

Changing consciousness: Toward a pedagogy for social improvement¹

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ABSTRACT

The topic of changing social consciousness brings together a number of concerns often treated separately. It lies at the intersection of concerns about learning, interests, authority, class, freedom, character, reform, and ideology. There are, from time to time, profound shifts in the social consciousness that point groups in dramatically new directions. My focus will not be on shifts of this historic sort, but instead on microchanges. These are doubtless involved when groups change, but they also occur apart from group changes.

Microchanges and conflict

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Microchanges are changes in social consciousness that individuals undergo even in the absence of an active threat to the social structure. They are changes that can be brought about by discussion with others in the context of routine social tensions. These discussions may, but need not, involve formal teaching. I shall though treat them as involving teaching in a broad sense that includes media commentary, political meetings, committee work, docudramas, and floor debates on proposals.

Microchanges are facilitated by conflicts within consciousness. These inner conflicts are a basis for hope, since they contain a positive side that can be built on to promote social improvement. Without something to build on, it would be difficult to reconcile teaching with democratic norms. Changing consciousness would become instead a form of imposing consciousness. Since the teacher would confront a monolithic consciousness, in trying to change it he or she would be suspected of interfering with personal autonomy. People without a conflicted consciousness would not themselves be receptive to ideas - understood broadly to include motives, attitudes, feelings, and beliefs - outside their monolithic repertoires. People could be won to ideas that are so out of character only by manipulation.

Right, Left, and Centre invest heavily in consciousness changing. The common assumption of such efforts is that those targeted already have ideas that can be built upon in the desired direction.

But it is less commonly assumed that they have opposed ideas, ones that cannot be built upon in the desired direction. Manipulation enters in here as well, since persons are treated as though an important side of their character didn't exist.

Changing consciousness, though of utmost importance in changing behaviour, is itself conditioned by social context. The social context makes it self-defeating to want to hold onto conflicts in social consciousness. In addition, paying attention to the social context reinforces the teacher's efforts to resolve such conflicts in one direction rather than another. Arriving at a new stage of consciousness passes through an awareness of our social reality. Very general features of social context will, in a similar way, be conditions for the original conflicts in ideas themselves.

In our societies there is an important differentiation into groups. Many of these groups are asymmetrically related to others as regards power. It is this differentiation that is a major root of the conflict within social consciousness. One belongs both to a society and to groups asymmetrically related to others within the society. The way one's ideas are shaped will, then, depend on the fact that one's experiences resonate in one's ideas within the context of a society differentiated into such groups.

I am not saying that one set of ideas comes from the society and another from one of its groups. That would be to endorse a kind of direct causal theory of ideas which can't explain the simplest ideas of physical objects, much less the more complex social ones relevant here. Instead, I am saying that, in the context of a society differentiated into such groups, different common kinds of experience will tend to lead to forms of consciousness opposed to one another. This context should not be confused with a direct cause of either side of consciousness. It is instead something that sets the way causes themselves will operate to bring consciousness about. Some illustrations from different divisions in society will make this more concrete.

Sandra Lee Bartky says that contemporary women have contradictory beliefs (1990: 30). On the one hand, they think they are inferior since they find themselves denied an autonomous choice of self and forbidden many avenues of cultural expression. This leads women to live out their membership in their sex with shame. The sense of inferiority and the feeling of shame are not here the result of explicit ideological put-downs of women. They don't have to be told in the media or from the pulpit that they are inferior or that they should feel shame for their sex. Rather, in a sexist society, the way they are treated by male friends, lovers, colleagues, and bureaucrats suffices to account for their sense of inferiority and their feeling of shame.²

On the other hand, they think they are equal. This sense of equality is associated with their finding themselves outraged by many of the ways they are treated and ready to censure those who treat them as inferior. Shame and outrage at the level of feeling and inferiority and equality at the level of belief are part of the conflicted consciousness of many women in an oppressive society. These conflicts are possible in view of the fact that, however much women are infantilised, demeaned, and enserfed, they are never merely victims.

The belief in equality on the part of many women can't be attributed to the ideological use of the slogan of equality by the society for the purpose of legitimating its institutions. This slogan is supposed to head off resistance and basic changes by making women feel they are not denied rights and that expressions of outrage are extremist. This slogan celebrates equality as an already established fact, whereas the belief in equality I am talking about is a belief in the need to fulfil the right to equality. It is a belief accompanied with outrage, not with the sense of calm that follows triumph.

The context of a society with asymmetrical power between genders is crucial for understanding the belief in an unfulfilled right to equality and the associated outrage at systematic abuses. Imagine the situation changed so that both sexes are denied autonomous choice of self due to stereotyping and are suborned for service and pleasure. These people are like the unfortunate school kid who is scorned and picked on from the first day of class for being awkward, fat, skinny, smart, dumb, a

favourite, nerdy, or cross-eyed. To explain the behaviour of his or her tormentors, we can't do better than say they want to make someone a victim. If the kid and his or her parents are outraged and demand that the school authorities take action, they are at best insisting on equal treatment for all. But there is no social group whose right to equality they are championing, since virtually anyone can be turned into such a victim.

It is different with women. Their stereotyping and suborning are part of a larger pattern of oppression directed at a definite group. Thus the acts directed at them provoke among women a demand for equality for women and outrage against acts interpreted as acts against women. These responses are then different from the kinds of responses drawn from the virtually random victimisation of school kids by their classmates. The basis for the difference lies in the contexts of the offending acts. In the case of women the context within which the offending acts engender their response is a society that oppresses women as a group. In the case of the school kids, the context contains no targeted group and would lead instead to a call for fairness in a general sense.

Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb in their minor classic, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, observe the contradictions in the consciousness of the working class in the United States (1972: 53-76). As in the case of women, workers form their consciousness not just in a society but also in the context of a group in it that is opposed to a dominant group of the society. In this context, there arises, on the one hand, a sense of dignity and, on the other hand, a sense of defeat. The sense of dignity - of worthiness of respect, of not being defined by one's station, of rights against the powerful in and outside the state - is promoted by the openness of the society to voices and to talents. The sense of defeat, which is just as strong, is promoted by the way in which class limits that very openness by controlling access to resources and to jobs, thereby guaranteeing failure to get the respect and the rights implied by dignity.

Associated with the sense of dignity is outrage at the kinds of control that block the achievement of dignity. And associated with the sense of defeat is shame at the failure of one's efforts to achieve dignity. In addition, when dignity is outraged, the authority of the powers responsible for the outrage is put into question. Yet when there is shame at failure, one blames oneself and legitimates the authority of the more powerful.

Here too there is no need to appeal to ideology. The idea of dignity is certainly part of modernist ideology. This ideology has both entrenched the idea of dignity that is promoted by the context of capitalist society itself and also given it a special individualist tone. Still, capitalist society by opening doors that had been closed to hierarchies of jobs and by creating publics in which many voices could be heard set the stage itself for a new consciousness. The individual became a centre of possibilities, and efforts to restrict them unduly would be greeted with outrage.

The possibilities are nonetheless restricted through control over investment, insecurity of employment, and denial of voice in the workplace. On seeing that appeals to dignity do not avail against these restrictions, workers fall back on a kind of amoralism that allows them to betray one another in order to take more advantage of their possibilities. Solidarity becomes privatised into family life as defeatism leads to selfishness. There isn't the excuse that this defeatist and selfish consciousness is extraneous to what working people are. It isn't created out of whole cloth by TV, advertising, and politicians. It is rather part of what workers are in this society (Cohen and Rogers, 1983: chapter 3). But they don't thereby lose their sense of dignity and their potential for outrage over attempts to limit their possibilities.

Their consciousness, being contradictory, contains the seeds for both passivity and activism, for collaboration and rebellion. Ignoring one of the sides is always dangerous. Ignoring the passivity in the face of power and authority makes incomprehensible how, for example, in 1994 Mexican workers could have voted for a continuation of the reign of the party, the PRI, which had contributed so much to their misery. Ignoring the activist potential motivated by outrage makes incomprehensible how, for example, in 1994 and 1995 thousands of workers in the small Illinois town of Decatur joined together in an extended strike wave against a British, a Japanese, and a U.S.

corporation for attacks on them that have become part of a familiar pattern in the neoliberal economy.³

One of the clearest formulations of the kind of contradictory consciousness I have attempted to articulate was given by Wilhelm Reich, in his marxist period. In trying to account for the fascist defeat of communism in Germany, Reich focused on consciousness. The German Communist Party had failed, he claimed, by not understanding the consciousness of the . people. Their consciousness was encompassed by everyday needs, rather than impersonal historical forces. Party leaders imagined that their own more theoretical consciousness was, or at least should become, that of the people.⁴ In addition, for Reich there was a conflict between "progressive desires, ideas, and thoughts which are latent in people" and "the desires, fears, thoughts, and ideas ('traditional bonds') which prevent the progressive desires, ideas, etc. from developing" (Reich, 1983). Reich had his own interpretation of the content of these two sides of consciousness. Among other things, he stressed the importance of sexuality as a progressive force in the struggle for socialism, and hence the importance of overcoming sexual repression.⁵ I am interested here, though, only in his insight that the effort to change consciousness needs to be based on cognisance of the role that everyday problems play in consciousness and of the contradictory structure of this everyday consciousness.

In search of a pedagogy for change

There is a view of the teacher that emerges quite naturally from the assumption of a two-sided consciousness. Opposed views of the teacher emerge from theories of consciousness along the spectrum from the *tabula rasa* to innatism.

The view associated with two-sided consciousness is not that the teacher's role is to impose facts and norms. This is the view that the Andean Maoist Sendero Luminoso seems to have taken. It formed groups of workers or peasants into "generated organisms" by providing them with "the correct line." Without the transmission of the correct line from the party, it was the view of the party that workers and peasants had no capacity to act (DeGregori, 1990- 1991). As Mao would have it, the worker or peasant is a clean slate on which the party writes big characters.

It is also not the view that the teacher is there to turn latent knowledge into explicit knowledge. Socrates led Meno's slave boy to see that the square on the diagonal of a given square has double its area (Plato, 1949: 81a-84b). Socrates, by accompanying scratches in the sand with questions, leads the slave to recover, or recollect, knowledge.

Rather, the view of the teacher that emerges from the assumption of two-sided consciousness is at once more complex and more credible. The teacher confronts not a blank tablet as in the case of the Shining Path's worker or peasant, but a conflicted consciousness. There is something there to build on that the teacher must both recognise and assess. Each of these steps - recognition and assessment - calls for dialogue with the student. Recognition depends on a dialogue with the student that leads the teacher to discover the elements of a consciousness of resistance. Assessment depends on a dialogue to discover not just the content of such a consciousness but also the degree to which it plays an active role in the life and thought of the student.

In Socratic learning, dialogue replaces the authoritarian instruction of the Shining Path leader. What's still missing is the element of conflict in consciousness. Since the two sides are not tidily compartmentalised, the teacher's task is more complicated. Their interpenetration makes recognition and assessment arduous. This is only the beginning, for there is the further task of freeing one side from the obstacles posed by the other in order to allow the former to define a clear course of behaviour. In the broader context of Plato's dialogues, there is, to be sure, jousting with conventional opinions voiced by the sophists. Such opinions are taken as obstacles to a kind of deeper knowledge, represented by the slave boy's recollection of plane geometry. But they are like layers that can be peeled off to advance to a deeper one. This does not begin to suggest the entwining of incompatibles that is possible in a conflicted consciousness.

The topic of race gives us an example of this entwining. On the one side, there is an awareness among working people, however inoperative in practice, of the need for solidarity across racial lines in order to fend off the worst depredations of employers. On the other side, there is on the part of the white working class in the United States a strain of racism that has proven resistant to the therapy of numerous changes away from older patterns of discrimination. This more subtle form of racism resides in the consciousness that the society is at bottom a white society and hence one in which the norms that all peoples are to be measured by are those whites are comfortable with.

Now these two sides of racial consciousness don't stay statically in place. They interact to create something that looks less like a stark contradiction and more like a dynamic tension. For, the necessary solidarity is pictured by whites as achievable without their having to negotiate away the norms they are comfortable with. This picture of solidarity is one they can hold only by assuming that the norms they will measure blacks by are not the norms of whites but are genuinely neutral. The tension that is left comes from the worry whites will have that blacks will reject solidarity with them by refusing to recognise the norms as neutral. Something parallel occurs in the case of affirmative action in hiring. The norm whites hold is that only equally qualified persons have an equal claim on jobs. True, the norm is stated without mention of race, but it is still a white norm. It makes no exceptions for the fact that whites have been privileged in their efforts to qualify for jobs through a distribution of resources that is significantly determined by a history of discrimination. The equal claim on jobs stated in the norm perpetuates that white privilege deriving from discrimination. Nonetheless, whites by and large see acceptance of the norm of equality of claims as a background condition for solidarity across the race line. Blacks who persist in letting themselves be benefited by affirmative action are to be viewed as rejecting a neutral norm that is a legitimate condition for solidarity.

The role of the teacher - political activist, talk show leftist, or trade unionist - can't be simply that of unearthing the solidaristic and the racist sides of worker consciousness. These two sides will not be identified as such by the white worker since they have become entwined. The teacher must start with the product of the entwining - the concept of solidarity conditioned by an apparently race-neutral concept of equal claim to jobs. Only then can the teacher begin the process of exposing this product as one with a racist component. Otherwise, the student can continue to hide behind the claim that there is no racist side to his or her consciousness. By starting with this product of entwining, the teacher can then analyse it into its components, one being the racist white norm.

All of this is preparation for the central activity of changing consciousness. The contradiction in consciousness has to be resolved. This imperative derives from the anticipated negative effects of acting at different times on the basis of the different sides of a contradiction. It does not derive from the formal imperative to take a stand when faced with a list of incompatible alternatives for action, which drives dilemma solving of the kind Lawrence Kohlberg thinks important in moral training (1981: 27-47). Consider the following dilemma, based on an example constructed by Bernard Williams (1973: 98-99). A tyrant has rounded up all suspicious persons in the streets in hopes of capturing all dissidents. All those apprehended are to be shot without trial. Knowing that the tyrant admires you as a great artist, you appeal for mercy for all. The tyrant responds that he is ready to strike a bargain. If you kill a random one of those arrested, he will release the rest. A message from the prisoners pleads for your, accepting the bargain. The dilemma you face is that, if you kill one prisoner, you wrong another human being, but if you kill none, you let many die. Should you kill one or none?

A major difference between this dilemma and what I have called conflicted consciousness is that at no point in solving the dilemma do you believe that you should kill one person and also believe that you should kill no one. Dilemma solving is precisely for the purpose of deciding which you should believe. Even the operative moral values involved - not killing humans and not letting them be killed - are not like the sides of conflicted consciousness. For they are not systematically in conflict, but only lead to conflicting directives because of something contingent, such as the tyrant's

decision. The dilemma is to be solved by terminating a state of lack of commitment through accepting one of its horns. In contrast, conflicted consciousness is resolved, not by deciding on one of several courses of action, but by withdrawing from all but one of several deeply held incompatible commitments.

In resolving conflicted consciousness, a change of character is, then, one of the outcomes. One has lived a contradiction and the entwinement of its poles has become so tight that one lives it without seeing it. The resolution analyses this entwinement and builds on one of the poles while deconstructing the other. There is then a shift in the familiar ways of responding to situations. In contrast, dilemma solving has the effect of leading one to articulate principles of balancing values, which are in effect principles of justice (Bao, 1994: chapter 2, section 3). Suppose, in the example above, you decide the best thing to do is to save the rest of the prisoners by killing one. You act for a general good that you take to outweigh the good of or even the right to an individual life. That you weigh the values this way may be less the beginning of a new chapter in the development of your character than a rational conclusion from values you and those you discuss the matter with share.

Beyond conflicted consciousness

So far I have shown the need for a pedagogy that is aimed at the recognition and assessment of the elements of social consciousness. But what is the next step? Is the student to be left with the message that he or she is deeply conflicted? Michel Foucault is interpreted by respected commentators as having left his readers with little more than this message. This view of Foucault is put nicely by Richard J. Bernstein when he says that "Foucault's rhetoric of disruption 'works' because it at once presupposes and challenges an ethical-political horizon. He deliberately seeks to elicit conflicting responses in us, exposing the fractures in 'our' most cherished convictions and comforting beliefs" (1992: 156).

Though he may not have gone beyond eliciting conflicting ethical-political responses, Foucault still recognised the need for some way of avoiding the burden of the conflict. This might be the reason he turned, in the work published at the time of his death, to personal ethics (1988: part 2). His focus on the cultivation of the self in Hellenistic and Roman civilisation marked a turn away from his concentration on less personal institutional and social issues. The self he turned to study was, to be sure, not a detached, asocial self, but its construction became an art form that prescinded from the larger issues of how to counter power regimes. Thus, Foucault turned from critiquing Reich on the revolutionary potential of sexual liberation, in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1988: part 1), to shifts in the ethics of self mastery in Greece and Rome, in the last two volumes of that work, eight years later.

It is hard to miss the conflict he points up in the first volume. On the one side, there is a consciousness of sexual repression. This consciousness is reinforced by an idea of sexual liberation embodied in the "great sexual sermon" which chastises the existing order and promises felicity. On the other side, this consciousness of repression and liberation takes place "within a general economy of discourses on sex in modern societies." A regime of power is at work in this general economy that has everything to do with what we say about sex. Prohibitions are only a part of this regime; ironically, it also controls talk of liberation. Our talk about sexual liberation is under the influence of population policy makers, the mental health establishments, the global labour market, and the beauty/industrial complex.

Foucault leaves us with the conflict between a desire for liberation and a recognition of the control of sexual discourse. The great sexual sermon can be deflated through the recognition of control, but without a sense of repression and a desire for liberation there is no counter to that control. (Foucault makes a counter to control the background to all of his discussions of power.)

Absent a resolution of the ethico-political problem the conflict in sexual consciousness contains, it is tempting to follow Foucault away from politics toward the art of the self.

However tempting, it is not satisfactory. Turning one's back on the ethico-political problems doesn't resolve them - consciousness remains conflicted, as does the world. We must then address the question of how the teacher is to deal with conflicted consciousness. A conflict in consciousness can have a debilitating effect. In many of the cases we have discussed it will stymie action (Fisk, 1980: chapter 11, section 2). This will come from recognising that following the lead of one pole in consciousness works at cross purposes to following the lead of the other pole. A worker's sense of dignity can lead to resistance in the face of excessive demands for work. But this motivation may be undermined by the sense of defeat emerging from a history of losing struggles against the combined power of the state and the employers. A key step, then, in the pedagogy for social improvement will involve an effort to get the student to recognise that perpetuating the conflict will mean either passivity in insecurity or a zero-sum activism that leads in opposite directions.

It is one thing to say that conflict must be resolved. It is quite another to say in what direction. So long as there is the defeatist side to consciousness, with its accompanying downward spiral into pettiness and selfishness, the elimination of insecurity and powerlessness can never be realised. Promoting a sense of dignity, while downplaying defeatism and shame as a motive for behaviour, would though offer an avenue toward limiting, if not eliminating, insecurity and powerlessness. This would in effect resolve the contradiction by building its dignity pole. In principle, the other direction is also a possibility: promoting defeatism and shame while downplaying the sense of dignity.

What is needed to justify the teacher in leading the student in one of these directions rather than the other? The teacher would break with the method of dialogue, which is a requisite of student autonomy, if the teacher led the student through the manipulation of hollow rhetoric or propaganda. To be justified, the teacher must go beyond manipulation. He or she must have come to understand the needs of the social positions students occupy - their race, gender, class etc ... Ignoring these needs for the sake of the demands of defeatism, shame, pettiness, and resentment may have a high cost, without though buying significant compensating rewards.

That there will be this high cost and that it will not be offset by compensating rewards must be shown if the teacher is to be justified in leading the student in the direction of dignity rather than defeatism. The teacher can show this by showing that defeatism and shame are dead ends and that being motivated by dignity and a desire for security has its rewards. To make a plausible case for there being such rewards, the teacher must be prepared to reanalyse the significance of alleged defeats of lower groups, to evaluate the current vulnerabilities of dominant groups and the state, and to inventory resources at the disposal of a renewed effort at organisation. These assessments will obviously be different at different times. In some circumstances, the opportunity for amelioration through aiming at dignity by resistive methods won't exist. Still, it will be important to think beyond the immediate present so as to be prepared when there is a shift to more favourable circumstances. The teacher can try now to remove obstacles in consciousness to an amelioration starting only later.

Why does emphasising dignity and resistance while de-emphasising shame and defeatism prove the better strategy? The answer lies in the kind of individual our teacher addresses. The asymmetry in the pedagogical strategy reflects the asymmetry between subordinate and superordinate groups. Our teacher addresses individuals in subordinate groups. Their welfare is tied to the possibilities associated with these social locations. Being in subordinate groups, the amelioration of their situation requires a measure of resistance to the discipline a superordinate group wishes to impose. Within the framework of unequal social groups assumed here, aspects of consciousness which undermine motives for resistance will play a role in encouraging superordinate groups to take greater advantage of subordinate ones.

Why though should teachers be interested in the amelioration of people in a given social location? Instead, the teacher could ignore the ill effects of undermining resistance and eliminate

the burden of conflicted consciousness by building upon defeatism in the direction of passivity, servility, and fascism. Why should the teacher go one way rather than another?

Yet this puts the teacher outside any social position. It makes abstraction not just from the teacher's own class, race, and gender, but from any involvement he or she has with one or more of those groups. Where the teacher is sufficiently involved in these groups to feel solidarity with their members, he or she will not want to promote facets of consciousness that undermine amelioration for those groups. We need then to make solidarity, of the sort Antonio Gramsci builds into his concept of "organic intellectual", a requirement for the teacher engaged in a pedagogy for social improvement (1971: 5-13). The kind of teacher needed is an organic intellectual, one integrated, through actual membership or deep involvement, into the groups of those whose fortunes he or she is to promote.

This appeal to the organic intellectual might, though, seem unnecessary in order to get the teacher interested in promoting the good fortune of members of subordinate groups. For example, Amy Gutmann's philosophy of education assumes a teacher with no specific class, race, or gender attachments (1987: chapter 3). Still, she does assume that the teacher shares the democratic goal of the educational institutions of the kind she wants to promote. This implies that teachers will educate for a robust sense of respect and tolerance. But to teach respect and tolerance, they would have to get involved in resolving conflicted consciousness. They would get involved in diminishing the side of consciousness that leads to shame and pettiness and in enhancing the side that leads to limiting domination. In this process these teachers would inevitably see that their commitment to a robust democracy can be advanced only by a closer integration into subordinate groups to which they belong. In effect, it calls for their becoming organic intellectuals of those groups.

Merely seeing that a closer connection with subordinated groups is called for among teachers dedicated to democracy is not enough to establish such a connection. They will be held back by their own conflicted consciousness, which they have simply as a result of being part of a divided system. They will also have it as a result of institutional pressure - in a law school, on the editorial staff of a newspaper, in a trade union office, and in a secondary school - to implant market and property ideology. But it is not my purpose here to pursue the issue Marx raised, in the third of the *Theses on Feuerbach*, of how to educate the educators. I've tried to indicate the kind of teacher required for changing social consciousness for social improvement. A pedagogy for social improvement will undeniably find teachers of that kind.

Changing social consciousness involves another factor I have ignored so far. It is the tricorned dialogue between teacher, student, and the student's peers. The teacher raises questions and makes suggestions which the student answers and tests in dialogue with peers. This distinction is one solely between roles; so, the same person can play the teacher role of posing ideas and then switch over to the student-peer role of testing them. The workshop, the small discussion group, conversation with friends, a floor debate in a union meeting ... , such forums are needed to make sure one has got what the teacher said, to make sure one sees where it leads, and to make sure one won't be on a limb by oneself if one tries to implement it. In contrast, spiritual conversion can more easily happen, without involvement with peers, within a polar relation to a guru. But changing social consciousness is, for most of us, the product of a triangular relation in which the influence of teacher and peers reinforce one another. After all, clearing the way for motives that promote social change calls for an assurance that others will be on board to help get it.

Framework, reason, and authority

So far I've said the teacher can succeed only by providing a solid basis for believing the following: That, first, conflicted consciousness has a virtual zero-sum outcome, and thus needs resolving, and that, second, the rewards of diminishing defeatism while promoting dignity are greater than those

of doing the reverse. The teacher tries to make this second belief plausible by reanalysing defeats, demonstrating vulnerabilities, and inventorying resources for organisation.

The teacher's performance may be impressive but still not get past that sense of a recalcitrant reality students gain from everyday experience. What the teacher says may appear to be utopian. I respond by considering three models of what's effective in changing consciousness. Only the third, the model of framework reinforcement, proves satisfactory.

One model for reaching the student is centred around the concept of authority. In his critique of enlightenment rationalism, Alasdair MacIntyre has reintroduced a role for authority in the passing along of an ethical tradition (1990: 63, 91, 147). The authority of the teacher derives from his or her embodying a tradition. Humility is called for so that students don't pridefully fracture the tradition. Without humility, students can't be taught the habits needed for continuing the moral inquiry of a tradition. This humility is, MacIntyre alleges, vindicated when it is seen that the tradition has advantages over others.

The difficulty for us today with the acceptance of moral authority is that there is no unity of moral inquiry, no unitary community. In dealing with conflicted consciousness, I am dealing with a phenomenon of divided societies in which "We" is a term for concealing divisions rather than expressing solidarity. There is, prior to the success of the teacher, no group, no community, no "We" before which the appropriate attitude of the student is humility. So our teacher has a tougher job than MacIntyre's. When it comes to changing social consciousness, respect for authority has to be won and can't be demanded.

The Enlightenment came up with a plausible alternative to traditional authority - the faculty of reason. It can be employed to show in which direction conflicted consciousness should be resolved. Suppose you are so overwhelmed by your insecurity as a wage worker that you focus mainly on providing for your family and saving a bit against the time when you will be out of work. You have to accept the rules of the economic system to stay focused in this way. Still, you hate the discipline these rules force on you. You desire an end to your insecurity and powerlessness. You want a dignity your routine doesn't allow you to have. You even see that you are trapped by an economic system that leaves little way out for you. You are resigned and outraged, accepting and rebellious at the same time. Enlightenment reason might seem to provide a moral way out of this conflict. Respect for human dignity is one of the primary principles of reason. A system of insecurity undermines dignity and hence stands condemned.

In just this way Jurgen Habermas would counter the divisiveness of the market and the insensitivity of state bureaucracies by a moral critique coming from outside the economy and the state (1990: 20). Does such an appeal to reason work? A moral rejection of these systemic attacks on dignity fails to prevent them. The conflict between dignity and insecurity gets resolved by moral critique only at a rational level, not at a level of economic, bureaucratic, and emotional practicality. This failure to be efficacious leads us to turn to the third model.

What's needed is a solution that doesn't, as in the rationalist case, counterpoise itself to the economic system, but instead takes this system as its framework. I stressed earlier that the existence of conflicted consciousness is understandable within the framework of a divided society. Now it is time to note that changing that consciousness to a less conflicted form needs the same framework. The teacher's activity would have different effects in different possible social frameworks. But the teacher must devise strategies that in the actual framework will have the desired effects. The teacher's interventions alone aren't able to bring about these results. Yet they can have this power against the background of the actual economic system (Fisk, 1989: chapter 2).

To see the point of the framework strategy, let's consider interventions teachers could make in opposition to a recent trend on the right in the United States. The politics of resentment has become a major threat to solidarity among those in subordinate groups. White male workers resent job preferences for women workers and workers of colour. This resentment spills over against women

and people of colour themselves. With government as the enforcer of measures for equality, the target of resentment has spread even to government. In addition, employers come to oppose government for meddling in their affairs through its regulatory efforts, whether to enhance equality or the quality of life. An attack on big government is then mounted by those resenting the gains of women and people of colour, in an implicit alliance with those opposing regulatory encroachments on corporate power. How can one counteract this politics of resentment among white male employees?

Within the given capitalist framework, the consciousness expressed by the politics of resentment will only weaken the capacity to gain security and dignity. The leftist teacher's efforts to undo the politics of resentment will then be reinforced by this inevitable failure of the politics of resentment in the capitalist framework. The teacher's efforts in a framework where this reinforcement was lacking couldn't be as effective. The teacher's efforts have a greater chance of success where there is what I shall call framework reinforcement. This occurs where the teacher's efforts to diminish (strengthen) one pole in the conflicted consciousness of a person in a certain group are supported by the fact that in the given framework this pole leads to behaviour that undermines (enhances) the well being of persons in that group.

Consider in this light the plight of the rightist teacher who wants to undermine the politics of equality. In the absence of framework reinforcement, he or she must adopt a strategy based on propaganda. To see this, assume the framework is such that a politics of equality does not in fact undermine security and dignity for white males. Teaching them that the politics of equality is indeed harmful to them would, other things being equal, not win many adherents for the politics of resentment. Other things wouldn't be equal if this teaching were backed by a propaganda barrage to help conceal the lack of framework reinforcement. Filling the gap due to lack of framework reinforcement is one of the main goals of propaganda. Chomsky and Herman's propaganda model of the media explains how the press can spread inflated claims with impunity (1988: chapter 1). Having this capacity, the media can, with its propaganda, fill the gap due to lack of framework reinforcement.

I return now to consider how the framework reinforces the message of the leftist teacher. What reason is there to believe that the consciousness expressed in the politics of resentment will, in the actual capitalist framework, lead to a failure to get security and dignity? Within this framework, several connections leading to such failure can be seen to hold. Within this framework, the politics of resentment disrupts solidarity among natural allies; it puts downward pressure on wages; and it increases corporate power through deregulation.

Suppose though the teacher doesn't make these consequences clear to white males. Or suppose at least that the students don't see them as harmful. Then the teacher can call for discussion among the students. What wasn't clear or taken as harmful may become so as a result of dialogue with student peers. They can bring to bear a fund of experiences gained in the capitalist framework. The many stories of how resentment within the ranks led to defeat will have the desired impact. The politics of resentment is weakened, then, not by appeal to traditional authority or to abstract reason but by appeal to the experience of members of the tri-cornered dialogue. Won't the rightist teacher be able to play this game just as well? A conservative populist commentator, like Rush Limbaugh in the United States, who is featured on some 600 radio stations at prime listening time, can point to the way the power of already vulnerable white male workers has been eroded. Standing in the same capitalist framework as the leftist pedagogue, he has no trouble making a quite different scenario seem plausible. In that framework, the favouritism of government for people with values at odds with those of white male workers seems to marginalise the white male worker. Moreover, he intimates - with seeming plausibility in that framework - that this marginalisation can be overcome and dignity recaptured by supporting politicians who are dedicated to diminishing the powers of government. Isn't there framework reinforcement for Limbaugh's anti-big- government message?

Framework reinforcement would then seem to account for Limbaugh's success at building up the politics of resentment.

In fact, Limbaugh's success depends, not on framework reinforcement, but on distortions and inaccuracies that are appealing to the resentful (Rendall et al., 1995). The greatest distortion is that in the capitalist framework a politics of resentment will have a benefit for its followers that outweighs the benefit of pursuing dignity through equality. Resentment is supposed to have the political effect of defeating the enemies of the so-called common (white) man and putting his allies in power. Then the common (white) man will recover his rightful place. This, though, is a hopeless tactic in the very capitalist framework that is supposed to facilitate it. Instead, as the leftist pedagogue points out, it only leads to worse defeats for the common (white) man. The politics of resentment breaks solidarity networks, runs wages down, and enhances corporate power. Without attending to these consequences, the rightist relies on a few horror stories of favouritism to stir up resentment against natural allies.

Autonomy and pedagogy

I focused in the last section on an effective strategy for the teacher, without saying much in detail about what goes on in the student. Yet it is the student who is to change, and how does this happen? Let's retrace the teacher's steps. In dialogue with the student, the teacher first identifies, as already noted, a conflict in consciousness and then proceeds to show the student the need to resolve this conflict in a particular way. This the teacher does by showing, as again already noted, that so long as the conflict persists the student will squander his or her efforts in actions at cross purposes. The teacher doesn't stay neutral about which side of consciousness needs to have its effectiveness in promoting action diminished. So finally the teacher leads the student to see, as I previously explained, with the idea of framework reinforcement, that it is less likely the student will succeed in realising well being, in the social situation he or she is in, if one of the sides of his or her conflicted consciousness is diminished rather than the other. But having followed the teacher through all this, what triggers the change in the student?

We must be careful, in discussing the student's change, to avoid an overly voluntaristic interpretation. It might seem that the student in dialogue with the teacher and student peers will ultimately decide to try to resolve the conflict in the direction the teacher proposes. The step to non-conflicted consciousness would then involve a conscious choice. Does one, though, choose, or even choose to try, to resolve a conflict of consciousness?

This is the domain of character formation where reason and will surely play roles without it being obvious that they generally lead to anything so neatly locatable as choices. The student might wish that the motive of defeatism would take less of a toll on his or her activism. But saying that he or she had decided to curb its negative role would either provoke scepticism about there being a real decision rather than a mere wish, or call for interpretation in terms of an increase in the relative strength of another motive. Such an interpretation would be plausible when the circumstances change enough, either to introduce a countervailing motive or to give greater weight to an existing one. Thus defeatism might be overridden by active resistance where an increase in the vulnerability of superordinate groups has spurred militancy.

This interpretation can also be applied to the teaching situation. This situation can then be viewed, not as leading to a choice, but as one in which changed consciousness takes place through a strengthening of some sources of action and a weakening of others. This variation in the sources of action - motives, desires, beliefs - is stimulated by the tri-cornered relation in the framework of the divided society. Acts of will enter here in taking concrete actions in the tri-cornered process, such as the teacher's action of going to meet students to talk about a given problem and the student's action in deciding to get together with co-workers to discuss a proposal. But acts of will seem out of place when talking about changing the very sources of action that make up character.

The response in the student is, then, a variation in the strength of certain aspects of consciousness. This variation comes about through a process of tri-cornered dialogic interaction based on framework reinforcement. There is no guarantee that the process will change consciousness or change it in the right direction. But our experience leads us to believe that immersion in such a process does prove effective in a significant number of cases, with that number being greater in times when social movements are challenging the subordination of groups. A key factor in the pedagogic process favouring its success is its being designed to encourage both openness and solidarity. There is openness with the teacher and solidarity with student peers that are promoted by and in turn promote the dialogic character of the tri-cornered relation. They make it easier for the student to realise a slackening in the strength of the aspects of consciousness targeted for removal.

Of course, it would advance this slackening of the negative side of consciousness even further if the student were to engage in struggles which build up the other side of consciousness (Freire, 1994: 31). But that raises a problem. If the student can be engaged systematically in such positive struggles, he or she has already changed consciousness away from the zero-sum conflicted type. Action is surely necessary to change character thoroughly, but the moment of teaching is critical at the outset.

How does even this tri-cornered dialogic process avoid violating student autonomy? The student started with conflicted consciousness, and there was every reason to think this consciousness defined who the student was. One might then object that the teacher came in from the outside to change who the student was by insisting on a norm for making a better self. The student at no point chose to end his or her conflicted state, but simply slid into ending it through social pressures.

There is a twofold response to this charge. First, if the tri-cornered process is to be dubbed manipulative, then democracy itself, which at its best rests on a process of rational persuasion, must also face the same charge. Genuine autonomy does not come from being able to make acts of will in a state of separation from all contending influences, but from being open to change in the direction indicated by a reasonable discourse. Second, who one is at a given time is only a starting point in fashioning one's identity. If one is willing to bring others into the process of fashioning that identity, they become partners in seeking one's self-conception. If they are willing to listen as well as to direct, there is no loss of autonomy. Otherwise, the condition for autonomy would be the impossibly steep one of fashioning one's identity in isolation.

Notes

1. An earlier draft of this article was read in 1991 in Havana at the Third Conference of North American and Cuban Philosophers.
2. The view here is not that the 'negative' side of divided consciousness is ideological, in the sense of being made up of imposed doctrines designed to subordinate. Instead, the view is that the negative side emerges within the framework of a divided society due to the way the society organises need satisfaction. This differs, though, from the view of Paolo Freire that the consciousness of the oppressor is imposed on the oppressed (1970: chapter 1). This view is central to his project of having the oppressed recapture their 'authenticity' by recognising this imposition as a source of their 'dehumanisation'. Much of Freire's valuable contribution can, though, be recast, within my framework model, without the assumption of an imposition on a primordial humanity.
3. Miliband discusses the importance of a kind of defensive fight-back that grows out of need and outrage but nonetheless falls short of eliminating powerlessness and insecurity (1989: chapter 3).
4. Robert Ware makes a persuasive critique of the claim that theoretical consciousness - consciousness involving economic and social theory - should be realised in large numbers of people if there is to be social change. Unfortunately, by emphasising organisation, Ware neglects the importance of non-theoretical consciousness in social change (1983).

5. Bertell Olinan gives a careful critique of Reich's linking socialist revolution with sexual liberation (1979: chapters 6, 7).

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