the State

Anthony O'Hear

Retired as Professor in the Department of Philosophy in University of Buckingham.

Education for Freedom: the Child

Liberal education, as I am understanding it, is an education for freedom. 'Liberal' in the phrase 'liberal education' derives from the Latin 'liber' = free (rather than 'liber' = child, which would be tautologous, or 'liber' = book, which will certainly be involved in any course of liberal education, but only as a part of the whole thing). An education stressing or aiming at freedom can, however, be seen in rather different and incompatible ways. At one extreme, at what we might call the progressive end, there would be the typical 'free' school, of which A.S. Neill's Summerhill would be a famous example, or in the USA the type of thing advocated by John Holt in his book How Children Fail. (Holt, 1964) Summerhill was, and to an extent still is, a school in which children do not attend lessons if they do not feel like it; they study the things they want as and when they themselves feel ready for it; and, with teachers and other members of the school community, they collectively decide on the rules to be imposed in the school. In Neill's own words (on the School's website), at Summerhill 'we had to renounce all discipline, all direction, all suggestion, all moral training, all religious instruction. We have been called brave, but it did not require courage. All it required was what we had – a complete belief in the child

as a good, not an evil, being.' Notably absent from this type of free school will be any form of external discipline, either in the conduct of lessons and the structuring of curricula, or, more generally, in the ethos or conduct of the school as an institution. The underlying thought here is that there is something de-humanising in imposing external curricula and controls even on young children. According to Holt, 'nobody starts off stupid', yet schools are no more than places in which pupils are coerced according to external social goals, with the result that in them 'children learn to be stupid'. (Holt, 1964, p. 196)

By contrast in the type of liberal education I am interested in here discipline and externally imposed curricula will play a major role. There is an understanding that children – pupils – are not when young fully human, and only become human in the full sense by being initiated into various practices and forms of knowledge and experience in which one's humanity achieves its full embodiment and articulation. I have put this bluntly and starkly, because I think it needs stating clearly and emphatically, in these post-Rousseauan and possibly post-Freudian days when childhood is seen, sentimentally, as a paradise from which we adults have been excluded by the forces of civilization. Plato, of course, took a rather different view. Paradise was that from which we descended *before* we were born, and childhood is actually the start of our descent into the Cave. Human existence thereafter is an uphill struggle to rise above our humanity, in which we attempt to control the two horses we set bestride, one that would fly up and one that would drag us down, a metaphor which might seem to be a more accurate representation of our life in general and of childhood in particular than seeing childhood simply as a time of innocence.

Actually claiming that the child is not fully human is not as extreme as it might at first sight seem. It is simply recognizing

the fact of what biologists call neoteny, that when we are born we are very immature and unformed, in comparison to most other species, and remain immature for a long time. When we are young, our instincts on their own will not take us very far. The great distinction between humans and other animals is the way in which, in all cultures, human beings pass on to their young by education and training, formal and informal, immense tracts of what they need to know and do in order to survive and flourish in both natural and social worlds. During the Enlightenment many thinkers – and not just Rousseau – were fascinated by the prospect of *l'enfant sauvage*, the child who had not had a human upbringing, and who was raised in nature, among the beasts. As is well known from the film of Francois Truffaut, when such a child was actually found in the Auvergne (the wild boy of Aveyron), sadly, tragically, even despite all the efforts of the well-meaning doctor who fostered him, he never succeeded in becoming (dare I say?) fully human, and actually ended up as an exhibit in Paris. But, whether or not, acculturation is possible for children or young people after a certain age, what *l'enfant sauvage* graphically illustrates is the significance and extent of learning and acculturation in human life.

Marx was wrong when he famously spoke of humans having no nature, but only history, because part of our nature is precisely to live our lives in the *polis* where we will flourish in and through what we learn and are taught – and this (Aristotelian) view is quite compatible with thinking that there are eternal truths about what does and does not contribute to human flourishing. But because flourishing involves acculturation, in a human society, with its traditions and history, education, formal and informal, becomes critical.

The proponent of liberal education takes a view of childhood which has its roots in the thought of the classical Greek

philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. Pace Holt, who thinks that 'children are by nature not only kind and loving but serious and purposeful', (Holt, 1964, p. 196) for the philosophers of classical antiquity the child is unhabituated in desirable traits either of character or of intellect, and so is in no position to exercise the type of freedom accorded to children in A.S.Neill's school or advocated by Holt. It is not that children are evil or malignant (though some might have evil and malignant tendencies and original sin weighs on us all), so much as that they are unformed. And this lack of formation goes all through, intellectual, physical, moral and in terms of character. So, famously, the ancient Greeks emphasized the need in education for gymnastic (the training of the body), music (the training of sensibility through music and the other arts), while Aristotle stressed the way in which a virtuous character can emerge only from an habituation in virtuous acts, which will, if things go well, lead to a love of virtue itself.

As far as the intellect goes, what the young need above all is initiation into disciplines and traditions in which reason is exercised. None of these things is instinctive; hence the need for discipline and training. I will leave it to those who have had experience of young children to judge between the Greeks and the likes of Holt and Neill. Here I will restrict myself to the comment that even if Holt is right in thinking that schools actually *produce* the sort of malice and stupidity we see in pupils in many secondary schools these days, what this would show is that the good qualities he discerns in very young children are not strongly embedded, and need careful nurturing, just as the Greeks thought and Christians think. A similar point could be made about Rousseau, who also puts the blame for our evil inclinations on the social world, and to whom many of our current sentimental notions of childhood can be traced, but who in *Emile* requires an astonishingly

artificial set up in order that Emile's natural goodness should develop *naturally*. (It is perhaps worth underlining here that Rousseau's idea of childhood, as being a stage in which children should develop naturally and in interaction between the natural world and their childhood inclinations, is the source not only of much current thinking about primary and early years education, but also of a powerful strand of opposition to the type of education I am here advocating.)

True Enlargement of Mind

From the perspective of the liberal educator (as represented by, say, Cardinal Newman and Matthew Arnold in the nineteenth century), in an education which truly frees the mind, a, if not the, key element will be initiation into the best that has been thought and known (or said) (Arnold, 1882); as a result of such an initiation we will develop that 'true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence', as Newman has it (Newman, 1858). Here teaching and discipline are essential because the 'best' in whatever field is not going to be picked up randomly. Much of it will be hard and different from anything the pupil will be familiar with or will pick up in his or her ordinary life. It will require a grounding of knowledge and vocabulary and reference beyond what the pupil will meet in everyday life.

The subject matter of liberal education will include science and mathematics, treated in a serious way, as inquiries for their own sakes, examining the fundamental nature of reality from both a physical and from an abstract mathematical point of view. This enterprise will remind us of both of Aristotle's view that part of wisdom is the pure desire to know the causes of things and also of the Pythagorean-Platonic sense of number as a realm of its own, adamantine in its certainty

and proof, arguably penetrating to the essence of the world. But over and above science and maths, liberal education will involve an encounter with our cultural roots. Like Odysseus in Book XI of *The Odyssey*, we will, in a sense, enter Hades to converse with the dead and to discover who we and they are. Like Odysseus, each one of us has to 'sail after knowledge', or else we will be in a state 'knowing less than drugged beasts', in thrall to the clamour, mindlessness and superficiality of the present when we have nothing with which to compare or judge it.

Liberal education, then, involves an orderly and disciplined initiation into the best that has been thought and known in various dimensions, as well as an education in sensibility and in habits of virtue. In this process the learner will be introduced to various traditions and canons of thought, sensibility and behaviour (the best that has been thought and known) as streams of experience and conversations through the ages, which of necessity have a longevity and an authority far more extensive and commanding than anything which could be produced by any groups or individuals making things anew to-day. In that sense we will, all of us, be dwarves sitting on the shoulders of giants, as John of Salisbury put it in the twelfth century. Of course we know more than those earlier in the conversation, as T.S.Eliot observed, and a key part of what we know is precisely those who have gone before us, and their achievements. The thought, though, is that this initiation, disciplined as it is, is actually the precondition of true intellectual and moral freedom. Without this grounding there will always be an element of the barbarian at a loss in a temple whose meaning he does not understand, or of the untrained would-be artist cut off from subtlety and depth of expression by his incompetence in the medium.

Much modern education is predicated on just such models. For example, 'creativity' without training is valued, pupils

are expected to express a reaction to poems whose context is deliberately hidden from them, and they are envisaged as working out for themselves a type of social contract for their school just in the way Rousseau envisaged the noble savage moving the state of nature into a state of social organization. All this underlines the difference between the conception of freedom at work in liberal education and that envisaged in the progressive free school. To put it broadly and bluntly, the liberal educator sees freedom in terms of the ability of the learner to participate in and add to the conversations of mankind, in Michael Oakeshott's phrase, whereas the freedom envisaged by the progressive is that championed by Francis Bacon right at the start of the modern era in the early seventeenth century, the freedom of the man who dives into the River Lethe, erasing from his soul the memory of all knowledge, all art, all poetry, to re-emerge on the opposite shore, naked and glorious like the first man.

It might seem a cheap shot to point out that in expressing his vision so beautifully Bacon is relying on classical and biblical imagery, but it would not be a cheap shot to point out that Bacon was the advocate of a new science, based solely on observation and experiment, which was supposed to look at the world anew and without preconception or influence from past authorities. For Bacon was a polemicist who referred to the knowledge of the middle ages and of the renaissance as consisting of idols, and who excoriated the intellectual influence of Aristotle. Bacon's own contributions to the actual new science of his day were less than nugatory, and he misunderstood the mathematical and theoretical nature of the new science he was supposedly advocating, which was actually very far from addressing nature without preconceptions. Nevertheless none of this has prevented the Baconian ideal of science, and his re-writing of its history (in effect wiping out the contribution of the medieval to

empirical knowledge) from exercising a dominance in the popular (and even not so popular) mind ever since.

Nor should we overlook the way in which the Baconian conception of science is a thoroughly utilitarian one, in contrast to the view of Aristotle, in which knowledge of causes is a species of wisdom, good in and for itself, an aspect of mental and moral liberation. For Bacon the true and only point of science is to improve man's estate, and the liberation is one afforded (if at all) by technique and technology. It is not, then, surprising that Bacon should have been an opponent of liberal education, to the extent that he opposed the foundation of Charterhouse because its curriculum was to be based on the Greek and Roman classics. As things have turned out, Bacon can be seen to be one of the first of many who have opposed liberal education on grounds of economic and scientific utility, including John Locke, Newman's *bête noire* in this respect. We stand here at the point of one of the big divides in educational thought, that between the followers of Aristotle and Cicero, the liberal educators, who see a virtue in knowledge for its own sake and the rational life as an end in itself, and the utilitarians, Bacon, Locke and their followers, who see education and indeed knowledge itself primarily as means to ulterior practical ends, with reason the slave of the passions, rather than their master. (To avoid confusion, I should underline here that the greatest of the so-called utilitarian philosophers, John Stuart Mill, was actually a doughty defender of the ideals of liberal education ; but then the happiness he defended in *Utilitarianism* was the philosophic happiness, or perhaps unhappiness, of a Socrates, as opposed to the cruder pleasures envisaged in the philosophies of his father and Jeremy Bentham.)

A further element is added to the utilitarianism of Bacon and Locke by John Dewey. According to Dewey's pragmatist philosophy the key notions for any human activity are

problem solving and growth. Dewey had an in-built hostility to the past, because, in his denial that there were any eternal or permanent verities, the legacy of the past was that of yesterday's solutions to yesterday's problems. Explicitly linking his thought to Darwin's theory of evolution – the 'greatest dissolvent in contemporary thought of old questions' (Dewey, 1951 edition) - Dewey wanted everything, including philosophy and education to address 'the intelligent administration of existent conditions', without being tied to what he saw as the absolutism and authoritarianism of the idea that the essences of things could be or had been discovered. Moreover, in contrast to the Aristotelian notion that different modes of enquiry were appropriate for different areas of life, Dewey insisted that the methods of the physical sciences, of observation and, above all, experiment, were suitable for all our endeavours. In the continuous flow of life in which we are all swimming, we must always be ready for new problems and ready – through our education – to experiment with new solutions.

For all Dewey's occasional nod towards great minds of the past, there is in his educational thinking and, even more, in that of his followers, a relentless focus on the modern and the demands (or what they take to be the demands) of the present, which cannot but be suspicious of any Arnoldian lingering over the best that *has* been thought and known. For Dewey, not only should education be directed at practical ends - to-day's practical ends and to-day's problems - approached in a technologico-scientific spirit, but it will be collectivized. As is clear from his Chicago school experiments of the 1890s, Dewey saw education in highly politicized terms, in which the community as a whole will participate in solving its problems. The school would be part of the local democratic community, and its activities would focus on projects which grew out of the concerns and interests of the people in the

locality. At the same time the classroom itself would be run as a democracy in miniature, with the teacher no 'external boss or dictator', but a moderator or co-ordinator of the activities of the group (facilitator in to-day's jargon); to this fundamentally democratic enterprise all pupils would be encouraged to contribute their own individual slants on whatever topic was being investigated. And to hammer home his message that education was to be a socialized activity, as early as 1889 Dewey said this: 'What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children.' (Dewey, 1956 edition)

A Transcendent Dimension

But over and above all this, there is yet another aspect to liberal education which would make its promotion problematic for the modern state. As will be evident from a glance at its history, (O'Hear and Sidwell, 2009) there are among its devotees and forbears, both Christian and pre-Christian, a striking number of thinkers who are explicitly committed to a belief in the supernatural destiny of mankind, from Plato, Aristotle and Cicero through to Ruskin, Newman, Tawney, T.S.Eliot, C.S.Lewis and Dorothy L Sayers in more modern times. From the point of view of these thinkers, the formation involved in a programme of liberal education is part of the way we would respond to our nature as having a destiny not confined to this world.

At the very least, liberal education leaves open the possibility that human beings have a calling which is open, and not confined to any ulterior ends, economic, political, social or, as Newman stressed, even moral. Our intellectual and aesthetic sensibilities are treated as ends in themselves, worthwhile in themselves. A full analysis of these faculties may well see them as having a transcendent aspect, not just worthwhile in themselves, which they are, but as crucial aspects of our

spiritual nature. Aristotle and Newman would have analysed our intellectual faculties in these terms. In Newman's case, as we see from *The Idea of a University*, 1873, Discourse V, what liberal education aims at is that 'illuminative reason and true philosophy' which is 'the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence.' (Newman, 1858) But if this power is not to be a mere intellectual fastidiousness, which is often found among the highly educated and can be little more than a form of snobbery, it will need a context against which to make these judgements. Secular reason has proved incapable of overcoming the fissiparous nature of intellectual disciplines, and the 'unity of the sciences', much trumpeted in the 1920s and 1930s, remains as elusive as ever it was, as in the modern university does any uncontentious way of relating the sciences to other aspects of human nature. Newman's conclusion is that universalizing and synthesising aspirations of intellectual endeavour which he is seeking makes sense only against the background of a unifying and legitimating divinely upheld order. (MacIntyre, 2009)

Plato and Ruskin, and a host of neo-Platonists saw beauty and our perception of it as a bridge to the divine. Clearly a significant element of liberal education will be what the Greeks called music, things to do with the muses, perhaps, so not just music in the strict sense, but also literature and the other arts and humanities. One could argue, as did Simone Weil, that all art of the first order is essentially religious, and not just because of the obvious, but often overlooked fact, that so much of the greatest art is an articulation of religious feelings. But even in art which is not on the surface religious, both creators and listeners sense that in much of it there is a reaching out to something beyond us, or perhaps

more accurately, a reaching down of the divine to us, that in great art there is often a sense, hard to express but definitely there, that in it the veil which separates life on earth from its ultimate source is for a time drawn aside.

Whether either of those aspects of the mind and feelings with which liberal education deals are actually rooted in the spiritual or not – and there are plenty of people who would see themselves as defenders of liberal education who would stringently deny any such thing – still in liberal education we are treating of things of intrinsic value and independent from all other concerns; by virtue of these facts the devotees of liberal education, whether teachers or students, are going to put the more quantifiable and basic concerns of the community to one side, at least for a time.

The Interests of the State

There is no need here to go into great detail as to the ways in which ends such as the ones just mentioned have become prominent in state run systems of education. Nor is this a new phenomenon. As long ago as 1796, Benjamin Rush, one of the signatories of the American Constitution, said this: 'Each youth does not belong to himself, but is public property and a warrior in the cause of liberty.' (Knight and Hall, 1951, p. 306) Paradoxical as it may be to think of someone being public property in the cause of liberty, in the century following Rush's statement public education, as far as it existed, was designed not only to prepare populations for work, whether manual or mental (in most industrialized countries), but also to promote such causes as Evangelical Christianity against Catholicism (USA), nation building in general (Prussia and Germany), the values of the secular state (France) and the production of a cadre of young people fit and apt for military service and running an over-extended empire (Britain in the late 19th century, under the Conservatives, and opposed by

the churches for what they saw as glorification of war), to take but four typical examples. In the twentieth century, in addition to some or all of these there has been a stress in many places on education as an agent of social mobility, and latterly of equality.

In each case the policy in question would be defended by claiming that education is a social concern. As such it should reflect social needs and values, and moreover as a state education will necessarily be paid for out of the public purse, the state has a very direct interest in what it does and what it is for. (The fact that the public purse is involved here only because the state has taken money from individual parents who would otherwise have been able to educate their children themselves is generally overlooked at this point in the argument.) Further, as societies have become more democratic, and democracy itself more populist, there is also a move to make education more egalitarian, shunning elitism (as it would be called) and those elements of the curriculum which cannot be shared by all, a theme characteristically prominent in the writings of Dewey and his followers, for whom what is now known as inclusiveness or inclusion is to be the very touchstone of a healthily democratic system of education.

'A Despotism Over the Mind'

The liberal educator need not deny that education is in some sense a social concern, nor that society as a whole has an interest and even a paternalistic duty in seeing that its members are educated. Both Newman and Arnold, in their different ways, saw an educated population as a good in itself, something that would leaven and civilize the society it made up, and so did Mill. But as Mill saw with compelling clarity, saying that is one thing; saying (as is almost taken as axiomatic these days) that therefore the state should

take charge of education is quite another. In Chapter V of *On Liberty*, Mill warned that 'a general state education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another', and that 'in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading to one over the body' (Mill, ed. By Warnock, 1960, p. 239-240). One may, of course, have doubts about the efficiency of the enterprise, but looking at the materials of the English National Curriculum as it was under New Labour, there can be no doubt about an intention of just the kind Mill feared: an overwhelming and overweening drive within it to produce a certain set of attitudes on topics such as multi-culturalism, environmentalism, citizenship, social justice, and even the European Union (amazingly, according to the Single European Act of 1986 we in Britain are now bound by law to bring out the (pro) European dimension of every topic in the curriculum).

We have so far been treating the question of the influence of the state and its bureaucracies as if they were in a sense neutral phenomena, simply administering policies laid down by rulers and politicians in a disinterested way. In practice, though, we know both from experience and from the findings of public choice theory that bureaucracies are never disinterested players. They always have their own interests to pursue, their own empires to build up, their own influence and power to expand. While this need not be sinister in itself, no bureaucracy is likely to favour an activity whose aims and rationale are essentially in tension with a managerial, bureaucratic approach and also essentially to place its adherents at one or more mental removes from the state. The aims of liberal education certainly are, in that they involve values which are unquantifiable, and which will seem to the managerial mind to be unaccountable, and aims which may well be critical of the forms of economic utility and

social levelling beloved of the politician and the bureaucrat. No one in to-day's world should be surprised to learn what underpinned the English National Curriculum under the government of 1997-2010. In its statement of the values we were told that education is 'a route to equality of opportunity for all, a healthy and just democracy, a productive economy and sustainable development… valuing diversity in our society and the environment in which we live'. Given that any genuine equality of opportunity will necessarily involve a continuous discounting of unequal outcomes at any stage (a direction the British government is already moving in with regard to university admissions, where pupils from poorly achieving schools are to have their grades artificially enhanced), and given that the politics of diversity amount in practice to a refusal to admit differences of quality between, say, the art of the ghetto and that of Bach and Rembrandt, as well as a repudiation of the idea of culture as one inclusive conversation, these are anything but neutral requirements.

Though the liberal educator may hope from his work for a social leavening and other desirable social ends (though not, one hopes, the delusory and ultimately totalitarian 'equality of opportunity'), it is a leavening which will occur, if at all, through the care and nurture of the soul of the individual (Plato) and by the cultivation of the *best* that has been thought and known, and of those who are the best. This aristocracy of talent need not and should not imply a regime of social barriers; but the alternative is the situation dreaded by both Plato and Matthew Arnold in which those with most talent track down to the level of the lowest tastes, keeping those from educationally under-privileged backgrounds firmly in their place by flattering them into believing that there is nothing better to aspire to than their own uneducated tastes (rather how the mass media work in to-day's world, in fact).

Nor should we forget that the modern world and the politics of the modern state above all are aspects of what Plato called the great beast (Plato, Republic). The great beast is the public world which can be pulled in any direction by the force of public opinion, without regard to truth or justice. In a populist democracy public opinion is easily manipulated by propaganda and the mass media. Political leaders are demagogues, and they in turn are in thrall to all sorts of other interests and powers. Political parties exist, but as mass movements, concerned only with growing and furthering their own power. All this is highly corrosive of the type of serene individualism the liberal educator endeavours to foster, and so we should not be surprised if the modern state hardly wants to cherish institutions of liberal education.

An Unregulated System: Parental Choice

This is not the place to discuss the mechanics of an unregulated system in any detail, though some form of voucher system has occasionally received support from the political left as well as from the political right. Parents would receive in the form of vouchers what they paid in taxes for the education of their children with various top-ups in the case of poor parents and handicapped children. Such a system could be a godsend to the poor – for it is poor parents in poor areas who are most trapped in the monolithic and unresponsive state system, in which they have no option but to send their children to the poorly performing and undisciplined state schools which constitute their community schools. In the few places where vouchers have been tried in the USA, they have been popular with inner city parents, though rather less popular with the middle classes outside the inner cities who are not given vouchers and who do not have access to the sort of choice afforded by vouchers, who see their taxes going to fund to others advantages they themselves do not have.

In a system of education not run or controlled by the state, even if supported by state taxes in the form of vouchers, should the state have a regulatory role? Here, along with its artificial restriction to areas of high deprivation, is the Achilles heel of the voucher system, for the state will find it very hard not to place restrictions on the use to which vouchers can be put. Many who could see some virtue in a voucher based system would fear the consequences of an unregulated system. Schools they did not like may well appear within it. It is tempting to think that some form of central regulation could guard against the worst excesses, and so the freedom state gives in doling out vouchers, it then takes away through regulation.

Whether it would be possible within a voucher system for the state to manage to confine its role in the way just suggested is, of course, an empirical matter. Economists and public choice theorists who are highly sensitive to the self-aggrandising tendencies of state bureaucracies point out that vouchers are just too much of a Trojan horse, because they require both that the state takes the money away from tax payers in the first place, and then hands it out again (as well as deciding on the amount). Both the collection and the distribution of the money will be costly, quite apart from any less neutral accompanying intervention. Maybe tax-credits, where people are simply allowed to set school fees against tax, would be a more efficient and more genuinely liberal way. Or maybe, most radical of all, education should simply be left entirely to the private decisions of private individuals. In such a world, no doubt charities would provide education for the very poor, but also, as the work of James Tooley in India, Africa and China has demonstrated – small schools would spring up even in the poorest areas from the private initiative of groups of parents and educational entrepreneurs (who, in those third world settings, often provide a better level of education than the competing state schools).

In advocating in whatever form the de-regulation of education, the defender of liberal education will have to take on board the fact that there will undoubtedly be schools he or she disapproves of. Here his position will be liberal in a wider sense. We can all think of examples of schools which might crop up in a de-regulated system, schools for Scientologists or creationists or Islamists and the rest, which doubtless some will object to strongly. On this general point, I will just say two things.

First, freedom in whatever sphere will always involve outcomes some disapprove of, but this does not mean that those making those choices do not have the right to make them. This is what freedom means, and in the case of schooling there is the further point that (many) parents are tax-payers, from whom the state actually takes the money in order to impose on them and their children the model of schooling it and its bureaucracies prefer. Against this I would urge that, on balance, parents will know more about the educational needs of their children than bureaucrats, motivated by bureaucratic imperatives with little regard for the individual child. Of course, some parents will make choices other find unfortunate (the price of freedom), but apart from the point of principle at stake we in the Western world are not in a situation in which bureaucratic management of schools is a roaring success. To put it bluntly large numbers of children are failed by this system in the most callous way. There is no reason to suppose that more children would be failed were their parents to have some genuine control over their education, however bizarre some of their choices might look to others.

But then, secondly, let us suppose that we have a traditionalist Muslim school, for example. In a context of parental choice it would be supported by the parents who sent their children there, otherwise it would not exist, which would be important

educationally and in other ways, and a big advantage over the present situation in which many parents are unhappy with the schools the state forcers their children to go to; but over and above that, the Muslim school would have to be a pretty dreadful place to be worse that many of the state schools which so signally fail so many children as it is. Of course it would teach things some people did not like, but again many state schools do just that, and from them there is currently no exit for the vast majority. As far as the teaching of what is disliked goes, there would, of course, be the normal application of the law to prevent incitements to violence, suppression of the rights of girls and women, vilification of minorities and the rest. So long as a school remained within the law, it is hard to see by what right even the best meaning of authorities could forbid the teaching of specific doctrines or world views; but equally the vast majority of parents do want their children to enter mainstream society, whatever their own particular beliefs, and so there would be pressure there for an education which was no so bizarre as to make that impossible. And even where that was not the case – as with the Amish in parts of the USA – other things being equal, tolerance by society as a whole would seem more fair, more constructive and more in a genuinely liberal spirit than attempts to suppress minorities by force (which is what external intervention would amount to).

In sum, then, supporters of liberal education ought to favour a system of genuine parental choice stimulating genuine diversity of provision, with the state playing as small a role in educations as is consistent with it ensuring that all children are educated and that in their education the law is upheld in a general sense and that children are not subject to obvious physical or moral danger in schools. Not only does liberal education view education as in principle autonomous, but for the practical reasons just considered it is most likely to thrive where education is not run by the state.

Given, though, that education in most Western democracies is run predominantly by the state, and in many cases increasingly intrusively, and that we do not have a voucher system or anything permitting genuine parental choice for the vast majority of parents (who cannot afford private schooling), the best hope for liberal education would seem to, lie in whatever private sector of education is allowed to exist. Meanwhile, as things stand, the best plan for liberal educators who want to do more than simply teach in whatever setting they can would be to campaign for greater levels of autonomy within their national systems of education.

Notes

1. John Holt, *How Children Fail*, New York: Pitman, 1964. A further complication is that in England we now have another sense of 'free' school, to refer to a state-funded school set up on the initiative of parents, teachers, trusts and charities, rather than through the normal bureaucratic channels. These schools will tend not to be 'free' in A.S. Neill's sense.

2. Holt, 207, 196

3. Holt, 196

4. This phrase and variants of it occur many times in Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (London: Smith Elder, 1882)

5. John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (1858), Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982, esp Discourse V

6. See 'The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy' in John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought*, New York: Henry Holt and Co, 1951

7. John Dewey, *School and Society*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1956 edition, 9

8. See A .O'Hear and M.Sidwell (eds), *The School of Freedom: A Liberal Education Reader from Plato to the Present Day,* Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2009.

9. See endnote 5 above.

10. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities,* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009

11. E. Knight and C.Hall (eds), *Readings in American Educational History,* New York: Appleton, 1951, 306

12. J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* in his *Utilitarianism* (ed Mary Warnock), London: Collins/Fontana, 1960, 239-40

13. Plato, *Republic*, Bk VI, 493b

Truth, Harmony and Justice

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Indian society currently seems to be struggling hard to preserve meaning in its old slogan "unity in diversity". The slogan recognises the range of diversity in Indian people that is beyond imagination for many other societies; and simultaneously claims unity at a level deeper than this diversity. The number of languages (22 constitutionally recognised and 270[1] languages spoken as mother tongue) is only the tip of proverbial iceberg of diversity underneath the Indian unity. Add to that the diversity in cultural customs, attires, food habits and religious beliefs and one has a very complex tapestry of a society, where even communication between all groups seems to be a huge challenge. Almost all major world religions are significantly represented in India. The amorphous nature of Hinduism coupled with its enormously complicated caste system itself seriously challenges the claimed unity within this set of people. The three major religions - Hinduism, Islam and Christianity - almost always look at each other with suspicion. That gives Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism anxiety and they start asserting their own identities. This diversity has now crystallised into hard and contesting political positions.

1. As per census data 2011. Linguists note a much larger number of spoken languages.

It is but natural that such a diverse country will have a wide range of value systems informed by culture, local customs and religions. It is also natural that there shall be cross cutting interest groups concerned with economic, political and social power in this diversity of value systems. It is also natural and legitimate that these diverse groups will formulate their separate political agendas and will work through political discourse, protests and agitations to realise those agendas. All this has pushed Indian society into a deep turmoil at the level of thinking and political action. This could be understood as adversarial strife or could also be seen as a churning, to find ways of creating a just political and social order according to the constitution, and overall cultural milieu of the country. I would prefer the latter. In this sense it is akin to the mythological *Samudra-manthan*[2]. But it is a *Samudra-manthan* with a difference. In the mythological *Samudra-manthan* there were *devas* and *asuras* with very definite characteristics; *devas* were presented as good and benevolent while *asuras* were assumed to be all bad and malevolent. In the contemporary *Samudra-manthan* there are no such definite categories; therefore, the deceit used by *devas* in gaining all the nectar can have not even a semblance of justification in this new age churning. Here the poison as well as the nectar have to be shared equally by all; and that makes the situation much more complicated today than described in the mythology.

As said above, it is legitimate for diverse population groups to work towards realising their values and agendas in a democracy. But if democracy is to remain functional and

2. This term literally means, "churning of the ocean". It is a reference to the mythological event when devas (gods) and asuras (demons) they had to cooperate and churn the ocean in order to get amrut/nectar (elixir of immortality). The devas conspired and designed the happenings in a way that only they would get the nectar, and not the asuras. Details of the story can be found at: https://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/vp/vp044.htm

the country to be united, then a certain kind of harmony beneath all this turmoil is an imperative. Contradictions in value systems and political agendas necessarily lead to struggle, strife, opposition and antagonism. A society rife with such qualities cannot be called harmonious. Harmony can be regained only through resolving all these contradictions, getting rid of strife, and cessation of struggle. In a democracy with so much diversity, complete resolution of contradictions and cessation of all struggle is impossible, as new issues will necessarily emerge as soon as old ones are resolved. Peace and harmony are not static and fixed for all times in any society. They are dynamically or perpetually created conditions which constantly face new problems, and keep solving them. Thus, the aim could only be to reduce these contradictions etc. to a level where harmonious functioning of democracy for a common good is not threatened; and to build socio-political systems which are alive to such challenges, and rational capabilities of its people who can continuously produce ideas and practices, that are operationalised through those systems.

Harmony is more than absence of struggle and strife. Absence of struggle and strife or active antagonism is called "negative peace" in the literature on Education for Peace. Harmony is closer to "positive peace"[3] which is characterised by cooperation and collaboration for common good, mutual respect and tolerance of difference in opinions and value systems. It is compatibility in opinion and action. Negative peace can be achieved even in an unjust social order, as it is possible to either manipulate people's opinion and actions through deceit, or to silence difference of opinion by force. Indian society in maintaining its caste system has been using

3. Gur-Ze'ev, International Encyclopedia of Education, Third Edition (2010), Academic Press (Academic Press is an imprint of Elsevier), London. (Electronic Edition: page: 6:22)

these two in tandem for centuries. Such a social peace can be legitimately characterised as unjust; and it is rightly said that "*the demands of justice must take precedence over the claims of peace*"[4]. The reasons for such a precedence to justice over peace are not only pragmatic, they are primarily ethical, which we will see presently.

Without going into details it could be plausibly argued that a just socio-political order necessarily grants (i) equal opportunity to develop one's reason, and (ii) rational autonomy to form one's judgment to each citizen.[5] If some people are not allowed to, or denied opportunities to develop their rational capability and use those capabilities in forming their opinion, such a socio-political order can not be called just in a democracy. Also, any action that deliberately hinders people's development of reason and forming informed opinion has to be counted as hindering justice and being opposed to harmony.

Therefore, lasting and just harmony has to be achieved only through freely formed rational opinion of citizens on all issues of controversy and strife. Two necessary conditions of being able to form rational opinion are, having knowledge and capability for rational deliberation.

Capability for rational deliberation is more than logic alone, it involves moral and emotional commitment to truth and consistency. As Scheffler notes "[R]eason stands always in contrast with inconsistency and with expediency, in the judgment of particular issues". Reason treats evidence fairly without bias, in the interest of truth. "In the moral realm, reason is action on principle, action that therefore does

4. NCERT, National Focus Group Position Paper on Education for Peace, page 4

5. In addition, a just social order also entails fair distribution of liberties and material and social goods. Here we need not go into those details.

not bend with the wind, nor lean to the side of advantage or power out of weakness or self-interest. Whether in the cognitive or the moral realm, reason is always a matter of treating equal reasons equally, and of judging the issues in the light of general principles to which one has bound oneself"[6]. Thus reason is also a self-made commitment to general principles, consistency and truth, even in the face of self-interest, advantage and power.

The second necessary condition for forming one's own rational opinion is availability of knowledge. Often knowledge is confused with belief. Whatever one believes is deemed as his knowledge. However, knowledge is more than just the psychological process of forming beliefs. It necessarily requires epistemic criteria of justification and truth. Justification is having evidence and arguments that support the belief in question, and cognitively convince one to consider it to be true.

In spite of truth being a very problematic and controversial concept in epistemology, no concept of knowledge can do without it. Scheffler has argued at length that truth can survive acceptance of fallibility and loss of certainty in empirical matters, he concludes his discussion on truth as a condition of knowledge by stating that "even if we totally reject certainty as a condition of knowledge, we need not also reject (absolute) truth. To attribute knowledge that Q[7], is not only to attribute belief that Q but also to affirm that Q — in effect, to affirm that "Q" is *true*, in the absolute sense of the term"[8]. Truth here survives not always as an achieved

6. Israel Scheffler, Philosophical Models of Teaching in *Reason and Teaching*, Routledge, Oxon (2014) (1973), Page 76.
7. Q being the asserted proposition.
8. Israel Scheffler, Conditions of Knowledge: An introduction to epistemology and education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, (1965), page 53.

goal, but as a necessary ideal for a belief to be counted as knowledge.

I would argue that a commitment to this epistemic ideal of truth is necessary in public discourse aiming for justice and harmony. Even more important for such a discourse is another related but distinguishable notion of truth, i.e. moral notion of truth. Moral truth is certainly connected with epistemic truth, but is not identical with it. Epistemic truth is concerned with judging whether a belief is correct or not, and has to meet certain standards of evidence and justification to establish it's correctness. Moral truth is about expression or communication of the belief so formed. When one communicates a belief as one holds it, s/he is telling the truth. But when one's communication is at variance with his/her belief, s/he is telling a lie. It is possible to have an epistemically false belief B and still tell a moral truth by communicating it as it is, i.e. by communicating the belief as one holds it.

For example, a member of Flat Earth Society may actually believe that (B) "The earth is flat". Epistemically this may be provable as false based on available observation data. But if he (i) actually believes in this, and (ii) communicates the same to others, he is not telling a lie, as he is communicating his belief as he holds it. Though his statement that "The earth is flat" is epistemically false, he is speaking truthfully. In such a situation we call him "wrong", but not a "liar". On the other hand, imagine the same person appearing for Geography teacher's interview in a school. He knows that if the interview board comes to know of his true belief about the shape of earth, he will be considered lacking in knowledge and will not get the job. When asked: "What do you believe about the shape of the earth?" he says "It is nearly spherical". Epistemically he is correct, but he is giving false information about his belief, thus is telling a lie. Moral truth is not about

the correctness of the statement one makes, rather it is about the "correct communication" of what one happens to believe. The opposite of moral-truth is a lie. The intention of a liar is to deceive others into forming false beliefs, either about himself or about the state of affairs in the world. Harry Frankfurt rightly states "[I]n some accounts of lying there is no lie unless a false statement is made; in others a person may be lying even if the statement he makes is true, as long as he himself believes that the statement is false and intends by making it to deceive"[9].

In public political discourse in a democracy intellectuals and politicians have a responsibility to be epistemically and morally committed to truth. Deviation from truth in either sense aids injustice and disrupts harmony.

As mentioned above, dignity and autonomy of individual citizens demand that a just order in society should be formed on the basis of freely formed opinions of citizens. Their agreement on the definition of common good and compromises made in their personal and group values, and interests should be arrived at of their own free will and on the basis of reasons they themselves accept cognitively.

Meeting these tough standards of rational decision making by every single individual in a society is not possible. In actual fact perhaps a majority of people do not meet the standards of knowledge and rational deliberation. However, this fact can not be used to trample upon their dignity and autonomy. A public political discourse should aim at convincing the public with epistemically fair means, without deceit or taking recourse to lies or obfuscation of information. It is the job of public intellectuals, politicians and media to provide required information as well as styles of argumentation,

9. Harry Frankfurt, On Bullshit, Princeton University Press, Princeton, (2005), page 8

making sense of that information, and often actually on formed opinions. Furthermore public political discourses, movements and agitations are a form of mass education in democratic citizenship. Dewey defines education "as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men". And notes that "[P]ublic agitation, propaganda, … are effective in producing the change of disposition which a philosophy indicates as desirable, but only in the degree in which they are educative—that is to say, in the degree in which they modify mental and moral attitudes"[10].

Opinion makers (public intellectuals, politicians and media personalities) have a sway over the thinking of large sections of population. When such people are epistemically careless, and disregard standards of justification and truth, they are guilty of misleading people into forming false beliefs. In comparison to well considered true and justified beliefs, false beliefs are less likely to produce appropriate action to achieve the aims of justice and harmony. Thus, they harm the prospects of justice and harmony in the society.

But when opinion makers deliberately tell lies or hide truth, they harm justice and harmony even more. In this latter case they are guilty of manipulating people into false beliefs. Manipulation of citizens is an attack on their dignity and autonomy. It is a direct interference in their freedom of thought and expression, and in their autonomous judgment. This is deliberate corruption of their rational cognitive processes. Further, in both these cases, of epistemic laxity and moral deception, the public is being miseducated, thus harming future prospects of justice and harmony in the society.

10. John Dewey, Democracy and Education, Aakar Books, Delhi, 2004 (1915), page 354

To clarify the issue further let's take two examples. About 20 years back one very prominent and famous professor-cum-activist started arguing that "all children out of school should be considered victims of child-labour under the law". Now the idea of child labour means that children are pushed into labour beyond their capabilities, which harms their health, physical growth, and adversely effects their mental growth. The operating concepts here are "labour", "harm" and "adverse effect on growth due to being involved in labour". A child can be in a situation which is harmful to him/her and adversely effects his/her growth; but no labour may be involved. Malnutrition is an example. But malnutrition cannot be called labour. If one uses common sense, a child being malnutritioned cannot be called a victim of child labour. A child out of school and having no opportunity of education is actually in a situation where his mental growth might be adversely affected. However, if she is not pushed into work it is not because of labour, but for some other reasons. Therefore, calling all out of school children child labour is actually an attack on people's epistemic sensibilities. It is obfuscating the ideas of labour and child-labour.

A supporter of calling out of school children 'child-labour', however, might argue that terms like child-labour should be legally defined and they have no "absolute meaning" in a society. Defining all out of school children as child-labour will benefit children, as child-labour is illegal in the country and, therefore, keeping children out of school will become illegal. This is a sentimental appeal to morally good-hearted people to discard their epistemic sensibilities; in other words, this is a false juxtaposition of epistemic and moral concepts of truth; claiming that justice can be better achieved if we blur epistemic truth.

In another case a very famous and powerful Indian politician is on record saying that he deliberately misled people on

an issue that involved their safety and had far reaching political consequences. In 1993 there were eleven bomb blasts in a single day in Bombay, killing 363 people (according to the politician on record) and injuring another 1400. There was mounting tension between two major religious communities in the country and particularly in the city of Bombay. The bombs were planted targeting one community, say X, and it was an easy conclusion for anyone that the terrorist group responsible belongs to the other religious community, say Y. The government also had information that automatic weapons were distributed to select members of community Y by the terrorist group responsible for bomb blasts. The Chief Minister of the state reached the right conclusion that the bomb blasts and weapons distribution is part of a larger plan to start religious riots in the city. He surmised that such religious riots will take a larger toll on community Y, it being a minority; and that will prepare the ground for young people of the community Y to be recruited as terrorists. He wanted to avoid further riots as well as their aftereffect. To prevent riots, he invented a twelfth bomb blast - which never happened - in an area where the fatalities would have been more in community Y. By this false information he wanted people to form a belief that it is not only one community (X) that is targeted. He further invented a lie stating that the material used in the blasts was the kind used by another terrorist group active in a neighbouring community and belonging to community X. The terrorist group indicated by the Chief Minister had never claimed any religious reasons for their attacks, and had conducted only one targeted attack in India, killing the then Prime Minister of the country in 1991. But since this was in the minds of the people his ploy of diverting attention from one terrorist group (community Y) to another (community X) had chances of success. He thinks that by these lies he averted serious religious riots in the city and

prevented loss of life and property. Therefore, his intentions were good and honorable.

Let's note that:

- The first case is that of epistemic obfuscation, that attacks people's capability to think clearly.
- The second is a deliberate lie, to divert accusation from the actual culprits and to accuse innocents at the least in this case. This also involved fixing the responsibility on members of the religious community which was targeted in this incident.
- Both cases have good intention at heart, as per claims.
- The first is supposed to enhance the prospects of better opportunity for education of deprived children.
- The second is supposed to preserve social harmony in the city and the country.

From the point of view of argument in this article both these issues are important in a democracy. Both examples manipulate citizens in order to form beliefs which are epistemically abhorrent to truth. Thus, both attack the dignity - as rational decision-making agents - and the autonomy of citizens. Morally speaking, from this point of view they run counter to justice and freedom of thought of citizens. Both manipulate people and use them for the aims set by the activist-professor and the politician without people's informed and free consent. Thus, these actions of disregarding epistemic and moral truth cannot be justified, if we think from the citizens' dignity and autonomy perspective.

But can they be justified from consequential point of view in pragmatic socio-political discourse? At the first sight it

depends on what the results of their obfuscation and lies were. Understanding the results of these actions is an empirical question. On the basis of available information, perhaps some children might have got an opportunity to attend school as a result of the first campaign. The politician's lie may have helped avoid a major religious riot in the city, and maybe in several other cities, as religious riots also have an induction effect. But one has to also think of the consequences of taking these devices as 'accepted principles' of conducting public discourse, and the long-term results of frequent use of such principles. Again, this is largely an empirical question; answer to which will depend on several things, including public awareness and capability to think clearly, politicians' prowess in telling lies, intellectuals' capability to obfuscate thinking and killing clarity of mind and so on. But perhaps it is not too far fetched to imagine that frequent use of such devices will produce diminishing dividends and finally the intellectuals and politicians will lose credibility. Also, the politician's device is a calumniation of the community X, and hides a problem in community Y. Repeated one sided use of use such devices, if successful, may finally result in the vilification of community X, which is direct injustice to the members of that community.

If the above discussion and its tentative conclusions are acceptable then commitment to truth - moral and epistemic - seems to be a necessary condition for justice and harmony in the society. However, the present day Indian socio-political discourse does not seem to exhibit any serious commitment to truth.

Two enemies of truth

In the Indian discourse today political correctness and what Harry Frankfurt calls bullshit seems to be the most

pronounced enemy of truth. Both of them are much more dangerous than plain lies.

Political correctness manifests itself in two interrelated forms. One, its evolved form, is about using "language that seems intended to give the least amount of offense, especially when describing groups identified by external markers such as race, gender, culture, or sexual orientation"[11]. This form is concerned with sensitivity in civilised conversations and discourses. This may impinge on truth if taken to extremes, but is generally benign and harmless; even a demand of civility. In this article we are not talking of this form of political correctness.

The other and its original form, which is alive and kicking in all ideological discourses, is inimical to truth. This form is a gift of communist ideologues, and emerged after 1917 Bolshevik revolution. Political correctness in this form is "to judge the degree of compatibility of one's ideas or political analyses with the official party line"[12] and publicly express only that which is most compatible. At the least in India this form is practiced by all political parties and public intellectuals supporting them. It is no more a propagation of left-wing parties alone.

Political correctness in this form necessarily involves hiding, twisting, ignoring evidence and truth; and fabricating evidence, justification and lies. In addition to the above-mentioned dangers of lack of commitment to truth it also throttles freedom of expression. Not only in avoidance of speaking the truth, but also through intellectual attacks on those who express opinions against the accepted political

11. https://www.britannica.com/topic/political-correctness 2020.
12. Pierre L. van den Berghe, Political *Correctness*, in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2nd edition*, Macmillan Reference USA, 2008, Volume 6, page 298.

lines. Thus, botching up debates and freedom of thinking. It is consciously directed at manipulating people into accepting the party line.

Harry Frankfurt in "On Bullshit"[13] claims that bullshit is much more prevalent in societies than we think. He analyses the concept of bullshit, not as a term of abuse but as an expression used to communicate a standpoint in conversations. Frankfurt claims that: one, bullshitters are profoundly indifferent to truth. Two, they are not concerned with communicating information, though they may pretend to be doing so. Three, that they are fakers and phonies, as "the essence of bullshit is not that it is *false* but that it is *phony*"[14] and that what they care about primarily is whether what they say is effective in manipulating opinion.

This understanding of bullshit leads Frankfurt to the conclusion that "bullshitting constitutes a more insidious threat than lying does to the conduct of civilized life."[15] Because a liar at least recognises the force of truth as well as its place in life; and he lies to avoid that force. A bullshitter is unaware of the place of truth in society and is profoundly indifferent to it; all that matters to him is manipulation of opinion to gain prominence and power.

Conclusion

If the above discussion has any merit, we can safely conclude that attacks on truth - epistemic and moral - happen in many forms. Some of them are a result of laxity in epistemic standards, deliberate obfuscation, plain lies, political

13. Harry G. Frankfurt, On Bullshit, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2005
14. Ibid, page 47.
15. Frankfurt, Harry G. On Truth (pp. 4-5). Random House. Kindle Edition

correctness and bullshitting. All these forms are used to manipulate public opinion, often in the name of justice and harmony. However, any manipulation of peoples' opinion constitutes attack on their dignity and autonomy; rational and informed persuasion is the only legitimate way of creating consensus in a democracy. Manipulation, thus, is morally unjustifiable. Secondly, a frequent use of devices of manipulation creates trust deficit in the society. Lack of trust in intellectuals, politicians, the state and any one in power in general makes smooth functioning very difficult, and it may invite the breakdown of law and order. Therefore, all such attempts decimate the democratic fabric of the society, even if often in an invisible manner. They are incapable of producing "just harmony", rather they add fuel to strife and keep power struggle and animosity alive.

Academic Knowledge and Democracy

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Introduction

Rohit Dhankar's (2005) memorable phrase "curriculum frameworks in search of a coherent epistemology" captures succinctly the growing interest in theories of curriculum knowledge by sociologists of education. (See for example, Muller, 2000; Young, 2008; Maton & Moore, 2010; Barrett & Rata, 2014). Dhankar's reference to the "inadequately articulated notion of knowledge in various Indian curriculum" in the period between 1988 and 2005 parallels similar experiences with curricula developments in, for example, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Norway, Scotland, and England. Central to the concern about how knowledge is theorised in the curriculum is the sociology of education's perennial issue (Davies, 1995): equality of access and of opportunity for all social groups, especially for the working class and traditionally marginalised communities. This chapter links these two research questions by exploring the relationship between epistemic (i.e. context independent, disciplinary or academic) knowledge and democracy. It examines how that relationship affects access to academic knowledge for all children at school. My purpose is to locate the central paradox that characterises education systems in democracies, i.e. that systems intended to increase equality in fact reproduce class inequalities, in the deeper contradictions

of democracy's main institutions: the nation, the state, and the citizen.

The interest in developing a coherent theory of curriculum knowledge is in response to the current mis-alignment between epistemic knowledge and the curricula of national education systems in democratic countries; a mis-alignment located in the erosion of expertise and the loss of trust in specialist knowledge and science of recent decades (Derry, 2014). Localising ideologies (Rata, 2012), supported by ethnic and religious writers, and fuelled by the relativism of subjects without boundaries (Muller, 2000; Moore, 2007) have disturbed the idea of epistemic knowledge as objective and universalising; an idea which previously enabled a degree of consensus about *what* knowledge should be taught at school (Rata, 2012; Turner, 2012) even though there has been little agreement about *how* and *to whom* the knowledge should be taught.

I argue that the disturbance to the objective and universalising nature of epistemic knowledge has had profoundly negative effects on the curriculum's role in supporting democracy; a goal of national education systems in democratic societies since the 19th century. I make this case by claiming that epistemic knowledge and democratic politics operate in a structurally inter-dependent relationship. My premise is that national education systems which aim to teach objective and universalising knowledge to all social groups, including the working class, poor, and marginalised, are the means to ensure progressive societies. This is a disputed position amongst educationalists, with some arguing that knowledge is always and necessarily 'knowledge of the powerful'. However, I argue, following Durkheim (2001), Gramsci (1986), and more recently Michael Young and Johan Muller (2013), and Rob Moore (2013); that access to objective disciplinary knowledge enables access to the collective representations of modern

societies. Without such access, individuals and groups remain outside a society's self-representation. As a result they become increasingly marginalised and increasingly unable to contribute to, and identify with, that society. With such access however, individuals acquire the ability to understand abstractions, to generalise, and to specialise; abilities needed to take up the authority and control over their own lives that is possible, but not guaranteed, in the modern democratic world.

According to Gramsci, the job of the school is,

> […] to accustom [the students] to reason, to think abstractly and schematically while remaining able to plunge back from abstraction into real and immediate life, to see in each fact or datum what is general and what is particular, to distinguish the concept from the particular instance. (1986, p. 38 in Muller 2000, pp. 7–8)

Without the ability to think in abstract ways, the child is confined to the world of immediate experience, i.e. to culture. With that ability however, he or she is able to conceptualise the world of immediate cultural experience objectively, and, as a consequence of that objective inquiry, criticise and change it. In addition, the ability to think abstractly enables young people to enter social worlds that are not, and cannot be known from experience. It is what modern education offers that traditional forms of education cannot offer. The former is subversive of culture because it offers a way out of the immediate by providing the means by which traditional cultural norms and practices can be objectified and criticised. The latter provide an instrumental education that fits individuals for their place in life – usually according to birth status and gender.

Abstract thinking not only provides the intellectual tools

of objectification and criticism, but it provides a social community - a 'culture' but one unlike the kinship or ethnic cultures of groups that draw on the past for their cohesion. Having access to the knowledge created by universal intellectual communities (Collins, 1998) brings the child into a way of thinking that, because it is based on provisional and contested truth, cannot offer the guarantee of stability that traditional beliefs offer. As compensation, it offers access to the unthinkable, to the 'not-yet thought' (Bernstein, 2000, p. 30). This is the knowledge built up over centuries through the cooperative endeavours of individuals working in social contexts and relating to other individuals according to the social mores of the discipline's procedures:

> The guiding ideas elaborated by our civilization are collective ideas that must be transmitted to the child, because he would not know, how to elaborate them alone. One does not recreate science through one's own personal experience, because it is social and not individual; one learns it. (Durkheim, 1956, p. 48)

Durkheim's ideas speak of the latent philosophy in the disciplines as 'a system of cardinal notions which sum up the most characteristics of things as we conceive them, and which govern their interpretation'. He calls this philosophy 'the product of the cumulative work of generations, that must be transmitted to the child, because it constitutes the very framework of the intelligence' (1956, p. 50). It is the universal knowledge inheritance most vividly captured in Bourdieu's phrase: "A twenty-year-old mathematician can have twenty centuries of mathematics in his mind" (Bourdieu 2004, p. 40). The task for education is to include the children of disadvantaged groups in this universal inheritance, knowing that entering into the world of abstract, objective thought is both alienating for such children and also contains the

potential for criticism of the very world from which the child comes. This is the dilemma, not only for culture-based schooling, but for the multicultural politics of which it is a part (Rata, 2014).

If academic knowledge and democracy share the same structuring principle; the argument that I develop below, then access to the former is essential for involvement in the latter. This means that questions about the nature of academic knowledge, about how the knowledge is altered to become subjects in the school curiculum, and about how it should be taught, are not confined to educational research. They are central political questions given that the knowledge each generation acquires at school affects how people are able to engage with democratic politics. This includes how individuals exercise the authority of criticism in holding to account those in power. Indeed, as this chapter makes clear, questions about authority and power are deeply embedded in both knowledge and politics. Those with 'powerful knowledge' (as distinguished from 'knowledge of the powerful') have authority in both domains. (See Beck, 2014 for a discussion of the origins and meanings of the dyad 'powerful knowledge/ knowledge of the powerful' in Michael Young's post-1990s' writings.)

The strife of the dialectic

The structuring principle uniting democracy and rational knowledge was recognised by Kant, who referred to the ongoing contradictory nature of modern society as "the strife of the dialectic", a state that he described as both the necessity of reason and of politics (1993, p. 488). It is the strife of the dialectic which produces the contradictory 'provisional truth' of knowledge and the equally contradictory 'peaceful dispute' of democratic politics. It allows for the plurality of collective representations described by Durkheim (2002)

that draw upon the authority of science (epistemic knowledge in its broadest sense), rather than the received beliefs of religion and traditional authority.

Those students with the ability to grasp the 'strife of the dialectic' have an advantage in understanding politics and knowledge over those who do not. It is an understanding of complexity and contradiction that does not arise from the 'spontaneous' concepts recognised by Vygotsky (1962) as belonging to experience and that I discuss in greater detail in the final section. Rather the ability to find complexity and contradiction that are not obvious in the world of appearance comes from acquiring abstract thinking. Thinking in abstract concepts is, as Durkheim (2001) noted "not simply to see the real through the most general; it is to project onto sensation a light that illuminates, penetrates, and transforms it" (p. 331). Those without access to the intellectual tools of abstract thinking, intellectual resources that, for almost all children, are available only at school, remain confined to the limited world of personal experience. They are blocked from access to society's collective representations, including how we represent all the inherent contradictions and paradoxes of our social and political relations and institutions. This makes individuals vulnerable to ideologies as the ability to understand how a society represents itself also includes the ability to recognise 'mis-representations', that is, ideologies. In his defense of liberal education, Charles Bailey (1984) argues that this type of education liberates "*from* the tyranny of the present and the particular and liberates *for* the ideal of the autonomous, rational, moral agent" (p. 22, italics in the original). It is clear that he regards education's role as linking rational knowledge and political agency, the argument taken in this chapter.

Structural contradictions

Of all the contradictions shaping modern society, the most important are those which shape the three structuring institutions of the modern nation: the nation itself, the state, and the citizen. Understanding these contradictions gives access to genuine political involvement, but it is an understanding which can only be acquired from knowledge about how power and authority are controlled, distributed, and regulated. This is knowledge most likely to be created and taught in the Social Sciences and Humanities disciplines. It is altered for teaching in schools, usually in the subjects of History and in various types of Social Studies. Access to the content of specific subject knowledge is insufficient on its own. It requires a way of thinking that enables individuals to understand increasingly complex systems of abstract knowledge.

Unfortunately the teaching of subject knowledge as a 'gradgrind' recitation of meaningless facts has contributed to the mistrust of the knowledge itself. This is the rote learning of subject knowledge, "the direct teaching of concepts [as] impossible and fruitless", that Vygotsky (1962) called an "empty verbalism, a parrotlike repetition of words by the child, simulating a knowledge of the corresponding concepts but actually covering up a vacuum" (p. 83). Yet neither Vygotsky nor others, such as Gramsci who saw access to national education systems as essential if working people were to acquire control over their own lives, wanted to abandon academic knowledge. The fault lay with *how* the knowledge was taught not the academic nature of the knowledge. Vygotsky (1962) asked instead for a pedagogy that "stimulates the strenuous mental activity of the child" (p. 85). Such mental activity is not constructed from the spontaneous concepts of a child's experience but from direct teaching (Vygotsky uses the term 'instruction') in "scientific concepts,

with their hierarchical system of interrelationships" (p. 92). It is this cognitive activity which is "the medium within which awareness and mastery first develop, to be transferred later to other concepts and other areas of thought" (p. 92).

Students acquire the ability to understand the contradictory nature of modern society from the study of disciplinary knowledge because it is in acquiring this knowledge, in contrast to the knowledge of everyday experience, that abstract cognition develops in the hierarchical system of epistemic interrelationships described by Vygotsky above. That most abstract concept, the 'nation', serves as the main symbol upon which to build the representations of the modern collective. However, to identify with a collective that is essentially abstract goes against common-sense. Indeed the concept of the modern collective is counter-intuitive. It lacks the bonds of kinship, race, or religion whose empirically known materiality was the mechanism for creating and maintaining the traditional collective.

This paradox at the heart of the modern nation was identified early in the modern period (Macfarlane, 2002) and remains a central question in understanding the role played by education. It asks the question: 'How does a society cohere in the absence of traditional unifying forces, such as kinship and status hierarchies?' The answer is 'not easily', given that the idea of traditional collectivities (often highly romanticised) continues to have a strong claim in peoples' identities. This can be seen in the rise of various forms of neo-traditionalism in the post-1970s' period (Rata, 2011; Friedman, 1994). Indeed in comparison to the materiality of ethnic collectives, the modern nation's existence as a symbolic entity is a fragile resource for stability. Its vulnerability as an abstract or 'imagined' idea is exposed by those nations unable to sustain the symbolic idea as a material fact.

Demonstrating W. B. Yeat's memorable line, 'the centre cannot hold', a number of newly constructured nation-states break down into older race or religious groups based on a mythologised ideology. This process occurred most noticeably in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, but the rumble of older ethnic ties against the new order is felt in other areas too. Even the United Kingdom, with its relatively long history as a modern nation-state is no stranger to the seductive pull of racial mythologies. The persistence of loyalties to beliefs in an imagined 'Anglo-Saxon' ethnicity is used to provide a counter-foil to the perceived threats of multiculturalism, informed Brexit politics in recent years. Similarly, the modern nation of India exists in a dialectic tension with the forces of older primordial identities supported by resurgent neotraditionalist ideologies justified in religious terms (Nanda, 2003).

The pull of a romanticised and ethnicised past is felt most strongly by marginalised groups in modern societies; those who were never fully included in the abstraction of the modern nation-state with its new forms of symbolic representations. These groups, usually categorised by ethnicity, religion, or as localised indigenous peoples, find their collective in a re-created primordial identity. According to Friedman (2006) progressive class politics 'finds its source within the imaginary trajectory' of the modern nation-state. The integration of formerly separate populations into that new socio-political entity led to a 'developmental cosmology', one in which action was channelled to 'a politics of social transformation' (xvi). The regression to cultural politics in recent decades is the result of the 'modernism's declining hegemony', of its fragmentation into a new imaginary, that of pre-modern socio-political units. 'Romanticism, traditionalism and anti-modernism' are the 'new forms of integration between the individual and the smaller entity' (xvi).

The purpose of national education systems had been to contribute to the form of social integration promised by modernity; one based on the dialectic of the individual and society in a creative but contradictory balance. These systems rejected older racialised identities in order to socialise the generations of the modern polity into new symbolic representations, ones freed from the fixed boundaries of primordial origins. The universalising democratic ideals of equality, freedom, and society worked fairly successfully during the era of industrial capitalism (an era that continues in a somewhat different way in the emerging developed countries of China, India, and Brazil). Working people have reason to believe that the ideals of equality, if not currently experienced, would be experienced by their children in an imagined future of wealth redistribution. Yet when the veracity of those symbols is tested against the lived experience of those who remain marginalised and 'less equal', the contradiction at the heart of the modern nation becomes a source of weakness rather than a source of creative tension. Democratic societies need to achieve balance between their idealised symbolic self-representation and the material reality of ordinary peoples' lives if those ideals are to provide social cohesion.

Durkheim (2001) recognised the delicate balance between how we live and how we understand that life, referring to "the concept that was originally taken to be true because it is collective tends to become collective only if it is held to be true: we demand its credentials before giving it credence" (p. 333). An educated populace which understands the essential contradiction at the heart of the modern nation; its existence as an abstraction yet also its material existence that continually tests the abstraction, is more likely to not only test its credentials, but to use its authority to strengthen them. Those credentials are maintained only by the modern

nation 'proving' itself by including all its people into both the symbolic and material collectivity. One way into the symbolic collectivity that has the potential to include all the population is the equality of opportunity offered by the national education system. If such opportunity occurs, each generation acquires the intellectual capital that is an economic as well as a social and political resource.

Yet equally of opportunity is continually 'tested' by the contradictions that exist in the other institutions of the modern polity; the state and the citizen. The state is simultaneously the democratic nation's infrastructure and the regulatory unit serving global capitalism. It pulls towards inequality and equality. This contradiction is experienced by individuals in the education system. Those in the working class are more likely to receive an instrumental education, one that is vocational and 'relevant' to their immediate lives. The children of the upper middle class are, on the whole, freed from this restricting educative function. They are more likely to receive the liberal education that, as J.S. Mill (1985) noted, provides "observation to see, reasoning and judgement to foresee, activity to gather materials for decision, discrimination to decide, and when he has decided, firmness and self-control to hold to his own deliberate decision" (p. 123). It is here in the distinction between the working class and the privileged class that the contradiction expressed in the 'powerful knowledge/ knowledge of the powerful' dyad is most fully realised. Those with access to powerful knowledge, that is, to the type of knowledge that enables them to generalise, specialise, and conceptualise in abstract ways, are most likely to be the children of the powerful.

Similarly, the 'citizen' is a contradictory status. It is the concept of the equal political and legal entity yet the materiality of that status in the individual's experience is of the unequal

worker in the capitalist economy. Those individuals who have the cognitive ability to think in abstractions have the ability to objectify their citizen status as both an individual and a collective experience. This understanding means that they are more likely to act upon its implications. These are the people who take part in politics, who analyse its ideological interests, who understand the on-going tensions as modern society seeks to keep its contradictory nature in balance. But to do so requires a way of thinking that can only be acquired from the long and demanding schooling in epistemic knowledge, an 'apprenticeship' to which the working-class has unequal access.

The education contradiction

Is it possible for the education system to provide the means by which the working class can acquire 'powerful knowledge' given that it is at school that students are prepared for their classed position in life? The determinism of such a pessimistic approach is no different from the deterministic function of education in traditional systems. Yet while modern education may reproduce the inequalities of the wider system, this is just one of the possibilities available from a system that is inherently contradictory. The paradox of education, one located in the deeper structural contradictions of the polity itself, means that schools have the means with which to break that classed trajectory and provide to all students the symbolic representations of the collective (Moore, 2013). Whether or not that 'interruption' (to use Moore's phrase), does occur depends upon how and to whom the school distributes the symbolic capital. Those students with such access are not only initiated into the collective thought of disciplinary subjects, but into the means to that thought, that is, into the conceptual thought that allows entry into society's representations. To be excluded from conceptual thought is to be excluded from society because, as Durkheim

(2001) pointed out, "concepts are collective representations . . . they respond to the way in which that special entity, society, thinks about the things from its own experience" (p. 330).

Yet it would be naïve to overlook or to minimise the forces arraigned against equalising access to intellectual capital. Even countries that project an image of educational opportunity such as New Zealand, with its national educational system dating back to the 1877 Education Act, wrestle uneasily with the paradox. The idealistic view of equal opportunity, one seen emerging in New Zealand during the 1890s, and with greater certainty in the prosperous 1940s-60s, certainly contained policies of greater equality. These included opening access to secondary schooling, the introduction of a core curriculum, and by the 1980s the legislative commitment to equitable gender and disability policies. Yet, at the same time, intransigent class divisions continued to influence both access to, and opportunities within, New Zealand education (Nash, 2010) exposing the underlying contradictions that shape both political and epistemic fields.

Along with the use of policy regulation as a means to increase opportunities, the use of information and communication technologies, often referred to as '21st century learning' (Bolstad, 2011-2012) is seen as a way out of the inter-generational inequalities of educational reproduction. However, despite the belief that we live in a more liberating 'Knowledge Age', that mental-manual division is transferred to the new technological forces and relations of production in the current economic era. Mundane, low-level technology jobs having the same class-determining features of manual work. The jobs in technology may well be cleaner and less physical, but they have the central features of working class employment: low autonomy, limited or no decision-making, repetitive operation, low wages, and casualised or uncertain employment conditions. In contrast, the 'mental' jobs of the

technological era are like those of the industrial economies; marked by creativity, considerable employee autonomy and decision-making, and high salaries with relative security.

The paradox of education which does offer promise for increased access to the symbolic resources of modern society, is located in the deeper structural contradictions of the democratic polity. Advanced technology without democratic politics cannot 'release' that paradox. Indeed, what it offers is the reactionary modernism described by Herf (1984) in his description of Germany in the 1930s. Herf described a highly developed economy, a technologically educated workforce, and a repressive political system. This system is in the end self-defeating. Schools and higher education institutions that simply produce the new manual workers of financial capitalism disguise their working class status in the digital utopianism of Future Knowledge Age rhetoric.

If more enlightened policies and increased technologies are not sufficient to enable the interrupt to education's role in class reproduction, then what else is required to release the paradox; that is, the potential of education as a liberating system? My purpose in the final section is to move from education's context to the system itself to ask what can be done *within* schools to increase access to intellectual capital and to the symbolic representations of the collective?

Knowledge and Pedagogy

The problem for education is how to overcome the alienation that many children from the working class and marginalised groups experience at school. How do these children acquire what Bernard Charlot (2009) refers to as the identity of the epistemic self, one distinct from the 'home identities' of the empirical self? In this concluding section I argue that the 'epistemic self' requires both the 'powerful knowledge' found in academic subjects and the abstract thinking needed

to access this type of counter-intuitive knowledge. If the case for powerful knowledge is accepted, then the essential problem is pedagogic. How do we develop a pedagogy of engagement (Young & Muller, 2010; Rata, McPhail & Barrett, 2019) so that students learn to understand mental objects and how they connect in non-empirical space and time? In other words, how do we learn to think about what is not encountered in experience by using concepts that themselves are not known in experience? This is the formidable task required of schools. Teachers must introduce children to the formal world of abstract concepts that are 'real' in the Popperian sense of a causal materiality but not 'real' in the sense of the reality of everyday experiences (Popper, 1978).

The task of bringing students into the counter-intuitive world creates two specific problems for teachers and students alike. Firstly, students must first acquire the ability to engage with context-independent knowledge. Secondly, following on from this initial, and often alienating engagement, they must also engage with the long process of lower to higher order conceptual progression that occurs within coherent systems of meaning. Vygotsky (1962) addressed these central issues in pedagogy; does conceptual understanding develop from what children already know or is abstract understanding separate and different from experience? While progressivists and later constructivists take the first path, emphasising experience and the facilitating role of the teacher in connecting to this experience, Vygotsky took the opposing position. He distinguished between 'spontaneous' concepts and 'scientific' ones, how these different types of knowledge are acquired, and how they relate to each other. His most succinct comment on the distinction observes:

> Concepts form and develop under entirely different inner and outer conditions, depending on whether

> they originate in classroom instruction or in the child's personal experience. Even the motives prompting the child to form the two types of concepts are not the same. The mind faces different problems when assimilating concepts at school and when left to its own devices. When we impart systematic knowledge to the child, we teach him many things that he cannot directly see or experience. Since scientific and spontaneous concepts differ in their relation to the child's experience and in the child's attitude towards their objects, they may be expected to follow differing developmental paths from their inception to their final form.
> (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 86).

However, Vygotsky (1962) was well aware that scientific concepts are not simply acquired by rote, hence his objection to role-learning methods. He regarded their acquisition as involving "the aid of strenuous mental activity on the part of the child himself" (p. 86). That activity does require direct instruction. Here the teacher is not a facilitator but actively engaged in direct teaching. Indeed Vygoysky spoke of "Instruction [as] one of the principal sources of the school child's concepts . . . [it] is also a powerful force in directing their evolution; it determines the fate of this total mental development." (p. 85). However he also recognised that, although spontaneous and scientific concepts are distinct, they are "related and constantly influence each other" (p. 85). While this realisation is significant as it stands, Vygotsky went further in exploring the relationship between spontaneous and scientific concepts and the significant of that relationship for pedagogy. He contended that learning proceeds from the counter-intuitive to the intuitive, itself a counter-intuitive idea.

> In the scientific concepts that the child acquires in school, the relationship to an object is mediated from the start

> by some other concept. Thus the very notion of scientific concepts implies a certain position in relation to other concepts, i.e., a place within a system of concepts. It is our contention that the rudiments of sytemisation first enter the child's mind by way of his contact with scientific concepts and *are then transferred to everyday concepts, changing their psychological structure from the top down*. (1962, p. 93, italics added)

The idea that teachers start with the scientific or abstract concepts and then may draw on everyday knowledge perhaps as illustrative of the concept has profound consequences for teaching. It moves academic knowledge and the knowledgeable teacher to the central position at school, but does not exclude the child's experience.

It is difficult for students, and for many teachers, to grasp that concepts are material abstractions in their own right and that, in acquiring this knowledge we start with abstractions, concepts which, as Vygotsky noted, must be taught because they do not arise 'spontaneously' from experience. The commonsense view that we proceed from the known to the unknown, leads to constructivist pedagogies, and also justifies the variously termed 'twenty-first century futures approaches'. This type of instrumentalist education emphasises 'relevance' and is directed towards producing skills, competencies and outcomes. Indeed, in what appears to be a denial of knowledge itself, knowledge is reduced to a process. According to Bolstad and Gilbert (2012)

> Knowledge is rapidly created every day. Knowledge is the *process* of creating new knowledge. It is a product of "networks and flows" coming into being through interactions and intersections on a "just-in-time" basis to solve specific problems as they emerge (p. 13).

Both 'process' education and constructivism lack the hierarchical systems of meaning that enable students to progress from lower order to higher order concepts systems found in academic subjects. These systems of meaning are the coherent epistemologies that, if offered in a curriculum, are the means to intellectual development for all social groups (Rata, 2017; 2019). What is also required along with the academic concepts and content are pedagogies which enable teachers and students to find relationships between the abstract knowledge and the world of their immediate experience. Knowledge that is independent of a student's context is not, as Vygotsky (1962) argued, unrelated to his or her experience. It may shed light upon contexts, and in this way, be highly relevant. However, the process is from the abstract to the concrete. The contexts illuminated by the ideas may be from the student's own world, but abstract ideas may also be used to illustrate the experience of humanity. In this way, academic ideas have the potential to take students into a range of universalising experiences, linking their own to the lives of others. This is the political potential of abstract knowledge.

Conclusion

A 'curriculum in search of a coherent epistemology' is one which recognises that abstract knowledge is the path into the "yet to be thought" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 30). Bernstein locates that site for alternate possibilities in the ongoing contradictions of education. Those alternates are found in the context-independent nature of abstract knowledge. Context-dependent meanings on the other hand, "are so embedded in the context that they have no reference outside that context . . .they are totally consumed by that context" (p. 30). However, "if meanings have an indirect relation to a specific material base, the meanings themselves create a

gap or a space." The gap that Bernstein theorises, is one that "a potential discursive gap, one he suggests is "the site for the unthinkable, the site of the impossible . . .it is the crucial site of the *yet to be thought*." (p. 30, italics in the original). It is this potential that arises from the strife of the dialectic. Deep structural contradictions within the institutions of the political system, including within education, are the context within which the material realities of life can be changed by the immaterial ideas.

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Educational Inequalities and Educational Justice

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The goal of this paper is to identify and justify a normative principle that allows for an identification of inequalities incompatible with educational justice. To reach that goal, three alternative versions of egalitarianism are discussed: luck egalitarianism, threshold (minimalist) egalitarianism, and respect egalitarianism. Respect egalitarianism can be closely linked to the model of epistemic justice, which was recently the subject of intensive, far reaching discussions in the field of philosophy of education. This paper argues that the approaches of both luck egalitarianism and threshold egalitarianism are inadequate to satisfy the aim of education. Luck egalitarianism entails the "bottomless pit problem" that seems to be conceptually and politically unsolvable. Additionally, luck egalitarians tend to interpret education as a positional, distributive good whose primary value is extrinsic. This stance ignores the fact that education is foremost concerned with the growth of knowledge - a non-positional good whose worth is primarily intrinsic. On the other hand, threshold egalitarians do not offer a conceptual means of discriminating between just and unjust educational inequalities that lie above the capability threshold required by individuals to participate in the political life of society and/or to live a life of dignity.

The approach of respect egalitarianism avoids these shortcomings. According to this approach, the most crucial form of educational injustice is treating select groups of students with disrespect by disregarding their beliefs, experiences, ideals, and achievements, as well as their knowledge-ability. Educational injustice appears both as a lack of empathy and cognitive respect toward students. To overcome this educational injustice, educational institutions should design and implement forms of teaching that equally include the beliefs and experiences of all students. Teachers should use these beliefs and experiences as a point of departure for addressing academic classroom content. Social, economic, and knowledge inequalities between students would no longer be an issue of educational injustice if principles of respect in formal education were fully implemented.

This paper explores the relationship between equality and justice in formal education. More precisely, it addresses the following questions: which versions of egalitarianism correspond to the concept of educational justice (and why), and which educational inequalities are incompatible with the norms implied by this concept?

In the last two decades, three alternative versions of egalitarianism have been conceptually elaborated upon: luck egalitarianism, threshold (minimalist) egalitarianism, and respect egalitarianism. The latter is closely linked to the model of epistemic justice, a model recently subject to intensive, far reaching discussions in the field of philosophy of education. The following considerations will comparatively analyze these three approaches with respect to the primary questions of this paper. This should allow us to develop a conceptual tool for identifying unjust or morally wrong educational inequalities. The final part of this paper will offer clues about

what kinds of pedagogies are required to overcome unjust educational inequalities.

Luck Egalitarianism: Educational Justice as a Redistribution of Resources in Favor of the Disadvantaged Students

Luck egalitarianism may be viewed as a label for the "classic" distributive-egalitarian model of justice. During the last decade, Harry Brighouse elaborately applied this model to topics of educational justice. According to Brighouse, because inequalities in education license inequalities in income, it is unjust when educational inequalities are caused by a family's choices, background, or circumstances (Brighouse, 2003, pp. 473–475). Brighouse draws arguments from Rawls and Dworkin - probably the most prominent egalitarian theorists of distributive justice.

It is important to note that the mentioned authors are not arguing against inequalities of income and wealth in general, insofar as these inequalities reflect the choices made by individuals on the grounds of equal opportunity. Unequal distribution of rewards is just, provided that the competing individuals deserved this distribution, that is, if this distribution is due to their chosen actions they can be held responsible for them. However, individuals are certainly not responsible for their family background. Hence, a schooling practice is unjust if it reproduces the advantages and disadvantages of brute luck and transforms these advantages and disadvantages into unequal positions in a competition for rewards or statuses. The principle of equal opportunity to lead an autonomously chosen life presupposes the neutralization of the "brute bad luck" (Dworkin, 2000, pp. 285–287).

This neutralization appears to be primarily the domain of school education. So Rawls argues that a just society should

spend more effort and resources on the early education of children disadvantaged by their family backgrounds, or by their health, or even by their talents, in order to equalize their opportunities to define and pursue their own life prospects and competing for goods and employment positions with other individuals without these disadvantages (Rawls, 1999, pp. 86–87).

To sum up: Social justice presupposes equal education, understood as "*a positional good*, relative to the instrumental benefits it brings" (Brighouse, 2003, p. 475; emphasis in the original text). The equal distribution of this good presupposes a redistribution of educational efforts and resources in favor of disadvantaged children.

However, this claim for redistribution entails what Brighouse calls the "bottomless pit problem" (Brighouse 2003, pp. 477–478). Neutralizing disadvantages from family background alone would require an enormous amount of effort and resources since neutralization must target not only the unequal funding of schools but also the inequality of children's pre-school socialization and upbringing. Moreover, the principles of luck egalitarianism in education seem to imply a neutralization of inequalities in the natural gifts of the children. Children are certainly not responsible for their level of talent. A complete equalization of opportunities between children with different natural gifts, for example between children with and without mental disabilities, seems to be an entirely utopian goal, thereby making the bottomless pit problem seemingly unsolvable.

Minimalist Egalitarianism as a Threshold Model of Educational Justice

A prominent strategy to eliminate the bottomless pit problem is to define a threshold of educational equality that should be

reached by every child. From this perspective, inequalities above the threshold are deemed acceptable. I would like to call this approach minimalist egalitarianism.

Generally speaking, it is possible to distinguish between the two different approaches to define a threshold of educational equality. By the late 1980s, Amy Gutmann proposed a "democratic threshold principle" based on the concept of deliberative democracy (Gutmann 1987). More recently, Martha Nussbaum developed a different, anthropologically founded argument, according to which a threshold of basic human capabilities should be cultivated in every human being (Nussbaum 2006).

Gutmann's threshold principle suggests that inequalities in the distribution of educational goods can be justified if – and only if – they do not limit the ability of every individual to effectively participate in the democratic process (Gutmann, 1987, p. 136). Gutmann understands this process as a practice of political deliberation, whose performance requires the ability to argumentatively evaluate different values and options of (and for) collective political action (Gutmann, 1987, p. 171). School education would be just if every child received an education that allows her to develop this ability, thereby enabling her to participate in the democratic process.

An obvious weakness of the concept is that it is limited to the political sphere, or more precisely, to the practice of political deliberation. But education concerns not only one's ability to participate politically, but also to provide individuals with the capacity to define and pursue one's own notion of a good life in society. As determined in the previous section, Rawls and Dworkin both endorsed this broader understanding of education. Education is not only about politics but also about social participation in the broader sense of the term. Imagine that John received an education that provided him with

the ability to deliberate but did not offer to him any of the high professional skills. When in competition with others who attended schools that offered sound training in these skills, he would be deprived of positions and offices. Should the education that John received be considered "just"? No, obviously it should not.

Martha Nussbaum's threshold principle avoids Gutmann's political reductionism. Nussbaum identifies central human capabilities implicit in the idea of a life led with dignity. Furthermore, she endorses the idea of a threshold level for each capability, "[b]eneath which it is held that truly human functioning is not available for citizens; the social goal should be understood in terms of getting citizens above this capability threshold" (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 71). Human functions should be understood according to the concept of human dignity; that implies "[t]hat the capabilities in question should be pursued for each and every person, treating each as an end and none as a mere tool of the ends of the others" (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 70). Nussbaum offers a list of ten central human capabilities (e.g. affiliation, bodily integrity, and control over one's environment (political and material)) whose cultivation is a necessary condition for a dignified human existence (Nussbaum, 2006, pp. 76–78).

One may question whether all of those capabilities can claim universal validity. For example, it is difficult to deny that there may be large groups of human beings capable of leading a life of dignity without aiming to control their environment – both in the political sense of effective political participation or in the material sense of being able to hold property. However, this question is not crucial to this paper's argument. Another question seems to be much more urgent for the theory of educational justice: are all inequalities above the threshold of central human capabilities irrelevant to educational justice?

The following example illustrates this point. Ian is from a wealthy middle class family and attended a well-financed, high-performing school. Mary is from an underprivileged family and attended a school in her low-income neighborhood. The material resources in Mary's school are insufficient, there is permanent fluctuation among the underpaid teachers, and several students are confronting drug addiction and crime in their families. Despite this, the school manages to bring its students to the thresholds defined by Gutmann and Nussbaum. However, this is the maximum result that Mary's school can achieve.

This is not the case in Ian's school, which offers advanced classes in rhetoric, sciences, economics, and foreign languages. Mary's school cannot afford these advanced courses. Additionally, because the majority of students at Ian's school are middle class, the learning atmosphere is much comfortable then at Mary's school. It is obvious that by the end of their respective schooling both Ian and Mary will be able to effectively participate in the democratic process and lead a dignified human life. However, Mary will be less equipped to handle competition in social positions and offices. Her disadvantages are the result of her poorer education due to her underprivileged family background.

Even if Mary manages to move beyond the capability threshold, enabling her to participate politically in her society and/or to live a life of dignity, I think that most of us would share the intuition that Mary's educationally produced disadvantages are unjust. This paper claims that this intuition can be conceptually grasped and explicated through the approach of respect egalitarianism.

Respect Egalitarianism and Educational Justice

Unlike proponents of the threshold model, respect egalitarians describe justice and injustice in terms of complete equality: it is understood however as a moral equality instead of as distributive or competence oriented. According to respect egalitarians, formal education cannot be restricted to reaching the capability threshold by everyone. The principle of respect egalitarianism rather presupposes that educational practices of discrimination or unequal treatment of children are unjust, even when these practices do not interfere with the goal of moving all children above the capability threshold that is required for political participation and/or for leading a good human life.

Unlike luck egalitarians, respect egalitarians understand justice as an *inner dimension* of social relations and not primarily as an algorithm for a fair distribution of goods qua transferable *objects*. The underlying idea is that the development of individual autonomy (based on the development of self-respect) depends *immediately* and *primarily* on the quality of the social relations *themselves*. This refers to the social relations that the individuals are involved in and not the possession of distributable goods. Thus, justice presupposes overcoming certain forms of social relations, such as oppression and discrimination, rather than the distribution and redistribution of goods (Anderson, 2000; Gosepath, 2004). In other words, according to respect egalitarians, educational justice is not primarily a matter of the distribution and redistribution of educational resources but of the respectful treatment of all students. Thus, in the issue of educational justice, Birdhouse's bottomless pit problem loses its urgency. Respectful treatment is obviously not a distributive good. When a teacher "gives" respect to student A it does not imply that she "takes" this respect away

from student B, nor does it mean that treating some students respectfully presupposes disrespectful treatment of other students.

What does it mean to treat (immature) persons with respect in educational contexts? Approximately fifty years ago, Richard S. Peters offered a description of respect in the field of education that remains unsurpassable in its semantic richness and analytic clarity.

> In general respect for persons is the feeling awakened when another is regarded as a distinctive centre of consciousness, with peculiar feelings and purposes that crisscross his institutional roles. It is connected with the awareness one has that each man has his own aspirations, his own viewpoint on the world; that each man takes pride in his achievements, however idiosyncratic they may be. (Peters 1966, p. 59)

According to Peters, to respect someone implies recognizing her as possessing an "assertive point of view" and being capable of "judgments, appraisals, intentions, and decisions," or recognizing him as someone "[w]ho is capable of valuation and choice, and who has a point of view of his own about his own future and interests" (ibid., p. 210).

Thus, respect is the recognition of all features which constitute a person as a "distinctive centre of consciousness" – her feelings, purposes, aspirations, and achievements, as well as her capacity to make judgments. Now, the question is whether one can and should differentiate among those features and among the social and pedagogical relations that address them. This does seem necessary, especially in the context of schooling. Teachers cannot regard the judgments, feelings, or aspirations of children in the same way. While educators should seriously consider the feelings of a child in their actuality, they may not acknowledge a child's judgments

as being fully true and justified. Educators should rather recognize the child's *potential* to develop the ability for true and justified judgments.

This difference, which seems to have enormous educational significance, may be best explained through Axel Honneth's distinction of two different forms of intersubjective recognition: empathy and cognitive respect. While the recognition form of empathy refers to the emotional needs and wishes of the individual, the recognition form of cognitive respect requires acknowledging the individual as a subject capable of moral autonomy. This capability manifests itself basically in deliberations about the legitimacy of norms. These deliberations presuppose a formal, universalistic moral perspective. Within the process of deliberation, the individual's ability to recognize others and herself as possessors of formal, universal, and equal rights is made evident (Honneth, 1992, pp. 173–185).

Hence, Honneth describes cognitive respect as more or less identical with juridical recognition (Honneth, 1992, pp. 173–196). In his view, to respect a person in that way means not discriminating against him by acknowledging that he has the same rights as every other human being. This recognition of individuals as bearers of rights presupposes the acknowledgement of individuals as morally accountable. It presupposes that they are endowed with practical reason – that is, that they are capable of taking the universal, moral point of view; taking responsibility for their own actions and decisions; and deliberating over moral and juristic norms vis-à-vis the moral point of view (ibid, pp. 173–185).

This conception of cognitive respect seems, at first glance, to have a restricted and/or only indirect applicability to education, for children obviously cannot yet be considered fully reasonable and morally responsible persons. The task

of education is precisely to help children to become such persons. However, treating children with "prospective respect" (Curren, 2007, p. 47) is a necessary condition for this becoming. According to the concept of prospective respect, even if children cannot yet be considered fully reasonable, adults (especially teachers and parents) should nonetheless recognize them as having the *potential* to become reasonable persons endowed with moral autonomy.[1] This claim fits very well with Honneth's understanding of a future oriented dimension of intersubjective recognition. According to that future oriented dimension, persons can develop particular abilities given that significant individuals in their lives recognize (in advance) their potential to develop these abilities (Honneth, 1992, p. 110).

While cognitive respect concerns children's futures, empathy addresses children's actuality. To be empathic with children requires co-experience with their experiences – to feel their feelings as caused by their experiences and to understand their needs and ideals. Empathy means recognizing others as they are in their actual subjectivity and emotionally supporting them as they are in their present inner and outer life (Honneth, 1992, pp. 153–154).

Given that differentiation, in discussing respect egalitarianism, it is necessary to address both equality of empathy and equality of cognitive acknowledgement.

Equality of empathy does not necessarily imply that every teacher should equally love all pupils. It is important to remember that norms of justice in general and egalitarianism in particular address in first instance institutional

1. As Harvey Siegel persuasively suggests, the most significant justification for fostering rationality and reason, as intended by the educational program of critical thinking, is to treat schoolchildren with respect (Siegel, 2012, p. 192).

arrangements and not acts of individual behavior. The demand for egalitarian empathy does not imply an appeal for teachers to equally love their pupils. Rather, it requires modes of teaching and re-structuring curricula, including the needs, ideals, and experiences of all school children in the classroom, and treating these needs, ideals, and experiences as the point of departure for all teaching activities and learning processes.

On the other hand, cognitive respect, as indicated above, means recognizing the child's potential for rationality, that is, for grasping concepts, understanding, and constructing arguments.

Now, when we try to think empathy and cognitive respect together in the context of school education, we will be heading to a notion of just pedagogies. These pedagogies focus affirmatively on both dimensions: the feelings and ideals of *all children* on one the hand and the potential of *all children* to articulate these ideals, feelings, and experiences conceptually on the other. Moreover, teachers who are engaged in this kind of pedagogy will actively initiate and support all children's efforts to articulate themselves in conceptual and argumentative ways.

Schools today – even in the most democratic countries – are still far away from implementing thus sketched norms of just pedagogies. These schools permanently generate what Miranda Fricker calls "testimonial" and "hermeneutical" injustices (Fricker, 2007, p. 1). These forms of epistemic injustices embody a lack of empathy and cognitive disregard, clearly illustrating what empathy and cognitive respect in education are about.

Respect Egalitarianism and Epistemic Injustice

In a recent article, Ben Kotzee persuasively demonstrates that the conception of epistemic injustice, initially developed by Fricker, enables a deeper level of identification and analysis of forms of educational injustice: forms that are likely to have more devastating effects on the educational motivation and success of students than the unequal and/or unfair distribution of material resources in education (Kotzee, 2013, pp. 340–349). Epistemic injustice directly concerns (mis-)recognition of different forms of knowledge and access to publicly validated knowledge (ibid, 340). Since education is basically about the transmission and growth of knowledge, the concept of epistemic justice seems more suited to the specific domain of educational institutions than the approaches that focus on distribution and redistribution of material goods. Generally speaking, the distributive terminology appears to be, in principle, incompatible with the transmission and production of knowledge. Kotzee states, "Furthermore, unlike social goods such as money, food, or housing that are limited and that must be distributed according to certain priorities, there is no limit in principle on the number of people that can know any particular truth" (ibid, p. 343). One person's knowledge of a truth does not prevent another's access to that truth, such that "[p]reventing one person of knowing too much does not improve the quality of what someone else knows" (ibid, p. 343).

Hence, from the perspective of epistemic justice, the most crucial moral pathology in education is not the lack of redistribution of material resources in favor of the disadvantaged by bad brute luck. This pathology consists rather of two forms of *disrespect*. Kotzee, following Fricker, calls these forms "testimonial injustice" and "hermeneutical injustice" (ibid, p. 344).

Now, it is important to stress in advance that both testimonial and hermeneutical injustice entail a lack of empathy *and* cognitive respect, however in slightly different ways. While testimonial injustice is characterized by a lack for sensitivity for the specific beliefs and truth claims of certain persons, hermeneutical injustice is basically about neglecting the efforts and needs of those individuals to articulate their beliefs and experiences using publicly recognized concepts; it also concerns the deficit of social semantic resources for that articulation.

Testimonial injustice occurs in cases where credibility is assigned based on who individuals are and not what they (may) know. These are cases, in which less credibility is given to students of a lower social status, although they may have an equal ability to gain and produce knowledge as middle class students. So, for example, several empirical surveys from Germany illustrate the point that teachers regularly evaluate children from immigrant families with a lower social status as only being eligible for low-performance, non-academic secondary schools without a college track. This holds true even if these children reached the same level of knowledge-related abilities at the end of primary school as children from non-immigrant families who have gymnasium recommendations (Baumert, 2001, pp. 279–402). The main reason seems to be a particular pattern of thought that is apparently widely widespread among school teachers in Germany. According to the pattern, family socialization of every child as well as her "acculturation" determines the child's learning ability and hence her knowledge-related credibility (Mannitz & Schiffauer, 2002, pp. 97–100). Thus, not only the level of a child's knowledge but also the "quality" of her culture and socialization are subject to discriminatory evaluation when decisions are made concerning the kind of secondary school the child should attend in his formal education.

This case is a clear example of a lack of what Fricker calls testimonial sensitivity. This refers to both a lack of empathy to students' beliefs and a respectful readiness to fully include those students in the space of shared information and argumentative discussion. As Fricker emphasizes, not including someone in that space means not recognizing e him as a 'knower,' and therefore hindering him to develop his potential as a knower (Fricker, 2007, p. 145).

The second form of epistemic injustice, the so called hermeneutical injustice, occurs when disrespect towards beliefs, intentions and achievements of certain people is embodied in the publicly (and educationally) validated language itself. This is the case particularly when there are no publicly recognized and developed concepts capable of adequately articulating the beliefs, experiences, aspirations, and achievements of members of marginalized groups (Fricker, 2007, pp. 5–7; pp. 147–152; Kotzee, 2013, pp. 344–345). So, it seems to be the case that in the "official" language of educational institutions in Germany, no concept exists to express the simultaneous self-identification of students from immigrant families with different ethnic cultures as well as their multi-lingual socialization as an achievement, although translating between different languages and cultural contexts is obviously a valuable skill that can serve as a basis for producing new and important knowledge. Instead, educational authorities still place these students in cultural boxes thus reducing the distinctive subjectivity of those students to manifestation of a single "foreign culture" which is seen as being "deficient" with regard to German "leading culture". As some ethnographic studies suggest, it is very difficult for those students to find verbal means (in the form of publicly recognized concepts) to argue against their own subordination via these constructed "cultures" and against the educational ignorance of their specific knowledge and

abilities (Mannitz, 2003, pp. 319–320; Mannitz & Schiffauer, 2002, pp. 87–100).

This situation disregards the need and demand for recognizing moral equality and valuable achievements (lack of empathy), as well as lack of support for certain marginalized groups of students to make their experiences intelligible and so to participate in the process of knowledge production (lack of cognitive respect). Both of these deficits are the result of cultural domination, largely organized upon a homogeneous canon of traditional knowledge. This canon is not open to conceptual innovations, that is, to new concepts that articulate the experiences and achievements of marginalized groups.

It is not difficult to imagine educational institutions that are able to prevent testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice, lack of empathy and lack of cognitive respect. Such institutions would be characterized by an equal regard for different forms of knowledge and the knowledge related abilities of the students, regardless of their social status. Furthermore, within such educational institutions, the beliefs, ideals, and experiences of all students would be brought into the classroom. These beliefs, ideals, and experiences would be the focus and the departure point for teaching at schools claiming to be just. With regard to the issue of construction of school curricula this requires in first place that these curricula should be inclusive to the beliefs and experiences of all social groups and not restricted to the worldviews and values of the upper and middle classes and/or to cultural majorities. Second, the curricula should be flexible enough to enable teachers to use students' experiences and beliefs – and not fixed "scientific truths" – as points of departure for their teaching.

Unfortunately, most schools are still ignorant of the experiences and beliefs of their students, as well as their potential to articulate these experiences and beliefs conceptually and transform them into knowledge. This is especially true with regard to students who do not belong to culturally and socially dominant groups. Instead, schools are still endorsing a top-down approach, focusing on fixed canonic truths that they attempt to transmit to the heads of the students. This is the main reason why contemporary school education remains unjust.

Which Educational Inequalities are (not) unjust?

The leading goal of this paper was to formulate and justify a normative principle that allows for differentiation between just and unjust inequalities in formal education. Thus far, it has been argued that the approaches of both luck egalitarianism and threshold egalitarianism fall short of this goal. Luck egalitarianism is associated with the bottomless pit problem, which seems conceptually and politically unsolvable. Besides, luck egalitarians tend to interpret education as a positional, distributive good with primarily extrinsic worth. This ignores the fact that education is essentially the growth of knowledge, which is a non-positional good with primarily intrinsic value. On the other hand, threshold egalitarians do not offer conceptual means of discriminating between just and unjust educational inequalities that lie above the capability threshold that every person needs to participate in the political life of his society and/or to live a life of dignity. In other words, simply reaching the capability threshold does not imply that all students have received an equally good education.

This leads us to a distinction that is crucial for developing a thorough account of educational justice. As John Calvert recently argued, one should strictly differentiate between

"equal educational opportunities" and "equal education" (Galvert, 2014, p. 83). While at the talk about "equal educational opportunities" we face actually a notion of *social* justice *through* education, equal education regards justice *in* education, that is, *educational justice* in the precise sense of the term. Justice in education is foremost about enabling the maximal growth of self- and world-knowledge for every student and enabling every student to participate in the processes of producing and transmitting knowledge in society. Justice in education is "only" in second place about the question of how this enabling of knowledge may affect student's economic and social opportunities.

The approach of respect egalitarianism is best equipped to answer the question of how school education can enable the maximal growth of knowledge and participation in knowledge for every student. Let us recall the great insight of John Dewey that growth of knowledge is carried out by mediation between personal experiences and beliefs on the one hand and conceptual contents that claim universal validity on the other (Dewey, 1964, p. 344 ff.; p. 351). In order to initiate this mediation, school education has both to address the personal-subjective ideals, worldviews, needs and feelings of the students, *and* to provide the students with opportunities, pedagogical space and skills to articulate these self-building entities conceptually and argumentatively on the ground of students' becoming fluent in mastering of academic subjects. Empathy is required to fulfil the former task, while the latter presupposes cognitive respect, culminating in students' initiation into discursive practices of acquiring and justifying knowledge. We face educational injustice in the sense of respect egalitarianism when the beliefs and experiences of certain groups of students are not represented in the classroom or curricula; when certain students are labelled as not having the potential to grasp

and apply conceptual content; or when students are not receiving sufficient support in their schools to become fluent in conceptual understanding and (self-) articulation.

The implementation of these norms of educational respect (i.e. empathy and cognitive respect) would not lead to an elimination of all inequalities between students' levels of knowledge or between social and economic opportunities of high school absolvents. Levels of knowledge and social opportunities depend on several factors, many of which are largely beyond the scope of formal education, such as family care, upbringing, or peer groups. Educational institutions would nevertheless become just if they treated all students with equal respect; this means that they would not internally produce epistemic injustice.

These considerations should not be misunderstood to mean that distributive questions are irrelevant for educational justice in the respect approach. Educational injustice in the form of disrespect is closely linked to unfair distribution of material resources. When educational policymakers and teachers disregard the experiences and the knowledge ability of students with an underprivileged social and cultural status, they tend to spend less money and effort on disadvantaged students' education as compared with students from wealthier circumstances who are situated in culturally mainstream families. It is ultimately this genetic link between unequal distribution of resources in education that neglects underprivileged children, and disrespect towards those children that makes this distribution unjust.

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Section II

Transformative Education for a Just Society

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Education and Social Capital

H.G. Wells presciently concluded his *Outline of History* in 1920 with a warning we need to take to heart seriously: "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." (Wells 2004, 1st 1920) The inadequacy of education at all levels is putting our future at enormous risk in the rapid and radical change Indian society is undergoing. It is failing to provide the social capital needed for our society to navigate this transition, that is, the social infrastructure of values and norms, behaviour patterns and interactive networks on which our Constitutional vision of social transformation is premised. Conscientised adult literacy, universal primary education, good secondary education in multiple streams available to all, accessible tertiary education for everyone qualified, with at least some world class institutions at the upper end of this spectrum,… all these are crucial social capital for governments and society to investment in.

Already in the ideological inspiration of the freedom struggle, there is an inherent tension between, on the one hand, an envisioned future that contested colonial rule in terms of a "vision centred on social transformation aimed at giving

justice to the downtrodden," (Kumar 1998: 10), and on the other, an idealised past that "gave priority to the recovery of Indian self-identity with the help of religious cultural revivalism." (Kumar: ibid.) The dominant Nehruvian consensus of the early independence era was premised on the first, but it never could quite contain or defuse the lure of the second.

Transmission and Transformation

For the sociologist, Emile Durkheim education is "the means by which society perpetually re-creates the conditions of its very existence" by "a systematic socialisation of the young generation." (Durkheim 1956: 123 -124) This implies two basic functions for education. Firstly, transmitting an institutional heritage across generations as an agency of socialisation. This is the conservative function of education. And secondly, transforming this heritage through critique and creativity. This is the progressive function of education. In a more stable social context it is the first that will be emphasised, while in a society subjected to change and development it must be the second.

Dewey's approach to education was perhaps more nuanced and contemporary than the Durkheim's: "education may be conceived either retrospectively or prospectively. That is to say, it may be treated as process of accommodating the future to the past, or as an utilisation of the past for a resource in a developing future." (Dewey 1957: 92) Dewey would clearly emphasise the second without perhaps entirely dismissing the first. Being more future oriented than Durkheim, he was only too aware of his changing world:

"For we live not in a settled and finished world, but in one which is going on, and where our main task is prospective, and where retrospect – and all knowledge as distinct from thought is retrospect – is of value in the solidity, security,

and fertility it affords our dealings with the future." (Dewey 1957: 178)

The future of a changing society demands a prospective rather than the retrospective perspective in education. But in both, its transmissive and more especially, in its transformative function education have failed our youth and compromised their future. Paradoxically, the schooling they get is less and less relevant, even as the education they need is becoming more critical and urgent.

The Nehruvian state, in spite of its socialist rhetoric and its egalitarian promise, showed much more continuity than disjunction with its colonial past. The distance of the upper strata of society from the masses is more apparent and even blatant with regard to education! Here a dual system has been evolved, in spite of all official policy, namely a few good institutions to cater to the better off classes and many poor ones to contain the aspirations of the less privileged masses. (Naik 1974: 14)

However, there remained an undertone in much of the social and secular rhetoric of Nehruvian socialism. With the breakdown of the Nehruvian consensus the crisis in education has become increasingly acute. Yet, after more than half a century Independent India has not universalised adult literacy, let alone primary education, nor made available to weaker sections good quality secondary and vocational schools. The Right to Education Act (2010) has taken us sixty years to pass and already there are difficulties in its execution. Government does not have the institutional infrastructure in place and it has to fall back on private agencies.

And yet too many private educational agencies are less concerned with serving a basic social need, than to "capture public resources for private ends" (Rudolph and Rudolph 1972: 23) under the grants-in-aid code, while upward

mobility has become a free for all, no holds barred contest. A private educational mafia is now emerging that is more preoccupied with political patronage and economic returns from their investment in education, rather than with any real educational concerns or pedagogic interests. (Deshpande 2000)

Earlier attempts at a more comprehensive understanding and holist agenda expressed by the Kothari Commission of 1964-1966, "Education and National Development", (Government of India 1966) has in practice given way to a pragmatic instrumentalisation of education for upward social mobility, whether this be in response to individual or group claims. However, our developmental model has brought us growth without equity. Stark inequalities and social tensions are increasing with our GDP. There is now

"a whole new class of entrants are knocking on the doors of institutionalised education. Denied a fair share in educational opportunities all these years, these new entrants perceive education as a key to gaining status and power, and not always as a means to learn." (Kumar 1998: 10)

Our education must confront social inequalities to bring the marginalised into an egalitarian and participative society, it must also protect the multicultural, pluri-religious diversities of our people, which is being undermined by a cultural nationalism. For too long has the economic-political agenda of development displaced the socio-cultural one of change. Our present crises needs must be addressed on both these dimensions for an effective holistic approach. In the past the role of education has been projected too much in terms of the first to the neglect the second.

This demands a fundamental change of perspective and orientation and not just in education. What we need is 'another development' (Hettne 2009) and 'another politics'

and for both 'another education', 'nai talim' is a sine qua non. Education for justice would seem to be the only viable alternative for the scale and diversity of a society such as ours. (Wren 1977)

Herein lies the challenge for a model of education that can be mainstreamed for the system at large. A large measure of daring innovation and energetic creativity will be needed for our educators as much, if not more than that of our early pioneers, who institutionalised Western education in pre-independent India. Will our institutions prove open and equal to this? Or after having established a successful school model once, will we continue with it in pursuit of upward mobility into the middle class and a Westernised life style? In no area of governance is such a change of perspective more critical and urgent than in education.

A Critical Citizenry

John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* in 1916 (Dewey 1957,) with its problem solving approach and project method was intended to train an active and critical citizenry with the cognitive skills needed in society (Heredia 1992). Dewey may be taught in our B.Ed. colleges, but there's is little evidence of his impact on our system in terms of the formation of a critical citizenry.

The imperative today is education for a just society, to create the social capital for a critical citizenry that will make our democracy work for the common good of all, where social structures and institutional norms are democratically designed and arranged to bridge the 'justice-gap' (Samaddar 2009: 16) between comprehensive justice and a realisable one, where social structures and institutional norms must be designed and arranged to facilitate "Voice and Choice" (Sen 2009; 87-) for each person, for at least an effective minimum to live a decent and dignified life, especially for

the vulnerable and marginalised. For justice in a credible democratic regime, cannot be dictated by a tyranny of the majority, much less imposed by the hegemony of a dominant elite.

Our society has instituted democratic freedoms and civil liberties as fundamental rights. However, economic-political inequalities still remain stubbornly endemic to our system, further accentuated with our economic development, while social-cultural solidarity is increasingly undermined by divisions of caste, class and creed, mobilised for partisan gain, even erupting into collective violence. A relevant education must provide the social capital to create a critical citizenry to resist and reverse this downward spiral into dangerous and retrogressive extremisms and revivalisms of all kinds.

Comprehending Justice

Contending concepts concerning justice with their rival claims to truth often diverge. Mapping a minimal common ground across these is a daunting task. For justice in a society must be founded on a consensus of moral values and implemented fairly by agreed procedures. While the substance of justice must be premised on these values, just procedures must follow due process. However, some viable consensus on both is essential. For then a credible substantive understanding of justice can be spelled out in realisable procedures. This will not result in a comprehensive agenda in our quest for a just society, but in our quest for just ends through just means, it will address and narrow the 'justice-gap' (Samaddar 2009: 16) between the formal claims for, and the practical implementation of justice.

Justice as Integral

A regime deemed to be just, but which eventually leads to injustice, is a contradiction in terms, for a truly just social

structure cannot lead to or perpetuate unjust social results. If it does, it must forfeit its claim to be called just. Therefore the talisman of a just regime must be in just outcomes, not merely in just procedures. In the complex context of a changing society, this apparent tautology is too easily lost sight of, especially in regard to the inequalities and imbalances that a supposedly just regime often precipitates.

Moreover, justice necessarily demands an integrated approach, for justice itself must be integral not only in confronting the contradictions within groups and communities but also the ones between them and across social strata as well. In society justice for one group, or for a section within a group cannot amount to a denial of justice to other groups, or to another section in the group. This seems self-evident: quotas for vulnerable groups must be complementary not contradictory to the interests of other vulnerable groups and persons; what is given to dalits must not undermine what is meant for tribals; nor what is given to some within the community undermine what is due to other members of this community.

But more to the point, justice in one area must not be a negation of justice in another. Affirmative action and minority rights are meant to level the field and protect vulnerable groups, whether economic, social or cultural. If one contradicts the other both will be stymied, the promotion of justice in society discredited, the vulnerable groups left at odds with each other and so worse off for the intervention. Affirmative action that undercuts religious diversity and minority entitlements would be unjust, as would minority rights that contradict human rights of individuals, in and outside the group.

For justice as integral is a crucial test case for any understanding of justice. It must be equally available for,

and equally applied to all. It cannot be the privilege of some and denied to others. I cannot say: justice for us, but not for them, for me, not him or her. Further, justice as equality argues beyond an *equal justice for all* to a *just equality for each*, political, economic and social. This must be the sustainable basis for the pursuit of the other two dimensions of justice: liberty and fraternity or solidarity. A just society must integrate all three.

To grapple with this, a comprehensive and feasible regime of human rights is essential, one that includes fundamental rights, civil and political, social and economic, and equally the corresponding basic duties as well. For in the final analysis, an integral justice is not intended to legitimise a social quest for efficiency, much less for power, but rather to facilitate and privilege a people's desire for a decent and humane society.

Hence justice must be spelt out in terms of rights for minorities, who are culturally vulnerable but still socially valuable in the diversity of our pluralist society, as also for the socially excluded who are marginalised and oppressed, in terms of affirmative action and reservation quotas as instruments for their inclusion because this is seen as a regeneration of our society. How this can be done without precipitating other injustices to other groups and communities, is our most critical challenge today.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity

Thus liberty, equality, fraternity are three necessary dimensions of an integral social justice, that characterises a just society. (Heredia 2011) Together the three must guide our understanding and pursuit of justice lest we settle for a notional freedom, a legalistic equality, a formal fellowship. At the same time, we must accept that liberty and fraternity

are difficult to quantify and measure and so a consensus on optimum levels of these can be illusive and problematic, except at the extremes of injustice: the violation of fundamental rights to freedom or violent conflict threatening security and life.

Equality however is more amenable to analysis. Indeed, in a democracy, inequalities are the most endemic cause of injustice perceived and justice denied. Justice as equality is the shibboleth of any credible regime of democratic and civil rights, inclusive of the political and the economic, the cultural and the religious domains. However, without liberty these are meaningless, without fraternity their sustainability is at risk. Yet building a consensus on equality is a challenging and daunting task, especially an equality that is fair, free and inclusive.

We know that equal outcomes for the engaged parties on every dimension of social interaction is simply not possible, even with the best intentions of equal justice for all. But when these inequalities add up to become cumulative, then inevitably a society gets stratified into unequal groups of class, castes, races. The exchange between these will necessarily be asymmetric and skewed. Moreover, as is apparent in human history and can be documented from a wide range of social experiences, unequal social exchange within societies and across them, becomes further reinforcing and increasingly pervasive. Whether this is between social groups, and categories, or geographical regions and economic classes … when left unaddressed, social relationships thus structured will inevitably be oppressive and exploitative.

No matter how much goodwill and charity, unequal exchange only amounts to a benevolent paternalism at best, and patronising debilitation at worst. It fails to contend with structural anomalies at the origins. Downstream effects are

never really remedied until upstream causes are tackled. Treating symptoms does not heal the disease. Hence in any society where economic class, social caste, political power, occupational and educational opportunities, legal access, gender bias, racial privilege … are mutually reinforcing, then this necessarily leads to increasing inequalities and inevitable injustices.

Justice as equality, where equality is the touchstone of justice, requires that though some inequalities in society might very well be inevitable, these do not become cumulative and embedded in its social structure, or in the interrelationships between and within communities and groups and other societies. Rather, equal justice demands that such multiple inequalities on various dimensions, rather than becoming cumulative, are so structured as to neutralise and defuse each other. This is a difficult conundrum for any democracy but it must be confronted if liberty, equality, fraternity are not to be compromised.

For justice as equality for society means that equity and equality must not be in contradiction. This necessarily implies redistribution in an equitable manner, of inequalities and assets, of advantages and disadvantages … to create a level playing field where winners are not always winners and no loser always loses. The returns on their performance must be so structured as not to be self-perpetuating or the playing field will no longer remain level. As far as possible this field must be levelled before that can happen, not after it has. This demands effective protection and promotion of the weaker, more vulnerable in society, but not at the cost of political rights and civil liberties of others.

To constructively confront such a dilemma, this ground must be levelled at the bottom of the climb, not flattened at the top into an "egalitarian plateau" (Dworkin 1977 179-183)

for those advantaged enough to be able to get there in the first place. For the exclusion of the most disadvantaged at the very start only leaves an ever more exclusive group to compete for scarce opportunities at the peak.

The Just Society

A credible understanding of social justice must be premised on an integration of the social values, among which liberty, equality, solidarity are definitive as necessary conditions for a just society. This goes beyond the righteousness of persons and fairness in society, whether in exchange or distribution, to provide a structural framework for fundamental rights and basic needs as essential entitlements for human identity and dignity. For basic needs represent the minimum required to live with some dignity, and fundamental rights underwrite the human agency needed to affirm one's identity. Both these must be guaranteed and extended in a just society.

All too often the injustices in a society are the unintended and unanticipated consequences of ill-adapted institutional structures and consequently a skewed implementation of justice. However, intended or not, untoward outcomes must be addressed if not in anticipation at least in retrospect. For implementing an idea of justice that eventually brings injustice in practice is a cruel contradiction. A stable and sustainable justice must carry over from the ideal to actual. Moreover, if justice is to be understood as credible and is to be seen as implementable, we need to look at in the context of its distinct but not separate dimensions: individual behaviour, exchange transactions, the distribution of social goods and services, and institutional structures and relationships.

These dimensions and levels of justice are complementary and so must be integrated and balanced in a society to be just. This demands a justice premised on liberty, critiqued by equality and affirmed in solidarity, so that an inclusive

solidarity provides the context for social equality that is respectful of civic liberties and democratic rights. In other words a fraternal solidarity that is a co-responsibility for each other in a commitment to a life of dignity and identity for all. But this is still a vision for a just society, not a blueprint for its social structures.

A just society attempts to steer the difficult course past libertarians, socialists and communitarians, who privilege one or the other dimension of justice at the cost of the others. For "justice is our critic, not our mirror" that calls us to "always ask of some settled institutional scheme whether it is fair" (Dworkin 1985: 219). A vision of justice is not meant to mirror back to us the way we are, but to critique it and challenge and us to be the way we ought. This cannot be decided by majoritarian opinion or even by majority vote, for then might would become right, whereas justice must speak truth to power, in the public domain.

This then is the understanding of justice on which the argument of this presentation is premised: justice must protect and promote liberty, it is best measured and authenticated by equality, it can only be sustained and extended with fraternity. Any critique of affirmative action, whether in terms of reservation quotas or protective discrimination; any discussion of minority rights in terms of Constitutional guarantees or Directive Principles, must be premised on a justice that is defined by all these three: liberty, equality, fraternity.

Education and Change

The relationship of education to society is a problematic one. Earlier an optimistic philosophy prevailed:

"It was uncritically assumed that education could cure all kinds of social problems and, particularly, that it could

bring about more equality among men. As the sociology of education developed, this was progressively reversed and a new philosophy, a pessimistic one, emerged more and more convincingly. It may be summarized in the statement that schooling is unable to reduce to any considerable extent the inequalities among individuals which result from social background." (Boudon 1974: xii)

The Education Commission Report (1964-66) subtitled "Education and National Development" reflected this earlier optimism when it emphatically affirmed, that for "change on a grand scale....there is one instrument and one instrument only, that can be used: Education." (Government of India 1966: 79).

In the pessimistic neo-Marxist view, best expressed by Gramsci (1957) education becomes the ideological instrument of class domination and control. It merely produces "officers of the ruling class for the exercise of subordinate functions of social hegemony and political government" (Gramsci 1957: 124) Thus the modern school replaces the medieval Church as the dominant ideological state apparatus.

The new critical sociology of the sixties and seventies, provided the basis for an incisive critique of the relationship of education and society. It "provided a discourse for re-examining the relationship among knowledge, culture, and power, on the one hand, and schooling and the issue of control on the other." (Aronowitz and Giroux 1985: 144)

Education was now seen as a dependent variable, not a causative one in the social system. It reflected and reproduced the social structure and culture of the dominant groups that controlled it. The school institutionalized the distribution of knowledge and skills so as to perpetuate the relative class status of different groups in society. The pedagogic process

internalized and legitimized the values and disciplines that sustained the status quo. Hence the urgency of Deschooling Society. (Illich 1973) and developing an alternative Pedagogy of the Oppressed. (Freire 1972)

Some versions of this critique were so deterministic as to leave little room for an authentic "human praxis". Historical necessity seems to displace hope and struggle. But the process of domination is never stable or complete in a society. There are "spaces" where subordinate groups do confront and can contest superordinate ones. People do resist and the "ruptural effects of conflict and struggle", (Foucault 1980:82) often arise among the marginalized and then flow into and affect the mainstream. It is not just the reflection and 'reproduction' of the old in society, that we must critique; there is also the production and creation of the new, that we must make possible.

In the complex, multi-causal situation of a changing society, neither of the two extreme positions sketched above are very helpful. The reciprocity between these various subsystems in modern society cannot be ignored by policy-makers and social-planning today, even while conceding that one or the other is the dominant system. Moreover, it is hardly possible to deny all causal efficacy to education, especially in the Third World. For "when we have clear evidence of the role of education creating conditions of change, it is usually from the Third world rather than the West." (Di Bona and Singh 1987: 126)

Approaches to Education

There are two levels at which the role of education can be analysed. At the socio-psychological level of analysis, educators favour a pedagogic approach. This would focus on teachers and students, teaching-learning methods, ... These

must be studied and implemented in the classroom and the school. However, teaching is a relationship that concerns more than just individual teachers and learners. The classroom is not meant to be a closed laboratory experiment, for the teaching relationship is always situated in the real life context of a group located in the institution and in the larger society, in which this teaching-learning takes place. Hence this pedagogic approach to education must be opened to other approaches that take these into consideration.

The socio-cultural approach goes beyond that of social-psychologists who study individual behaviour in the group. They focus on institutions in society. Thus educational sociologists are more concerned with the relationship between an education system and social structures like the family, class stratification, caste hierarchy, the state, etc.. Anthropologists who focus on education are more concerned with the relationship of education to cultural values and norms, social traditions and local customs etc.. Similarly, economists and political scientists, focus on the relationship between the economic-political system and education in society, particularly the role of the state and its governance.

These approaches must complement each other. A social analysis of structures of a society would be incomplete without a corresponding analysis of its social institutions and cultural traditions, as also of its political systems. Further an historical approach broadens the context by situating it in a timeframe. An adequate understanding of education in society must embrace in some measure all these and more. Thus an inter-disciplinary approach must integrate the pedagogic, the socio-cultural, and the historical, or else perceptions and understandings will inevitably be inadequate and one-sided. At the critical juncture at which education in this country finds itself, nothing less will do.

Effective classroom pedagogy, must consider not only such socio-cultural circumstances of the student in the school, but also those of the school in the community and the community in society. Obviously, an upper class, English medium, urban school will be very different from a lower class, vernacular medium, rural school. Religion and caste further complicate the differences and historical circumstance further nuances this impact. An education for an inclusive participative society of critical and sensitive citizens must contribute minimising the differences not accentuating them. All this brings into play economic and political forces that condition the school and the student, often with unintended and unanticipated consequences. The resources and goodwill needed for a viable education cannot be independent of any of this.

In a formally democratic system, what legitimates the blatant inequality is "the ritual of mass examinations" which

"carry a symbolic message – that all individuals have an equal chance. Thus, while emphasis on early selection ensures special treatment to the children of those who can afford to make extra inputs, mass examination promises total parity among all the candidates." (Kumar 1987:32)

This makes for "sponsored" not "contest" mobility. (Turner 1961) Such supposed 'equality' between 'unequals' perpetuates and legitimates the status quo even while keeping "the confidence and aspirations of the masses alive." (Kumar 1987: 32) Elementary education in India, and now pre-primary kindergarten classes in our cities, provide a stark illustration of this.

There is within the system a "key dialectic" that operates through two crucial mechanisms: "early selection and mass examinations." (Kumar 1987: 27-41) already at their

point of entry into the education system the children are streamed at two levels: on the one hand the rather expensive, and generally privately run, urban based English medium schools which prepare them for an elite status in later life; on the other hand, the freely offered, generally rural based, vernacular medium schools run by local government bodies, that prepare young people to accept lower status occupations.

J.P.Naik's remark on Indian education is pertinent:

"In fact, the primary object of the system is not to spread education among the people but to function as an efficient and merciless mechanism to select individuals who should continue to remain in the privileged sector or enter it afresh." (Naik 1982: 170)

Raymond Boudon, postulates "a two-stage filtering process" for the social status of individuals: "In the first they go from a given social background to a given educational level. In the second stage they go from educational level to achieved status." (Boudon 1974: 21) Here the endemic divisions and prejudices of caste and class, of ethnicity and race, even the canons of our secular society stymie the translation of personal education into social achievement.

Dilemmas and Contradictions

This results in a dual system of education: one for the haves – mostly but only run by private agencies – and another for the have-nots – for those mostly, but not only run by government departments. Here we indicate some of the basic dilemmas confronting education in our country today: pedagogic, cultural, societal, political, economic.

The pedagogic dilemma concerns the humanist versus the instrumental perspectives on education. Is education an end or a means? Is it a value-in-itself or a means-to-a-goal? Is

its purpose to draw out the best in persons, help them grow to their full potential as human beings, and become good citizens of society? Or is it to be concerned with skills and techniques for individual advancement in a professional career, with promising economic returns, prestige and security. In other words, should education focus on bringing out the creative potential of students and motivate and equip them for some larger cause or on training them for the job-market for gainful employment?

The societal dilemma centres on the emphasis given to mass versus elite education. Is education to be freely and equally available to all or accessible on the basis of merit? Must education be a leveller that opens equal opportunity and for all or do we create islands of excellences and talent? Do we strive to level playing field for all or wait for a rising tide to lift all boats? Should we prioritise the higher levels of education and research, or the more basic and mass-based ones? A scientific-technical education, or a liberal-humanist one?

The cultural dilemma focuses on the stress given to cultural orientations, whether Indic or Western, modern or traditional, and most especially in terms of language, whether mother-tongue or regional, or on one that gives access to the world on the national and international stage. Should students be grounded in the local and rooted in their own culture? Or open to the global and vitalised by a multiculturalism? Socialised into a collective uniformity or prepared for a cultural pluralism? Isolated in their ethnic communities or integrated into a larger secular pluralist society?

The political dilemma is the orientation of the education system to civic duties and democratic rights, whether citizens' duties and obligations are to be prioritised for its students or rather their civil rights and liberties stressed. Should

educational institution discipline students in the prevailing social customs and mores, regulations and laws? Or should a concern for social justice and equity, sensitivity to human rights and compassion for the under-dog be instilled as a priority? Should citizens be socialised into being orderly and disciplined or made aware of their rights and responsibilities?

Similarly, the economic dilemma concerns the allocation of scarce resources to prioritised goals. Given the limited resources and different levels of individual achievement and talent, are the available resource to be used on the basis of efficiency for the greatest advantage of society by allocating them to the most talented and meritorious as we wait for the benefits to eventually trickle down to others less able and gifted, or are these resources to be allocated on the basis of equity to the most needy to enable them to live with dignity and purpose.

A Creative Dialectic

These dilemmas are not mutually exclusive contradictions that force an either/or option on us. Rather they represent tensions between polarities both of which must be affirmed in a creative dialectic. For such tension are not resolved, they must be lived through as we situate our own option among the alternatives available to us. It is the practical and prudential choices we make that will create the new institutional alternatives which must be replicable models for an education for a future that is confronting us already. Our postcolonial education system must do today what once the precolonial one did earlier: create and stabilise a new institutional model for the country to meet the new challenges confronting us in building a socialist, secular, democratic nation.

The challenge is to find a creative composite that will combine both polarities of the dilemmas. For the education we need is one that is truly humanist and also useful, training good

citizens and competent contributors for our society. It must include the masses of our people, education them for a participative and critical citizenship, even as it strives to raise standards of excellence by rewarding real merit and true talent, combining this with a noblesse oblige that will give back from the largesse received. It must be rooted and open, culturally authentic and genuinely multicultural. It must balance responsibilities and rights, critique and discipline. This must be an on-going process, a project continually in the making, and where the clarity of our vision and our commitment to the goal will assure a periodic course correction and a sure, if gradual incremental progress.

A critical and creative response to these dilemmas must address the underlying contradictions and our persistent ambiguities. We want our teachers to be creative and we rail against government rules and regulations. But our administrators exercise a strict control over them and replicate the government bureaucracy in our institutions. Officially we publicise an integral, humanist education but in practice we allow the compulsions of the system and the requirements of good examination results displaces this as a prioritized goal. We want to prepare our students for a multicultural, globalizing world while our faculties and institutions are enmeshed in local prejudices and ethnocentrisms. Publicly we stand for human rights, but our managements are often at odds with just claim and fair dues in our own institutions. We proclaim our preferential option for the poor, and then rationalise our elitist institutions with a top-down understanding of leadership and a trickle-down theory of social change and so compromise proclaimed egalitarian commitments and our preferential option for the poor.

These ambiguities are not moral lacunae so much as structural dysfunctions of institutions unable to respond

to the contradictions of the system they are caught up in. Accepting the contradictions and addressing our own ambiguities in this regard will require a willingness to invest in new institutional models that runs counter to the old familiar ones. This is new wine and it will not go into old wine skins. It is bound to meet with difficulties and opposition from the status quo, both educators and beneficiaries of our schools. Before we measure the cost of change against the loss of not changing, we would do well to recall the courage and confidence of the early pioneers in the country and feel part of their saga before casting the dye.

A Transformative Pedagogic Paradigm

The transmission of a society's social heritage to future generations, could well lead to stagnation without the transformation of this inheritance. Both conservative and creative functions are basic to education: the first without the second would mean stagnation in the present status quo; the second without the first, would be reinventing the wheel again and again. In creative interface the two functions could add up to Paulo Freire's *Cultural Action for Freedom*. (Freire 1973).

To break through the securities and constraints of the present into the challenge and uncertainties of the future will demand a new paradigm for education to counter the prevailing institutional culture of the system. This can only be viable with correspondingly transformative pedagogies. Specifying some of these will help articulate a new model for the future, one that will seek to change, rather than just to interpret the world for our students; one that will inspire them to change the world they find for the better rather than just adjust to, and succeed in it. Most institutions have not always shown the internal resilience or sought the external cooperation to generate

such a counter-dynamic for transformative pedagogic paradigm.

Alternative transformative pedagogies can have a crucial and cumulative impact on some of the critical dimensions of the system, eventually contributing to changing it. Here we will sketch a few these: teaching as an art implying a personalised and creative relationship between teacher and taught; the development of human potential for more authentic and fulfilling living; a value formation and commitment that will build a counter-culture and make for the goal of a contrast-community. The liberative potential of education in such a community will depend on some fundamental pedagogic options: against pedagogies of violence and silence; and for those of subaltern affirmation, of relevant contextualisation and creative critique.

Pedagogy as a Creative Art

As with creative art, creativity pedagogies cannot be standardised. For teaching as a relationship will obviously imply something of the uniqueness of the persons involved: teachers and learners. This is why it is more an art than a technique, and art is learnt by practice not in theory. Moreover, teaching necessarily implies a relationship which depends on the competence and credibility of the teacher, and the preparedness and openness of the taught. To be a creative relationship teaching needs must be both a personalised and a contextualised one. It must be sensitive to the personal freedom and social circumstances of both the teacher and taught. This will be the precondition for a creativity that is both personally and socially transformative.

Pedagogy as a Humanist Discipline

The development, "drawing out", of human potential the student is the humanist goal of education, (from the Latin

educare to lead out). For the humanist this in the order of ends, a value-in-self and not to be instrumentalised by lesser interests. When these become the goal of education then means displace ends and the fundamental humanising potential of education is severely compromised. Moreover, institutionalised means have unintended consequences that can be very different from their original purpose, sometimes the very opposite of what might have been intended. Thus examinations are meant to monitor pedagogic progress. But now they perform a gate-keeping function screening access to further opportunities in life. Studying for examinations becomes more important than learning the subject, the emphasis on high marks stymies creative teaching….

Such an instrumental approach to education can be transferred to other areas of life, where public success and the recognition it brings becomes the motivating force, rather than human growth and the achievement it represents. This adds up to a colossal failure of our education system, and the consequences are already apparent in the stresses and strains that are undermining our social order.

Pedagogy as Ethical transformation

Further, at the institutional level, the organisational climate constitutes the context in which this individual interaction takes place. For the ethical atmosphere of an institution is made by the values experienced in its decision-making. Syllabus construction and teaching methodologies are most concerned with the development of skills and disciplines. These are an essential dimension of any pedagogic process in any education system, but underpinning this must be a foundation of ethical values. A value-free pedagogy can only make for a 'valueless' education! Value-neutrality implicitly supports established values and consequently the status quo. The critical challenge is to integrate value-formation and

value-commitment This is surely a crucial and urgent matter for a humanist education, especially in this country today where social changes have precipitated nothing short of a moral crisis.

Moreover, if the change we seek to initiate is to be transformative, it must be value-premised in terms that operationalise our vision and mission and integratged into the pedagogic process with the priority of goals, not just as means. This can only be done in the actual practice of individuals, especially the significant ones, and the actual allocation of resource, especially the scarce ones. Moreover, a contradiction between action and word is seen by young people as hypocritical and evokes cynicism. Hence the integrity of life and example of the educator is most crucial.

The Pedagogy of Violence

Stressing the conservative function of pedagogic transmission to the negation of the liberative one of transformation, reproduces the dominant culture, while subordinating and co-opting the non-dominant ones. Moreover, once this culture of oppression is internalised it appears to be the naturally given, and hence the uncontested and the incontestable order of things. The potential of people to learn from their experiences even the negative ones is perverted by excluding liberative experiences from the learning process, or forcing them into an interpretive grid of the dominant culture. This precisely is the violence of such a pedagogy, and the more pernicious for not being overt.

For as Habermus rightfully remarks: "not 'learning', but 'not-learning' is the phenomenon that calls for explanation at the socio-cultural level of development"! (Habermus, 1975) Lele illustrates "The Political Appropriation of Bhakti" with regard to its egalitarian potential, particularly of the Varkari Pant in Maharashtra and more generally of the bhakti

movement in medieval India, and he goes on to argue, that at present this is precisely the role of "Hindutva as Pedagogic Violence". (Lele 1994) Thus in our education system "the role of strengthening group solidarity among the educated" is far more prevalent than the one "of disturbing traditional hierarchies". (Kumar 1991) Our educational institutions trapped in the system must swim against the tide, or they will go with the flow.

The Pedagogy of Silence

A culture of protest may remain subterranean for long periods. It may find expression in low-intensity continuing encounters or dramatically irrupt in violent clashes. It may find expression in a people's movements that can precipitate sudden, even violent change. Till then an adaptive pedagogy of 'silence' results in a more passive, but all the same alienating violence, including that of the victims against themselves in self-deprecation and hate. This easily leads to repression and inhibits the healing process.

Most often we fall into such a pedagogy of silence by default. We have nothing to say or are afraid to say it. But one cannot be neutral in the face of such pedagogic violence. Silence at such moments from significant persons in their lives, leaves an unexplained emptiness, a sensitive space with which the young have to cope with on their own. The vacuum is readily 'colonised' by other explanations and interpretations so easily available with the overload of today's communications media. (Kumar 1996)

The Pedagogy of Subaltern Affirmation

The earlier two pedagogies either by design or default negate subaltern culture or leave it open to manipulation or subversion. As such they can hardly make for transformative cultural change. This demands a pedagogy that will not do

violence to, or silence the subalterns, but one that will affirm them in their identity and dignity, in their quest for a place in the sun; a pedagogy that will eventually replace the need for positive discrimination for the disadvantaged with a level playing field for all. Exclusions only reinforce negative identities and social alienation, whether these be deliberate options, or part of the hidden agenda in our education system. (Taylor 1992)

In all human societies this is a continuing need for an authentic affirmation of the cultures of non-dominant groups, not an uncritical idealisation or a romantic indigenism. Idealisation glosses over the negative aspects of a culture that need to be purged. Indigenism easily becomes regressively isolationist. In a globalising world this is disastrous if it is possible at all. Only a constructive critique of these cultures can lead to a critical affirmation of underprivileged groups and a humanising counter-culture. Tokenism is counter-productive. It obfuscates the real challenge of including the knowledge and skills, the values and lore of groups, exiled from the formal learning process.

Gandhiji's 'nai talim', or basic education, had the potential for reversing this subjugation of subaltern knowledge and skills by giving them a central place in the school system. 'Nai talim' was too threatening to vested interests to be acceptable to them. (Heredia 2000) So it was marginalised and diluted, then co-opted as a token concession in a completely ineffective form, and now laid quietly to rest! It survives if at all as lesser education for less other people's children.

The Pedagogy of Creative Critique

If the subaltern affirmation sets the socio-cultural context, a creative critique addresses the inter-personal one within it.

For it is here that the teaching relationship is best expressed as an art at the inter-personal level of the learning experience. Now if the teacher-student relationship is at the centre of the pedagogic process, then it must be given a corresponding priority in the educational system. To be creative this relationship must involve the active and free participation of students and teachers. Internal passivity and external control cannot make for creativity of any sort. Autonomy and competence are the most basic conditions for a creative pedagogy, but they are far from being a priority of any kind in our system. (Kumar 1992)

Our teachers at most levels are confined to standardised and narrowly defined roles. The compulsions of the external examination system, with its pre-set syllabus, its standardised and opaque evaluation processes, destroys whatever innovative and creative urge that would otherwise be possible. No wonder in our system the educational administrator has far more status and influence than the pedagogue or the scholar.

Rote learning and mechanical reproduction are at a high premium, while critique and creativity at a disheartening discount. Even science is still taught with the authority of the textbook commanding acceptance and not the excitement of the laboratory experiment leading to personal discovery. Such 'indoctrination' cannot encourage the scientific temper. It only allows superstitions and uncritical traditions to survive and thrive.

With the humanities, even within the confines of the conventional canon, there is scope to contextualise and focus on those aspects that make for a sensitivity and openness to counter-cultural concerns and subaltern aspirations. This is more directly possible with the social sciences, provided they eschew the pretended value-free stance of positivist

science, as also the prevalent value-relativism espoused by post-modernism, and opt for a broad and humanist value-premised critique. An inter-disciplinary approach can further broaden and deepen their perspectives.

The Pedagogy of Relevant Contextualisation

This is the final and necessary step in a pedagogy of change. For divorced from the social context teaching cannot be made relevant. However, without a deliberate effort by the teacher to relate the subject matter taught in the classroom to the world outside, this will not automatically happen. If anything the rote learning and mechanical reproduction encouraged by our education system disengages the students from their social situation. The preoccupation for individuals and institutions to return good exam results does not help to understand and cope with the world around.

Some subjects lend themselves to this contextualising more readily than others. Thus environmental sciences cannot ignore the ecological crisis that threatens us all today. The same can be done with social sciences and our social crises by contextualising constructed meanings in their social situations, and in literature studies by demonstrating the relationship between writing literature and writing culture. Furthermore, we can identify and study new and relevant initiatives, and support and learn from them wherever we find them. Some innovative and competent voluntary agencies, like Eklavya in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh, have already blazed a new trail.

In all this, alternative understandings can be made to question conventional wisdom and suggest more relevant contextualised responses. The classroom is often too divorced from the real world of our students. If it helps them to comprehend and critique their world, we will already have begun a transformative change of lasting effect. In helping

students thus to understand and interpret their world the teacher can also help them reconstruct it in more creative and humane ways. A relevant contextualisation of learning can address contradictions between academic learning and practical life, raise questions, pursue issues and challenge the young to create a brave new world.

Practical Possibilities

Much of what is being proposed here is possible even within the constraints of the present system. The more recently moves to greater flexibility are in the right direction: institutional autonomy with experimental school, the open school system, autonomous colleges, deem universities, … The principle of subsidiarity can serve as practical guideline to devolve such academic authority and consequent freedom downwards to reach the teacher in the classroom, to devolve decision to lower levels to those competence there, ...This must be complemented and co-ordinated from higher levels by a practical solidarity to enables competent decision-making at these levels and facilitate implementation as required….

The transformative paradigm with its counter-cultural options, both individual and institutional, can eventually have a cumulative effect and change the system, if not completely, then at least in parts. Surely we can use the vast goodwill some of our prestigious institutions, not to get more of the same, but to give credibility to, and get acceptance for such creative ventures. The temptation to postpone decisions, until there is no need to make them, allows circumstances to get beyond our control so that decisions are finally happen by default and drift. This can only lead us into the dustbin of history!

Habermus rightfully observes: "truths which are to have consequences require a consensus prudently attained." (Habermus 1975) Hence it is important for a pedagogy

of change to contest, and provide alternatives to the conventional 'truth' which is all too often nothing but the imposed conventions of hegemonic groups. It is precisely in this sense that Giroux wants teachers to be "transformative intellectuals". (Giroux 1988: 121) For then "Teaching as a Subversive Activity" (Postman and Weingartner 1975) can further advance a consequent learning, and challenge the status quo to build communities of solidarity, of sharing and caring in our society.

Our practical, even pragmatic focus cannot be just to teach the three 'r's to fit students into a cybernetic world, but to read that world and understand it, to interpret and change it, to claim and share it. These transformative pedagogies must be institutionally situated lest they be dismissed as impractically utopian. This will require a new model for a transformative education.

A Model for the Future

In a rapidly and radically changing world, this will not be the one to which their teachers and parents belong, but or one still unfolding. Margret Mead called this a prefigurative culture for which the models of learning are not in the past as with a post figurative culture, or even in the present as with a configurtive culture, but rather in the future. (Mead 1970: 67). In such a society education cannot be premised on 'models of' oriented not to the past or even to the present but rather on 'models for' that anticipate the future crashing in on us. (Geertz 1793: 93)

A Working Consensus

An effective model for such change must be premised on some common ground on which can be built a consensus for collective action, a vision and mission within the larger social context of the education system. Here we indicate in

a few broad brush strokes as a point of departure for this endeavour to create and establish a model for education that is true to our history and able to carry forward this saga into the future, where it can once again seize the significant role it once played in the making of modern India.

Today we need a new institutional model that can then be stabilised and replicated in the larger system to meet the educational demands of a changing society. It must be perceived as leading the way and calling other educators to where we are going, and where they know they ought to be. Its effectiveness must be measured not in terms of the old criteria, like examination performance, institutional prestige, ..., but on new more pertinent ones for the changed circumstances, like preparing students to be other- not self-oriented, critical and creative, to be self-employed entrepreneurs rather than employable job-seekers, equipping them with the skills for problem-solving in a complex and inter-connected world not applying old solutions to new problems, empowering them with the ability for a continuing self-education and skills up-gradation not leaving them with a self-satisfied sense of closure.

Practical Possibilities

We cannot completely deschool our society, as Ivan Illich has urged. (Illich 1973) But we do need to exorcise our institutions from the banking pedagogy that Paulo Freire (Freire 1972) decried, which rote learning foregrounds, and our evaluation system rewards. Here viable expansive possibilities have not been imaginatively adapted to our changing contemporary situations and creatively mainstreamed into it. However, there are some who have already started out on the path of pedagogic innovation with alternatives schools that have demonstrated that a total alienation from the mainstream is neither required nor viable.

(see http://www.alternativeeducationindia.net/altschools.htm)

In their six-nation review of *School and Community in the Third World*, Sinclair and Lilis offer three possible strategies for educational change which are here quoted at length:

"the first is thus the stepwise development of a subpopulation of innovating institutions. This would be the preferred policy, if political and other pressures allowed such choice. The second model offered for consideration is that of universal adoption of a relevance orientation but with a two-tier system permitting stepwise development of high-quality programmes in an expanding group of selected innovative schools. This policy would have much to commend it where political pressures necessitated immediate system-wide adoption of some kind of relevance venture. A third strategy involves the omission of any special relevance programmes but attempts to reorient the existing curriculum towards activity methods and local relevance. An attempt to build on its strengths and overcome its weakness would be appropriate where the government was unwilling to provide the resources and organisational infrastructure for a major relevance programme." (Sinclair and Lilis 1980: 164)

Given their spread through many locations in this country, there are strategies most institutions can adopt with some systematic planning and inter-institutional cooperation in a particular region or area. But if we set our sail against the wind we must be able to stay the course and brave the storms. For

"while it is comparatively easy to introduce educational reforms that support the existing social structure, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement radical educational reforms which threaten the existing social

structure or run counter to its imperatives." (Citizens for Democracy 1978: 35)

More than half a century after ago we pledge ourselves as a

"sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic Republic … to secure for all its citizens:

justice, social, economic and political;
liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
equality of status and of opportunity;
and to promote among them all,
fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation".(Preamble to the Constitution)

The challenge of education for justice is to create a viable model for such a society towards fulfilling this tryst with destiny. No doubt we cannot wish away the constraints under which our education institutions labour. And yet in the interstices of all the contradictions and anomalies of our society there are spaces of freedom still available, which must be seized and creatively used.

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Unpacking the Interconnections of Inequality: Conceptual explorations of the convergences and divergences of class, caste and gender in higher education in the 66th NSS

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How different systems of inequality are interconnected is not well understood. The 66th NSS round (2009-10) is analysed to show the importance of grasping class, caste and gender together to visualize inequalities in higher education enrolments in India. Certain classes dominate enrolments across different caste groups and the proportion of women from a particular class itself varies across castes. These patterns call for theoretical explanation. The ways in which class, caste and gender have been theorized suggest certain common elements – work, kinship and culture – which may serve to connect them up. These offer analytical tools that help us to see how intersectionality comes into play. Changes in one system may reverberate through these elements into other systems. This may lead to the cascading of a reduction in inequality, but there is also a relative autonomy between them. It may happen that the decline of obstacles in one domain does not necessarily lead to a decrease of inequality in another. There is a pressing need to rethink how we describe and analyse the sources of inequality so as to build a more integrated understanding.

Our understanding of inequality and injustice in society has grown in spurts and bursts and not in a smooth, systematic manner. Sometimes one particular approach seems to give us new insights and directions for action and sometimes it is another aspect of social inequality that opens fresh doors. The integration of different approaches usually lags behind as the energy that provides a particular insight tends to focus itself on the problem at hand, rather than worry about conceptual holism or tidiness. At one time class processes seemed to explain shared conditions and experiences in a way that older discourses of race and nation did not. In recent decades the study of ethnicity and community has returned with new vigour and is revealing forms of domination that the class lens had swept under the carpet. We are also beginning to realize that the politics of gender shapes many of the basic processes of exchange, culture and social organization. The problem of an integrated and multi-dimensional understanding of inequality and injustice faces the challenge of bringing together these diverse theoretical strands. It is not a new challenge, with Max Weber's famous section on the role of class, status and party on the distribution of power (Weber 1978: 926-938) being an early attempt to use multiple concepts together. Cultural Studies has since the last forty years been interested in the way race, class, gender and ethnicity intertwine with each other (Hall and Jefferson 1976, Hall 1997). The way class and culture are intertwined has been remarked upon by E.P. Thompson amongst many others. In India the problem of the relation between caste and class has attracted much interest (Mukherjee 1999, Srinivas 2003) and it is now being emphasized that caste and gender must be seen together and not separately (Guru 1995, Chakravarti 1995). The feminist tradition has given a name, intersectionality, to this problem (Crenshaw 1991), through its "third wave" emphasis that people do not just stand across socially constructed

boundaries of gender, but at the intersections of the barbed wire fences of race and class as well.

There is sometimes a resistance against acknowledging the complexity and multi-dimensional character of social inequality. Perhaps this is because the argument of multiple identities has often been used by the existing order to attack and weaken protesting voices. Against that a rhetorics of conceptual distinctiveness has helped in gaining acceptance and visibility. However there is still the imperative to examine inequality in its more complete and interwoven form and not in fragments. Apart from the creation of more comprehensive theory this agenda may also guard against situations like for example generalizing from the oppressions which upper caste and middle class women face to those faced by lower caste and agricultural labour women. There can be many other practical offshoots like the building of a composite index of social disadvantage which can be used for targeting individuals for additional support in a variety of domains. A sound theoretical understanding of how inequalities interweave, for instance, can help to build a disadvantage index in education which would be more accurate and representative than the contemporary practice of using caste as the basis of affirmative action.

Intersectionality as a way of interpreting interwoven inequalities has itself been understood in different ways. The way Kimberlé Crenshaw wrote about it conjured a vision of the meeting of roads at a crossing and then the carrying on of the roads down their own separate paths. A better way may be to talk of integration of the roads into a common subjectivity or the intertwining of of the different systems of inequality into a new complex form, which does not show the trajectory of it progenitors alone but takes a different route.

Leslie McCall (2005) distinguishes between anti-categorical, inter-categorical and intra-categorical perspectives. Anti-categorical approaches tend to dismiss traditional categories of social analysis like class and caste altogether. Inter-categorical approaches accept these categories at least in a temporary fashion to ask how they interact with each other. Intra-categorical approaches interrogate why and how the boundaries between categories exist. This paper is an exploration which starts with traditional categories and seeks to ask what it is that actually cuts through and across them. It thus tries to move from an inter-categorical perspective to suggesting ways to improve our grasp of the categories and to revising the categories of inequality themselves.

The approach this paper takes is to examine key processes and relations of different systems of social inequality and asks whether a better understanding may be had through combining some of them together. It suggests that a focus specifically on the themes of work, kinship and culture, rather than on class, gender and caste helps in seeing how the latter three systems are inter-connected. Taking a step back from the three systems of inequality may help to see what is common acros them and what is different. It may offer a way to integrate an understanding of these three systems, enabling a conceptual and not only an empirical grasp of their intersections.

The emphasis here is to search for a way of imagining inequality in India which can take not just an intersectional but an integrative perspective. It is argued that merely speaking of the intersectionality of class, caste and gender does not enlighten us much, since these can each mean a very large number of things. Instead it is suggested that a more specific focus on three elements – work, culture and

kinship – may be more productive and direct our attention better. This is because they spell out specific processes which cut across different sources of inequality.

The approach suggested here takes the nominalist stance of drawing out analytical concepts which help to understand the real world, even while those concepts may not correspond to unique real objects. This analytic re-formulation of the categories of social inequality, asking how they are actually integrated with each other by reaching across particular systems, may help us to delineate and then counter-balance the operation of structural injustices. The nominalist approach is not a new one in the social sciences (Weber 1978/1922: 20-22; Beteille 2007: 288) and moves away from seeing social groupings as tangible objects which are expected to be visibly different and self-aware, towards seeing them as tendencies produced by processes. Many social relations which produce patterned behaviours and cultures may actually not be part of the self-consciousness of the grouping which gets constituted by them. It is the analytical labour of researchers which identifies those subtle processes and relations. Thus it is not necessary for, say, a class to be conscious of itself for its members to behave in a common way. More important is what leads to a certain degree of common behaviour, feelings, values and actions, even when that process which creates commonality is not consciously articulated by the involved people.

The categories of caste, class and gender can then be looked at afresh to ask whether they are indeed the best way to describe a complex reality or whether a different tack may give some new insights. The task of constructing an integrated view of multiple systems of inequality would, unsurprisingly, be a long and onerous one. Perhaps that task may find useful the small suggestion which this paper tries to make: an exploration of where there are overlaps and also disjunctions

between them. The overlaps and disjunctions may vary in different domains, the focus here being mainly on education. It is aimed to ask, to put it in a sentence, *why* it is that we see interconnections between different systems of inequality in education.

What is common across systems of inequality?

It is possible to start identifying some connecting elements by asking how class, caste and gender have been theoretically delineated. To begin with caste, an immense body of literature has explored the caste system's impact on political and economic affairs. The theorization of its basic features, though, has been a concern of a relatively smaller corpus within that. The caste system has usually been conceived of as a ranked ordering of endogamous groups, whose exact composition and pattern may vary across diverse cultural and linguistic zones. The importance of endogamy for caste has meant that marriage rules and the regulation of women have been a key aspect of reproducing caste (Senart 1896, Ambedkar 1917). The structuralist turn in the study of caste has paid more attention to the role of culture in maintaining and expressing it. In the work of Louis Dumont (1999/1970) this has meant the generalization of caste processes to an opposition between purity and impurity, though he also acknowledged the possible role of locality as well as political and economic factors (ibid.: 38-39). Veena Das (1980) distanced herself from a bipolar view of caste culture and emphasized triangular oppositions of categories instead. Richard Burghart (1978), too, sought to understand the caste system through an opposition between the cultural meaning of being a king, an ascetic and a brahmin. Meanwhile the connection of the caste system with hereditary occupations has often led to the question being asked what the difference is between it and social class.

Classes have been conceptualized, if anything, in an even greater variety of ways than caste. The convention is to keep work activities at the centre of what it means to be of a particular class. It is what people do to make a living and how they consume and exchange goods, services and meanings that seems to shape their class experience. Many economists think of class structure in terms of levels of consumption, with what and how people consume being seen as leading to the biggest class differences between them. The sociological tradition has tended to pay more attention to what people actually do in production and exchange, looking at the beliefs, values and orientations that their occupation leads to, thus using an occupational basis of distinguishing between classes (Lockwood 1958). A distinct tradition within sociology has emphasized the importance of relationships in shaping human classes, particularly those of exploitation (Marx 1974) or power (Dahrendorf 1959) or both (Wright 1996). In the works of people like Erik Olin Wright (ibid) this has been articulated through the notion of people not being characterized by just one class identity, but as actually standing at certain locations in a multifarious web of relationships. Individuals can have simultaneously contradictory and intermediary class relations. John Goldthorpe's (2000) work has emphasized in this the relation between workers and the owner in terms of the former's powers to negotiate, as well as commitment and trust. He has contrasted the relationship of a labour contract with an orientation of service to the firm, and has spelt out the widely varying consequences on the everyday experience of work, identity and remunerations. Education is deeply implicated with the class structure, serving to exclude or to allocate various roles and to participate in the cultural politics of class.

Pierre Bourdieu and others (Bourdieu 1992, 1996; Bourdieu & Passeron 1979, 1992; Godelier 1986) have highlighted the importance of inheritance in reproducing class relations across generations. What gets inherited is not just economic but several other forms of capital, too, which may increase or decrease the advantages which the next generation has in a particular field. Culture and networks of marriage are crucial to shaping as well as reproducing class structures. The relation between men and women is thus an important element in class relations, too.

The gendering of society has been seen as a way of bending women to domination by men. It has been argued that this represents a primeval form of exploitation (Lerner 1986) and a form of power sui-generis. A somewhat different but often intertwined perspective has seen gender as a way of getting women to support the stratification system of men (Engels 1962). Women may be ensocialized or bullied into contributing to the patterns of class and caste domination (Chakravarti 1995). This operates through the control of their sexuality, roles within the family, culture and even the uses they are expected to make of education amongst other social processes.

It is possible to see many connecting lines between the three systems of inequality outlined above. For the present at least three analytically central tropes are proposed that cut across them and can be helpful in seeing the connections and disjunctions between various systems of inequality: work, kinship and culture. An analytical focus on these three tropes would help to identify intersectionality and trace its pathways. These tropes cut across systems of class, caste and gender and hence offer a way of seeing them in an integrated manner. They do not replace the need to understand each system on its own, but highlight and draw our attention to what is common across the various systems.

This paper will explore their interconnections mainly through tertiary or higher education. This is not to say that primary and secondary education are not sharply constrained by our political economy, culture and institutional processes. They, after all, filter who goes on to tertiary education. The most obvious and easily seen connections between education and social structure, however, are at the tertiary level. To the extent that education shapes adult roles of privilege and power, that is most directly through tertiary education. Educated classes in India are defined by tertiary education and not so much by secondary education or by primary education where we are approaching universal enrolment. The number of people moving to a tertiary education at 17.2% is a rather small fraction of the Indian youth. These, however, are the children of the topmost sections of the stratification system and they are the ones who will occupy most of the higher strata of status, power and wealth. Of course, education alone is not responsible for differences of rank and political power or the inheritance of wealth. Tertiary education, too, is highly differentiated, with for instance a vast gap between IITs and Delhi's elite undergraduate colleges on the one hand and arts colleges in mofussil towns on the other. A focus on higher education, it is submitted, is still valuable, for it can tell us something significant about power and rank in this country.

Inequality and domination in higher education is most easily measured through enrolment and access, though that hardly constitutes its only or even most important aspect. Surveys and tabulations of enrolments are readily available for analysis, while studies of the lived experience of injustice in education are still rare in India (Deshpande and Zacharias 2013). The use of survey data, we know, must be done with

great caution. Apart from a host of issues related to sampling, any survey tends to count only what its categories are able to theoretically imagine. Further, large-scale surveys tend to represent only what is relatively easy to count, whereas we know that many of the most important aspects of social inequality can only be recognized through sensitive processes of dialogue and interpretation across cultures. Yet, it is submitted, they provide advantages of scale, generalization and comparison, which even multi-site ethnographies are still struggling to move towards. The broad contours of intersectionality would be thus drawn through a large-scale survey dataset, whereas the subsequent discussion would be on the basis of ethnographies and smaller scale studies.

That gender, class and caste show interconnected patterns in enrolments in higher education has been noted by several observers (Chanana 2004, Raju 2008, Arora 2012, John 2012). In this paper relatively recent data is presented to further strengthen the argument, calculated from the Employment and Unemployment Survey in the 66th round of the NSS, done between July 2009 to June 2010, covering 100,957 households. Along with using the conventional survey categories of social inequality, this analysis differs from the majority of literature by applying occupational categories of class rather than consumption-based categories, since the former show a sharper contrast in choices and circumstances.

Table 1. Caste-wise Current Enrolments of Undergraduates in Percent (17-24 age group)

	In sample	Agriculture	Engineering	Medicine	Arts, Com., Sci
ST	8.5	6.6	0.7	0.3	4.7
SC	20.4	15.0	5.3	14.3	14.3
OBC	40.4	37.1	35.9	36.5	41.0

Others	30.7	41.3	58.2	48.9	39.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Calculated by author from 66th NSS round (2009-10)

Castes in India are conventionally clubbed together for most legal matters into the categories of Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes and Others. The categories are not perfect and there can be a good deal of variation in the social and educational conditions of different endogamous groups within any particular category. In spite of the untidiness of these categories, they still reveal quite substantial inequalities in enrolment patterns. The "Others" are about 30.7% of the 17-24 year olds in the sample (Table 1). However they are disproportionately represented in all the different streams of tertiary education enumerated in the survey. The percentages here are of all the forms of tertiary education together, including post-senior secondary school diploma and certificate courses and not just degree colleges. If there were no systemic processes leading to advantaging certain communities and disadvantaging others, we would expect the percentage of a category in the general population to also be reflected in enrolments. For instance, the ST are 8.5% of all 17-24 year olds and if there were no systemic discrimination they should have also been 8.5% of, say, all engineering students. However the observation that they are only 0.7% of engineering students in the sample strongly indicates that some exclusionary processes are at work. The ST are the most under-represented in all the academic streams, followed by the SC. The OBC are slightly under-represented and the "Others" are substantially over-represented. This is an important pointer to how structures of education as well as society are tilted in favour of some castes and differentially against others. Systemic discrimination need not mean

a deliberate, conscious act of exclusion, but can operate through structural forces as well.

A reduced eleven class framework has been used in this paper to get a picture of occupational class as an organizing principle of social inequality in higher education. The 66th NSS used categories available in the National Classification of Occupations (2004), from which the below reported occupational classes were calculated. The clustering of NOC categories into classes has been done through a mix of relational and occupational principles (Goldthorpe 2000, Wright 1996, Dhanagare 1983), trying to arrive at a set which was not too unwieldy and fragmented. Here we have clubbed owners, managers and professionals together as groups with some affinities that distinguish them from lower ranking educational workers who do more routine work and are at lower levels in organizational hierarchies (Table 2). These are the two main classes within educated or white-collar workers. In the non-agricultural sector, skilled and unskilled non-agricultural workers are demarkated from each other. Shopkeepers and moneylenders are clubbed as a separate class. Agricultural landowners and tenants have been counted together and distinguished into three classes on the basis of the amount of land which they hold: 0-2 hectares (small), 2-4 hectares (medium) and greater than 4 hectares (large) respectively. People who are primarily doing animal husbandry are treated as a distinct class. Subsistence agricultural workers and agricultural workers who are integrated into markets are counted as two separate classes. As the various tables in this paper show, the differences amongst these classes are tangible, which at least partially validates this kind of categorization. It also shows itself to be useful in understanding the interactions between class and other systems of inequality.

Table 2. Occupational Class-wise Current Enrolments of Undergraduates in Percent (17-24 age group)

	In Sample	Agriculture	Engineering	Medicine	Arts, Com., Sci.
Owners, managers, professionals	11.3	10.8	41.8	23.1	19.3
Low ranking educated workers	5.9	14.5	20.6	27.0	13.7
Shopkeepers moneylenders	4.6	5.4	5.2	1.5	5.6
Skilled workers	19.8	17.8	13.2	21.6	19.5
Non-agricultural unskilled workers	11.4	6.2	1.4	3.3	6.3
Farmers <= 2ha	16.4	21.9	7.9	11.7	14.3
Farmers > 2 <= 4ha	5.5	7.1	2.3	0.2	6.4
Farmers > 4ha	2.7	2.5	4.1	0.9	3.0
Animal husbandry	1.8	0.5	0.6	0.5	2.0
Subsistence agricultural workers	2.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	2.3
Agricultural workers	18.6	10.9	3.0	10.2	7.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Calculated by author from 66th NSS round (2009-10)

Young people from families which are mainly white collar workers and owners are the most over-represented in all the academic streams. At the bottom of the heap are the children of families of unskilled non-agricultural workers and of landless agricultural labour. Youths from families classified as managers, professionals and owners are 11.3% of the sample, but 41.8% of those enrolled in engineering, over-represented by a ratio of over 3:1. In contrast youths from agricultural worker families are 18.6% of the sample, but only 3.0% of the students of engineering streams, an under-representation of over 1:6. The children of white-collar and owner families are together a whopping 62.4% of all students in engineering and 50.1% of medical, the most sought after undergraduate courses.

Table 3. Gender-wise Current Enrolments of Undergraduates in Percent (17-24 age group)

	In Sample	Agriculture	Engineering	Medicine	Arts, Com., Sci.
Men	52.2	67.6	72.1	53.5	58.0
Women	47.8	32.4	27.9	46.5	42.0

Calculated by author from 66th NSS round (2009-10)

Gender differences are also pronounced in higher education. Women are 47.8% of the sample, but only 27.9% of the engineering stream (Table 3). They are approximately equivalent to the sample's sex ratio in the medical stream, contrary to popular belief of the women filling up medical education. Data was not available for the arts, commerce and science separately but only in an aggregate manner. There, too, men were disproportionately enrolled (58.0%), though it could not be said whether there was a difference between the arts and the rest.

Table 4 Occupational Classes Within Various Castes in Undergraduate Engineering in Percent (17-24 age group)

	ST		SC		OBC		OTHERS	
	Eng UGs	Sample	Eng UGs	Sample	Eng UGs	Sample	Eng UGs	Sample
Owners, managers, professionals	27.6	3.5	27.3	5.3	31.5	10.7	52.2	18.4
Low ranking educated workers	14.5	4.5	25.4	4.5	22.2	4.4	18.6	9.2
Shopkeepers moneylenders	0.0	1.7	0.2	2.7	5.5	4.8	6.0	6.3
Skilled workers	17.6	10.2	22.6	20.0	17.6	21.8	8.2	19.8
Non-agricultural unskilled workers	0.0	9.4	4.7	20.5	1.4	10.4	0.8	7.2
Farmers <= 2ha	2.7	24.8	13.4	10.7	12.6	17.3	3.5	16.7
Farmers > 2 <= 4ha	31.5	11.1	0.0	2.0	3.3	5.5	1.5	6.3
Farmers > 4ha	0.0	2.6	0.5	0.9	1.1	3.0	7.1	3.5
Animal husbandry	0.0	0.9	0.0	1.8	1.3	2.3	0.1	1.3
Subsistence agricultural workers	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.4	0.0	2.8	0.0	1.7
Agricultural workers	6.2	30.0	6.0	30.2	3.4	17.0	2.1	9.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Calculated by author from 66th NSS round (2009-10)

Class and caste are undoubtedly linked but it is not helpful to treat them as one. Their relationship as well as difference can be seen through a breakup of students from each caste category into their occupational class origins. Table 4 depicts this for the students in engineering stream. Clearly it is not possible to speak in a generalized manner that the upper caste family's child also comes from a white collar background. The "Others" from white collar and owner families are 27.6% of all the "Others" youth in the sample. The rest come from various other occupations. Of course, the proportion of the "Others" which is from the white collar and owner class is much greater than among all other caste groups. Only about 9.8% of the SC youth, for instance, in the entire sample survey are from white collar and owner families.

An important question is whether caste (or class) alone is enough to help us understand educational advantage or disadvantage. The SC youth who are from professional, managerial and owner families are just 5.3% of all the SC youth. However, they are 27.3% of all the SC youth in tertiary engineering courses. Clearly merely looking at the caste is not enough, we need to look at the family occupational class, too, to understand educational inequality. While the SC youth from professional, managerial and owner families are over-represented among the SC engineering students by a ratio of about 5:1, the SC youth from agricultural worker families are the opposite, under-represented by about 1:5.

Similarly it is the "Others" youth from white-collar and owner families who have the lion's share of engineering enrolments (70.8%) in spite of being only 27.6% of all the "Others" youth. About 9.5% of the "Others" youth are from agricultural labour families, but they are only 2.1% of the

"Others" enrolled in engineering. That shows them to be much more disadvantaged than the upper caste youth from white collar and owner families. What, incidentally, this tells us is that the "creamy layer" phenomenon is not restricted to the SC, ST and OBC, but extends to the upper castes, too. Certain classes are dominating enrolments across all the castes.

Importantly, class effects are not constant across different caste groups. In other words class effects by themselves are not sufficient to understand inequality. The proportion of youth in engineering from a particular occupational background changes as we move from one caste group to another. The ratio of owners, managers and professionals in engineering to the actual size of that class in a caste group is about 8:1 among the ST, 5:1 among the SC, 3:1 among the OBC and the same 3:1 among the Others. The advantages given by class background for admission to engineering are greater amongst the ST and the SC compared to the Others and OBC of the same class. It seems that when a community has greater social disadvantages then being from a white collar or owner background makes a much larger difference to a family's life chances.

What this re-affirms is that caste origins are connected but not synonymous with occupational class and within a particular caste group what occupation one's family follows can differentiate considerably the kind of educational trajectory one follows. Class and caste need to be understood as separate while connected processes.

The gendered enrolment of men and women also appears to be influenced by class and caste in complicated ways. For instance, amongst the owners, managers and professionals there is an interesting variation in men and women's enrolments into engineering across different castes (see

Table 5). In this class, the ST have a similar number of men and women in engineering, being 27.4% and 27.8% of ST engineering students respectively. However, amongst the SC and the OBC being from an owner, manager or professional family seems to make it much more likely that a woman will join engineering tertiary education. The women in engineering from this class are far greater amongst the SC, with 46.6% women compared to 17.8% men, respectively out of the total SC women and men enrolled in engineering. The class effect on OBC women is less dramatic but still visible with 35.2% of OBC women in engineering from the owner, manager and professional class, in comparison to 29.3% of OBC men students being from that same class. Amongst the "Others", however there is a greater proportion of men from this class, compared to women in engineering, 57.4% and 41.3% respectively.

Table 5. Gender Differences in Undergraduate Engineering by Occupational Classes and Caste in Percent (17-24 age group)

	ST				SC			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	Eng. UG	Sample	Eng. UG	Sample	Eng. UG	Sample	Eng. UG	Sample
Owners, managers, professionals.	27.4	3.5	27.8	3.5	17.8	5.1	46.6	5.6
Low ranking educated workers	3.2	5.1	25.4	4.0	23.1	4.0	30.0	5.0
Shopkeepers moneylenders	0.0	1.4	0.0	2.0	0.3	2.7	0.0	2.7
Skilled workers	0.0	10.8	34.7	9.7	23.1	20.1	21.6	19.8
Non-agricultural unskilled workers	0.0	9.3	0.0	9.6	6.9	20.6	0.2	20.4
Farmers <= 2ha	5.5	27.6	0.0	22.2	19.1	11.4	1.7	10.0
Farmers > 2 <= 4ha	63.9	11.4	0.0	10.7	0.0	1.8	0.0	2.2
Farmers > 4ha	0.0	2.1	0.0	3.0	0.7	0.9	0.0	1.0
Animal husbandry	0.0	0.7	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	2.0
Subsistence agricultural workers	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.5
Agricultural workers	0.0	26.7	12.2	32.9	8.9	30.6	0.0	29.8
Total	100	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5 (continued)

	OBC				Others			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	Eng. UG	Sample	Eng. UG	Sample	Eng. UG	Sample	Eng. UG	Sample
Owners, managers, professionals.	29.3	10.4	35.2	11.0	57.4	18.0	41.3	18.8
Low ranking educated workers	21.8	4.4	23.0	4.5	14.2	9.6	28.0	8.8
Shopkeepers moneylenders	5.5	4.7	5.4	5.0	6.2	6.3	5.5	6.3
Skilled workers	16.5	21.4	19.4	22.2	10.4	20.5	3.3	19.0
Non-agricultural unskilled workers	2.3	10.9	0.0	9.8	0.2	7.2	2.1	7.1
Farmers <= 2ha	14.4	17.0	9.6	17.6	4.1	16.8	2.1	16.6
Farmers > 2 <= 4ha	4.0	5.3	2.1	5.7	2.2	6.2	0.0	6.4
Farmers > 4ha	1.0	3.1	1.4	2.9	5.3	3.6	10.9	3.5
Animal husbandry	0.5	2.8	2.7	1.8	0.0	1.3	0.2	1.3
Subsistence agricultural workers	0.0	2.4	0.0	3.2	0.0	1.4	0.0	2.1
Agricultural workers	4.7	17.7	1.3	16.3	0.0	9.2	6.6	10.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

Calculated by author from 66th NSS (2009-10)

The statistical patterns are sufficient to show a series of interconnections which bely claims of simple generalizations about caste or gender inequality. Speaking about say, women in higher education is incomplete without also talking about which class and caste they belong to. But how does one begin to understand these interlinked patterns? They call for a way to understand how gendered choices of education, selfhood, career and marriage are being influenced by class and caste dynamics as well. These need appropriate ways of theoretically imagining the processes within each of these systems of inequality.

Common Themes: Work, Culture and Kinship

The exploration of intersections and seaerch for ways of a conceptual integration of these systems of inequality may be helped by asking what are the tropes which are common to all of them. It is submitted here, to begin with, that one central trope cutting through the various forms of inequality is that of work and occupation, affecting the expression of class and caste as well as the way gendering takes place, though each of them in a somewhat different manner. The character of the work and the relationships and experiences it puts us through is shaped through several processes, coming from different origins. It may be influenced, for instance, by the logic of capitalist development, which may involve exploiting others or becoming onself the object of exploitation. Or it may be shaped by occupational specialization, as the need to cultivate technical skills over several years. It configures our life experience in a foundational manner and is an active ingredient of many forms of social inequality.

Specific castes no longer share internally the identically same work pattern (if they at all ever did so), but there are still pronounced caste linkages to various occupations, not least because of the inheritance of property. Often what appears

to be a caste trend is actually the expression of its class relations. Thus the upper castes' overwhelming presence in technical education nowadays may not be the consequence of their caste ideology as much as the fact that they dominate the educated wage labour of contemporary India. Fuller and Narasimhan (2010) studied Tamil Brahmins and argued that their educational strategies did not reflect their traditional caste roles as much as their desire to capture the new opportunities which were emerging. This provides us with a possible explanation of the pattern in Table 4 of the children of all white collared workers and owners being disproportionately represented in higher education. This is a pattern which is strongest in the SC and ST, rather than the OBCs and Others. The drive to make the current generation into higher level educated wage labour is at least partially that class's attempt to reproduce itself and maintain, if not improve, its position vis-a-vis other classes. It cannot be seen as purely and only an attempt to maintain the caste system. If that were so, the Others in engineering education should have shown a far greater ratio of parents from white collar origins, than the OBC or the rest. Instead they are only at par with the OBC and below the rest with white collar social locations.

The fact that the Others are far more numerous in white collar work to begin with, even though that work is still a smaller part of the occupations they are spread across, may be the result of initial occupational advantages given by their castes. However the much larger ratios of children of ST, SC, OBC white collar workers tells that the advantage of parental occupations is not restricted to the upper castes alone. Clearly work can act as a source of social and educational advantage across different caste groups and it is worthwhile examining its character in an analytically autonomous manner.

In a similar vein, the trend within these castes to support the higher education of their daughters may also be at least partially a process of work related strategies and the reproduction of a class itself. Karuna Chanana (1993) for instance described how Punjabis who migrated to India after the Partition began to encouraged their women to acquire education as a means of having careers outside the home. In the new and difficult circumstances they found themselves, this was consistent with the expectation that women should serve to maintain the family. It was not a break with the traditional expectations of women's work being that of caring for the family and they were supposed to combine that with the earning of a cash income. In other words, it was part of a work or class related strategy. Radhika Chopra (2005) has described educational strategies as a means of equipping a woman with the appropriate characteristics for marrying into a suitable class. Apart from one of the main features of gender being a separation of spheres of work, it also takes up specific forms according to the kind of work being reproduced (e.g. Natrajan 2005). The patterns of work in one system may echo through the way inequality is shaped in other systems, leading to a common thread uniting them.

The work aspect of gender helps us to understand the differences in enrolments across different occupational groups in Table 5. The proportion of Others women in engineering education from white collar and owner families is very close to that of men from the same kind of families (2.6 to 1 and 2.5 to 1 respectively). However, when it comes to non-agricultural skilled workers, the proportion of Others men in engineering education drops, but that of women drops far more drastically (.5 to 1 and .17 to 1). A theoretical and empirical attention to work patterns does help us to understand matters across gender as well as caste.

The example of skilled labour above shows that it may also happen that occupational processes may introduce divergent, rather than convergent, trends into caste and gender processes. These systems of inequality are not homologous and contradictions are inevitable. It may also happen, for instance, that the aspiration to join the educated wage labour through education may lead to weakening a caste identity whose ideology is based on agriculture and landlordism (Bose 2001: 290). It may similarly cause an accelerating tension with the traditional homemaker's role as more and more educated women with jobs provided by their degrees are discovering (Chanana 2000). Gendered occupational identities may pull away from the logic of occupations in the growing economy or may colour them in unique ways.

A second central trope is that of culture, seen as loosely integrated symbols and practices, which plays a crucial role, although in different forms, in markets, a caste society and a patriarchy, respectively. It acts, among other things, to organize social groupings, which can be quite dynamic in a market society with an emphasis on open-ness and meritocracy so as to permit a continual re-configuration of resources and processes. This may resound through caste cultures leading, for example, to a greater ideological emphasis on being flexible according to the era one is in and thus justifying and encouraging participation in new educational opportunities (Fuller and Narasimhan 2010). Cultures of elitism originating from the history of certain castes may influence the stratification system in another way. They may interweave with the belief of being special and provide a boost to those who imagine themselves as superior in studies and encourage them to orient themselves even more closely with academic goals and processes. Conversely, identities that see book learning as alien may contribute to identity processes that slow down students' acceptance of

school authority and may lead them to internalize a sense of being "weak" students (cf. Velaskar 2005). Anuradha Sharma (2014) has described the construction of cultures of gender in school classrooms and playgrounds which become the basis of consolidation of a distinct gender identity and naturalize choices of adult roles.

An interesting aspect of Table 4 is that there appears to be greater education inequality across classes than across castes within the same occupational group. The cultural aspect has been an important highlight in the literature on caste, including the impact of humiliation on the lower ranked castes. Cultural differences coming from caste origins should have been visible through differences in enrollment ratios across different caste groups but within a similar occupational group. However these do not show a greater advantage for the Other castes. If anything, within the owner and white collar workers, non-agricultural skilled labour and amongst small famers, which are amongst the larger occupational groups, the Other castes are not doing any better than the rest, even doing worse than certain other groups. That culture does matter in educational access is substantiated by many studies, but this evidence seems to be more consistent with the argument that the culture which comes from occupational groupings may perhaps be more important than the culture of caste ideologies per se.

Cultures of class, caste and gender may pull in opposite directions, too, within education. Patriarchy and caste's ideological emphasis on maintaining a stable rank order is basically in a state of tension with the market-based class system's pull towards recombining resources and moving them to new positions through education, among other things. Caste and gender cultures often resist the messages of consumerism which are an important driving force of the new re-combination of educated labour in liberalizing India.

On the other hand, cultures of individualism may reinforce market inequality, while destabilizing traditional forms of both caste as well as gender. These would have corresponding consequences on aspirations for various levels of education by young people and for what they expect education to eventually provide them.

Cultures may also serve as boundaries of exclusion in the most advanced of capitalist firms, the boundaries sometimes acting as a useful resource for group functioning and simultaneously as an obstacle for recruitment of new group members (Collins 1971, 1979). It may be the basis of excluding both women and other ethnicities and castes from the circles of power. Caste and male cultures invisibly form a substantial part of the cultural identity of many groups that first get formed in highly competitive schools and colleges. These cultural identities define who joins an informal group and who is kept out of it as not quite the right sort. These are dynamics which the NSS data, unfortunately, is not designed to reveal or reflect.

The third central trope here is that of kinship, which refuses to disappear even under the most advanced capitalism. It shapes the inheritance of property and of work cultures, though the form that it may take may be different in aggressive corporate circles, with their mantra of meritocracy, in comparison with the explicit support it gets in the context of the need to maintain social rank in caste and an acceptance of gendering amongst men and women. Kinship bonds deeply impact the distribution of cultural knowledges and practices which provide the ability to use the education system to access higher positions in corporate and state bureaucracies. Children of educated wage labour – more often of certain castes and more commonly male – would be familiar with the phrase told to them repeatedly by fathers that "if you don't study, how will you eat?" For

many young men this becomes a milestone in the formation of their identity as a committed and enterprising educated wage worker. The way to hold oneself vis-a-vis others, cultivation of a love of reading, learning to negotiate with teachers to gain their attention and so on, for all of these one important site where they are learnt is in the family and in intimate circles. The obscurity of their roots in kinship for the self-consciousness of these groups is not an obstacle to their effectiveness in distinguishing who gets ahead in competitions. For women meanwhile, the importance of marriage as a social goal keeps kinship relations a central influence in their lives. It is they who must carry the bulk of the burden of reproducing and maintaining kinship bonds, often translated into reproducing caste cultures and caste identity. This deeply influences their ability to access and stay on in education and also the kind of subjects and eventually class positions they may aspire to.

Kinship may become a site of enormous tensions where the other two tropes of occupation and culture intersect with it. The need to reproduce the class of educated wage labour, as mentioned earlier, is an important force pushing families to look for suitable matches outside the old caste networks. This causes kinship networks to break and take up new forms in ways which we are still struggling to understand. The individualism of the educated wage labour clashes with the expectations of kinsfolk that older collective traditions be maintained. Women are often the ones who have to negotiate both the old and new and try to somehow keep the bonds alive. At the same time, for women from white-collar worker families, the pressure to keep their existing occupation going through teaching their children and keeping them focused on educational success may become a site of new tensions and split loyalties (Belliappa 2014).

Kinship provides us a powerful way to understand why caste has the patterning influence on enrollments in higher education seen in Table 1 and also in understanding why occupational patterns have an impact reaching across caste groups, as is clear from Tables 2 and 4. When we look within one particular occupational group then what kinship systems and along with them cultures of hierarchy and group superiority offer us is a way to make sense of the differences in gendered enrolments in undergraduate engineering across different caste groups. To take the example of the upper white collar workers and owners, among the ST the genders are relatively similarly represented (both nearly 8 times the size of that class amongst the ST), while there is a substantial difference amongst the SC (men over-represented by 3:1 and women over-represented more than 8:1). The sharp difference in patterns between the ST and the SC are difficult to understand unless one brings in differences in culture and kinship systems. The cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity appear to be different within and without the caste system and appear to be interwoven here with educational choices.

The OBC have a more balanced gender distribution within this class, with men and women both being over-represented by about 3:1, with women showing a slightly greater inclination towards engineering higher education. However amongst the Others, a reversal of patterns emerges, with women (over-represented 2:1) of this class being less than men (3:1) in engineering education. While this class is over-represented all through, the differences in caste and gender patterns within it call for explanations. It is argued that by keeping in mind the cultural dimension of hierarchy and the way kinship systems are structured may provide a vigorous way of understanding these patterns. These are central to both the caste as well gender system.

While arguing for an analytical isolation of these three concepts, it is of course acknowledged that each of these three moments is integrated into particular systems, like those of gender or class or caste, and shows patterns which express that systemic integration. The cultures of hierarchy, for instance, take up the idiom of purity and impurity within brahminnical orders, serving to express and reproduce the caste structure. What the above suggests, however, is that it is also useful to draw them out and speak of these tropes in isolation, which is in a purely analytical sense of isolation. Doing so helps us to explain and understand the ways in which different systems of inequality meet and also how they diverge. The caste culture of hierarchy, thus, may see ideas and values merging with those coming from patriarchy or from class inequality and reinforcing them. Or at times contradicting them, as may happen when children from trading castes begin to accept the values of open competition and meritocracy. An uneasy truce gets struck, with a hybrid interpretation of meritocracy which is both hierarchical and exclusionary and open at the same time.

As has been illustrated above, these tropes serve to draw out patterns that cut across the parent systems of inequality. We may find that kinship leads to strong synergies between class, caste and gender by virtue of its shaping social networks and the boundaries of marriage and affinity. This may lead to strong boundaries emerging in social groups even under capitalism which serve to keep individuals locked in and unable to access knowledges and support systems that are necessary for a higher education. Similarly, they may make available role models and guidance which teach how one is supposed to build the daily rhythm of study and revision so as to get higher marks in board exams.

Yet, the systemic character of class, caste and gender, respectively and on their own right, may still persist. The

way kinship, for instance, is treated by different systems is an important point of divergence between them. Classes in contemporary capitalism emphasize an openness and allocation of roles on the basis of achieved abilities. The caste system sets strong lines which cannot be crossed on the basis of birth and relationships of blood and marriage. The influence of kinship on deciding roles and relationships is even stronger when it comes to women. Nepotism and familial bonds remain an important tension point in contemporary societies. The fundamental ideals of contemporary education systems rest on this contradiction in values, that achievement and merit should be the decider of roles, not blood. And yet blood and marriage continue to be significant factors, sometimes covertly and sometimes in open displays as in the anointment of heirs to corporate empires.

To explore the integrations within different systems to create patterns of social inequality and the way such integrations are manifested in education it may be useful to spell out some more ways in which these three moments overlap with each other across the different systems of class, caste and gender. Some of these are summarized in table 6. It is of course not implied that they may always reinforce each other. Contradictory and divergent trajectories are also possible, where one form of inequality may even cancel out another (table 7).

Table 6. Principles of Overlap: Some Examples

	Class under capitalism	**Caste**	**Gender**
Work	Occupational groups, exploitation, income	Ranked, hereditary occupations	Gendered roles, reproduction of work

Kinship	Shapes social networks and inheritance of property	Forms patterns of endogamy and endogamous groups	Power and social reproduction
Culture	Cultures of specialization in work, of rank and of occupational identity	Cultures of caste identity, ranking and separation (purity-impurity)	Cultures of gendered roles, cultures of rank

Table 7: Principles of Divergence: Some Examples

	Class under capitalism	**Caste**	**Gender**
Work	Based on relations of inter-dependence, on principles of capital accumulation and profit	Conservation of kinship systems and ideological rank	Male domination
Kinship	Open to non-kinship relations in most situations	Kinship defines majority of relations	Kinship defines most relations
Culture	Cultures of occupational specialization and work-related identity, open markets and competition	Cultures of ranking, exclusion and group bonding	Cultures of gender specialization and domination

What is being suggested here is that an emphasis on asking how work, kinship and culture are played out becomes a way to see continuities across class, caste and gender and also the oppositions amongst them. The focus on tropes instead of complete systems helps us to understand, for instance, why in spite of a decreasing emphasis on and consciousness of caste identity amongst the upper castes, they still dominate the higher wage labour. One process behind this may be the fact that work roles that directly use education in the Indian economy (white collar work) are in a relative minority, which greatly magnifies the impact of kinship and culture

in accessing them. When there is a scarcity of opportunities, any asset that may give advantages in accessing them leads to the cultivation of that asset and also leads to disproportionate numbers of those with that asset taking control of those opportunities. This is consistent with the observation that a surprisingly high proportion of upper castes and even women from those castes are present in higher education that provides white collar work.

A disaggregation into tropes to recombine them into a composite understanding of inequality also helps us to see the significance of the entry of women into higher education in greater numbers. This is not necessarily an expression of the emancipation of women from their traditional gender roles, though that, too, may be a slowly growing tendency. To understand this trend, we can point out that agriculture is stagnating in India in comparison to the service sector and to informal manufacturing, leading even farmers' children (but only those with sufficient income to afford it) to turn to an education that has little to contribute towards reproducing their own kinship groups' traditional occupations. This is creating a demand for a new set of abilities to reproduce the emerging class position. The more a group is oriented towards education and white collar work, the greater the emphasis on education as a means of reproduction of class. And consequently a greater acceptance of the seeking of education by women from those groups, which is the new class culture which is being aspired to, whose cultural reproduction it remains women's responsibility to perpetuate. Women begin to enter higher education alongside men in rising numbers, but that is not a statement necessarily of liberation, being more of an expression of a transition from agricultural or artisanal social reproduction to the social reproduction of white-collar work instead.

This is not a trend restricted to old agrarian communities. A clerical worker in a market economy no longer has the same social rank as his or her father who may have been a hereditary leather worker of the caste system. The roles that a wife of a leather worker in a market economy may have to play would be different in several ways from her roles in the caste system. Instead of participating in leather production, she may be pushed into being the housewife who looks after the home while the husband moves into a pattern of working in a distant factory. It is in this context that an education that provides access to jobs in the new emerging economy is then interpreted and made use of.

Many more examples may be multiplied of the usefulness of understanding how class, caste and gender are interwoven through a focus on cultures, occupations and kinship networks. But the above are perhaps enough to illustrate the point being made: looking at caste or class or gender as integrated systems as a way of describing inequality and guiding our understanding of it is not adequate, but instead their disaggregation into their constitutive processes helps us to better understand the convergences and divergences of processes of social inequality in education. It is these which carry across from one system into another and provide the grounds for converging and diverging trends. An analytical focus, in particular on work, culture and kinship may lead us to a better understanding of the processes of intersectionality and the new structures it is erecting. They provide us a way of undersanding why there is intersectionality and of moving beyond an empirical depiction of it. The questions of the relative importance of these constituent processes and how they combine into various forms of social inequality may lead us to transcend and revise the categories of class, caste and gender individually, indeed how to formulate integrated and elementary forms of

inequality themselves anew, all these are frontiers that need to be worked upon.

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Section III

Teaching as a Learning Profession

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Is teaching a profession, a semi-profession or a skilled occupation? The technical and moral bases for professional authority in modern society have been the focus of a long line of sociological research (Parsons, 1954; Weber, 1947; Wilensky, 1964; Hall, 1968; Etzioni, 1969; Abbott, 1988; Lortie, 1975). Sociologists debate whether teaching meets the primary requirements of a profession which include:

- A specialized knowledge base and shared standards of practice
- A strong service ethic and commitment to meeting clients' needs
- A strong personal identity with and dedication to the occupation
- Collegial [versus bureaucratic] control over entry, performance evaluations, and retention in the profession (see Talbert & McLaughlin 1994:126).

Academics portray primary and secondary teaching in the United States as weak on each condition of professional status (Cohen, 2011). Teaching has long lacked the organizational and professional controls fundamental to professional standing. Neither professional socialization

nor educational policies provide clear definitions of teachers' roles and standards of practice; neither schools nor collegial bodies have much capacity to meaningfully evaluate practice or sanction poor teaching. In the United States, for instance, once teachers are granted lifetime tenure it is almost impossible to dismiss them on the grounds of incompetence.

Evidence about teaching in American classrooms places the occupation at considerable distance from these primary criteria of professional status. Challenges to teachers' professionalism are many; primary among them is teachings' incoherent occupational infrastructure. Educational settings in the United States display divergent conceptions of quality instruction and little shared technical culture. Even within the same school, teachers' ideas about academic progress and standards of ju dgment about student outcomes can and do vary widely in the absence of any valid, agree-upon set of methods or frameworks for teaching. Instead, debates continue among researchers, educators, and academics about "best practices" and the standards by which to assess them. The social-normative context of teaching undermines the professional status of teaching. In particular, privacy norms undercut shared standards of practice and expectations for students (Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006).

Fueling to this occupational disjointedness are deep-seated disputes about the means and ends of schooling, disagreements that extend back to the beginning of public education in America. Is the primary aim of schooling to promote democracy, or is the production of better workers the motivating goal of schooling?

Despite this discouraging overall assessment of teachers' professional status, positive evidence about teachers'

professional standing and authority can be found in strong, site-based teacher learning communities. Based on this research, I argue that teaching can meet the primary conditions which distinguish a profession from a semi-profession or skilled occupation if it is conceived of as a learning profession that is socially-constructed, not bureaucratically derived. Sustained and meaningful teacher professionalism, I argue, is a product of an active, school-based teacher learning community that exhibits high levels of inquiry-based collaboration, shared responsibility, and mutual support.

This paper first delineates among the different forms a school-based teacher community might assume, a learning community being only one. I then consider the features fundamental to the design, functioning, and outcomes of a teacher learning community. Next, I provide evidence that a teacher learning community positively benefits students and engenders the primary requirements of professional status. I conclude with lessons for policy and practice about teaching as a learning profession. My goal is to provide a descriptive theory to better understand the functions and contributions of a teacher learning community, and the conditions that support it.

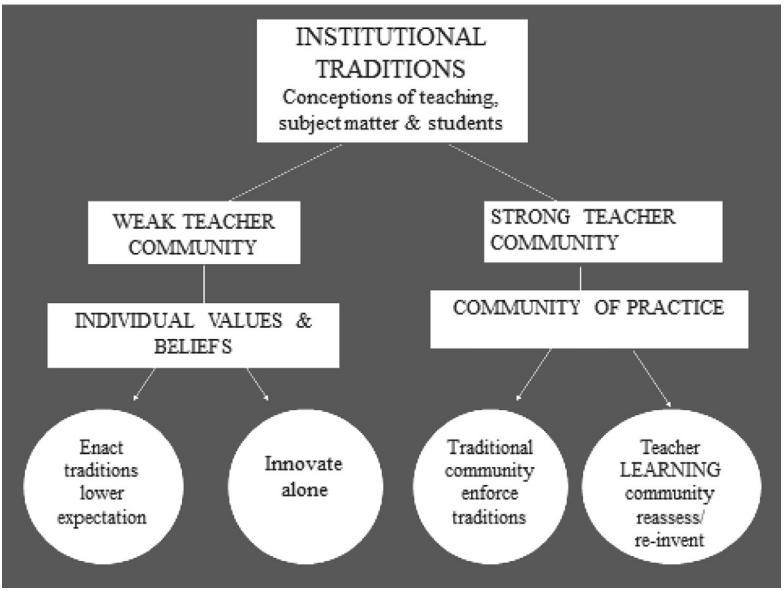
Forms of Teacher Community

Teacher learning communities are characterized by collaborative, evidence-based learning about how school and classroom practices affect student learning. They are the exception within and across American schools. Most typically, American schools are characterized by weak teacher communities in which teachers practice "behind the classroom door" according to their individual beliefs and values about instruction and expectations for students. In weak teacher communities, little shared knowledge base

exists and accountability for student outcomes is understood in individual terms. In weak teacher communities, teaching has few hallmarks of a profession.

Forms of Teacher Community

(McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001:62)



Strong teacher communities, in contrast, support a community of practice within the school, but not all strong teacher communities meet primary criteria of a profession. Teacher communities organized around traditional practices often exhibit shared standards of practice and instructional strategies, but do not necessarily subscribe to a service ethic or commitment to meeting students' needs. This type of strong teacher community is often found in many of America's high-performing, elite schools where mainstream students do well in coursework and on tests. Students from different cultural or economic backgrounds often struggle in these school settings because traditional instructional practices

do not meet their learning needs. Teachers develop strong commitments to "upholding traditional standards" in the face of widespread student failure. Assessments of students' academic shortfalls in such communities frequently explain these outcomes in terms of insufficient student motivation or ability. Often heard from teachers in these settings is some version of the exasperated comment: "I am teaching but they are not learning."

Features of a Teacher Learning Community

Teacher learning communities can and do take different forms in primary and secondary schools. Some learning communities involve teachers from the same grade level and engage them in examining how students with similar academic or demographic characteristics perform in different classrooms. Secondary school teachers often organize by subject area and consider the different classrooms teaching similar material as opportunity for a natural experiment in different pedagogical or instructional strategies. In small schools, a teacher learning community can engage the entire faculty in thinking about patterns of student learning outcomes across grades (McLaughlin & Talbert, op cit.).

Bransford, Brown and Cocking's landmark 1999 volume *How people learn* details four features fundamental to an effective learning community, whether that community is composed of children and youth or adults. Productive, vibrant learning communities are *learner centered, knowledge centered, assessment centered, and community centered*.

Learner centered environments. A requirement that a learning community be learner centered draws upon a strong body of evidence that learning is most powerful and successful when it is connected to learners' experience and needs. Learner centered environments help learners, teachers

in this instance, make connections between their previous knowledge and their current problems of practice.

A learner centered perspective acknowledges that productive knowledge use within teacher learning communities is path dependent—it builds on what teachers know and can do. Teachers use their current knowledge to construct new knowledge and interpret its significance for practice. Sometimes teachers' existing knowledge facilitates new learning, and sometimes it obstructs it. Nonetheless, many researchers have pointed out that learning is most powerful when the knowledge that promotes it is tightly tied to learners' context. As Bransford, Brown and Cocking (1999: 49) point out, "Learners of all ages are more motivated when they can see the usefulness of what they are learning and when they can use that information to do something that has impact on others."

Knowledge centered environments. Knowledge centered settings place a premium on generating, building upon and using knowledge of various stripes. Knowledge that is of high quality, accessible, well-organized and relevant to learners provides the content for an effective learning community (Bransford, Brown & Cocking op cit.).

What kinds of knowledge motivate and enable teachers' learning? Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle (1999) usefully distinguish among three substantively and strategically different conceptions of the knowledge associated with teachers' learning and change: *knowledge for practice, knowledge of practice, and knowledge in practice*.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle define knowledge *for* practice as the formal knowledge and theory generated by researchers and university-based scholars. Some of this external knowledge comprises new programs or strategies– Success for All, or

Reading Recovery programs are examples of such university-produced knowledge for practice. Other externally-developed knowledge for practice involves new theories of learning or instruction, such as reciprocal teaching, cooperative learning, or peer instruction. Knowledge for practice also includes assessments, strategies for research and evaluation, or other inquiry tools such as running records to score students' reading progress.

Knowledge *of* practice involves yet another form of knowledge and resource for teachers' learning. This second form of knowledge comprises neither formal nor practical knowledge. Knowledge of practice is generated when teachers treat their own classrooms and schools as sites of inquiry and examine them in terms of such broader social and political issues as equity, patterns of student achievement, or school supports for students' futures. Knowledge of practice may be produced by teachers themselves, or may involve data and analysis provided by outside evaluators or researchers—working with or without teachers' involvement.

Knowledge *in* practice—a third kind of knowledge—is what teachers come to understand as they reflect on their practice, generate different forms of data about it, and is situated in their own classrooms. It is practical knowledge. Action research and other forms of classroom-based inquiry support teachers' learning of this sort. Knowledge in practice is knowledge about individual students, stimulated by teachers' questions about their own classrooms.

Each form of knowledge is mutually reinforcing and essential to teaching as a learning profession. Without knowledge for practice, teachers lack the new ideas, skills and perspectives they need to evaluate, enrich or change their practices. Yet, without knowledge of practice, teachers are constrained in their ability to exploit external knowledge, situate it in their

particular school workplace, or even understand the need for new ways of doing things. Knowledge of practice enables teachers to see problem areas in their practice, and to identify opportunities for inquiry and innovation. Knowledge of practice points a faculty to needed external resources and areas for internal improvement.

However, absent teachers' knowledge in practice, new ideas may have only uneven or marginal effects on individual classrooms, since they may not reflect the needs and issues specific to any one classroom setting. Knowledge in practice informs individual teacher action and reflection, and guides teachers in tailoring resources to best support their everyday work.

Assessment centered environments. Strategic inquiry into students' performance serves as the 'engine' of a strong teacher learning community, focusing teachers' attention on students' responses to instructional practices, how to modify them to improve student outcomes, and how to learn from their collective experience. Strategic inquiry involves teachers in nonjudgmental examination of student work and exploration of the connections between classroom or school practices and student outcomes.

Collaborative discussions are most productive when they involve data and concrete examples of students' work to inform teachers' sense-making and identifying connections between practices and student outcomes. Researchers from diverse perspectives agree that that data and the process of inquiry form the foundation for teachers' learning (Daly, Moolenaar, Der-Martirosian &Liou 2014; Mandinach & Honey, 2008; McLaughlin & Talbert, op cit.; Panero & Talbert, 2013).

Panero and Talbert (2013) employ the term *strategic inquiry* to distinguish the process and product of a teacher learning

community from generic approaches of 'data-based decision making' or collaborative examination of student outcomes. It is strategic because it is based upon specific concepts about student learning goals, concrete ideas about what gets in the way, and detailed evidence about gaps in struggling students' foundational skills, such as literacy and mathematical operations. "Starting small" is a central feature of strategic inquiry because it focuses inquiry on specifics and assumes that "a part represents the whole" of a problem of practice and makes manageable the otherwise overwhelming challenge of change (Panero & Talbert op cit., 11 ff.).

Strategic inquiry based upon various types of student work and learning outcomes requires both formative and summative assessments of where students are, how they are progressing and what they have accomplished. Formative assessments use many different forms of data—homework, writing samples, classroom participation, student journals for example. Final grades and standardized test scores typically comprise summative assessments examined by members of the learning community.

Teacher learning communities employ a variety of strategies to focus their inquiry on explicit problems of practice. In some instances, teachers have identified a small group of students for whom existing practices are not successful. Concentration on focal or target students forces teachers to be explicit about problems identified, learning goals and measures of progress. Teachers follow focal students closely over a period of time, attending to their work and learning using a variety of formal and informal measures and indicators.

A Low Inference Transcript (LIT) is another formative strategy; LIT involves a teacher observer scripting the student

engagement and learning evident during a particular lesson. This transcript then becomes data used to draw connections between what a colleague observed in terms of students' responses and the instructional practices employed in the classroom (see Panero & Talbert op cit. for a full discussion of the LIT strategy). These and other formative strategies enable teacher learners to see their classroom and the school from the perspective of struggling students and make visible the associated learning gaps problems of practice.

Teacher learning communities use summative assessments to identify patterns of success and underperformance in student outcomes at classroom, department and school levels. Does one subgroup of students consistently fall behind? Are there school structures or routines associated with disappointing student performance? What are student pathways through grade levels? Is there at point at which students fall behind? Which students?

Teachers use both formative and summative assessments as part of their strategic inquiry to identify problems early and consider pedagogical or curricular responses that could be beneficial. To be meaningful, assessments of students' learning must correspond to the specific learning goals established by the teacher community and make deliberate use of the many practical experiments that are part of their everyday practice.

Community centered environments. It takes a community of practice to support teaching as a learning profession. Assigning "community" a foundational place in the operation of an effective learning environment references the long line of research that demonstrates that learning is most effective when it is the result of an interactive and social process, rather than as something an individual undertakes on his or her own.

Teams of teachers form the foundation of a learning community be they organized by grade level, subject area, department or include the whole faculty; over time they create the social-normative basis for strategic inquiry, learning and change. Learning communities provide the opportunities for collegial reflection and problem-solving that allow teachers to construct knowledge based on what they know about students' learning and progress. When teachers examine students' work together, it helps them consider how practice has been successful or fallen short of expectations for particular students. Norms of shared responsibility developed in strong teacher learning communities encourage teachers to report rather than hide disappointing student outcomes, and collectively to make the most of that experience through a critical review of practice (Young, 2008).

Teams of teachers examining student work bring different perspectives on instruction and problems of practice. In its collective wisdom, the ability of a teacher team to identify performance gaps and possible reasons for disappointing student performance exceeds that of even the most gifted teacher.

The "community" aspect of teachers' learning environment serves several functions critical to teachers' engagement with strategic inquiry and using the resulting knowledge. For one, the collective building and managing of knowledge develops a "collective mindfulness" among teacher participants and sense of shared responsibility, language and vision within the teacher learning community.

Also, a strong teacher learning community provides a powerful collegial strategy for socializing new teachers and administrators to the schools' norms of practice and professional expectations for both teachers and students. In this sense, a strong teacher learning community serves

as a "rudder" for maintaining agreed-upon goals and commitments to practice.

But perhaps the most important contribution of a strong teacher community lies in the relational trust and sense of shared responsibility it fosters and sustains among teachers (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu & Easton, 2010). Arguably without mutual trust and respect, strategic inquiry could never take place to any meaningful extent. The inquiry stance central to teaching as a learning profession requires a huge cultural shift for most teachers who typically are asked to deliver instruction not to examine it critically. Learning involves making oneself vulnerable—acknowledging shortfalls in practice, gaps in professional knowledge or experience. Rethinking practice or assumptions about student engagement and outcomes requires risk-taking of the most fundamental kind, especially for veteran teachers.

Collegial buy in and support are essential if teachers are to take these risks voluntarily. Comfort with inquiry and the necessary trusting relationships take time to build and deepen. In this sense, the process of inquiry is a product when it creates positive relational capital among teachers. The most effective teacher learning communities engage trained facilitators to keep that process moving forward, comfortable and on task (McLaughlin & Talbert op cit.; Panero & Talbert op cit.; Talbert, Cor, Chen, Kless & McLaughlin, 2012).

All of these features of a strong teacher learning community—most centrally, shared language, values and responsibility, collective mindfulness, relational trust—function together to support creation of knowledge and learning about practice. What happens to knowledge produced by and brought into a community of practice depends fundamentally on the character of that community and the relationships among its members.

Teacher subject area networks and professional associations in principle provide other important communities of practice, and provide knowledge *for* practice. But they do not and cannot serve the function of a school-based learning community. Knowledge resources imported into a professional community that lacks these connections to on-going practice and problems of practice have limited if any utility. The knowledge produced and managed by teacher communities serve as a filter determining relevance and value.

This observation highlights the critical role of prior knowledge in teachers' ability and inclination to use external resources—what Cohen and Levinthal (1990) call "absorptive capacity" or the ability to recognize, assimilate and apply new information. To this point, research into teachers' knowledge use and collaboration consistently support Yasumoto, Uekawa and Bidwell's (2001) conclusion about "the importance of strong ties in the workplace, which ease the flow of information, provide collective ability to respond quickly and flexibly when problems of practice occur, and create capacity to ensure consistent performance throughout a work group."

Benefits of Teacher Learning Communities

For students' learning. Teachers associated with a strong learning community continually examine the fit between instruction and student outcomes, and modify practices where they are found to fall short. Not surprisingly, their students benefit—most especially students traditionally unsuccessful in school. Students learn more when their teachers work together and when strategic inquiry is the medium for that collaborative work. Researchers find positive effects of teachers' learning communities for both regional and nationally representative samples (see for example, Bryk,

et al., op cit.; Daly, et al., op cit.; Panero & Talbert 2013;Pil & Leana 2009; Talbert et al., op cit.; Yasumoto, Uekawa & Bidwell, op cit.). Likewise, researchers report strong correlations of teacher learning communities with teacher practices associated with students' learning gains, students' positive experiences with their schools and classrooms. Students report that learning is fun, that they feel connected to school, and that their teachers care about them.

For teachers' professionalism. The primary requirements an occupation must exhibit to achieve status as a profession include: a specialized knowledge base and shared standards of practice; a strong service ethic; strong personal identity with and commitment to the occupation; and collegial control over entry, advancement and retention to the occupation. How do teacher learning communities enable teachers to achieve professional status through the processes of inquiry and collegial work around students' learning they embody?

Teacher learning communities shift the focus within schools from adults to students—how are they learning? Are they engaged? In doing so teacher learning communities create common language and expectations—a shared technical culture. The strategic inquiry characteristic of teacher learning communities shifts responsibility for student outcomes from individual teachers to the teaching community, responsibility that operates according to shared professional norms.

In strong teacher learning communities, conversations reference "our" students rather than "my" students and teaching becomes a "team" activity rather than an solely a solo one Practice in a strong teacher learning community moves from routinized presentation of texts, or text-driven instruction, to student-focused instruction and academic supports—evidence of a strong service ethic.

Finally, our research finds that teachers associated with strong teacher learning communities have a stronger sense of professional efficacy and satisfaction, increased professional commitment and identity—hallmarks of professional status. Conversely, we saw that teacher "burnout" and departure from teaching was associated with a lack of teacher community and sense of professional isolation (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001;2006.).

Teaching as a Learning Profession: Conclusion and Implications

Research on teachers' learning communities provides lessons about how and under what conditions teachers use knowledge to inform practice; it underscores the point that learning to inform change in practice and support professional authority requires local knowledge. Teachers learn through their up-close, on-going interactions with colleagues. Professionalism and the criteria that define it cannot be bureaucratically mandated or organizationally controlled. In the absence of all-encompassing professional, organizational or institutional standards for practice, it is socially constructed and locally negotiated within school-based learning communities.

The strength and benefit of teachers' professionalism so constructed is evident in its effects for students and teachers. But the essential localness of the site and sources of teachers' learning profession also contains its vulnerability to leadership change or the imposition of punitive, rigid accountability schemes that reward or sanction individual teachers' performance.

Although evidence supports the claim that both students and teachers benefit when teaching is supported as a learning profession through school-based learning communities, the uptake on this approach has been slow. While many districts

and schools across the United States have bought into the general concept of a teacher learning community as a powerful educational reform strategy and one that especially benefits struggling students, implementation has been at best spotty and at worst, unsuccessful. Several factors explain this observation.

For one, too often basic understanding of the issues involved with teachers' learning is limited or misconstrued. The academic or policy communities seldom make problematic the question of what a specialized knowledge base should include and what teachers need to know to improve their practice. Reformers and impatient publics disappointed with student outcomes often cast teachers' learning requirements in relatively the relatively simple terms of more or different content knowledge. Certainly, knowledge of new practices is essential for teachers to improve instruction for today's classrooms, but more or better content knowledge by itself cannot necessarily accomplish much. Experience shows that simply having more and better knowledge resources available does not mean that teachers will or can use them effectively in their classrooms.

Likewise, research on teachers' learning typically is more concerned about the content of teachers' learning than with the processes that stimulate, support and sustain it. The one-shot workshops that gather teachers somewhere off-site for a day and send them home with a notebook are antithetical to what we know about how teachers learn and use knowledge. These strategies aim to push "knowledge" into the system through meetings and informational resources. This approach finds support in efficiency-based arguments. Teachers may acquire new information in these sessions, but its significance to practice is questionable. Despite the fact that these approaches have been consistently

found to be ineffective, many professional development practices continue to center on supplying content rather than promoting learning; unfortunately they continue to dominate the professional development landscape (Webster-Wright 2009).

Similarly, although we see that knowledge that informs and animates a teacher learning community is adapted to existing practices, problems of practice and professional capabilities, reformers continue to pursue "silver bullet" responses to poor student outcomes and problems of practice. Regardless of evidence that "solutions" cannot be imported wholesale into classrooms, unrealistic expectations about the power of "best practices" persist at national, state and local levels. Yet we know that the usefulness of so-called best practices or theories of instruction and learning depend on the extent to which teachers are able to situate this knowledge in their own instructional contexts.

Another obstacle to successful implementation of school-based teacher learning communities has to do with the insufficient attention given to the features essential to an effective learning community. Teachers' knowledge use and learning depends fundamentally on the rigor and reach of the cycle of inquiry at work within their learning community. Teachers' knowledge use and learning is a social process, problem-based and data informed; it requires the support, collegiality and perspectives of a healthy community.

Yet, research on teachers' learning generally is decontextualized and silent on the question of environments that stimulate or frustrate it. Relatively little research looks at how sites and sources of teachers' learning affect teachers' ability and motivation to learn and use new knowledge. Practical and political support for developing and using the multi-faceted forms of knowledge essential to a teacher

learning community also is limited because of this incomplete research base, but more importantly because of reluctance to invest the required time and resources.

Implications. Several implications for practice and policy emerge from a perspective that frames teaching as a learning profession. One is that an inquiry stance must be central to the role of the teacher and that development and deepening of these skills and habits of mind require intentional attention by preservice and in-service teacher educators, practitioners and education policy makers at all levels of the system.

Pre-service teacher education programs serve a critical preparation and socialization function for teachers. Introducing aspiring teachers to the skills and collegial settings required by inquiry as part of their pre-service education could make a substantive contribution to the ways in which new teachers understand their role and the value of a teacher learning community. Preservice education programs have a vital function to play in preparing teachers to assume an inquiry stance on practice and equipping them with the skills to undertake it.

Practicing teachers receive scant support in developing comfort and skill in generating and using data. Available evidence suggests that those competencies need to be fostered in the context of investigating concrete problems of practice and familiar predicaments. In-service resources for teachers' professional development as inquirers and learners will have the most impact when they are available at the school-level. Support within the school for data collection and sense making, acting on identified problems of practice, and assessing the consequences for students' learning provide critical resources for teachers' strategic inquiry and the healthy functioning of their learning community.

Administrators play a crucial role in the development, operation and contribution of a teacher learning community (Young, 2008). Administrative support for evidence-based teacher learning supplies an essential sense of professional safety around strategic inquiry—that disappointments and shortfalls are opportunities for learning rather than cause for sanction. Administrators make the time, space and resources available for teachers' learning communities—"business as usual" at the school site cannot accommodate a teacher learning community. Administrators, like teachers, would benefit from professional development focused on the role and operation of teacher inquiry and implications for administrators.

Data systems seldom are developed with teachers' use in mind. Administrative data about student outcomes typically includes summative measures such as end of semester grade point averages, school enrollment and completion, or attendance figures. These data furnish essential information for school and district administrators but are less useful to teachers engaged in real-time inquiry about student learning. Teachers need formative data that are provided regularly and in accessible formats. Most school systems currently provide data only at mid and end of year—too late to be useful to teachers' instructional decision making except as grounds for retrospective reflection.

The fruitful implementation and support of a teacher learning community requires a *developmental perspective*. Building a strong teacher learning community takes time; few if any faculties are willing or able to launch into the activities and conversations found in a mature learning community. Time is needed to develop shared understandings and language, agreements about the process of inquiry, and mutual responsibility—and the relational trust that underpins it.

A developmental perspective on implementation of a teacher learning communities acknowledges the substantial cultural shift involved in moving from the traditional "stand and deliver" teacher role to an inquiry stance. It means starting with activities and expectations that are manageable, that teachers are [more or less] comfortable with and capable of. Our research found that faculty new to strategic inquiry often were more comfortable starting with generating knowledge *of* practice—inquiry focused on school level patterns of student outcomes and connections to structures, practices, and resources within the school and across classrooms. Only then were teachers willing to put aside their anxieties and engage in up-close examination of their classroom practices—knowledge *in* practice (McLaughlin & Talbert, op cit.).

A developmental approach also recognizes that a vigorous, productive teacher learning community is not a temporary arrangement that can be convened and disbanded at will. Teacher learning communities are not *ad hoc* committees assembled to take on a specific task. They require significant relational capital to operate—collegial bonds that are continuously being built, rebuilt and reaffirmed. Likewise, once formed, teacher learning communities cannot be regrouped or recombined without attention to the [re] building of shared understandings and language.

A developmental approach to teacher learning communities also understands that the process of undertaking and acting on strategic inquiry is not self-winding, but will experience frustrations and unanticipated interruptions. Effective teacher learning communities, as do collaborations more generally, need someone to be in charge of managing the data, tracking logistics, and keeping the conversation going. Most effective is the presence of a trained facilitator;

however teachers on special assignment also can take on this important role.

* * *

Research and experience support the proposition that teachers' professional status depends to a significant extent on the nature and character of teachers' school-based communities, and that the challenge of enhancing teachers' professionalism is a local matter. The social, normative and organizational resources required by a productive teacher learning community are locally constructed and cannot be bureaucratically imposed. By implication, then, there are few quick fixes to enhancing teachers' professional status—to elevating teaching from a skilled occupation to a learning profession. Achieving that goal requires a major shift in technical, organizational and political conceptions of teaching and implicates all stakeholders in that process—educators at all levels, leaders and the public. The descriptive theory developed here about the form and function of teacher learning communities can inform that work.

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Teachers' Work and Identity – A Case for Strengthening Knowledge Relations

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This paper locates the current crisis in teachers' work and identity in the context of market led reform and restructuring. It maps the current discourses on education as a discipline and understanding of teaching as a profession and the implications of these for the nature of teachers' work and professional development. Drawing upon recent research it discuss the impact of the changing notions of teachers' work and quality on issues of teacher identity and their knowledge base. Based on an understanding of the self in a moral framework, it then argues for the conceptualisation of an authentic knowledge base for teachers that validates their identity and experience and incorporates an ontology of value based action.

The ongoing education reform process is characterised by two parallel discourses that reflect the international trends over the last decade or so. The first is a call for preparing teachers to become professional and humane individuals (NCFTE, 2009). The other is the adoption of state policies and interventions based on arguments in favour of efficiency and outcomes. It appears to be the case that the discourses are at odds with one another. To begin with, the notion of humane may be understood within an ethic of care

(Noddings, 2002), very often held up as an ideal by teachers, it is potentially problematic as it projects and reinforces the traditional roles of women in their domestic space into the arena of their work. The notion of professional too has been a highly contested one in the history of teaching (Lawn *cited in* Smyth, 2014) and there is very little clarity on what being a professional actually entails. There is then an inherent tension between the notions of humane and professional. While the former may entail individual attention to students, the latter would require the very opposite, which is to focus on overall outcomes (Kumar, 2011). In order to meet the demands of being a professional, the teacher is often required to redefine her relationship with students in ways that are contrary to the demands of being humane. The second discourse is in many ways consistent with changes occurring world over towards making schools more efficient and outcome oriented. This is particularly evident in specific actions at the national and global levels that are, camouflaged under the language of efficiency, performativity, measurable outcomes and quality (Apple & Jungck, 2013; Ball, Thrupp, & Forsey, 2010; Kumar, 2011). An emerging perspective from the so called developed and developing countries conceptualise these changes within the broader framework of globalisation and the hegemonic nature of the neoliberal regimes.

There is also a discernible move towards 'destatalisation' (Jessop in Nambissan & Ball, 2010) which underlies the increasing legitimacy for neoliberal answers to the issues confronting education propelled by advocacy networks that operate across national borders (Nambissan & Ball, 2010). While these discourses gain momentum in India in a manner similar to the global trends, the contextual factors are bound to have effects that may well be very different from those seen elsewhere. The postcolonial reform measures have been largely unsuccessful in affording teachers the voice and

agency required to meaningfully engage with issues that impact them the most as they continue to remain outside institutions of higher education and viewed as nothing more than transmitters of pre-designed curricula. Despite several progressive policy reforms in education in recent years, teachers themselves have remained marginal in these discussions (Batra, 2012). Teachers are subjected to the rising trends of managerialism that has led to 'trivialisation of teachers' work and identity'. Their long standing low professional status and reductivist view of their knowledge leads to teachers being treated as resources to be developed and not as intellectual beings with agency and capacity to learn from experience (Kumar, 2011). This clearly marks the current crisis in teachers work as one of their identity and calls for the need to establish a conceptual basis for this identity which is under threat from neoliberal forces.

Neoliberalism and Education: Neoliberalism is an economic doctrine that in the latter part of the twentieth century became a widely adopted framework for social, political and economic governance. It works on the central idea of classical economics that a free market is an essential prerequisite for a free society (Peters *in* Chopra, 2003) but as noted by David Harvey (2005), the freedoms embodied by neoliberalism in fact reflect the interests of private property owners, financial capital, large corporations and businesses. The distinguishing aspect of neoliberalism is that it departs from the laissez-faire approach of liberalism to co-opt the state to act in favour of private capital. It directs the state apparatus meant for human well-being to act in favour of global high finance and corporations to effectively reconstitute society in terms of its economic relations (Davies & Bansel, 2007). Neoliberalism has undeniable implications for education. Studies in the Indian context have further highlighted specific issues such as dilution of commitment to quality education due to

informalisation of teachers' work (Batra, 2012; Pandey, 2006), the problems in instituting pedagogic reform agendas based on the promise of child centred education (Sriprakash, 2011), the flaws in the very conception of education as evidenced in the growth of low cost private schooling in urban India (Sarangapani & Winch, 2010). The common thread here is a distinct tilt in the reform policy in a neoliberal direction along the twin 'axes of parental school choice and privatisation' ((Nambissan & Ball, 2010) sought to be justified by citing poor learning outcomes without recognition of the ground realities of the social factors that affect learning in schools for the underprivileged (Bhattacharya 2009 *in* M. Majumdar, 2011). The responsibility for the current 'crisis' in government schooling has been pinned rather too readily on teachers while the real issue of the conditions under which these teachers function, the wide variation in terms of resources, infrastructure remain largely masked (Majumdar, 2011).

These are but examples of a certain common paradigmatic view about the goals for society at large, aims of education in particular and thereby the kind of schools we provide for and the nature of teachers' work. I would conceptualise these policy changes broadly as restructuring of education which as noted above has several parallels with the restructuring happening in varying degrees across the developing and developed world. One of the most significant and fundamental ways in which these processes have impacted education is the way in which the nature of teachers' work has been recast to align with the new language of accountability (Madan, 2012)locating its intellectual and institutional dimensions of getting public institutions to function. Extending the control vs. commitment argument posed by Rowan, the paper argues that the notions of teachers' work shapes the organisational aspect of a school. underlying one kind of organisational approach is the technical instrumental ones that dictate a

specific set of choices to be made by the actors, and these draw largely from the set of doctrines termed as New Public Managament (NPM.

The accountability framework is closely linked with the technical instrumental approaches that shape and define organisations pushing them towards certain choices. In schools, these choices are dictated by the notion that improved school functioning and teacher efficiency can be achieved not by appeals to teacher identities, cultures and sense of professionalism but through applying strong managerial tactics. This in turn presupposes certain conception of teachers' work as mechanistic rather than organic, routine rather than involving new challenges that have to be handled contextually rather than by referring to a rule book. The 'control and command approach' of the accountability framework may result in effective schools and teachers but it is the 'commitment approach' that recognises the cultural identities and professionalism of the human actors that go into the building of better schools (Rowan *in* ibid). There has been a concerted move towards three kinds of policy technologies namely, market, managerialism and performativity that constitute a reform package (Ball, 2003). These are posed as alternatives to and often overlaid upon the older policy technologies of professionalism and bureaucracy. Though these are interrelated, the notion of performativity has the greatest implication for teachers' life and work as this changes one's subjective relations with one another and alters the social identity. Performativity outwardly encourages a sense of individualism and greater freedom for self-regulation and improving productivity. In reality however it signifies not the withdrawal of control but the institution of a new form of control where values such as commitment and service held by individuals are of little worth.

This establishes two things. First, the neoliberal regime with its overriding focus on efficient functioning of schools has a direct consequence for conceptions of teachers' work and professionalism. Second, there is an urgent need for unravelling the connection between the emerging conceptions of teachers work and the attendant negotiation of their identities.

Teacher Professionalism: The concept of a professional being a contested one, a preliminary understanding of what it is to be one, is needed. The notion of professional or professionalism is not a static concept and has evolved over time. A professional has been defined mainly as someone who possesses skills or expertise that proceed from a broad knowledge base, strong technical culture and shared standards of practice (Downie, 1990; Hargreaves, 2000). She provides service through a special, legitimised relationship with clients; speaks out on broad matters of public policy and justice; is independent of influence of state or commerce; is educated as distinct from merely being trained (Downie, 1990). The allegiance to a specialised knowledge base, and autonomy stand out as the key defining characteristics of a professional. This of course is an ideal, evaluative and not a sociological characterisation. On the contrary, a Weberian characterisation of profession wherein the rise of rationality in society corresponds with the rise of bureaucracy and professions particularly in the occident (Ritzer, 1975). Weber's notion of profession is unique in that he does not position professionalisation and bureaucratisation as antithetical to one another. In fact his conception combines all three sociological approaches to defining professions, viz., structure, process & power. Structure is the ahistorical and static characterisation of professions vis-à-vis the non-professions; process denotes the historical trajectory of professions or the stages they go through before they attain

the status of professions; and power denotes the monopoly the professional has over their work. More importantly, professionalization and bureaucratisation are aspects of rationalisation of society.

Coming to teachers as professionals and teaching as a profession, the knowledge base of a teacher especially knowledge *that*, must be grounded, broad based and the teacher must have the ability to communicate the knowledge *how* through humane practice (Ibid, p155-6). That is, convey the value of the subject along with its content. This is possible for a teacher who is educated rather than narrowly trained and is inclined to develop her knowledge and skills within a framework of values (Ibid, p157). One can therefore see how the introduction of market forces and competition in education could threaten the independence of the profession (Ibid. 158).

In the neoliberal regime where the market forces shape and dictate organisational choices, a professional is compelled to engage in relationships that are primarily economic. In this schema, with the focus on effective delivery of products and services, education becomes more of a commodity relationship than a social cultural one (Smyth, 2014: 284). This notion of education as a commodity raises several conceptual issues for teaching as a profession. Most significantly, it comes in direct conflict with one of the core ideal of teaching upheld by most teachers which is the emotional dimension of teachers' work, caring for their students and their learning ((Lasky, 2005; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002; Zembylas, 2010). This is an important dimension to analyse as increasing numbers of women are entering the teaching profession in India (Manjrekar, 2013) and this trend towards feminisation of the teaching workforce has implications for changing notions about the profession and the demands placed on teachers, in contrast to those placed on their male counterparts (Apple,

2013). Particularly, the child friendly pedagogies evoke the imagery of the nurturing role traditionally associated with women in their domestic spheres. In India, there is now greater participation in Education by the private sector, through corporate houses entering the space to provide infrastructure and even personnel to poorly staffed government schools. It becomes crucial to study what these policy packages mean for women teachers' lives and work during neoliberal reforms given the critical role of education in social reproduction and identity construction in modern societies (Manjrekar, 2013).

Given these factors, an understanding of teacher professionalism becomes all the more challenging. I will divide this broad concept (Calgren *in* Kompf, 1996) into 3 distinct aspects for further analysis.

1. Professional knowledge of teachers- what is it, how it is organised, how can it be developed?

2. Professionalisation of teachers – process by which an occupation becomes a profession including professional autonomy, long university education, control of the development of professional knowledge

3. Teacher professionalism – quality of the teachers' work.

Professional Knowledge of teachers: It is established that a professional in any field enjoys a certain monopoly over a specified body of knowledge that forms the basis for certain obligations and privileges she enjoys. This knowledge lies at the base of how the profession itself is defined and to a large extent is also the source of status that the profession occupies. The status of teachers in society has varied across time and cultures. The most familiar discourse in the Indian tradition is of the guru/shishya which many teachers use as a point of reference to this day. The guru in this tradition

was the repository of all knowledge the base of which was predominantly scriptural which only a select few had the privilege of accessing. There were other models too, of patron/ client that prevailed among artisans or parent / child (Sarangapani, 2003). These conceptions are frequently invoked to suit the organisational framework of schooling that is being promoted. Other cultures have had similar conceptions that have changed over time including some unflattering ones. For example, Montaigne in his essay titled 'On the schoolmasters learning' (Montaigne, 2004) talks of the contempt with which teachers were regarded in Roman and Greek times. This contempt stemmed primarily from what was perceived as the need teachers had to 'debase' themselves by having to peddle their knowledge in exchange for material gain. These traditional conceptions with the guru on the one end of the spectrum and the peddler of knowledge on the other end are no doubt discordant with modern value systems. The bureaucratisation of education in colonial times had the biggest impact on the status accorded to the village schoolmaster in India. Increased centralisation and the resulting need for regulatory and monitoring mechanisms lessened teachers' engagement with curricular issues and allowed for the text book culture to take over (Kumar, 1986) and the resulting loss of autonomy led teachers to become 'meek dictators' in the classroom (Kumar, 2005). This could arguably mark the point where the 'deintellectualisation' (Wilson *in* Hartley & Whitehead, 2006) of teachers began.

The question that remains then is what is the source and body of professional knowledge that teachers should claim? This is inevitably connected with the status of education itself as a discipline. Basil Bernstein as a sociologist of knowledge has analysed the status hierarchies of disciplines (Middleton, 2008), and his concepts have been used by researchers (Beck & Young, 2005; Moore & Muller, 2002) to further explain

the contemporary processes in educational knowledge. For Bernstein, there are two types of knowledge structures, hierarchical and horizontal (Bernstein, 2000). Hierarchical knowledge structures typified by natural sciences progress through integration of knowledge propositions. Horizontal knowledge structures on the other hand are not unitary but plural and consist of series of parallel, even incommensurable concepts that defy incorporation into a more general theory (Young & Muller, 2007). Furthermore, the horizontal knowledge structures have weak verticality i.e., internal relations among ideas as well as weak grammar i.e., external relation to data. By these criteria, educational knowledge could very well be characterised as having a segmented horizontal knowledge structure with a weak grammar. Bernstein did not hold out much hope for the growth of knowledge in education as it lacked the verticality of the hierarchical knowledge structures such as physics. Countering such a such a deficit view of the growth of knowledge in education, others like Maton (2010) have argued that the key to understanding knowledge structures in fields such as education is by recognising that the cosmology of these modes of theorising are less epistemological and more axiological. I will return to this argument a bit later.

It has also been argued (Sarangapani, 2011) that education may be considered a 'meta discipline due to the interactions with the constituent disciplines although it is this very nature of the discipline that weakens its structure providing multiple points of entry into its discourse'. The existence of a community of practice that enables the transmission of tacit knowledge, the ability to think through problems in a complex manner that reveals a complex epistemology, may lead one to regard education as a discipline 'albeit one with a weak structure'. There is also the familiar divide in

education between this theory and practice that has led to a deep disconnect that is experienced especially by student teachers between the disciplinary knowledge and classroom practice (Pope *in* Kompf, 1996).

Professionalisation of teachers: The second aspect of professionalisation is equally problematic. One challenge of being a teacher is navigating the pathways chartered by educational reformists (Stickney, 2012). Unlike other professions, where the professionals have autonomy and control over the development of professional knowledge in their respective fields, teachers do not enjoy the same autonomy or control. Historically, experts from outside the field of education with no background in teaching have decided these parameters. It has been argued that, despite a perception of classroom and teaching as unchanging entities, aims and purposes of school education change with the changing society. One aspect of professional knowledge is also being able to lean on tradition and continuities in professional experience which is denied to teachers and for this reason, teaching profession has been described as a 'rupture' profession (Calgren *in* Kompf, 1996:22). In this 'rupture' profession where the experts decide to change the goals at regular intervals, there is constant change in teacher tasks and they are rendered without competencies in the new context.

Teacher Professionalism: The third aspect namely, quality in teachers' work or teacher professionalism is the area that has received the greatest amount of attention both in terms of policy and research. This is closely connected with the previous aspect in the sense that teachers are not considered sufficiently professionalised to determine the parameters of quality in their profession. As a result of this, there is a constant change in what constitutes quality in teachers' work and it is determined by those outside the profession.

Also, professionalism, which is the process of raising standards of a given profession may often be contradictory to professionalization which denotes the process of improving the status of the profession. In other words, the technical ways of defining teaching which accompanies moves towards professionalism might undermine the other important dimensions such as devoting more time for individual student attention or the emotional aspects (Hargreaves, 2000).

Analyses of the notion of professionalism from a social critical perspective (Smyth et. al. 2000) have noted the rapid intensification of teachers' work in the name of professionalisation of teaching. Among the processes that characterise what is being termed as a contemporary crisis in teachers' work, are the "damaging of the student teacher relationship through the intrusion of market" and a subjugation of teachers' knowledge (Ibid: 146). Smyth *et.al.* have gone so far as to term this experience of teachers as alienation to describe their increasing powerlessness and negative feelings about the self. Studies of teachers' lives from the interactionist perspectives too have brought to light the everyday struggles of teachers who have to contend with the conflicting expectations from them (Middleton, 2008; Zembylas, 2010). While there is a demand for teachers to adapt to the changing social demands, there is a lack of recognition of the inherent conflict between the strictly professional and emotional demands on the teacher.

It is evident that notions of quality in education change with changing sociocultural conditions. By the turn of the century, didactic teaching had been replaced by the discourse on reflective practice which has become the dominant discourse in teacher education today but there has been very little critical examination as to why this should be so.

It has been argued (Smyth, 1992), that such an overemphasis on reflective practice has occurred in contexts where there have been moves towards greater centralised control that leads to loss of autonomy and undermining of the dignity of teachers by forcing them to subscribe to a prescriptive paradigm. This is but an example of processes that operate in subtle forms to invalidate teacher knowledge about their own work and contexts resulting in teachers undermining their own valid conceptions in favour of those that are prescribed. Any discourse on teacher professionalism must therefore begin with an authentic construction of what constitutes teacher professional knowledge.

If one is to engage productively with the creation of such an authentic knowledge base for teachers that would be the foundation of the creation of their selves, it is important to acknowledge that teachers construct their knowledge in action and within a value laden framework. The notion of disembodied knowledge has a long tradition in western philosophy that locates value outside of the human realm. The self turns inward more and more till such a stage where mental states are located within a so called inner space removed far from the realm of action (Frisina, 2012). This Cartesian disengagement and rationality employed to remove subjective experience from thinking about the natural world becomes extended to the concept of self. Sensory and other experiences of the world must now be subject to the strict control of reasoning. This move towards interiority is in a manner the objectification of all things external including the body. Unsurprisingly, this move parallels the triumph of objective knowledge of the natural sciences as the model of true knowledge.

An alternative position is that of the new sociology of education that argues for a notion of knowledge that is constructed socially. This is really an epistemological position

that sees knowledge as being relative to culture as opposed to knowledge as an independent universalist phenomenon where the latter is identified with privileging certain power structures. While it may be true that knowledge is constructed socially, but when it is argued that all forms of knowledge are a matter merely of social convention with no valid basis for differentiation, it becomes alarmingly relativist (Blackledge & Hunt 1985). This is recognised by Young, himself a critic of the hegemonic nature of knowledge who is known to have revised his position. While he continues to believe in the historical and social construction of knowledge, but opines that the new sociology of education that began with a commitment to truth undermined its own project by rejecting any idea of truth (Young, 2007).

Teacher Identity

The notion of teacher identity is admittedly a complex one. The concept of identity has itself been a topic of many philosophical, sociological and psychological explorations but has eluded an easy definition. As for teacher identity, its importance for teacher education and development is acknowledged widely in literature but there is very little convergence on its components, sources and relationship with related issues. Teacher identity is viewed as being dynamic, almost organic in nature, conceived of as something that can be formed, shaped and can shift according to the context (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). It is regarded as embodied, which is to say that the construction of identity cannot be regarded as removed from the material conditions of teaching but as continuously negotiated through experience (Alsup, 2006). It is at the same time consistent with the ideal or moral conceptions of teaching. One of the most significant aspects of identity is however the relationship with the self or self-concept. While the moral aspect of the self-concept is widely recognised, what is probably overlooked or less evident is the

sense of dignity that is inalienably linked to the moral aspect of the self.

Earlier, it was seen that theorising in education can be regarded as being more axiological than epistemological. This view is in consonance with the fact that for philosophers and thinkers from Plato to Kant to Dewey, education has been regarded first and foremost a moral act and these moral aspects have clear implications for a conception of teachers' self. Following Charles Taylor (1992), any description of the self must acknowledge the extent to which the understanding of the self is linked to an understanding of the good. Taylor's moral framework consists of three axes viz., respect for and obligation to others, understanding of what makes a good life and notions of dignity. If one were to apply this framework to teachers, it would be constituted by subjective notions of how a teacher might fulfil her respect for and obligations to her students, her notion of what makes for a good teacher and how while accomplishing these, she might maintain her sense of dignity. As all moral frameworks are understood as fundamentally social, these notions too would be constituted essentially in a social context.

The obvious question then is regarding the source of this identity or moral framework and it appears that it is the teacher's knowledge base. Goodson posits that forms of knowledge defines the "kind of people teachers are and believe themselves to be" (2003: 4). It is the systematic erosion of this knowledge base or even the inadequate understanding of its constitution that has contributed to the contemporary crisis in teaching referred to earlier. It has impacted teachers' work in deep ways, the curriculum, their forms of instruction, ways of working, ways of relating to pupils, how they are seen by others and by themselves. The challenges to teacher identities as professionals have been many but the core of the challenge lies in the fact that the close connect between

their knowledge base and identities has not been sufficiently acknowledged and in fact they are perceived to have no distinct knowledge base.

There is equally 'disrespect for teachers' professional knowledge; it is seen as either non-existent or wrong'. They should be doing not what they think they should be doing but what they have been told is paradigmatically appropriate as determined by the latest set of goals and conditions for their work (Calgren *in* Kompf, 1996:25). Therefore we see oversimplified solutions being offered to the problems in education that include school choice initiatives, replacing or 'teacher proofing' (Giroux, 2012) classrooms. The method and aim of such packages is to legitimise what might be called 'market-driven management pedagogies' (Ibid). These new management regimes have a de-humanising effect leaving little scope for the teacher to negotiate her multiple roles and identities (Kumar, 2011: 38).

Studies in different contexts have focused on teacher identity as one of the most complex and crucial aspects for research and find that teachers devise strategies to negotiate with the identities imposed from the outside. It has been found that (Sachs, 2001) in response to the managerial professionalism imposed by the authorities, teachers form new professional identities that are often not in consonance with the imposed identity. Studies on the impact of educational restructuring on teacher identities, find that the disintegration of self-identity from the social identity results in teachers having to engage in what is termed 'identity work' (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002) to negotiate some consistency between the two. This identity work was found to be largely emotional work that required teachers to expend considerable amount of energies in forming, shaping, constructing and re constructing notions about themselves as teachers to keep up with the change in

context, expectations from society etc. The conflict between the role expectations ensuing from the restructuring and teachers' self-identities have led to the adoption of strategic, instrumentalist identities (Ibid). Studies have also shown that teacher autonomy and agency can play a pivotal role in professional learning so as to offset the negative policy impact (Bodman, Taylor, & Morris, 2012).

The long standing recommendation (Batra, 2012),to relocate teacher education with the systems of higher education as a way to end the intellectual isolation of the teacher implicitly links the issue of teacher agency with the strengthening of their intellectual standing. What is being emphasised here is the urgent need to address issues of teacher professionalism and identity that have the potential to impact the very reform agendas. The micro studies of teachers' work lives in India in the recent years have brought out the relevance of grassroots perspectives emerging from the actual school life experience of teachers (Majumdar, 2011) while stressing the importance of connecting with the broader structural frameworks that leads to robust theorizing.

I will now briefly return to the earlier discussion on the nature of educational knowledge. If we are to engage productively with the creation of an authentic knowledge base for teachers that would be the foundation of the creation of their selves, it is important to acknowledge that teachers construct their knowledge in action and within a value laden framework. The notion of disembodied knowledge has a long tradition in western philosophy that locates value outside of the human realm. The self turns inward more and more till such a stage where mental states are located within a so called inner space removed far from the realm of action (Frisina, 2012). This Cartesian disengagement and rationality employed to remove subjective experience from thinking about the natural world becomes extended to the concept of self. Sensory and other

experiences of the world must now be subject to the strict control of reasoning. This move towards interiority is in a manner the objectification of all things external including the body. Unsurprisingly, this move parallels the triumph of objective knowledge of the natural sciences as the model of true knowledge. I submit therefore that the task of building an authentic knowledge base of teachers is an ontological one that necessarily integrates value and action.

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Teaching Democracy: Relational Ontology in Feminist and Ambedkarite critique

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In *Democracy and Education* (2004/1916), Dewey charts out the democratic ideals of education, which forms the foundation for his philosophy of education. He begins with firmly stating the primary goal of education is aimed at 'social continuity of life', in turn binding democracy and education inexorably. Here, democracy is not understood only in terms of governance but also as a way of life. This understanding of democracy has deep affinity with the idea of learning, as we need the foundation of democratic spirit for mutual learning to take place among diverse communities of the society. If instead there is an authoritative spirit present in the social, learning loses it mutuality and becomes one-sided didacticism. Such a unidirectional understanding of education comes along with several problematic notions, primary one being the static hierarchy between the learner and the teacher, where the teacher seems to have nothing to learn from the student, or one identity group from another in the social context, problematized insightfully by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000/1970). Therefore, a truly democratic society needs to be fundamentally open towards mutual learning and participation. If at any point, a group asserts themselves in exclusion to other group(s) and disrupts mutual learning, the democratic spirit vanishes, as both

Dewey and his student Ambedkar highlight in their germinal works.

Dewey problematizes the breakdown of democratic spirit in society, which occurs when groups become exclusive and isolated. This exclusivity suffocates possibilities of dialogue among different groups. Dewey states that

> [i]n order to have a large number of values in common, all the members of the group must have an equable opportunity to receive and to take from others. There must be a large variety of shared undertakings and experiences. Otherwise, the influences which educate some into masters, educate others into slaves. And the experience of each party loses in meaning, when the free interchange of varying modes of life-experience is arrested. A separation into a privileged and a subject-class prevents social endosmosis. The evils thereby affecting the superior class are less material and less perceptible, but equally real. Their culture tends to be sterile, to be turned back to feed on itself; their art becomes a showy display and artificial; their wealth luxurious; their knowledge overspecialized; their manners fastidious rather than humane. (2004: 90)

Here, Dewey introduces the concept of social endosmosis which is at the core of a democratic learning spirit. Such an exchange among different members and groups keep the dynamic nature of social alive, as they "learn from one another, and thereby to expand their horizons" (ibid.: 92). However, this democratic spirit can easily get hijacked by the selfish interests of groups who become isolated and exclusive in a desire to hold onto their own privileges. This anti-social spirit may allow for material benefits for the upper classes, but also stagnates them at the same time. Dewey goes onto elaborate that it is the isolation

of people and groups based on class, race and national identities, which is antithetical to the spirit of democracy and education.

Ambedkar, who draws substantially on Dewey in *Annihilation of Caste* locates the anti-social spirit in India with the isolation of groups based on caste and gender. Ambedkar argues that caste system is the worst form of exclusivization of groups as it divides based on labourers, instead of labour, and arranges them in a rigid graded hierarchy (2014/1936: 47). Moreover, there is no space for individual preference or choice in deciding or changing one's occupation, but instead it's based purely on the "dogma of predestination" (ibid.: 48). He further highlights the complete absence of a social or democratic spirit among the different castes as they want to keep themselves exclusive, and only in cases of Hindu-Muslim riots that there is a feeling of affiliation between the castes. However, Ambedkar argues that for a democratic society what is required is not merely physical proximity but also associated living, which can arise only through shared activities in which different communities participate together. For this kind of associated living, the caste groups need to rise above the interests of their own groups, and challenge the exclusivity that has isolated them from each other. Thus, for Ambedkar, the precondition for a democratic and associated living was annihilation of caste, without which exclusion and discrimination would continue unchallenged.

It is in this context that I place the problem of identity based discrimination and violence in contemporary India, and its damaging repercussions on breaking down the spirit of democracy and mutual learning. Following Dewey, Freire and Ambedkar, I argue that if a democratic society implies shared and associated living, then the current isolation of communities and deep rupture in their relationships due

to discrimination is antithetical to the democratic project. What is the role of education in such a context? Is it merely to train the students in particular fields of knowledge and skills without bothering about the increasing fissures in the social setup? Romila Thapar (2016) and Avijit Pathak (2009: 23) strongly argue against such an attempt of imagining formal education as merely concerned with technical skills without an ethical component, as it can easily allow for the skills of a doctor, engineer, scientist or historian to be used for disastrous purposes, most notably observed with the Nazi regime. Philosophers like Dewey and Ambedkar would instead place democratic ideals at the heart of educational aims, as public education has civic responsibilities towards nurturing the relationship between different groups for a healthy democracy. Such an inculcation of democratic spirit would encourage us to address the problem of ever-increasing tension among communities, as they attempt to scurry for selfish interests and use any available prejudice to discriminate against other groups.

Education here is not only understood as a domain for inculcating democratic values for 'social continuity of life,' but also as the space where the contestation and fissures among different groups play out in arguably their most severe forms. The Thorat Committee Report of 2007 underscored this problem of caste discrimination in the most prestigious medical institute of the country. The report highlighted the severity of the discrimination problem when they interacted with the SC/ST students of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). Clearing the entrance examination and getting into the Institute, which is considered the toughest part for most, is only the beginning of problems for SC/ST students. As they get harrowed throughout their time in the college, right from ragging to examination to cultural and social activities and job placements. This results in

many students undergoing trauma because of exclusion and humiliation, which can also make them drop out of college or take the extreme step of committing suicide. The problem of exclusion is not only restricted to students but continue even when they become teachers, professors or administrators (Kumar 2016).

This problem finally blew into national and international visibility with the suicide of a Dalit PhD Scholar, Rohith Vemula, at Hyderabad Central University (HCU) on 17th January 2016. Rohith was an active member of Ambedkar Students Association (ASA) at HCU and was vocal in highlighting the problems with Brahminical forces that have increasingly targeted marginalized communities with exclusion and violence, especially Dalits, Adivasis, women and religious minorities. A systematic and institutionally sanctioned discrimination finally led Rohith to commit suicide, but not before writing about his struggles in a poetic and philosophical tenor, which touched the hearts of people across the world and initiated a strong student's movement against identity based discrimination in educational spaces.

In the language of protests against HCU administration's role in Rohith's exclusion, one can observe a distinct legal-political approach, especially because of the critical nature of the problem and the immediacy required to address it. Khora (2016) articulates this position by arguing for a separate law required for educational spaces, which is particularly cognizant about indirect forms of discrimination. In addition to an anti-discrimination law which is a reactive measure, Khora argues that there should be proactive measures too such as Discrimination Audit (ibid). However, he doesn't deliberate on what should be the role of education itself in engaging with discrimination, if any. Pathak (2009) also raises this concern when he states that "education is understood as too much of a 'soft' domain, and hence without

revolutionary changes in the 'hard' domain of political economy, an attempt to alter discrimination is useless, or at best a utopian/idealistic venture" (ibid.: 9-10). Pathak goes on to argue that education actually has a central role of play in the moral transformation required to address the most crucial ethical problems of our times.

However, what Rohith's case has emphasized is that our Universities, which should ideally be the fountainheads for spreading democratic ideals in the society, are themselves plagued by the worst forms of exclusions that undermine democracy. Tagore claimed that Universities ought to be *the centre of Indian culture* which should sustain and keep the culture dynamic and alive in contrast to being preserved as a fossilized entity of the past. But in a society where the University themselves aren't able to uphold fundamental democratic and humanitarian ideals, what are we to expect in the rest of the society? Therefore, the recent protests for justice at Universities has to be understood in this context, where democratic education needs to first and foremost address the exclusion within Universities and other educational spaces. However, at the same time, we can't isolate the University from its social context and focussing on them alone is not sufficient. University can never remain in isolation from its socio-political surroundings as that creates another kind of fissure in society. Dewey (2008/1899) understood the importance of this continuity between *The School and Society* and, therefore, problematized any kind of isolation of school from its social milieu. For this reason, education has the dual responsibility of making both the University, as well as the society a democratic space. In the absence of either of this, both the society and the University would descend into group conflicts and cultural stagnation, which we are witnessing now in arguably the most acute form.

Thorat (2013, 2016) along with many other educational thinkers claim that education should be an instrument of bringing about change in the society if we emphasize on "unlearning undemocractic values". According to Thorat, most of our efforts have gone in giving legal safeguards to people who are discriminated, like the Anti-untouchability Act of 1955, Prevention of Atrocities Act of 1989 and 2015, and Vishaka Guidelines Act of 1997 and 2013, which are essential but not enough. He claims "[l]aws help to prevent, but not cure" (2016). Therefore, he argues that we need to think of discrimination not only as a legal problem but also as a pedagogical issue to be addressed through civic learning and engagement. Thorat advocates for a third goal of informed and engaged citizenship as an educational aim apart from "imparting knowledge and career preparation" (2013).

Causal Ontology of Discrimination

Although Thorat problematizes an extremely important lacuna in education but he doesn't elaborate on how these undemocratic values can be avoided. He does highlight few attempts in the US to bring in "education for diversity," which includes inter-group dialogue and desegregation that can help address one's prejudices about members of other groups. He hints at the vast amount of educational literature on prejudice, which has been inspired primarily by psychological development theories in the second half of the twentieth century. In this conception, prejudice is understood as a problematic cognitive state that can arise due to negative stereotypes about other identity groups, resulting in discriminatory action. Such prejudices can either be conscious or unconscious, often followed with reasonable justifications which makes it hard to address them. Therefore, for educators the "ultimate, practical objective of understanding both prejudice and tolerance

is to reduce discrimination" (Witenberg 2000: 1). In the context of contemporary multicultural societies, she claims it is imperative to engage with problems of racial and colour discrimination in the attempt to become a more tolerant society, a sentiment which other psychologists like Banks (2002) and Camicia (2007) agree as a key dimension of multicultural education. Camicia argues that "[p]rejudical attitudes and beliefs undermine principles of social justice in a liberal democracy" (2007: 219). He further problematizes the presence of prejudices in the educational space where it can severely affect the student who perceives prejudice against her, both in explicit and implicit forms.

Different pedagogical strategies like increasing interaction and dialogue among groups, cooperation, and equal status have been proposed to reduce prejudices. Terming it as 'The Contact Hypothesis', Blum (2009) explains that under this strategy it is assumed that once people get into contact with the other, their pre-existing prejudices are challenged by observing the complex behaviour of the individual which can't be reduced to a simplistic ideological box. Over a period of time by meeting different people from other groups, it is expected that the person will be able to challenge her pre-conceived notions and come to accept the futility of her prejudices in understanding the other.

Although it seems like a plausible strategy to counter prejudice, Blum argues that its underlying assumption has been challenged by psychologists for a long time. They argue that holding prejudices about the other is a more complex phenomenon than mere ignorance. It is also observed that people even after having friends from the so-called 'other' group, continue to hold their prejudices while not linking it to their friends. Blum states that "there is not a tight fit between the individual and group level; persons can be prejudiced against group X while nevertheless thinking

well of and liking particular members of group X. And on the other side, persons can change their conscious view of group X, while nevertheless continuing to react to particular encountered members of group X in prejudicial ways" (2009: 463).

Instead, Devine (1989) claims that it is a better strategy to bring about conscious interventions in an otherwise automatic prejudicial response. Thus, if we can impart egalitarian and non-prejudiced beliefs to the students as norms for action then the deeper prejudices may be overcome. In a sense, Devine argues that our interventions should focus on conscious response of the agent rather than her ignorance or knowledge about the other. By acting in respectful ways, it is hoped that the person herself can address the bad habits that she might have imbibed in the socialization process. Blum adds that all educational strategies to reduce prejudices have their own set of problems and the least we can do is "enforce rules that promote civil and respectful conduct toward out-groups" (2009: 468).

Here it becomes important to interrogate this psychologization of discrimination that the dominant educational literature presents. Is prejudice, as a problematic cognitive state, the cause behind the outward discriminatory action? This causal ontological explanation points us to the larger theory where action is understood as being caused by either a conscious intention or an unconscious desire/belief of the subject. Hence, it becomes important to critically examine this claim that the two dominant theories of action present viz. rational choice theory and normativism. The common assumption that both models work with is the presence of a rational and autonomous self, separate from its socio-historical intertwinement with the world, who chooses to make decisions based on certain cognitive states of desire or beliefs. In this picture, the self makes its decisions independent

of its socio-historical embodiment that it is situated in. In the rational choice model, the decision to act is made based on desire or belief-system of the agent, where rationality directs the agent to maximize the utilitarian benefit from the action. Thus, action itself has only an instrumental value for fulfilling the desires of the agent, which can be manipulated through positive and negative incentives. In this way, certain actions can get priority over others, as they are associated with more positive benefits than others. Similarly, one can prevent certain actions through deterrence by punitive measures, orchestrated by legal mechanisms. However, rational choice theorists like Lahno (2009) and Bicchieri (2006) find out in their experiments with game theory that rational choice is not the only motivation for action. Apart from selfish interests of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain, agents also choose to act for their commitment towards duty, which leads us to the model of normativism.

Normativism too works on a similar assumptions of atomic individualism and a causal ontology of action. However, it critiques the utilitarian conception of action as the choice based on desire or belief may not necessarily to the morally right decision. In the social theory of action, it is Parsons (1978) who identified these problems and argued for a different approach towards moral action. He developed on the Kantian model of categorical imperatives for a social theory of action, which allows one to overcome desire as the prime motivation for action through a higher cognitive faculty, which is that of the will. It is the autonomous will of the person that can supersede desire and commit to action based on public reason. Thus, the focus in Normativism is on rational deliberation of norms, which can guide the agent in doing the right action. Korsgaard (1996), drawing on Kant, argues that reason allows for a distance from one's impulses and desires, which helps in evaluating the

decision more accurately. This detachment allows the person to escape her particularistic perspective and reason from a universal standpoint. Habermas (1996) and Brandom (1994), emphasize the intersubjective nature of norm deliberation, which allows for continual reinterpretation of norms based on the social context. Thus, Habermas acknowledges the socio-historical influence on public reason, and underscores the communicative and deliberative aspect for arriving at norms. Brandom elaborates on the 'deontic scorekeeping' among rational agents in the social space, which leads to the formulation of norms. In his 'two-ply' model, Brandom understands action as a doxastic commitment to norms, where the agent consciously intends to translate the norms into action. Hence, action retains its secondary status in comparison to deliberation and communication of norms.

Feminist Critique

In contrast to this understanding of action as being caused only through certain cognitive states, feminist and Ambedkarite critiques challenge both the secondary status of action and the individualistic ontology of self. Feminists are primarily wary of the anti-particularistic stance in the conception of universal reason and identity, as they argue that it is the dominant white heterosexual male identity which masquerades as the universal one, while relegating women, people of colour and religious/sexual minorities to their particularity. In response to the atomistic individualism in the dominant models, feminist philosophers like Chodorow, Gilligan and Noddings argue for a relational ontology of the self, which challenges the distinct separation between self and the world (Willet and Anderson 2015/1999).

At the outset, Noddings charts out the limitations in the dominant understanding of ethical action as primarily an activity of logos i.e. moral reasoning and establishment of

principles at the cost of ignoring eros and care (2013: 1). She claims that most of the violence in the world today is done in the name of principles, as we keep establishing, contesting and subverting those principles regularly. She claims that "highly educated people, well trained in the arts and skills of reasoning, have performed demonstrably immoral acts" (2002: 1) which highlights the fact that reason alone can't be the motivation for moral action. She further states that principles are quite limited in being able to respond to the "practical domain of moral action," as most often there are many more factors influencing the action of a person located in a complex real-life situation. These factors operate both at the level of reason as well as affect, and it is in the affective aspect of moral action where Noddings places importance of care.

Care, for Noddings emerges from an ontological centrality of relation between the self and the world, rather than beginning from the assumption of a rational autonomous self, independent of its context. She clarifies that the nature of the relationship in care theory is that of reciprocity, different from the contract theories of Plato and Rawls (2013: 4). The contract understanding of relation lead to a kind of universalizability of action, i.e. a demand to act in a way that can become a maxim for others in a similar situation, which she 'emphatically' rejects. She claims there is an impossibility of "similar situation" as every scenario and the people involved are coming from different lived experiences, and therefore the demand of universalizability is unreasonable. She further argues that the moral principle approach is "ambiguous and unstable" which erroneously portrays a stance of certainty because for every principle there are exceptions which are constantly rationalized using one argument or other. Moreover, "history suggests that the prescriptive use of principles has not been effective" (2002: 1).

Instead she argues for an ethics of care which is an extension of the natural care we experience in nurturing relationships. She explains –

> Why do we recognize an obligation to care? If we were Kantians, we would trace our obligation to reason, to a commitment that logic won't allow us to escape. But in the ethic of care we accept our obligation because we value the relatedness of natural caring. Ethical caring is always aimed at establishing, restoring or enhancing the kind of relation in which we respond freely because we want to do so… It is feeling with and for the other that motivates us in natural caring. In ethical caring, this feeling is subdued, and so it must be augmented by a feeling for our own ethical selves (2002: 14)

The framework for moral education as developed in the works of Noddings, bell hooks and Hamington, emphasize on four components of modelling, dialogue, practice and confirmation. For Noddings, dialogue is at the centre of this model where she claims that "the carer must attend to or be engrossed in the cared-for, and the cared-for must receive the carer's effort at caring. This reception, too, is a form of attention… Dialogue is central to moral education because it always implies the question, What are you going through?" (2002: 16-17). Thus, both the teacher and students take positions of carer and cared-for alternatively, and listen to the lived experiences of each other as well as of those unrepresented in the classroom through autobiographies and films. However, both Noddings and bell hooks acknowledge that for such a dialogue and listening to happen, we first need a backdrop of trust and respect where the participants feel safe to share their experiences. In a hostile space, dialogue can easily take up the shape of a "war model" where the classroom space is used only to debate and win arguments while destroying the

fabric of care, essential to nurture relationships in the class (Noddings 2002: 17).

Hamington (2012, 2016) elaborates on the practice component by exemplifying his classroom experience of experimenting with embodied pedagogy. Instead of teaching ethics as a set of rules, virtues or "games of normative adjudication," he brought in experiential learning in addition to theoretical engagements with feminism and phenomenology. This allowed him to contest the dominant picture of

> treating ethics as if it were an abstract rubric to be learned and simply applied to real-world circumstances... Ethics is more than rules, and learning ethics is more than a cognitive exercise. Experiential learning is not merely an enhancement to pedagogical methods, but it essential for a robust understanding of morality. **The process of learning ethics is comingled with the content of ethics**. Another implication of this course is that it is difficult to divorce ontology from ethics. Learning from one self—one's embodiment, one's relationality, one's habits of existence—leads to a new perspective on ethical behaviour best described as care. (2016: 59, emphasis added)

Hamington claims that *knowing* about ethics is different from *being* ethical, where the emphasis is equally on the pedagogical process as the curricular content. As embodied pedagogy is directly concerned about the *being* of the student, it necessarily involves the ontological dimension of their relational selves. Hamington concludes that an embodied performative pedagogy bring ethics, ontology and epistemology together and thus challenges the separation of the self from body, action and world prevalent in our classrooms (ibid.: 62).

Ambedkarite critique

> An ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There should be varied and free points of contact with other modes of association. In other words there should be social endosmosis. This is fraternity, which is only another name for democracy. Democracy is not merely a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen.
>
> - Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in 'Annihiliation of Caste'

Ambedkar's conception of democracy and education was centrally influenced by Dewey as he placed high emphasis on democratic ideals of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity (Mukherjee 2009). Fraternity, in addition to equality, was one of the core principles for Ambedkar, for addressing concerns of social transformation and education, which gradually took the shape of *Maitri* in his Buddhist re-interpretation of the concept (Kumar 2015: 328). Both Dewey and Ambedkar were highly critical of the "dead wood" of the past, which could hinder the manifestation of the democratic ideals of a sovereign state. Critiquing the dead past of inhuman caste practices like untouchability, Ambedkar points out its burden on the present and future of India.

Thus, the principles from the past (as enshrined in Manusmriti and other Brahminical doctrines) had to be discarded, especially those which were inimical to the democratic ideals and didn't promote an "attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen" (Ambedkar 2014: 57).

Hence, Ambedkar's major contention was regarding the problematic ideals that the Indian society was carrying from the past and the need to rework them for an egalitarian society. However, Ambedkar knew that it was not merely by replacing ideals that caste and gender discrimination could be addressed. He thought of principles as only the guiding light for our actions and not as strict rules to be followed for doing the "right" action. Instead, he placed central emphasis on the responsibility that we have towards our fellowmen, which should inform our actions in the light of democratic principles.

Delving deeper into the everyday life of a democratic society, Ambedkar problematizes exclusion and isolation of groups from each other, as the major hindrance that disrupts the harmony among communities. He argues that for us to develop a culture of "like-mindedness," which is essential for a democratic society, we need to be in communication with each other, as well as participate in each other's activities (ibid.: 248). The problem becomes worse when communities are living in geographic proximity but are largely isolated from each other, which results in exclusivist conception of group identity. Instead it is through social endosmosis that can make re-socialization possible, essential for a discrimination free society.

Social endosmosis is not just about de-segregation, although it is an important component of it. It is more about participation in each other's life activities, which allows for shared identities to emerge. Thus, education is not just about 'knowing' the other which can address prejudicial notions about them. But it is fundamentally about the actions and activities that are shared with the so-called 'other.' However, for Ambedkar, the biggest roadblock for allowing such an endosmosis was untouchability and exclusionary caste practices (ibid.: 250). Untouchability was not only extremely

dehumanizing for Dalits but also the most anti-social practice, hindering any form of dialogue between the upper caste and the outcaste communities. Obviously such an anti-social practice emerges "wherever one group has 'interest of its own' which shut it out from full interaction with other groups, so that its prevailing purpose is protection of what it has got. This anti-social spirit, the spirit of protecting its own interests as much a marked feature of different castes in their isolation from one another as it is of nations in their isolation" (ibid.: 52). Thus, Ambedkar hints at the problems with the 'social ego' of groups which make them exclusive and self-serving, and blocks all possibility of dialogue and learning from each other.

Ambedkar recognized that such self-serving and anti-social group identities, are able to systematically subvert the state apparatus for their own benefits. Be it police, judiciary or bureaucracy, their complicity with the upper castes always end up in promoting further social tyranny on the depressed classes. As Dewey remarked, "merely legal guarantees of the civil liberties of free belief, free expression, free assembly are of little avail if in daily life freedom of communication, the give and take of ideas, facts, experience is choked by mutual suspicion, by abuse, by fear and hatred" (quoted in Mukherjee 2009: 360). Ambedkar also highlighted the difference between political and social democracy, where the Constitution could provide only political rights, which actually need to bring about social transformation. Thus, it is through teaching democracy that we can hope to encourage and facilitate endosmosis, which can aid not only in de-segregation but also mutual respect and participation.

Ambedkar, who turned substantially to Buddhism later in his life, understood self as primarily in a relation of responsibility with the other. In his germinal work on *The Buddha and His Dhamma* (2013/1957), he was aware of the

two extreme conceptions of self, narcissism and nihilism, and thus took the mediating position of a selfless self, non-attached to either extremes and responsible for nurturing *maitri* (fellowship) among groups for a democratic society (Kumar 2015, Vajpeyi 2012). Here *maitri* is conceptualized in the Buddhist sense of universal compassion, which is not only extended to one's personal relationships but beyond it as well, similar to feminist's conception of ethical caring. Social justice then doesn't remain only a democratic ideal but enters into everyday life as the responsibility towards a relationship of *maitri* with the other. Thus, Ambedkar constantly strives to build a 'working contact' between the democratic values and the social life in India by grounding them in a responsible relationality among the social groups.

In this relational ontology of action, Ambedkar argues that one must "exceed rules and norms" to be able to respond justly to the other (Kumar 2015: 304). He further emphasises upon the primacy of virtuous action by charting out the distinction between two classical concepts, that of *sila* (acting right) and *pradnya* (thinking right). H privileges the former over latter although both are necessary but are individually insufficient (ibid.: 306). He argues that *pradnya* purely in itself can be dangerous and therefore needs to be grounded in *sila*, while *sila* is continually informed by pradnya. Thus for Ambedkar, *maitri*, *sila* and *pradnya* are equally important in facilitating social endosmosis in a divided society on caste and gender lines.

Conclusion

Building on these critiques, one can begin to challenge the causal ontological picture of action which presents prejudice as the sole cause for discrimination. Instead if we look from a feminist and Ambedkarite perspective, discriminatory

action emerges from the breakdown of relationship between the social self and the world. This breakdown happens due to self-serving social egos that makes us perceive our relationship with other groups in instrumental terms, rather than in terms of care and responsibility. From this perspective, discrimination is addressed not only by overriding prejudices with egalitarian norms but also by addressing one's own exclusive identity which disrupts the relationship with the world. This implies that a complete separation of the self, in the utilitarian and normative conception, actually leads us towards a kind of isolation from other groups that breeds exclusion. Instead of shared identity practices that facilitates associated living, the self interiorizes its identity based on individualistic desires and belief in doctrines.

In the context of teaching democracy, we need to rethink the overemphasis on the *knowing* of democratic ideals and engage with the complexity of *being* democratic. Following care feminists and Ambedkar, it is the triad of caring relationships, ethical action and knowledge of democratic principles that needs to be worked on together. An unequal emphasis on one over the other can skew the educational process. By bringing emphasis on the ontological dimensions of education, the aim is also to challenge the assumptions of theory/practice dichotomy which deviates us from the democratic goals of education. This becomes especially relevant when we are engaging with discrimination as it involves an ontological reworking of the identity which is not imagined in exclusion of other groups based on caste, gender, race or religion. Practicing *maitri* forms the central pillar of pedagogy from where discriminatory action can be dismantled from its habituated embodiment for social endosmosis to occur.

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