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**Structuring of Modern and Postmodern Identities with  
Reflections on the Pedagogical Implications in a Multicultural  
World**

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## ABSTRACT

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**Title:** Structuring of Modern and Postmodern Identities with Reflections on the Pedagogical Implications in a Multicultural World

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**Summary:** This essay explores the different discourses that intersect to define and explain the concept of “identity” and consists of two distinct parts. The former being an attempt to eclecticize the discourses around identity and the structuring of identity under modern and post-modern conditions. The latter consisting of reflections on the methodological and pedagogical implications in a fragmenting postmodern and multicultural condition. This essay is a theoretical attempt to deconstruct the notion of the essentialized, stable, static and coherent modernist subjectivity/identity and tries to explore the construction of a multilayered, non-unitary, fragmented, plural postmodern subjectivity/identity. The essay aims to discuss the current politics of ‘identity’, ‘difference’, ‘recognition’ and ‘multiculturalism’ and explores the intricate enmeshing of concepts such as identity, ethnicity, minorities and nationalism. It further tries to construct the representation of identities within a world-systems paradigm. Modernity is seen as being convergent and a result of capital accumulation resulting in globalisation. Post-modernity is seen as a condition of fragmentation due to capital flight, resulting in discontinuities between different forms of collective and individual life. The deconstruction of modernist identity has methodological and pedagogical implications. This fragmentation and disintegration of stable hegemony has emancipatory potential within research. It has led to the decline of writing the “Other”. Writing the “Other” is seen as a violence, as it silences and disallows the other from representing themselves. Mere ethnographic observation needs to give way to a dialogic methodology. This has resulted in a focus in research on self-definition, self-identification, autobiographical and local narratives and a replacement of flawed grand narratives. It has also led to a new awareness of pluralism and diversity and articulation of a cultural politics in which culture is bound up with power and resistance. Feminist identity perspectives have strengthened research methodologies by creating empowering and self-reflexive research designs – concerned with producing emancipatory knowledge and empowering the researched. Pedagogically, from the perspective of postmodernism, modernist authority privileges western patriarchal culture and represses and marginalizes the voices of the subordinated. Hence the essay suggests the need for practicing “critical pedagogy” that views education as a political, social and cultural enterprise, and “border pedagogy” that incorporates the notion of difference as an ideal. In practice the culturally divergent fragmented postmodern condition calls for advocating policies of multiculturalism and multilingualism in education.

**Key Words:** Modernism, Postmodernism, Identity, Ethnicity, Critical Pedagogy, Border Pedagogy, Multiculturalism, Multi-lingualism,.

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## Forward

During my doctoral studentship in Sweden (between 1986 and 1995), I found myself exposed to Continental and Anglo - American discourses in the area of meta-science and social sciences. From having a keen interest in Critical School Theory, I evolved into exploring the modernist and postmodernist discourses and debates. Since my doctoral research was located in exploring the socialisation practices in the home and school of children of ethnic minorities in Kerala State, India, “identity” became an important focus of analysis.

While practicing for six months in the Department of Behavioural Sciences in Kristianstad, Sweden, I got the opportunity to attend the mid-term conference of the Research Committee (RC04) Sociology of Education of the International Sociological Association (of which I was a member), held in Taiwan between 1-3 December 2000. I decided to present a paper in a session titled : *The inter-relationship between identity formation and educational praxes in the era of multiculturalism.*

In between the duties assigned to me to liaise between the University of Kristianstad and Universities in India to establish a student teacher exchange programme funded by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and teaching, I found time to theoretically explore the discourses that intersect to define the concept of identity in modern and postmodern conditions. I am grateful to Christer Ohlin, Prefect of the Department of Behavioural Sciences at the University of Kristianstad, who allowed me to access this department for my practice period and for the material and moral support I received from him and the department during this period. This paper was published in the proceedings of the mid-term conference of RC04 and is being considered for publication by the Journal of Comparative Education in a re-written form.

In 2006 I asked Professor Lennart Svensson at the Department of Education, University of Lund, who was my supervisor during my doctoral studies to help me to get a fil. mag. exam. I submitted all my transcripts and the academic papers I had written since I was registered for Ph.D studies at Lund University. I was pleased when he decided to accept this paper as the 10 point essay required for being awarded M. Phil (fil. mag) in Education/Pedagogy. It is the culmination of my search to understand the divergent discourses surrounding the issue of identity.

Mariam John Meynert

Lund, 2006

## Introduction

This essay consists of two distinct parts. The former being an attempt to eclecticize the discourses around identity and the structuring of identity under modern and postmodern conditions. The latter consisting of reflections on the pedagogical implications in a multicultural social situation. Several discourses intersect in defining the concept of *identity*. Identity is an important aspect of the human quest for understanding the self. Identity means or connotes the process of identification, but the structure of identification is constructed through ambivalence – through splitting between that which is and that which is the other (Hall<sup>1</sup>, 1991). Modernist discourses emphasize the static, stable essentialized self (inherent in the concept of the free and self-determining individual) and the coherence of subjectivity and the notion of identity. Within modernist discourse, one of the functions of culture is to give a sense of 'identity' and form a world view (way of looking at life). Here the attempt has been to distinguish 'self' from the 'other', and 'we' from 'they', between those who understand and not understand the internal meanings of the system. One may belong to several cultures as identities develop over a period of time. Subjective identities are created within objective structures in which one lives and the material relations are connected to production in which it is situated. While identity is mostly seen as a question of epistemology (who we are), radical sociologists<sup>2</sup> would like to redefine identity more in terms of ethics, 'subjectivity being the determining factor where new identities (resistant subjectivities) are created - global and local - to wage new struggles of liberation' in order to combat the exploitative effects of globalization.

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<sup>1</sup> Hall, S. (1991), *Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities*, in Anthony D. King's (ed.) *Culture and Globalization and the World System*, MacMillan.

<sup>2</sup> Peter McLaren and Juan S. Murioz (2000), *Contesting Whiteness: Critical Perspectives on the Struggle for Social Justice*, published in the proceedings of the Mid-term Conference of RC04, Sociology of Education, held at Hualien, Taiwan, 1-3 December, 2000.

In contrast, postmodernist discourses challenge the fiction of the self-determining subject of modern discourses and the inflated conception of human reason and will. The notion of subjectivity as in the humanist notion of free, unified, stable and coherent is deconstructed and the notion of subjectivity, that is multilayered and non-unitary is brought in. In the poststructuralist theory of subjectivity, ideology is seen not as a false consciousness but as an effort to make sense in a world of contradictory information, radical contingency and indeterminacies (Spivak<sup>3</sup>, 1987). Here the notion of the identity of a person or a group gets produced simultaneously in many different locales of activities by different agents for many different purposes<sup>4</sup>. Identities are continually displaced and replaced. The subject is neither unified nor fixed, occupying conflicting subject positions. As plural social agents get involved in a variety of struggles and social movements, the issue of identity then becomes a crucial focus of political struggle.

Johnson<sup>5</sup> (1986-87) and Grossberg<sup>6</sup> (1987) give a post-poststructuralist account of subjectivity and reject postmodernism's tendency to reify a fractured, fragmented, schizoid subject and attempt to produce coherence and continuity in the notion of self, despite being subjected to regimes of meaning – a discourse Lather<sup>7</sup> (1991) calls '*fictions of the subject*' or '*subjected subjects*'. According to her, regardless of where one positions oneself, postmodernism raises

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<sup>3</sup> Gayatri Spivak (1987), *In other worlds: Essays in cultural politics*. Methuen. As quoted from Lather (1991).

<sup>4</sup> Marcus, G.E. (1986), *Anthropology as a Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago Press.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson, Richard (1986-87), *What is cultural studies anyway?* In *Social Texts* 16: 38-80. As quoted from Lather, P (1991).

<sup>6</sup> Grossberg, Lawrence (1987), *The in-difference of television or, mapping TV's popular economy*. *Screen* 28 (2): 28-47. As quoted from Lather (1991).

<sup>7</sup> Lather, P. (1991), *Getting Smart – Feminist Research and Pedagogy With/In the Postmodern*. Routledge.

compelling questions regarding emancipatory efforts. The politics of liberation are questions as central categories in identity politics - as race, class, gender and sexual orientation are seen as constantly being produced anew with different and compelling discourses – more fluid and drifting than had previously been assumed by reproduction theorists. In this essay, I shall try to trace the different discourses related to the notion of identity and try to link the concepts of identity and ethnicity in order to develop a rationale for pedagogical implications for a multicultural society.

### **Politics of `identity`, `difference`, `recognition` and `multiculturalism`**

Even in the pre-modern era, identities had never been fixed and in the older discourse was described as *'roles'* in the *'Role-theory'*. However the importance of 'Identity politics' had been obscured from analysis. *'Identity politics'* is also called the *'politics of recognition'* – the demand in today's politics, on behalf of minorities or *'sub-altern'* groups<sup>8</sup>, in some forms of feminism and in what is today called the *'politics of multiculturalism'* (Taylor<sup>9</sup>, 1995). Identity pursuits are seen as *'political'* because they are struggles that will determine the power relations in a society or nation, and involve seeking recognition, legitimacy and power. It involves resisting diminishing or fixed identities imposed on oneself, and contending universalizing, difference denying ways if thinking about self, politics and social life (Calhoun<sup>10</sup>, 1994). This has

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<sup>8</sup> 'Subaltern' means that of 'inferior rank' and is the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society and may be expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office. Subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up. The dominant groups are endowed with spurious primacy assigned to them by long standing tradition of elitism in South Asian Studies (Guha, 1994), ed. *Subaltern Studies – Writing on South Asian History and Society*, Oxford Univ. Press.

<sup>9</sup> Taylor, C (1995), *The Politics of Recognition*, in Multiculturalism – A Critical Reader, ed. David Theo Goldberg (1995), Blackwell.

<sup>10</sup> Calhoun, C., (ed.) (1994), *Social Theory and Politics of Identity*, Blackwell.

brought about a shift in the focus from ‘*Identity politics*’ to a ‘*politics of difference*’ - the politics of recognizing that we are composed of multiple social identities, complexly constructed through different categories, and these affect us by locating us socially in multiple positions of marginality and subordination (Hall, 1991).

Furthermore ‘*Identity politics*’, inspired by post-structuralism, recognizes that the discourse of identity is one where new theoretical discourses intersect, with many voices and there is no simple, unitary truth – addressing people through multiple identities they have, that these identities are frequently contradictory, and cut-across one another, tending to locate us differently at different moments – conducting a struggle/politics under contingent circumstances<sup>11</sup>. Post-humanist theory of the subject has resulted in a shift in cultural theory to seeing subjectivity as both socially produced in language, at conscious and unconscious levels and as a site of struggle and potential change. In poststructuralist theories of the subject, identity does not follow unproblematically from experience. One is seen to live in webs of class, race, gender, language and social relations. Meanings vary even within one individual. ‘Self-identity’ is constituted and reconstituted relationally, its boundaries repeatedly remapped and re-negotiated (Lather, 1991).

## **Identity, ethnicity, minorities and nationalism**

Identity is also constructed through narratives – stories, sagas, histories and world views internalised into the cognitive make-up of the identity of a person or groups. Narratives are crucial (Said<sup>12</sup>, 1993), because they are the method through which colonized people assert their own identity and an existence of their own history. The issues of the battle in imperialism are reflected, contested and decided in narratives – nations themselves are narratives.

The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it comes to who owned the land and, who has the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative. The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming

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<sup>11</sup> Hall, S. (1991), *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Said, E. (1993), *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage.



and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them. Most important, the grand narratives<sup>13</sup> of emancipation and enlightenment mobilized people in the colonial world to rise up and throw off imperial subjection; in the process many Europeans and Americans ...fought for new narratives of equality and human community” (Said, 1993).

Cultural identity can be formed and used in resisting and challenging colonial and imperial domination within a nation and inter-nationally. Homi Bhabha<sup>14</sup> (1990) attempts to trace the course of anti-colonial nationalist politics in India by exploring disjunctive processes in anti-colonial nationalist encounters with the narrative of modernity. He argues that people are neither the beginning nor the end of the national narrative; they represent the ‘cutting edge between the totalizing powers and forces that signify the more specific address to contentious unequal interests and identities within the population’<sup>15</sup>. Bhabha points out an interesting distinction in nationalist narratives between people as “pedagogical object” and people “constructed in the performance of narratives”. The former allows to perpetuate self-generating tradition for the nation, while the latter interferes in the sovereignty of the nation’s self generation<sup>16</sup>.

Partha Chatterjee<sup>17</sup> (1994) constructs the domains of sovereignty within colonial societies created by anti-colonial nationalism - the material domain of the “outside” and the spiritual or personal domain of the “inside”. Bilingual intelligentsia came to think of their own language and the “Indian family” as the inner domain of cultural identity, from which the colonial intruder had to be

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<sup>13</sup> Grand-narratives subsume the dialectics of spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth. (Lyotard, Jean-Francois, 1984. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis: Univ of Minnesota Press). As quoted from Cherryholmes, C.H. (1988).

<sup>14</sup> Bhabha H. (1990); *Dissemination: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation* in Bhabha (ed) Nation and Narration, Routledge.

<sup>15</sup> Chatterjee, P (1994), *The Nation and it’s Fragments – Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Oxford Univ. Press.

<sup>16</sup> Chatterjee, P (1994), *ibid*.

<sup>17</sup> Chatterjee, P (1994), *Ibid*.

kept out. Nandy<sup>18</sup> (1983) focuses on the colonization by the West, of the mind in addition to bodies, that forces the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities. According to Nandy, the West has not merely produced colonialism, but also informs most interpretations of colonialisms. He makes a call to the Third World (South as it is called today) not to be a willing player or counter player to the colonizing of one's mind, and to not become 'participants in a moral and cognitive venture against oppression'.

There have been attempts to deconstruct the notion of 'ethnicity' by post-modernist theorists. In the context of the Third World, particularly Africa, Lema<sup>19</sup> (1993) deconstructs<sup>20</sup> the notion of "ethnic groups" and suggests that "peoples" who, in earlier pre-colonial history were not defined as sub-groups or in relation to a majority culture, have come to be defined as "ethnic" in the discourses of academics and political debates. This process has been brought about by a centre-periphery bias. Although concepts such as "ethnic-nation" and "cultural-sub-nationalism" have been introduced by scholars instead of the term "ethnic groups", still at the centres of the world, the term "ethnic group" is being used in the discussions of socio-cultural groups, transforming all "peoples" of the world into "ethnic-groups". Populations called "ethnic groups" in Europe are politically and culturally marginalized sub-groups in reference to the majority cultures, while the majority "peoples" in Europe never conceived themselves as "ethnic groups", although majority groups were as ethnic as the minority groups. He further suggests that definitions are contextual in time and space, and formulated to describe specific socio-cultural and

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<sup>18</sup> Nandy, A. (1983); *The Intimate Enemy – Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Oxford.

<sup>19</sup> Antoine Lema (1993), *Africa Divided – the Creation of "Ethnic Groups"*, dissertation accepted by the University of Lund.

<sup>20</sup> Deconstruction is a postmodernist/poststructuralist operation which involves interrogating, evaluating, overturning and disrupting.

political status of “peoples” in particular societies under given historical contexts. Hence the researcher’s “ethnic groups” in Africa could be considered “nations” in the cultural sense, i.e. a folk, a community of socio-cultural groups. Similarly, depending on who sets the criteria for political consciousness, the term “nation states” and “multination states” are used for culturally heterogeneous countries<sup>21</sup>.

The term ‘ethnic group’ has come to be a synonym of ‘a people’ in Western academics. Ethnicity refers to cultural practices that distinguish a given community of people and to aspects of relationship between groups which consider themselves culturally distinct. It is at the level of everyday interaction that ethnicity is created and recreated and becomes relevant through social institutions and encounters. Ethnic differences are wholly learned. Ethnic distinctions are not neutral and are often associated with inequalities of wealth and power as well as antagonism between groups. The discourses concerning ethnicity are usually concerned with subnational units or minorities, but majorities and dominant peoples are also as ethnic as minorities<sup>22</sup>.

Both Marxists and liberals have difficulty in coming to intellectual terms with the concept of “ethnicity”. For the former it cuts across “more rational class solidarities”, and for the latter, the ascriptive group solidarity of ethnicity comes into conflict with “individualistic choice-preference”. Within the perspectives of modernization theories<sup>23</sup> are underlying assumptions that there exists two layers of human society - a retrogressive layer that is dominated by various forms of non-rational identities and a progressive layer containing of

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<sup>21</sup> Lema, A (1983) *ibid*.

<sup>22</sup> Eriksen, Thomas Hylland (1993), *Ethnicity & Nationalism – anthropological perspectives*, Pluto press.

<sup>23</sup> See Khalaf, A (1990), *Ethnicity: Rethinking a Sociological Enigma*, unpublished paper, Lund University.

rational identities. Ethnicity when viewed from this perspective is treated as a residual phenomenon, from an archaic past and is expected to disappear in the course of history. Khalaf (1990) asserts that there is a lack of theoretical coherence in the understanding of the different varieties of ethnicity.

Ethnicity may be an amalgam of any number of factors: descent, language, beliefs and assumed cultural traits. In every ethnic situation there is a distinctly different core. The core is inter-linked, influenced and modified by other ethnic components which can vary independently from each other ” (Khalaf, 1990).

Modernization and establishment of a system of nation-states have created a new situation for the people nowadays known as “ethnic minorities” or “indigenous peoples”, in that they have to become citizens of a geographic nation. Minority Rights Group<sup>24</sup> (1990) defines ethnic minority as a group which is numerically less than the rest of the population in a society, which is politically non-dominant and which is being reproduced as an ethnic category.

A minority exists only in relation to a majority. The majority-minority relationship therefore changes if state boundaries are redrawn. As soon as minorities become majorities due to redefinition of system boundaries, new minorities tend to appear. Groups which constitute majorities in one area or country may be minorities elsewhere. Members of immigrant groups can belong to a majority (or a nation) in their country of origin, but to a minority (or ethnic group) in a host country. A majority group can also become a minority through inclusion of its territory in a larger system” (Eriksen, 1993).

In the modern era, every individual is forced to have an identity as a citizen. Ethnic variations are frequently defined by dominant groups as something to “cope with”. Eriksen (1993) describes three main strategies used by nation-states in dealing with minorities. *Assimilation* is seen as a modernist strategy, where minorities lose their native language and boundary markers, and gradually come to identify themselves as the dominant people. Such policies of assimilation are believed to help their target groups to achieve equal rights and

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<sup>24</sup> As quoted from Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993), *Ethnicity and Nationalism – anthropological perspectives*, Pluto Press.

to improve their social standing, but often result in inflicting suffering and loss of dignity on the part of the minorities, who learn that their own tradition is of no value. Ethnic revitalization movements compete for no other scarce resource than cultural self-determination. Successful policies of assimilation from the point of view of modernist strategy, ultimately lead to the cultural disappearance of the minority.

The second strategy may be that of *domination*, where segregation on ethnic grounds is implied. This involves the minority being physically removed from the majority, and this is frequently justified by referring to the presumed inferiority of the former. Ideologies of segregation hold that it is harmful to 'mix cultures' or races, and are concerned with boundary maintenance. There is an asymmetrical power - context as in the case of apartheid and ethnic ghettos. The latter is caused by a combination of class differences following ethnic lines, ethnic dichotomization and minority stigma. The third option for the state is adopting the ideology of *multiculturalism*, a strategy close to post-modern perspective. Here members of all cultures and ethnicity enjoy full rights as citizens, without implying high degree of local autonomy. Multiculturalism may take two forms: that of *melting pot strategy*, where instead of the traditions of the immigrants being dissolved in favour of those dominant among the pre-existing population, traditions of all cultural groups blend to form a new, evolving cultural pattern. This is often believed to be the most desirable outcome of ethnic diversity; and *cultural pluralism*, the most appropriate course to foster the development of a genuinely plural society, in which the equal validity of numerous different subcultures are recognized.

Minorities respond to state domination in three ways:

The first option is to *assimilate*. This has been a common process. The second option for minorities consists in accepting their subordination, or try to *co-exist peacefully* with the nation - state... They sometimes negotiate for limited autonomy in religious, linguistic or local political matter. Such groups reproduce their boundaries and identities informally... The third option is favouring secessionism and full independence. Since these strategies are ideal types, in practice, both state tactics and minority responses will usually combine strategies of assimilation and segregation (or ethnic incorporation)... A term commonly used to describe combination between assimilation and segregation / incorporation, is *integration*" (Eriksen, 1993).

This implies that minorities simultaneously participates in the shared institutions of society and its reproduction of group identity and ethnic boundaries. Many majority - minority relationships may be analysed by focussing on the tension between equality and difference along these lines.

## **Representation of Identities in a World-Systems Paradigm**

There is a consensus among the social scientists about there being a world system. Wallerstein's World System theory attempts to interpret world patterns of inequality by making a series of economic and political connections across the globe based on the expansion of world economy. Connections are made between core countries (the economically modern and dominant countries) and peripheral outer-edge countries. In the context of identity formations and challenges to domination, Wallerstein<sup>25</sup> (1991) sees culture spatially delimited as, 'groups in control of states use it to build national identities. Solidarity achieved through these minimize internal conflicts, but defines the lines of conflict arising from disparities in international division of labour'. An expanding world system, incorporates new peripheries, resulting in cultural diffusion in the areas of education, technology, language, religion and law. The local elites created at the periphery, use local identities and traditions to

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<sup>25</sup> Wallerstein, I. (1991), *The National and the Universal: Can there be such a thing as world culture?* In Culture Globalization and the World System (ed.) A.D. King (1991).

formulate nationalistic challenges to foreign domination. Similarly the regional contenders to power within a nation use sub-cultural – linguistic, religious and other identities and traditions to formulate local social movements challenging the hegemony and the integrity of the state.

The representation of identity in conditions of global complexity is often situated into a binary opposition of “Relativism” / “Worldism” paradigm. Relativism is a post modern ideology and denies that there are absolutes and universals. Relativism refuses to make universalising sense of the discontinuities between forms of collective and individual lives. Worldism claims that it is possible to grasp the world as a whole, analytically. Everything socio - cultural and political including identity representation can be interpreted in reference to the dynamics of the world-system. Robertson<sup>26</sup> (1991) focuses attention on what he calls *particular* and *universal*. For Robertson, universalisation of the particular ‘involves extensive diffusion of the idea that there is no limit to particularity, to uniqueness, to differences and otherness’, while particularization of the universal ‘involves the idea of the universal being given global - human concreteness’. There is always a continuous dialectic, between the local and the global (Hall, 1991).

For Arjun Appadurai<sup>27</sup> (1990) the tension between the cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation is the central problem of today’ s interaction.

The tense ongoing interaction of forces promoting global integration and forces recreating local autonomy .... is not a struggle for or against global integration itself but rather the

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<sup>26</sup> Roland Robertson (1991), *Social Theory, Cultural Relativity and the Problems of Globality*, in Culture Globalization and the World System, ed. Anthony D. King (1991) MacMillan.

<sup>27</sup> Appadurai, A. (1990), *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*; Public Culture vol 5, (1990).

struggle of the terms of that integration... It is rather an effort to establish the terms of self determination and self controlled participation in the processes of global interaction and the struggle for planetary order” (Bright and Geyer<sup>28</sup>, 1987).

Attempt is made here to keep the global and the local, similarity and difference in mind simultaneously as a key to preserving diversity – a stance against the pure relativism found in post-modern discourse. A need is felt to keep the right amount of tension between individuals, cultures, nations, world-system societies and human kind – and this relationship is a dialectical one.

In *Postmodernis, and the cultural logic of late capitalism*<sup>29</sup> Jameson (1984) makes the most significant intervention by making a causal relationship between new developments in Western Capitalism and the rise of the post-modern. Jameson offers a totalising perspective of the post-modern and then seeks to approach postmodernism dialectically, as a simultaneous catastrophe and progress. Friedman (1988) develops this further in his *Cultural Logics of the Global System: A Sketch*<sup>30</sup> where he argues for a more objective understanding of the crisis of modernity that places current transformations of world cultures and identities in the context of the transformation of the world system, which is not to be understood as an evolutionary totality on its way to a socialist or post-industrial world but a more cyclical history of civilizational systems (see also F. Capra<sup>31</sup>, 1983). Arnowitz and Giroux<sup>32</sup>, (1991) attribute the politicisation of

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<sup>28</sup> Bright, C. & Geyer, M. (1987), *For a Unified History of the World in the Twentieth Century*, in *Radical History Review* No. 39. (1987).

<sup>29</sup> In the *New Left Review* 146:53-92, as quoted from The Idea of the Postmodern - a history. Jameson’s work is considered the most significant American intervention to the first significant attempt to fully conceptualize the postmodern in terms of global political economy (Bertens, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> In Theory, Culture and Society vol 5, (1988), Sage.

<sup>31</sup> .. Cultural transformations of this kind are essential steps in the development of civilizations. The forces underlying this development are complex, and historians are far from having a comprehensive theory of cultural dynamics, but it seems that all civilizations go



ethnicity due to capital flight supporting Friedman's argument that the crisis of modernity is a phenomenon specific to the declining centres of the world system due to the decentralization of the global accumulation of capital thus generating conditions in different parts of the world.

According to this notion:

...centres of modernization is found in areas where new capital is concentrating. The new expansion provoke resistance and accommodation of tribal peoples and finally their integration as peripheries into the new hegemonic spheres. In areas such as Africa, peripheralization remains stable, due to the absence of capital accumulation and a continued existence of non - capitalist (traditional) relations... In areas that have been more thoroughly capitalized<sup>33</sup>, the decline of modern identity has given rise to the elaboration and restoration of the formal cultural identities.... Here tradition is appropriated by modern premises.... It is true that we are witnessing a cultural pluralization of the world as well as globalisation of culture.... When hegemony is strong and increasing, cultural space is similarly homogenized. Cultural pluralism is the western experience of the real post-modernization of the world, the ethnicization and cultural pluralization of a dehegemonizing, dehomogenizing world incapable of a formerly enforced politics of assimilation and cultural hegemony” (Friedman<sup>34</sup>, 1988).

For Friedman, the construction of identity is very much part of the historical dynamics of the global system. Modernist identity depends on the expanding horizons, which in-turn depends on an expanding modern sector of the global system i.e. expanding hegemonic centre. Where such expansion ends or turns to decline, modern identity becomes difficult to maintain. The dissolution of

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through similar cyclical processes of genesis, growth, breakdown and disintegration”, as quoted from Fritjof Capra's *The Turning Point – Science, Society and the Rising Culture*, 1983.

<sup>32</sup> Arnowitz, S. & Giroux, H.A. (1991), *Postmodern Education – Politics, Culture & Social Criticism*, Univ. of Minnesota Press.

<sup>33</sup> This situation has to be understood as being different from traditionalism in which population are not fully integrated into the world system, and their identities and cultural strategies are not completely modern. The former is a strategy attempting to create a distinct form of life by population that have lost their identity, while the latter are able to participate as individuals in capital sector, yet psychologically bound by strategy of “kinship” solidarity and affiliation (Friedman, 1988).

<sup>34</sup> Friedman J. (1994); *Cultural Identity & Global Process*. Sage.

modern identity (- culture, - nature) trifurcates towards traditionalism (+culture) and primitivism (+nature) and true postmodernization (+culture, +nature). In a certain sense the modernist project itself dissolves the social and cultural fabric to such an extent that it generates postmodernism.

## **The Emancipatory and Methodological Issues Related to Postmodern Condition**

The roots of the post-modern discourse itself is seen to be part of the fragmentation of the world system. Identity is always part of a narrative, it is partly self-representation and partly composed of more than one discourse, composed by silencing “others” and composed against the silences of “others” (Hall, 1991). The fragmentation of the hegemonic structure of the world system has progressive and emancipatory aspects that cannot be ignored, since it has methodological implications and has led to what is called a “crisis” in representation. For Foucault (1980) whether one views this as a ‘crisis’ or opportunity depends on where one is located in the apparatuses of the power / knowledge systems. This breakdown of hegemony has brought about shifts in the methodological act of ethnography. There is a consequent decline in the anthropological authority of writing the “other”. Writing the “other” is seen as a violence, as it silences and disallows the other from representing themselves. The disintegration of stable hegemony and clear hierarchy of identities has interfered with the act of identifying the other, as the new empowered subject challenges this representation by others and chooses to identify themselves (Friedman, 1988). This has also resulted in the self consciousness of the ethnographic act amounting to an awareness of the anthropologist’s subject relation to the ethnographic object and their own object position in the larger

system<sup>35</sup>. Spivak<sup>36</sup> (1988) takes this argument further and shows concern about the silenced subaltern women in the East and sees it as part of a history - what she calls an 'epistemic violence'. This violence is perpetuated by the West with the complicity of the Third World elite. The subaltern Other as subject is silenced. By "Subaltern Other", Spivak alludes to the illiterate peasantry, the tribals, the lower strata of the urban proletariat, in India. She points out however that there is a continuation of the representation of the colonial as "other" in post-structural discourses, 'subsuming the East to the West and continuing the tendency for imperialistic thought'.

There are points of connections between the postmodernist decentring of the subject, its rejection of grand narratives and notion of totality, its embracing of local narratives, language games, and geneologies and its political pluralism (Boyne and Rattansi, 1990). However unconstrained pluralism, epistemological ambivalence and political ambiguity poses problems of analysis, as particularistic theories cannot explain interrelationships between events – how these events mutually determine and constrain one another<sup>37</sup>. While postmodernism rightly emphasizes the importance of local narratives, it blurs the distinction between mono-causal master narratives and between situational realities (Giroux<sup>38</sup>, 1991) and narratives which provide basis for historically placing different groups within a common project – capable of analysing differences 'between unity rather than against unity'.

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<sup>35</sup> See *Cultural Identity and the Global Process*, Jonathan Friedman (1994).

<sup>36</sup> Spivak, G.C. (1988), *Can the Subaltern Speak*, in C. Nelson and L. Grissberg (eds) Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Chicago. As quoted from McCarthy, P. (1994), *Postmodern Desire: Learning From India*.

<sup>37</sup> Boyne R. and Rattansi A. (1990), *Postmodernism and Society*, Macmillan.

<sup>38</sup> Giroux, H.A. (1991). *Postmodernism, Feminism and Cultural Politics – Redrawing Educational Boundaries*, State Univ. of New York Press.

Foster<sup>39</sup> (1985) is concerned about the need to reconstruct the politics of the left without falling between a ‘*pluralism of indifference*’. What is currently required is not an abandonment of the whole enterprise of grand narratives, but the replacement of the flawed ones with versions that can command both theoretical and political credibility (Boyne and Rattansi, 1990). Nandy<sup>40</sup> (1983) re-affirms this position when he argues not for giving up the theory of progress but to go beyond the old universalism within which the earlier critique of capitalism and colonialism was offered and to combine fundamental social criticism with a defence of non-modern cultures and traditions – and that, it is possible to speak of plurality of critical traditions and of human rationality. The project of modernity, for feminists, as much for those waiting to be emancipated, is still incomplete. For Habermas, modernity is an unfinished project but the task is not merely to complete what is yet unfulfilled, but to reassess some of its central presumptions. Reformulation and reassessment is expected to lead to an alternative politics, that results from a dialogue between Marxism and postmodernism, which would incorporate feminist and anti-racist contributions. In addition there is need to recognize provisionality of subjectivities and personal identities and the crucial role of contradictory discourses in the formation of subjectivities, identities and social relations<sup>41</sup>.

Postmodernists emphasize difference without reducing it to hierarchical positions or marginalizing it – and see it as a plural reality that is theoretically and politically harmless. However the issue of equality does not exclude difference<sup>42</sup>, and depends upon the acknowledgement of differences that

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<sup>39</sup> Foster, H. (1985); *Postmodern Culture*. Pluto.

<sup>40</sup> Ashis Nandy (1983), *The Intimate Enemy – Loss and recovery of self under colonialism*.

<sup>41</sup> Boyne and Rattansi A. (1990) *ibid*.

<sup>42</sup> The equality difference debate has been raised by postmodernist feminist, who claim that Modern political thought is characterized by a repression of difference, as the theoretical

promotes inequality and that which does not. For the postmodernist feminists, there is an acknowledgement that sexism, racism and class exploitation constitutes interlocking systems of domination – that sex, class and race/ethnicity determine the nature of female identity, status and circumstances (Lather<sup>43</sup>, 1991). The post-modern notion of difference is radicalised by post-modern feminist discourse through a refusal to isolate any one difference as a social category and simultaneously engaging in politics aimed at transforming self, community and society. Feminists welcome post-modern emphasis of local narratives and their stance against universals that are the result of hegemonic power relations, but are skeptical towards their status-quoist view of difference. Difference has to be understood so as to change rather than reproduce prevailing power relations.

Feminist theory has both produced and profited from a critical appropriation of a number of assumptions central to both modernism and postmodernism. The feminist engagement with modernism has been taken up primarily as a discourse of self-criticism and has served to radically expand a plurality of positions within feminism itself. Women of colour, lesbians, poor and working class women have challenged essentialism<sup>44</sup>, separatism, and ethnocentrism that has been expressed in feminist theorizing and in doing so have seriously undermined the Eurocentricism and totalising discourse that has become a political straight-jacket within the movement” (Giroux, 1991).

Feminist perspectives have also strengthened research methodologies by creating empowering and self-reflexive research designs – concerned with producing emancipatory knowledge and empowering the researched. According

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structure of the modern system of power ignores differences by absorbing it into an abstract paradigm of the individual, which is understood as male and universal (Gatens, M. 1991, *Feminism and Philosophy – Perspectives on Difference and Equality*. Polity).

<sup>43</sup> Lather, P (1991), *Getting Smart – Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/In the Postmodern*.

<sup>44</sup> Essentialism is a doctrine articulated by Aristotle, which claims that everything has a nature or essence – a cluster of properties such that if the thing were to lose any one of them, it would cease to be (Crystal, 1990).

to Harding<sup>45</sup> (1982), feminist researchers see gender as the basic organizing principle which profoundly shapes/mediates the concrete conditions of our lives – shaping consciousness, skills and institutions in the distribution of power and privilege. Ideologically feminist research tries to correct the invisibility and distortions of female experiences within human sciences, with the intention of helping to end women's unequal social position. Lather<sup>46</sup> (1991) wrote that women's studies is counter hegemonic work – designed to create and sustain opposition to social inequalities – creating spaces between debate over power and the production of knowledge (that passed as wisdom). Such spaces are seen as cultural space that allows for the negotiation of new meanings, as traditional forms of cultural authority are relativized.

Critical pedagogs and social scientists take a cue from postmodern feminists<sup>47</sup> and call for a politics that employ the most progressive aspects of modernism (equality, fraternity, freedom and justice) and aspects of postmodernism (struggle for a plural identity and right to self representation and power to define one-self). They re-affirm the importance of difference as part of a broader political struggle and recognize the importance of certain forms of narratives that are needed to provide a language of power that engages the issue of inequality and struggle.

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<sup>45</sup> Harding, S. (1982), *Is gender a variable in conceptions of rationality?* Dialectica, 36: 225-242. As quoted from Lather (1991).

<sup>46</sup> Lather, P. (1991), *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Postmodern feminists reject the binary opposition between modernism and postmodernism in favour of a broader theoretical attempt to situate both discourses critically within a feminist political project (Giroux, 1991).

## **Pedagogical Implications in a Multicultural World**

Before entering into the educational praxes appropriate in a multicultural society, I wish to summarize the essence of the discussion on the concept, formation and structuring of identity in a plural setting - Identity of a person is neither unified nor fixed and is produced in different locales by different agents for different purposes. The implication here is that an individual has a hierarchy of identities, with a primary attachment to one identity and at the same time different degrees of attachment to a whole net-work of other identities. The discourse of identity is not to be treated as apolitical since it involves the recognition of the multiple positions of marginality and subordination one is located in. There is a need to acknowledge differences that promote inequality – i.e. sexism, racism and class exploitation that constitute interlocking systems of domination and that these shape and mediate the concrete conditions of our lives – shaping consciousness, skills and institutions in the distribution of power and privilege<sup>48</sup>. It involves resisting diminishing or fixed identities that are imposed on oneself and the need to change rather than reproduce prevailing power relations.

Further more the discourse of pluralism, multiculturalism, multilingualism and education have to be based on values of dignity and equality, important for a democratic ideal, where rights claimed by cultural groups are not denied in the name of unity. Lessons need to be taken from the post-modern assertion of dissent against “universals” in education - which merely ‘impose dominance of the West on the East, the North over the South, and the elite mainstream high culture or society within a nation over the folk, the little, marginalized and

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<sup>48</sup> Lather, P. (1991), *Getting Smart – Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern*, Routledge.

oppressed identities'<sup>49</sup>. Educational praxes in the context of cultural criticism would imply evolving curricula that help students to locate themselves in history and find their own voices in terms of their cultural existence. Critical pedagogs would help students understand that differences and identities are constructed in multiple ways, and help students explore their membership in their culture, gender, class, nationality and humanity. Such critical education would not only promote knowledge of technical skills, but also provide a critique of the demoralizing forces associated with modernization, industrial freedom and material development, in order to prevent materialism from destroying the valuable traditions of the past - education that promotes the histories of cultural groups, and that gives new meaning to the past in the context of the future.

Self identity of cultural groups need to be developed in a suitable environment of cultural pluralism, to provide protection from the intrusion of other self-identities, yet allowing it to mature in cooperative interaction with other cultural groups. Critical pedagogs and students need to analyse and understand how differences within and between social groups are constructed and sustained within and outside schools in webs of domination, subordination, hierarchy and exploitation in order to resist the abuse of power and privilege<sup>50</sup>. From the perspective of postmodernism, modernistic authority privileges Western patriarchal culture and represses and marginalizes the voices of those who have been deemed subordinate or subjected to relations of oppression because of their colour, class, ethnicity, race, or cultural and social capital<sup>51</sup>. Hence postmodernism of resistance wants to bring about a change in power from the

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<sup>49</sup> Shukla, S.C. (1991), *Ethnocentricism and Education: An Asian Perspective*. J of Educational Planning and Administration. Vol V, No: 3. India.

<sup>50</sup> Giroux, H.A. (1991), *Postmodernism, Feminism, and Cultural Politics – Redrawing Educational Boundaries*, State Univ. of New York Press.

<sup>51</sup> Arnowitz, S. & Giroux, H.A. *Postmodern Education – Politics, Culture & Social Criticism*, University of Minnesota Press.



privileged and the powerful to those groups struggling to get control over their own lives in a world infused by the ‘logic of disintegration’. Postmodernism has emancipated educational notions by challenging the understanding that knowledge and meaning was to be defined through master narratives and by generating a more acute understanding of suppressed and local histories and struggles that are specifically related to the context; by the blurring of distinctions between high and mass culture, by merging art and life, by an exploration of ethnic minority and feminist perspectives, and by dissolving universalising claims to history, truth and socially constructed hierarchies of meanings (Arnowitz and Giroux, 1991).

Thus traditions are valued not because they stand for truth and authority but because tradition constitutes one of the diverse voices struggling for recognition in structures having asymmetrical relations of power. At this point a distinction needs to be made between critical pedagogy and border pedagogy of postmodern resistance. *Critical pedagogy* consists of a variety of theoretical positions with different ideological positions. It ranges from enabling teachers to view education as a political, social and cultural enterprise, to emulating liberal-progressive tradition in which teaching is reduced to getting students to merely express their own opinions, with a banal notion of teaching as facilitation, where understanding of contradictions underlying these experiences and critical contents of subject matter are avoided. In *border pedagogy*<sup>52</sup> the notion of incorporating difference as an ideal is introduced into the common struggle of the utopian project of educating students to locate themselves in their particular histories while confronting the limits of their own perspectives with a view to getting them involved with the broader engagement with democratic public life.

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<sup>52</sup> Aronowitz, S & Giroux, H.A. (1991), *Postmodern Education – Politics, Culture & Social Criticism*, University of Minnesota Press.

Within the discourse of border pedagogy students move between cultural borders of socially and historically constructed identities, capacities and forms. There is a decentring of maps of knowledge and social relations, and the terrain of learning gets linked with shifting parameters of identity, history and power. In fact border pedagogy involves combining the best insights of modernism and postmodernism and deepens the extent of critical pedagogy.

Although along with an acceptance of multi-linguality and multiculturalism is the inevitable corollary of a pre-modern, a fragmenting modern and post-modern condition, educational implications for multi-cultural education would vary depending on whether the multicultural situation is one created by the post-modern condition or is a modern or pre-modern phenomenon. The culture of a group is the product of the creative response of the inner spirit of a people to challenges of life. Culture is what holds the community together and is a dynamic rather than static phenomenon. Although it is expressed through language, patterns and ways of life, attitudes and symbols and is celebrated in art, painting, carving, sculptor, music, drama, dance folktales, literature, festivals, food, dress etc<sup>53</sup>, it is not solely composed of rituals or objects nor a discrete entity that some have and others do not. Differing life experiences and perceptions result in individuals and groups developing a variety of cultural understandings and behaviours<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas, M. M. (1992), *The Nagas Towards A.D. 2000*. Centre for New International Economic Order, India.

<sup>54</sup> Victoria, Ministry of Education (Schools Division) (1986) *Education in, and for, a Multicultural Victoria*. Melbourne, Ministry of Education, from Ethnic Diversity and Multicultural Education by Keith Simkin and Emmanuel Gauch, in Contemporary Perspectives in Comparative Education (eds) Robin J. Burns and Anthony R. Welch, Garland Publication, 1992, New York.

Most Second and Third World are multicultural, so also the present amalgam of the populations of the First World. Some radical suggestions have been made by Pattanayak<sup>55</sup> (1990) regarding differing goals in education when policies are based on multilingualism and mono-lingualism in a democratic state. The former lays stress on emphasizing differences rooted in culture and in group membership among people as against equal opportunity without barriers or affirmative action based on ethnicity, race or gender; Fairness in choosing evaluation measures appropriate to each individual and group as opposed to individual merit and accomplishments as the only legitimate source of economic and social success; each cultural group free to maintain its heritage norms and values (valuing diversity) as opposed to emphasizing similarities among people – fairness equalized by measuring each individual by the same yard stick; interpreting individual behaviour in the light of group patterns as opposed to focusing on individual level traits; and school reaffirming what cultures value as knowledge, as opposed to school as the great equalizer.

Associated to the question of multicultural education is the issue of education for multilingualism. Language is a powerful instrument by which individuals express their personality and groups identify their collective consciousness. In a multiracial and multi - lingual society, language tends to become a barrier to integration of different cultural groups because they stress attachment to their own language as a means of transmitting cultural and social values and resist the concept of a common communicating language for official and systemic purposes. Pattanayak (1990) asserts that variation is not to be seen as disintegration and that it is not the recognition but the non - recognition of identities that lead to disintegration. In the context of developing countries with economic constraints, educational efficiency is closely associated with language

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<sup>55</sup> Pattanayak, D. P. (ed) (1990), *Multilingualism in India*. Multilingual Matters Ltd.

factors – especially mother tongue as a medium of instruction. In addition to this, multilingualism thrives on respect for difference. Difference is not to be equated with deficiency. In the absence of this, injustice and inequality sets in. Giving recognition to a single language in a plurilingual society empowers the speaker of that language with advantage over others.

Inequality has many faces. Giving recognition to a single language variety as standard creates a cadre of people who through various controls, gain from the acquisition, processing, storage, transmission, retrieval and other manipulations of the language.. In the case of using monolingual standard in a pluri-lingual world, the elite is twice removed from reality as the choice of a single language as the sole medium of communication, usurp the right of different language speakers to participate equally in the developmental process of the society concerned. It further limits the societal resource to the cleverer among the manipulators of the standard language (Pattanayak<sup>56</sup>, 1990)... The unity of mankind must be built upon a recognition and acceptance of mankind's diversity and not merely upon the diversity of one social group or another; upon the diversity that exists internally in each group itself" (Fishman<sup>57</sup>, 1978).

Pattanayak (1990) lists different ways of approaching linguistic equality in education in a multicultural situation. These are: *Reciprocal bilingualism*<sup>58</sup> leading to the transformation of the total system of education. Here bilingualism characterises the mainstream of education. *Systemic modification*<sup>59</sup> leading to transformation of parts, resulting in a series of bilingual programmes rather than integrated system of bilingual education. *Positive discrimination* in favour of historically disadvantaged groups. This requires a distinction between bilingual education and minority education. A separate *segmented system*<sup>60</sup> of bilingual

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<sup>56</sup> Pattanayak, Debi Prassana (1990), *ibid.*.

<sup>57</sup> Fishman, Joshua A. and Lovas, John (1970), *Bilingual education in sociolinguistic perspective*. In Bernard Spolsky (ed.) The Language Education of Minority Children, Rowly, Mass: Newbury House Publishers. As quoted from Pattanayak (1990).

<sup>58</sup> The Welsh system of British education has achieved this to an extent.

<sup>59</sup> The Gaelic speakers in Scotland and the system in the Unites States of America.

<sup>60</sup> The French-English tension in Quebec and Canada.

education, parallel to the mainstream. *Linguistic apartheid*<sup>61</sup> providing different tracks for different ethnic groups. Fishman and Lovas<sup>62</sup> (1970) categorize bilingual education as: *Transitional bilingualism*<sup>63</sup>, which aims at language shift. Here no support is given to the mother tongue, neither to fluency and literacy in both languages. *Mono-literate bilingualism*<sup>64</sup>, which develops aural/oral skills in both languages but literacy in one. This leads to a language shift. *Partial bilingualism*<sup>65</sup>, which permits use of mother tongue to ethnic group or cultural heritage. *Full bilingualism* which aims at maintenance of both languages. It aims at development of all skills in both the languages in all domains. This is supportive of minority languages.

It is argued by radical sociolinguists<sup>66</sup> that language policy should aim at the full development of human beings as well as full development of each language community and region. In addition, in multilingual settings, functions are allocated to different languages and a non-conflicting type of societal bilingualism or multilingualism takes place. This is not in resonance with the documented view in the West on bilingualism, which sees bilingualism as a

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<sup>61</sup> As in South Africa, which had mandated separate development for different groups. In this system some elements are more prestigious than others in the total system. In Russia, linguistic minorities in the heartland come under this category.

<sup>62</sup> Fishman, Joshua A. and Lovas, John (1970), *Bilingual education in sociolinguistic perspective*. In Bernard Spolsky (ed.) The Language Education of Minority Children. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House Publishers. As quoted from Pattanayak (1990).

<sup>63</sup> In America Spanish is used to adjust to school until skill in English is developed to the point that it can be used as medium of education. Spanish is not developed institutionally.

<sup>64</sup> In the American context mother tongue is used as link between home and school, but the system does not encourage the use of mother tongue in the context of work, government, religion and book culture.

<sup>65</sup> Here mother tongue is used for social sciences and humanities and not for science, maths and technology.

<sup>66</sup> Deveriew (1974) *Social Linguistics, Language in Society* 9; Pattanayak (1990) *ibid*; Srivastava R. N. (1977) *Indian Bilingualism: Myth and Reality*. In Gopal P. Sharma and Kumar Suresh (eds) Indian Bilingualism. Agra: Central Institute of Hindi. As quoted from Pattanatak (1990).

static structure where two languages are in competition with each other. In the West, bilingualism is not seen as an abstraction whose nature, content, function and domain are constantly changing in relation to one another and in relation to other structures in society. Western scholars are sensitive to the use of language and dialect but not to the use of mother tongue, ethnic and community languages<sup>67</sup>. While variation on the axes of age, sex, economic status is conceded, variations in language – the primary expression of diversity - is not recognized within education, as valid<sup>68</sup>.

When identities are layered as in a multilingual situation, mother-tongue becomes the primary identity of the individual. Through mother-tongue one becomes aware of one's identity and one's linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural membership. Pattanayak (1990) notes that early socialization function, identity function and psychic functions are rooted in the mother tongue. Through the mother tongue the child gets anchored to the culture, and living and learning becomes a seamless process. Teaching of mother-tongue as the first language in school and gradually phasing through link languages to the official language would be a feasible democratic step towards an egalitarian, interdependent, multilingual and multicultural reality.

The issue of power is a pressing question: How do efforts to liberate perpetuate relations of domination? Is the role of critical intellectuals to be spokes-persons for the oppressed or to act as agents whose task is to take away barriers that prevent individuals from speaking for themselves.? What is an empowering

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<sup>67</sup> Since the majority mother tongue has a privileged position, it's standard form is taken for granted as the norm, and minorities are required to conform and acquire this language as the dominant means of communication in a nation-state. This process of hegemony results in minority languages being called community languages, mother tongues, ethnic languages, dialects and language varieties.

<sup>68</sup> Pattanayak (1990) *ibid*.

approach to generate knowledge? All critical enquiry is fundamentally dialogic and involves a mutually educative experience. The ultimate aim is to stimulate a self sustaining process of critical analysis and enlightened action without being imposing (Lather, 1991). The politics of ‘identity’/ ‘difference’/ ‘recognition’/ and ‘multiculturalism’ and its associated struggles need to be sustained within wider discourse of political engagement: a political project that embraces human interests that go beyond particularistic politics of class, ethnicity, race, gender and ecology to a development of radical democratic politics that stresses diversity within unity, as well as takes cognizance and account of gender and class issues, that along with race and ethnicity, constitute interlocking systems of domination.

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