The city, citizenship and education

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The perfect city is a powerful idea which runs through the literature on social space. It begins, as far as we know, in classical Greece. Aristotle, for example, had much to say about the ideal city: it had to be situated in a particular place, close to the sea but not right at the seaside, it had to be of a certain size, and have a certain number of citizens, each of a particular age, sex and character, and certain tasks had to be fulfilled if the city was to prosper. The discussion continued into the period of Roman domination of Europe and centred on the 'genius of Rome' and its capacity to embrace difference, its ability for 'making the conquered into one's fellows'.

Much of the discussion of the city is, of course, the domain of architecture and urban planning. It is architecture that has most to say about the relationship between space, freedom and happiness. Architecture, according to Le Corbusier (Bauman, 1999), is a born enemy of all confusion, spontaneity and chaos. Reason alone is its master.

In this paper I look at the city, not in its perfect radiant form, but in its messy, fetid and combustive guise, as a physical and discursive landscape upon which citizenship rights and responsibilities are fought over, shaped and generated. The city of this paper is like Blake's London where, as he says,

> . . .every face I meet
> marks of weakness, marks of woe.
>
> In every cry of Man,
> In every Infant's cry of fear,
> In every voice, in every ban,
> The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.
>
> How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
> Every black'ning church appals;
> And the hapless Soldier's sigh
> Runs in blood down Palace walls.

I look at the place of education within this landscape, particularly its role in mediating citizenship rights and in producing amongst young people a sense of place and belonging. What pathways, I ask, do schools, and education in general, provide on the urban landscape for young people towards citizenship?

While there are now any number of articles and books on citizenship and education, very few of these locate themselves within the socially bounded space of the city, the town or the country. I have chosen to situate myself within the problematique of the city, primarily, because the city is the pre-eminent space around which the modern struggle for survival and for self-fulfilment is unfolding. I am not suggesting, by any means, that rural life and rural struggle are not with us anymore, but that the fate of the modern world is increasingly located in the symbolism of the city. Carol Paton, in a poignant article in the *Sunday Times* (4 August 2002), writes of the abandonment of the land in the Eastern Cape by peasant farmers. She quotes an Elugewheni grandmother who says, "Our cattle died. Our children went to school and after that some went to work. But they didn't buy cattle, they only bought cars. . . Now when you ask the children to be involved in ploughing they say they are abused. They do not want to work (here)." In the same article a young man who grew up as a herdsman says quite categorically "I am not interested in farming. When I got money I bought a TV, a radio and a house in Kokstad." While the reasons for the abandonment of the land are complex, unmistakeable is the reality that it is in the towns and the cities that young people see their destinies unfolding. This is borne out by the dramatic upsurge in urbanisation rates since the early fifties and sixties. Current estimations suggest that South Africa's urban–rural split is something of the order of 56–44, but that this ratio will have changed to 65–35 in a matter of ten years.

The argument I am making therefore is that the city is critical in the making of the modern citizen. Sassen (1996, p.208), a key commentator tells us, that "the global city. . . is the site for new claims: by global capital which uses (it) as an 'organisational commodity', but also by disadvantaged sectors of the urban population, which in large cities are frequently as internationalised a presence as capital". As the events of September the eleventh, 2001 have made so clear, the city is the site for more than just claims. I am also arguing in this paper that education in the city is central in the globalisation age to how people are allocated to their social positions as gendered, racialised and classed subjects, but also how, as agents, they make claims and assert their rights.

The paper will move through three phases. In a first part I look at the city and citizenship. Hopefully, in the way I present the issues, the significance of thinking of the city as an educationally encoded and traversed space will emerge. Cape Town is my focus, but I have in mind the colonial city when I speak. I then try to show where we are in the discussion on citizenship and education in a second part, and in a third part I bring together the experience of educationists and cultural activists based in the city, working towards an education for citizenship.

The city and citizenship

Up until about the seventeenth century, the city enjoyed a central place in Western political thinking. The city provided a variety of thinkers a template upon which to imagine how the great questions of life – of morality, virtue, fellowship and understanding – could be worked out. Athens, and the problems of living in Athens in the fourth century BC, framed Aristotle's foundational work on rights, power and knowledge. It allowed him the space to develop the critical insight that human beings were intensely political and that politics defined the character of human life. The *polis,* the city, was a space into which human beings grew and in which they invested themselves and their identities.

The city, therefore, is a site upon which the resources that sustain human existence are regulated and controlled. It is a space in which the boundaries of the political are physically and symbolically defined. Central in these processes of definition are agencies and institutions, such as places of learning, which mediate for the individual and the family their relationships to each other, their fellow citizens and to the state. These institutions and agencies are the places of everyday life where one learns in the course of encounter and interaction what one's rights and responsibilities are. Here one is told what kind of citizen one is. Paradoxically, however, it is also here that, inevitably, one begins the discussion about privilege, status and access in the city and about the need for dignity and respect. One quickly learns who one's allies and enemies are. And so begins a process of struggle for dignity within the city. Because conditions of struggle differ in different parts of the world, what emerges from these processes are a variety of conceptions of what citizenship is all about. Needless to say, there are losers and winners. In Aristotle's time, the hegemonic figure of the warrior-citizen came to define what it meant to be a citizen, in Republican Rome it was the patrician-citizen, and in modern times it is the professional-citizen (Isin, 1999).

While the axis of political life shifts from the city to the state during the last three hundred years, it is important to note how much the identity of the state continues to be mediated through its great cities. The city, moreover, returns as a key focus in the late twentieth century when the question arises of whether the nation-state can manage the complex contradictions that are being thrown up by the drama of globalisation. Castells explains (1997) that the old nation-state is finding it increasingly difficult to exercise control over the economy. State control is by-passed by global movements of money, goods, services, information, technology and even people. In the process, the state's ability to define knowledge and its discursive control over its subjects' identities is massively eroded. In the place of the state is emerging what Castells calls megacities. They are the new nodes of the global economy, concentrating the directional, productive and managerial functions "all over the planet: the

control of the media; the real politics of power; and the symbolic capacity to create and diffuse messages" (Castells, 1997, p.403). As Castells says, they are the nodal points connecting the global networks, "thus in a fundamental sense, the future of humankind, and of each megacity's country, is being played out in the evolution of and management of these areas" (*ibid.*).

The interest, sociologically, that cities hold for us, is how they work as sites for domination and subjugation, for inclusion and exclusion. For my own purposes, I draw extensively on Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist who died recently, in helping us understand how these processes work. In contrast to most theorists who emphasize the ownership of financial capital as the basis for domination in the city, Bourdieu (1986) argues that aside from economic capital, present too in the new city are social capital (what one might think of as family inheritance and social networks), symbolic capital (which includes reputation and prestige), and cultural capital (that is the skills of discernment, expertise and credentials, such as they are defined by the dominant group). Each might be convertible to the other under certain conditions. Bourdieu (1986) explains that the formation of groups such as classes entails the appropriation of different forms of capital as resources. The volume and combination of different forms of capital place groups in specific class positions within the social space they occupy.

Bourdieu makes clear that the working class is not only dominated in the sphere of social rights but also in the cultural. He argues that the symbolic or the imaginative world of the working class is heavily influenced by professionals and their view of the world. In the new cities they dominate the processes of advertising, design and marketing. They determine what education, music, film, television and a whole range of commodities that are deeply imprinted with their cultural tastes, will circulate in the economy (Bourdieu, 1986). It is they, as cultural mediators, who link production of goods to consumption and who have made cultures of production what Isin (1999) calls *productions of culture*. To ordinary inhabitants of the city, much of this production is obscure. Richard Ohmann (1999, p.221), another scholar of the city talks of Theodore Dreiser's book *Sister Carrie* which describes the central district of Chicago as it looked to a casual wanderer, "wholesale firms have an imposing appearance", "a high and mighty air calculated to overawe and abash the common applicant". Dreiser's central character, Carrie Meeber, is mesmerized by the city: everywhere she sees "evidence of power and force which she did not understand". This story brings to mind the well known literacy studies stories of how text-illiterate South Africans have for decades made their way through the city. Looking for work, in strange and foreboding cities, they would have been prompted through their journey by family and friends who would have worked up a language to describe the landmarks and the symbols they would have to look out for.

In these explanations education is not only important in the *making* of social class within the city, it is critical to the way it works. It is *the* essential commodity for obtaining economic, political and social advantage. It becomes the crucial ingredient in the mix of 'capitals' required to exercise domination in the city. It also defines, by the lack of it, one's subordinate status. Without it one is condemned to the margins of the city. This is Bourdieu's 'cultural capital'.

But let us understand it more fully. We can describe cultural capital as those *cultivated* dispositions of the individual that are internalised through socialisation, a socialisation which is managed by parents, teachers and others who have an interest in how their young turn out to be. The dispositions which arise from it constitute, as Isin (1999, p.276) says, "schemes of appreciation and understanding. . . particular tastes and forms of recognition allowing one to classify and distinguish commodities, but also applying these categories to oneself by cultivating and incorporating certain manners, bodily movements, gestures and even specific ways of seeing, hearing and smelling". The ability to make distinctions is at the heart of this socialisation process. These distinctions are objectified in books, works of art and the use of particular instruments and artefacts that require specialised cultural skills. They become the currencies that are used as young people make their way into adulthood. Demonstration of these currencies earns rewards in schools, frames access to jobs and careers, and defines the solidarities young people make, including whom they will marry. It is here that the great paradox of modern education lies. Cultural capital is Janus-faced. It provides young people with the ability to think in more careful, oft-times even more refined ways. It simultaneously, however, and almost ineluctably, has the effect of setting apart those with cultural capital from those who do not have it. The significance of Bourdieu's work is that it helps us understand the principles through which ownership of cultural capital engenders class distinctions within the city. Looking at the city, Marx described it as the most opaque of all social formations (Ohmann, 1999). At the heart of this opacity is this knowledge – this cultural capital which is unequally and differentially distributed. From it is produced, reproduced and normalised what Ohmann (1996) calls 'the quite limpid' forms of citizenship, or as T H Marshall (1964), the great theorist of citizenship, says, the soil in which inequality grows.

The colonial city presents these inequalities even more starkly. This city, as Fanon (1963, p.39) reminds us, is divided into compartments where the policeman and the soldier are the official go-betweens. He says that

> the zones where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. . . No conciliation is possible. The settlers' town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel. . . its belly is always full of good things. . . The town belonging to the

colonised people. . . is a place of ill fame. . . (it) is a hungry town, starved of bread. . . The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy, it expresses his dream of possession – all manner of possession.

Knowledge and culture are inscribed in the barriers that divide the settlers from the natives. On the settlers' side, are the 'great' schools, the university, the cathedral and the town hall which present themselves as symbols of the mighty and the virtuous. On the natives' side, are the hell holes, the hideouts of those of ill repute. On the one side are wisdom, learning and understanding. On the other are cunning, duplicity and deviousness.

The city of Cape Town is, sadly, exactly such a city. In writing about urban planning in Cape Town in 1989, Don Pinnock talks of how the planners, as he says, "were wrong, very wrong" as they sought to restructure the city in the 1930s "so that freedom of movement, accessibility and breathing space can be restored where they are vital. It is possible to achieve this radical reorganisation only by a fresh start on cleared ground." The freedom and accessibility of which they spoke were, of course, those of the privileged white classes. They were, moreover, to be gained at the expense of urban black people who, as Pinnock (1989, p.154) says "lost the struggle for urban rights. . .". Their story, as he says, is a story of heartbreak and anger.

At the heart of the plans for the city was a thorough going sterilisation of densely populated parts of the city itself, such as District Six. For the anxious 'city fathers', the city was in danger of being over-run by the poor who, as one Maximilian Thalwitzer in the dying days of the nineteenth century was to say, brought with them "moral and physical corruption" which threatened to over-run "the better part of our inhabitants. . . (who) will soon have. . . to abandon their homes", unless, as he said, "the poor could be properly 'controlled'" (Bickford-Smith, 1990, p.36).

The plans, as we now know well, finally became a reality with the Group Areas Act of 1951. The Act and the welter of proclamations it made possible, produced the displacement of over 150 000 black people from the city and the entrenchment of the racial hierarchy of white, coloured and African. In the course of just twenty years, from about 1960 to 1980, the geography of Cape Town was profoundly resculpted and thoroughly racialised. Over 60 local communities were violently torn apart. New townships were built – built to cleanse the city of its malevolent blackness and then to organise blacks according to their supposed ethnic roots. Inscribed on the landscape were the planners' ideas of what rights the removed were entitled to. For those who landed up in the sandy wastes of Mitchells' Plain, awaiting them was racialised versions of what the apartheid government decreed they were not to have in the city itself. New but inferior civic institutions came into being:

hospitals, schools, libraries and other amenities which reminded them, everyday of their lives, that they were second-class citizens in the city of Cape Town. For African people it was worse. Those amenities were not even to be allowed. They were to have no rights in the city, not even second-class citizenship rights. For them the city was a place where they were meant to sleep only, away from their 'real' homes in the reserves and bantustans.

Marianne Mertens, (*Mail and Guardian,* October 8–14, 1999), a journalist, describes Cape Town as a tale of three cities. This is starkly represented in citizens' access to housing. While homes looking out over the Atlantic sell for many millions of rands, on the 'coloured' part of the Cape Flats, in gang-infested areas such as Manenberg, rent arrears in the late 1990s had spiralled to almost R20 million. Only 50 families were up to date with their payments. In Brown's Farm, the African part of the city, shacks jostle for space and thousands rely on night soil buckets or nearby bushes and embankments. Children play beneath electricity cables that run wild overhead. The 1996 census (South African Statistics, 1996) showed that the Median Annual Household Income for Brown's Farm was R8 657. For Manenberg it was R17 063, while for Camps' Bay it was R93 000. Forty per cent of the economically active population earned between R1 000 and R2 500 per month. The same census shows that of the economically active population of the city, 22 per cent of coloured females were without jobs, as were 18 per cent of coloured males, 50 per cent of African females and 33 per cent of African males, while 6 per cent and 5 per cent of white females and males respectively were without jobs. It is against this backdrop, that I move on to talk about the relationship between education and citizenship.

Education and citizenship

What does the field of education, particularly sociology of education, then have to say about rights and how rights are accessed and might be accessed in these divided urban spaces?

The standard arguments on the relationship between education and citizenship have us believing that education is a period of preparation of young people for taking up their rightful places as citizens within a democracy. Education is expected to develop (within young people) the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for living in, making informed decisions about and exercising responsibilities and rights in a democratic society. Education in this narration is entirely good.

More critical versions of the educational process have argued that, historically, the school has been used for a variety of often-contradictory goals. Schools,

according to this narrative, are places where the dominant messages of the society are often confirmed and reproduced but sometimes also challenged. Flowing from this then is the idea that the school is a contested space in which the impulses of regulation and emancipation run deep and often in contestation with each other. Most frequently, moreover, young people experience schools as oppressive in many more ways than might be appreciated.

The work of the feminists and Marxist scholars of the school have shown very clearly how this works. The work of Callender and Wright (2000) in the United Kingdom, building on almost two decades of research, explains how culturally biased styles of management and discipline in schools, never mind what is taught in the classroom, serve to disadvantage children of under-represented groups in a school. This brings to mind Dan Lortie's (1975, pp.113–114) famous line about school and citizenship and the preoccupation of most schools with discipline. He makes the remark that "discipline becomes more than mere forbidding and ordering; the dross of classroom management is transformed into the gold of dependable citizenship". More spectacular, in some ways, is the work of Gordon, Holland and Lahelma (2001), which looks at schools in Europe, and shows how schools are structured around and operate with homogenised notions of citizenship. Emphatic in this research is how strong understandings of what the gender differences were between boys and girls. Boys were seen as more relaxed, bohemian, inventive and usually more interesting than girls. Girls were more sensible, more mature and easier to teach. Pupils were invariably measured according to these norms. Significant about these approaches is how much they condition what girls and boys can and cannot do, what life-choices they are steered towards and, most important of all, what forms of knowledge it is presumed they should or should not possess. As with the example of the black pupils in London, it is clear that young people are hardly the universal subjects idealised in the standard homilies about education, but are often groomed towards adulthood and citizenship through the stereotypes which circulate around them and which position them as black, as male or female, rich or poor or indeed whatever identities their schools place on them.

These few points, and they cannot, of course, be exhaustive, raise many critical questions about schools and education and citizenship in the city. Absent in the discussion, it is acknowledged, is the complex discussion of participation (see Deuchar, 2003) and the access provided through education to civic participation, deliberative thinking and education (Waghid, 2004) and inclusion and education (Pendlebury and Enslin, 2004). Each of these issues can be usefully explored to show how social spaces such as the school and the wider landscape of the city are sociologically instantiated as sites of differentiation. The latter question of inclusion, for example, is nicely explored theoretically by Pendlebury and Enslin (2004) through their

discussion of capabilities (such as health, using one's senses, affiliation with others and so on) in relation to the environment and education. One can see how such a discussion can be harnessed in looking at the city. However, the point to be taken away from the general discussion on citizenship and education, and one that is very much in keeping with the large point made by many of the authors cited above, is that school and education are *not* neutral institutions and processes. Instead, they are sites for fierce contestation. They can become the agents of the state or whatever dominant class is in power, or they might become sites for resistance, or indeed, as many are, they are places where the messages of both compliance and resistance exist alongside of each other. Critical to understand, therefore, is that schools can become the kinds of institutions that those who operate them want them to be.

Education and citizenship in the city

Having said that, what then is the task of the school which wishes to produce young men and women who will become active citizens, the kinds of people who will engage with the issues of the city and strive to make it a place in which, as Touraine (2000), says, people can live together? I now move to the last part of the paper. In moving here I want to rephrase a question which my colleague Johan Muller (2000, p.41) has asked about the relationship between knowledge and citizenship. He asks, "what knowledge is of most worth for the millennial citizen?" My own reworking of this question goes as follows: "What ought schools and universities to be teaching young people to enable them to live productive and fulfilled lives in the new city?" Should their education be about rights and duties, or in its more sophisticated form, as feminism and radical multiculturalism is telling us, about how power works in society? Or should they rather learn the skills, or as people like bell hooks (1994) say, the 'master's tools', which will enable them to operate within the corridors of power?

It is at this point that our reading of Bourdieu becomes relevant again. We saw in Bourdieu's argument that cultural capital is crucial for the exercise of domination. Cultural capital regulates entry and passage into the social and economic networks of power. Those without it live on the margins of the institutions and processes that make a difference to everyday life. Important, however, following the feminists and the radical multiculturalists, is accepting how exclusionary this kind of capital and the education it stands for is, how much it serves to differentiate the powerful, be they male, white or middle-class, from the less powerful, women, people of colour and the poor. Now if it works in this way, we should be asking, what ought the attitude of those who are oppressed as a result of it be?

The discussion here is most certainly not new. It was engaged by the great American scholar W E B du Bois when he castigated Booker T Washington for advocating industrial education for black people. Talking about the field and function of the Negro College, Du Bois (1997, p.135) argued that the education of black men had to be grounded in the condition and work of their lives, much as a French or a Spanish education would be, but that "it would be of course idiotic to say, as (Booker T Washington) almost said, that. . . education must stop with this". All history, all science was the concern of the black student.

Critically, also, the city of Cape Town itself has a rich history of debate and practice around this question. During the long years of disenfranchisement of Capetonians of colour in the city, it was the teaching community, from the early twenties, who made it their responsibility to teach the ideals of civic-mindedness and citizenship. Most of these teachers, not all it must be said, were in the Teachers' League of South Africa, an organisation which was established in 1913 as a body concerned with the improvement of the status of education for 'coloured' people, but which was radicalised when young progressive teachers took over the leadership of the organisation in 1943. For these new leaders, education was indistinguishable from politics.

One of the key theorists in the Non-European Unity Movement, the parent organisation of the League, was I B Tabata who railed in his political work against the concept of the 'slave mentality'. He wrote that "the deception of the people is a strong weapon in the hands of those who govern and men have to liberate their minds" (Chisholm, 1994, p.226). He and teachers in the League, unremitting modernists as they all were, saw the progress of humankind stunted by bigots who sought to appropriate the world's intellectual and cultural treasures as the heritage of white people only. That heritage, they were to argue, belonged to all of humankind. And so they would, at every opportunity, trumpet their stance that people of colour, as human beings, deserved nothing less than the very best that education could provide. Like Du Bois, they resisted the attempts of the apartheid state in the 1960s to introduce an inferior and vocationally orientated education in African and coloured schools. Their mouthpiece, the *Education Journal,* commented that "handwork is an essential *adjunct* to learning languages, science and art, but it is secondary to them" (*ibid.*). They saw these attempts as sounding "the death knell of the new minds for the new age". As products of the enlightenment, they took the logic of universal rights to its extreme point.

For the purposes of this paper, it is their investment in the city that is important to understand. They and a number of other teachers, many of whom would have been members of other organisations, developed a range of formal and non-formal educational initiatives which sought to promote a counter-

official consciousness and understanding of what it meant to be a citizen of Cape Town. Men and women in or associated with the Teachers' League like Ben and Helen Kies, RO Dudley, Gwen Wilcox, Edgar Maurice, Victor Ritchie, Tom Hanmer, Ernie Steenveld, Stella Petersen, Neville Alexander, Ray Carlier, Allie Fataar, Victor Wessels and a whole host of people outside of the League, often working-class intellectuals and activists, like Peter Clarke, Vincent Kolbe, Phyllis Fuku, Nombeko Mlambo, Wilfred Rhodes, and younger activist-intellectuals like Jill Wenman, Pam Hicks, Yusuf Gabru, Jean Pease, Vivienne Carelse and Mandy Sanger and many, many others who committed themselves to an ideal of a free Cape Town. They were the city's true defenders, a group of people who brought together a passion for learning and a deep commitment to the people of the city. Of them, it could hardly be said, as Yeats was to say sneeringly, "The best lack all conviction while the worst are full of passionate intensity."

A small number of schools were critical in this counter-official discourse during the long period of the 1960s to the 1990s. They included high schools like Harold Cressy, Livingstone, Alexander Sinton, South Peninsula, Groenvlei, Trafalgar, and Belgravia. Amongst these schools Cressy, Trafalgar, Livingstone and South Peninsula were prime targets of the apartheid regime and the Cape Town city council. As schools located in areas which had been declared white, they were placed under enormous pressure to move to the Cape Flats. They resisted this and, even when their buildings were falling down around them, they elected to stay where they were.

Citizenship in the city was at the heart of this determination to stay. It was embodied in a distaste for the colouredism and bantuisation that went with having to move to the Cape Flats. Moving, the schools argued, amounted to a capitulation to the state and to the city's ideology that they were less than full human beings. In staying they deliberately taught their children a sense, if not a practice, of their rights as citizens in the city. The curriculum they taught complemented the stance they took with respect to staying in the city. At its core were high-status subjects, subjects like English, Mathematics, Physical Science, Latin, History and Geography taught on the higher grade. The best education, said these teachers, was a general academic and scientific one. For a teacher to do anything less, said the Teachers' League, "he or she would be a traitor to education". The effect of this teaching was to make the Shakespeare, the Catullus, the trigonometry, the history and the map-work children were learning intensely political. Reading *Great Expectations* or interpreting *The Tempest* the children would have been spared no opportunity of relating the narratives to their own situation here in the city. This work in school was complemented by the public education work of a range of cultural societies and fellowships on the Cape Flats where, during the height of the dark days of apartheid, fierce debates and discussions, which made no concessions to

simplicity and demanded the skills of argument, formal and informal knowledge, took place about citizenship, rights and struggle.

Strident as these counter-official attempts were, they contained within them a strategic understanding of what it meant to live in Cape Town. Their children received the cultural capital they needed to make their way through the complexities of the city. In the persons of their teachers, the young boys and girls would have been provided models and examples of what they themselves could be. A young teacher thinking back to the significance of Neville Alexander in her life remarked, "he was completely different to anybody I had ever seen. He was, he just looked so free. . ." (Chisholm, 1994, p.14). The teachers, mindful of the discrimination they had experienced in the city and at the university resolved that they would establish a cultural and intellectual environment in the city which the city itself was denying their children. Out of this emerged an alternative educational structure within the city. It provided the city, before the walls of apartheid came down in 1994, with the only real civic-minded intellectual and educational tradition it has known. Out of it were to come a generation of leaders in many arenas which the schools bequeathed to the city and to the nation many of whom were to land up in government, in business, the academy and in the broader civil society.

As little known to many as this story about schooling and education in the city may be, it provides us with an opportunity for thinking critically about where schools and education ought to be going as we seek to rebuild the city of Cape Town as a place for *all* its people to live and thrive in the new millennium. Two options, it seems are being considered. The first holds that what young South Africans need is an education which is culture and gender sensitive. Teaching young people their history and their culture, goes this line of thought, and it could be black history or women's history or whatever, will build their dignity and feelings of self-worth. The second is to provide young people with the high skills knowledge – the cultural capital – that will enable them to operate within the complexity of a globalised world.

In bringing this discussion to an end, it is important to consider the possibility that the education we provide young people ought to be about both. To do both – teaching on the one hand, that which is important for young people's dignity, and, on the other, high-skills knowledge – we need to teach in such a way that our children understand the politics of the knowledge which we are holding up as important. We need them to understand that all knowledge, even that which we believe to be crucial for their feelings of self-worth, is open to critique. We need to teach them what the radical scholars are telling us about the exclusionary impulses of high-status knowledge, particularly about the ways in which it universalises the culture and habits of the privileged. Our children need to develop an understanding of how the power of this

knowledge works to shut out those who speak a different language or who do not have access to the mysteries of opera and ballet, and who critically, do not have the great schools and academies on their resumes. They need to understand too, how the acquisition of high-status knowledge brings with it the real possibility of loss, of ways of knowing which are not necessarily inferior: the loss of languages other than English, the loss of community, the loss of alternative social practices and the loss, often, also of identity. But at the same time, they need to learn that the knowledge which affirms them as black people or as women, is not without its difficulties. In the first instance, it keeps them out of the places of power. And secondly, and this is harder to come to terms with, it is as partial, and therefore as problematic as any other form of knowledge.

If they were to have both the high-skills knowledge and the sensitivity to other ways of knowing, they would have what Touraine (2000) calls the ability to see the other within themselves. When he asks how might we live together in the future, he looks to an education that can teach all of us about the despised 'other' within us. It is in this respect that even our most progressive models of what it means to live in Cape Town have not been sufficient. Historically, they failed to recognise how a progressive agenda might itself have embedded within it the ability to leave out. At the heart of this problem of Cape Town's progressives is a problem inherent to modernity and high-status knowledge. In committing themselves to the cause of progress, the progressives, unavoidably, looked back on the past and saw there only a world of hardship, shame and struggle. This they wish to cast aside. In looking forward they, unfortunately, universalise humanity in the image of the modern. It is at this moment that they give up the capacity to see the 'other' – call it the past if you like – within themselves. They don't see how much their education has become an education of the privileged. If we are to become a city for all the people of Cape Town, our education has to be one which opens doors for all of its people, but which also reminds us, every day, of our privilege and at what cost that privilege has been obtained.

In closing we have to recognise that the world is undeniably, and fundamentally so, a transformed social space. Whatever else we might say about the age in which we live, now more than ever before, the knowledge we have in our hands and in our heads is absolutely crucial for how we manage in every day life. Whatever else we think, we cannot even begin to imagine sending our children to schools which do not have at the heart of what they do an interest in the challenges of living as modern people in a modern world. At the same time, whatever else we do, we cannot send our children into the world without a sense of possibility of themselves as human beings with different histories and different dreams of what the future might be. Our children want and deserve nothing less.

References

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