

Education for Profit, Education for Freedom

Martha C. Nussbaum

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{H}istory has come to a stage when the moral man, the complete man, is more and more giving way, almost without knowing it, to make room for the ...commercial man, the man of limited purpose. This process, aided by the wonderful progress in science, is assuming gigantic proportion and power, causing the upset of man's moral balance, obscuring his human side under the shadow of soul-less organization.

Tagore, Nationalism (1917)¹

Achievement comes to denote the sort of thing that a well-planned machine can do better than a human being can, and the main effect of education, the achieving of a life of rich significance, drops by the wayside.

John Dewey, Democracy and Education (1915)²

I. The Education Crisis

I begin with four examples, which illustrate, in different ways, a profound crisis in education that faces us today, although we have not yet faced it. All illustrate the crisis in both education and citizenship to which the great Indian writer and educator Rabindranath Tagore refers, a crisis that was already profound in his lifetime and that has become still more profound in our own.

1. In the fall of 2006, the United States Department of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education, headed by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, releases its report on the state of higher education in the nation.³ This report focuses entirely on education for national economic gain, for profitability in the global market. It concerns itself with perceived deficiencies in science, technology, and engineering – not even basic scientific research in these areas, but only highly applied learning, learning that can quickly generate profit-making strategies. The humanities, the arts, and critical thinking, so important for decent global citizenship, are basically absent, and the suggestion of the report is that it would be perfectly all right if these abilities were allowed to wither away, in favor of more useful disciplines.

2. In March 2006, Harvard's President Lawrence Summers (now ex-President) travels to India to host a three-day event called "Harvard in India." Summers is well known in America for his denigration of the humanities, whose role in the curriculum he sought to reduce, and especially for his opposition to the study of ethical reasoning, which he sought to remove entirely from the undergraduate core curriculum.

His aim was, consistently, to build up the portion of the curriculum devoted to science and technology.

"Harvard in India" was no different. The program had a number of remarkable features: no Indian academic was included on the program, and Harvard charged more than \$100 to every person who wanted to attend, something that put it out of range for local academics. By contrast, leading Indian businessmen were amply represented on the program (and I mean men – only one woman, an American medical researcher, was on the program at all), and the message delivered by Summers to the Prime Minister and other assembled dignitaries was that Harvard was happy to help India in its effort to develop its technology sector, and thus to capture a larger share of the global market. The educational emphasis was not even on creative, basic science: it was on science for short-term profit in industry.

3. In November 2005, I go across the Midway to the Laboratory School, the school where John Dewey conducted his path-breaking experiments in democratic education reform. The teachers are having a retreat, and I've been asked to address them on the topic of education for democratic citizenship, something that I undertake with some trepidation because I am sure they all know so much more about this topic than I do. As I defend the legacy of Dewey, focusing particularly on the sympathetic imagination, and introduce them to the closely related writings of Tagore (who conducted pioneering education reform at the same time in a similar spirit), I discover that I'm not where I thought I was, the safe home of Dewey's ideas. I'm on a battleground, where teachers who still take pride in stimulating children to question, criticize, and imagine are an embattled minority, increasingly suppressed by other teachers, and especially by wealthy parents, intent on testable results of a technical nature that will help produce financial success. When I present what I thought of as a very banal version of Dewey's vision, there is deep emotion, as if I've mentioned something precious that is being snatched away.

4. Finally: last year, I am invited by another great university, also in my own country, let's call it Y, to speak at a symposium celebrating a major anniversary. I am asked to speak as part of a symposium on "The Future of Liberal Education." A few months before the date of the event itself (February 2006), I am told by the Vice-Provost that the nature of the occasion has been changed: there will no longer be a symposium on the future of liberal education, and I am therefore urged to give a single lecture on whatever topic I like. When I arrive on campus, I press for an account of the reasons behind the change. From a

helpful and nicely talkative junior administrator, I learn that the President of Y has decided that a symposium on liberal education would not "make a splash," so he has decided to replace it with a symposium on the latest achievements in science and technology. My lecture, a tiny wavelet that is no longer part of a large "splash," argues for the great importance of the arts and humanities for a decent public culture, both critical and sympathetic, able to transcend suspicion and fear of the different. But of course at this point, with no public symposium, I'm preaching to the converted, an audience of humanities faculty and students.

Not to belabor the obvious, there are hundreds of stories like these, and new ones arrive every day, in the U. S., in Europe, in India, and, no doubt, in other parts of the world. When education is discussed in the U. S. presidential campaign, it is discussed in low-level utilitarian terms: how can we produce technically trained people who can hold onto "our" share of the global market. (On October 30, 2007, in the televised Democratic candidates' debate in the U. S., one candidate did mention the importance of the arts as a source of creativity, but he was one who has absolutely no chance of winning, absolutely nobody picked up on his remark, and I'm sure his unfashionable utterance further sealed his doom.⁴)

Given that economic growth is so eagerly sought by all nations, too few questions have been posed, in India as in the U. S., about the direction of education, and, with it, of democratic society. With the rush to profitability in the global market, values precious for the future of democracy, especially in an era of religious anxiety, are in danger of getting lost.

The profit motive suggests to most concerned politicians that science and technology are of crucial importance for the future health of their nations. We should have no objection to good scientific and technical education, and I do not suggest that nations should stop trying to improve in this regard. My concern is that other abilities, equally crucial, are at risk of getting lost in the competitive flurry, abilities crucial to the health of any democracy internally, and to the creation of a decent world culture and a robust type of global citizenship, capable of constructively addressing the world's most pressing problems. These abilities are associated with the humanities and the arts: the ability to think critically; the ability to

transcend local loyalties and to approach world problems as a "citizen of the world"; and, finally, the ability to imagine sympathetically the predicament of another person.

I shall make my argument by pursuing the contrast that my examples have already suggested: between an education for profit-making and an education for a more inclusive type of citizenship. Let me introduce this contrast via a contrast, familiar in discussions of global justice and global citizenship, between two conceptions of development: the old narrowly economic conception of development, and the richer more inclusive notion of "human development." Throughout I shall allude to examples from India, since that is where most of my development work has been conducted, and I recently published a book on religious tensions and democracy in India that devoted a good deal of consideration to education.⁵

II. Education and "Human Development"

We hear, these days, a good deal of talk about "human development" and the fostering of "human capabilities."⁶ Of course I've been part of that movement, and I applaud the broadening of development's focus to encompass broader human ends. I am concerned, however, to see that the analysis of education used even by the best practitioners of the human development approach tends to focus on basic marketable skills and to neglect the humanistic abilities of critical thinking and imagining, so crucial if education is really to promote human development, rather than, merely, economic growth and individual acquisition. So, let's reflect first, in a highly general way, about what an education for human development would look like, and how it would differ from an education for economic enrichment.

The old model of development, the one that has long been found inadequate by development practitioners who are concerned with ethical issues of inclusion and equality, says that the goal of development is economic growth – never mind about distribution and social equality, never mind about the preconditions of stable democracy, never mind about the improvement of other aspects of a human being's quality of life that are not well linked to economic growth. As I say, this model of development has by now been rejected by a large proportion of serious development thinkers, but it continues to dominate a lot of policy making, especially policies influenced by the U. S. The World Bank made some commendable progress, under James Wolfensohn, in recognizing a richer conception of development, but things then

slipped badly, and the International Monetary Fund never made the sort of progress that the Bank did under Wolfensohn. In the context of this paradigm of what it is for a nation to develop, what is on everyone's lips is the need for an education that promotes national development seen as economic growth. Such an education has recently been outlined by the Spellings Commission Report of the U. S. Department of Education, focusing on higher education; it is being implemented by many European nations, as they give high marks to technical universities and impose increasingly draconian cuts on the humanities; and it is very central to discussion in India today, as to most developing nations who are trying to grab a larger share of the global market.

What sort of education does the old model of development suggest? Education for economic enrichment needs basic skills, literacy and numeracy. It also needs some people to have more advanced skills in computer science and technology, although equal access is not terribly important: a nation can grow very nicely while the rural poor remain illiterate and without basic computer resources, as recent events in many Indian states show. In states such as Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, we have seen the creation of increased GNP per capita through the education of a technical elite who make the state attractive to foreign investors; the results of this enrichment do not trickle down to improve the health and well-being of the rural poor, and there is no reason to think that enrichment requires educating them adequately. That was always the first and most basic problem with the GNP/capita paradigm of development: it neglects distribution, and can give high marks to nations or states that contain alarming inequalities. This is very true of education: Given the nature of the information economy, nations can increase their GNP without worrying too much about the distribution of education, so long as they create a competent tech and business elite.

After that, education for enrichment needs, perhaps, a very rudimentary familiarity with history and with economic fact – on the part of the people who are going to get past elementary education in the first place, who are likely to be a relatively small elite. But care must be taken lest the historical and economic narrative lead to any serious critical thinking about class, about whether foreign investment is really good for the rural poor, about whether democracy can survive when such huge inequalities in basic life-chances obtain. So critical thinking would not be a very important part of education for economic enrichment, and

it has not been in states that have pursued this goal relentlessly, such as the Western Indian state of Gujarat, well known for its combination of technological sophistication with docility and groupthink. The student's freedom of mind is dangerous, if what is wanted is a group of technically trained docile technicians to carry out the plans of elites who are aiming at foreign investment and technological development. Critical thinking will, then, be discouraged – as it has so long been discouraged in the public schools of Gujarat.

History, I said, might be essential. But enrichment educators will not want a history that focuses on injustices of class, caste, gender, and ethno-religious membership, because that will prompt critical thinking about the present. Nor will such educators want any serious consideration of the rise of nationalism, of the damages done by nationalist ideals, and of the way in which the moral imagination too often becomes numbed under the sway of technical mastery – all themes developed with scathing pessimism by Rabindranath Tagore in Nationalism, lectures delivered during the First World War, and themes whose centrality is all the more apparent in our own time. So the version of history that will be presented will present national ambition as a great good, and will downplay issues of poverty and inequality. Once again, real-life examples of this sort of education are easy to find.

In fact, one of the most graphic examples of this disquieting feature of an "India Shining" type of education, if I may call it that (using the recent campaign slogan of the BJP, the Indian party that combined a focus on economic growth and foreign investment with support for religious polarization and even violence) is the portrayal of the Human Development approach itself in the textbooks published during the ascendancy of the BJP by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (and now, fortunately, retired by the post-2004 government).⁷ Although these details about Indian public schools may seem a bit remote, I am sure that the work of Yuli Tamir on textbooks and history in recent years has made you aware of the significance of such apparently small things, and I think it's often easier to talk about distant examples and the general lessons they yield, rather than plunging into the waters of local politics.

I was initially delighted to discover that the Class X social science book, Contemporary India,⁸ had a chapter on the Human Development approach, as an alternative to approaches to development that focus on economic growth alone. India has indeed been particularly energetic in implementing this approach;

moreover, it was initiated by Amartya Sen, an Indian citizen. So it was not surprising that it would be mentioned in a schoolbook for Indian children. It was, however, highly disconcerting to find three large errors in the brief account.

First, it is claimed that (according to the approach), human development and not economic development is the ultimate goal, but that "The importance of economic growth among all contributory factors of development is paramount."⁹ Sen in fact, however, argues through careful empirical studies that economic growth contributes little or nothing to the improvement of education and health care, two of the main goals of the human development approach; he recommends that each separate goal be given a separate analysis to see what in fact does promote it.¹⁰ The BJP's support for leaders such as Andhra Pradesh's Chandrababu Naidu, who promoted a "shining" state through foreign investment while doing nothing about the condition of the rural poor, speaks through this sentence, a nearly slanderous deformation of what Sen and I actually argue.

Second, it is asserted that the approach analyzes development "in context of an average individual"¹¹ – whereas the approach, as practiced, insists on disaggregating the population into discrete segments, not resting content with the GNP approach's focus on an average person, but instead focusing particular attention on people and groups that might be thought to enjoy a particularly low quality of life, such as women and the rural poor. (Once again, the ideology of "India Shining" shows its colors: promote a glorious average, and we don't need to think about those at the bottom.)

Third and worst, the whole discussion is introduced by the claim, "In social development, whatever benefit an individual derives is only as a collective being." This is an idea that Sen and I reject, insisting that each and every individual person is an end, and that it is ethically wrong to present development in terms of the well-being of collectivities.¹² We stress that even a community such as the family, in which intense love and loyalty putatively obtain, may be the site of great inequalities of opportunity: so it is crucial to ask not just how the household is doing, but how each and every person is doing.¹³ This error, too, seems more ideology than mistake, since it expresses the communitarian ethos of the Hindu right, as against the idea of human rights.

These errors already look highly ideological, an attempt to make the influential Human Development Approach look as if it supports BJP economic policies. Many other questionable statements in the books are even more flagrantly political, distorting history to prevent thought from focusing on poverty and inequality. Ancient India toes the orthodox RSS line: early Hindu India was a wonderful place, with no big problems.¹⁴ The introductory chapter ends with a long citation from British historian A. L. Basham, who wrote a book called The Wonder That was India: "[I]n no other part of the ancient world were the relations of man and man, and of man and the state, so fair and humane...No other ancient lawgiver proclaimed such noble ideals of fair play in battle as did Manu. In all her history of warfare Hindu India has few tales to tell of cities put to the sword or of the massacre of noncombatants..To us the most striking feature of ancient Indian civilization is its humanity."¹⁵ This romanticizing account of early India omits, as many historians have noted, issues of caste and class oppression, the misery of the poor, and, very conspicuously, the situation of women. The laws of Manu are in fact infamous for their extremely harsh and restrictive treatment of women, who are not permitted to do anything independently, even in their own homes, and who are seen as essentially intemperate and immoral, in constant need of male control. The rest of the book follows the Basham plan, wondering at India, but alerting the student to none of its problems. Similarly, the volume devoted to medieval history completely omits mention of the dalits and their situation.¹⁶ It also fails to mention important women's issues, such as Akbar's harsh disapproval of sati and his prohibition of child marriage, an entrenched Hindu custom by that time. It is hardly surprising that the books contain yet other distortions, portraying religious minorities as dangerous and as linked to terrorism.

We now notice something quite interesting: education for national enrichment converges conveniently with the sort of ideological education favored by the Hindu right, who are hardly unique in the world in linking right-wing ideology to a gung-ho development of science and technology. It sometimes looks as if there is a tension between two aims of the BJP: the aim to promote economic growth through foreign investment, and the aim to promote ethnic purity. Certainly, it seems as if one could favor the program of "India Shining" (meaning economic growth) without sympathizing with its dark militant side. (So too, in the U. S., it once seemed that one could favor the Republican Party's economic ideology without favoring its darker politics of ideological extremism and fear.) However, education for enrichment

needs docile students, students who don't think critically, and particularly students who have learned to ignore systematically the inequalities that are fostered by a policy based on economic growth alone. And the idea that we must learn to ignore such inequalities in history dovetails very nicely with the Hindu right's aim to produce an account of the past in which all Hindus were happy and peaceful in the Indus valley, and to suppress the work of historians who emphasize class and gender issues.¹⁷ Education for enrichment likes the fantasy of a happy life in the Indus valley, because it permits the mind to be lulled, as it follows the goal of national economic enrichment. As Tagore said, "Man is building his cage, fast developing his parasitism on the monster Thing, which he allows to envelop him on all sides". And this shrinking of the human allows the mind to become so small, the conscience so blind, that it is willing to follow all sorts of bad projects, "with no twinge of pity or moral responsibility."¹⁸

I have spoken about critical thinking and about the role of history. What about the arts and literature, so often valued by progressive democratic educators? An education for enrichment will, first of all, have contempt for these parts of a child's training, because they don't lead to enrichment. For this reason, all over the world, programs in arts and the humanities, at all levels, are being cut away, in favor of the cultivation of the technical. Indian parents take pride in a child who gains admission to the Institutes of Technology and Management; they are ashamed of a child who studies literature, or philosophy, or who wants to paint or dance or sing. But educators for enrichment will do more than ignore the arts: they will fear them. For a cultivated and developed sympathy is a particularly dangerous enemy of obtuseness, and moral obtuseness is necessary to carry out programs of enrichment that ignore inequality. As Tagore said: aggressive nationalism needs to blunt the moral conscience, so it needs people who don't recognize the individual, who speak group-speak, who behave, and see the world, like docile bureaucrats. Art is the great enemy of that obtuseness, and artists are never the reliable servants of any ideology, even a basically good one – they always ask the imagination to move beyond its usual confines, to see the world in new ways. So, educators for enrichment will campaign against the humanities and arts as ingredients of basic education. This assault is currently taking place, all over the world.

III. Education for Human Development

Now let me turn to education for human development. Let me just stipulate for the purposes of this lecture that the capabilities on which human development focuses are the ones on my capabilities list. There are others, but let's just focus on those: life, stathealth, bodily integrity, the development of senses, imagination, and thought, the development of practical reason, emotional health, the opportunity to participate in meaningful and respectful relationships with others, both personal and political, the opportunity to have a good relationship to the environment and the world of nature, the chance to play and enjoy recreational activities, and, finally, some specific types of control over property and one's working conditions.

Education for human development is a very broad idea, including many types of cultivation that are pertinent to a student's personal self-development. It is not simply about citizenship, even when citizenship is broadly understood. In what follows, however, I shall focus on the goal of producing decent world citizens who can understand the global problems to which this and other theories of justice respond and who have the practical competence and the motivational incentives to do something about those problems. How, then, would we produce such citizens?

An education for human development as responsible global citizenship has a twofold purpose. It must, first, promote the human development of its students. And it must, second, promote the students' understanding of the goals of human development for all, as goals inherent in the very idea of a decent minimally just society – in such a way that when they are empowered to make political choices, they will foster these capabilities for all, not only for themselves. So, in my version, such an education will begin from the idea of equal respect for all human beings and equal entitlement of all to a range of central human opportunities, not just in one's own nation, but everywhere in the world. It thus has a profound egalitarian and critical component from the start. (Here I think my own enterprise is tougher critically than other versions of a capability approach.¹⁹) So: education will promote the enrichment of the student's own senses, imagination, thought, and practical reason, for example -- and it will also promote a vision of humanity according to which all human beings are entitled to that kind of development on a basis of equality. What sort of education would we want to promote such goals?

Before we can design a scheme for education, we need to understand the problems we face on the way to making students responsible democratic citizens who might possibly implement a human development agenda. What is it about human life that makes it so hard to sustain egalitarian democratic institutions, and so easy to lapse into hierarchies of various types – or, even worse, projects of violent group animosity, as a powerful group attempts to establish its supremacy? Whatever these forces are, it is ultimately against them that true education for human development must fight: so it must, as I put it following Gandhi, engage with the clash of civilizations within each person, as respect for others contends against narcissistic aggression.

The internal clash can be found in all modern societies, in different forms, since all contain struggles over inclusion and equality, whether the precise locus of these struggles is in debates about immigration, or the accommodation of religious, racial, and ethnic minorities, or sex equality, or affirmative action. In all societies, too, there are forces in the human personality that militate against mutual recognition and reciprocity, as well as forces of compassion and respect that give egalitarian democracy strong support. Particular social and political structures, however, make a big difference to the outcome of these struggles.

Any account of human bad behavior has two aspects: the structural/institutional, and the individual-psychological. There is by now a large body of psychological research showing that average human beings will engage in bad behavior in certain types of situation. Stanley Milgram showed that experimental subjects have a high level of deference to authority: most people in his often-repeated experiments were willing to administer a very painful and dangerous level of electric shock to another person, so long as the superintending scientist told them that what they were doing was all right – even when the other person was screaming in pain (which, of course, was faked for the sake of the experiment).²⁰ Solomon Asch, earlier, showed that experimental subjects are willing to go against the clear evidence of their senses when all the other people around them are making sensory judgments that are off-target: his very rigorous and oft-confirmed research shows the unusual subservience of normal human beings to peer pressure. Both Milgram's work and Asch's have been used effectively by Christopher Browning to illuminate the behavior of young Germans in a police battalion that murdered Jews during the Nazi era.²¹ So great was the

influence of both peer pressure and authority on these young men, he shows, that the ones who couldn't bring themselves to shoot Jews felt ashamed of their weakness.

Still other research demonstrates that apparently normal people are willing to engage in behavior that humiliates and stigmatizes if their situation is set up in a certain way, casting them in a dominant role and telling them that the others are their inferiors. One particularly chilling example involves school children whose teacher informs them that children with blue eyes are superior to children with dark eyes. Hierarchical and cruel behavior ensue. The teacher then informs the children that a mistake has been made: it is actually the brown-eyed children who are superior, the blue-eyed inferior. The hierarchical and cruel behavior simply reverses itself: the brown-eyed children seem to have learned nothing from the pain of discrimination.²² Perhaps the most famous experiment of this type is Philip Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment, in which he found that subjects randomly cast in the roles of prison guard and prisoner began to behave differently almost right away. The prisoners became passive and depressed, the guards used their power to humiliate and stigmatize. I believe that this experiment was badly designed in a number of ways, and is thus less than conclusive: for example, Zimbardo gave elaborate instructions to the guards, telling them that their goal should be to induce feelings of alienation and despair in the prisoners.²³ Nonetheless, his findings are at least highly suggestive, and, when combined with the large amount of other data, corroborates the idea that people who are not individually pathological can behave very badly to others when their situation has been badly designed.

So, we have to look at two things: the individual, and the situation. Situations are not the only thing that matters: for research does find individual differences, and it also is plausibly interpreted as showing the influence of widely shared human psychological tendencies. So we need, ultimately, to do what Gandhi did and look deeply into the psychology of the individual, asking what we can do to help compassion and empathy win the clash over fear and hate. But situations matter too, and imperfect will no doubt act much worse when placed in structures of certain types.

What are those types? Research suggests several things.²⁴ First, people behave badly when they are not held personally accountable. People act much worse under shelter of anonymity, as parts of a faceless mass, than they do when they are watched and made accountable as individuals. (Anyone who has ever

violated the speed limit, and then slowed down on seeing a police car in the rear-view mirror, will know how pervasive this phenomenon is.) Second, people behave badly when nobody raises a critical voice: Asch's subjects went along with the erroneous judgment when all the other people whom they took to be fellow experimental subjects (and who were really working for the experimenter) concurred in error; but if even one other person said something different, they were freed to follow their own perception and judgment. Third, people behave badly when the human beings over whom they have power are dehumanized and de-individualized. In a wide range of situations, people behave much worse when the "other" is portrayed as like an animal, or as bearing only a number rather than a name.

Situations are important; we must also, however, look beneath situations to gain some understanding of the forces in the human personality that make decent citizenship such a rare attainment. Gandhi understood this problem at a very deep level. About the specific nature of the struggle to be waged, however, Gandhi did not give us very good guidance, since he suggested that difficulties to be overcome derive, in their essence, from the bodily appetites and require, for their overcoming, the successful repression or even extinction of those appetites. My own view of the "clash within" (developed in two books about the emotions and the development of the personality) is rather different, and I develop it further in writing about religious violence in India.²⁵ (My account owes a large debt to ancient Greek and Roman thought about the emotions and to the profound inquiries of the Stoic philosophers, particularly, into the problem of political anger and hatred, as well as to modern work on the emotions in the object-relations tradition of psychoanalysis.)

Understanding what the "clash within" is all about, I argue, requires thinking about human beings' problematic relationship to our mortality and finitude, our persistent desire to transcend conditions that are painful for any intelligent being to accept. The earliest experiences of a human infant contain a jolting alternation between blissful completeness, in which the whole world seems to revolve around its needs, and an agonizing awareness of helplessness, when good things do not arrive at the desired moment and the infant can do nothing to ensure their arrival. Human beings have a level of physical helplessness unknown elsewhere in the animal kingdom – combined with a very high level of cognitive sophistication. (We know

now, for example, that even a baby one week old can tell the difference between the smell of its own mother's milk and milk from another mother.)

So, infants are increasingly aware of what is happening to them, but they can't do anything about it. The expectation of being attended to constantly – the "infantile omnipotence" so well captured in Freud's phrase "His Majesty the baby" is joined to the anxiety, and the shame, of knowing that one is not in fact omnipotent, but utterly powerless. Out of this anxiety and shame emerges an urgent desire for completeness and fullness that never completely departs, however much the child learns that it is but one part of a world of finite needy beings. And this desire to transcend the shame of incompleteness leads to much instability and moral danger. In writing about the role of shame and disgust in the process of group-formation and social intolerance, I have argued that the type of social bad behavior with which I am most concerned in this paper can be traced to child's early pain at the fact that it is imperfect, unable to achieve the blissful completeness that in certain moments it is encouraged to expect. This pain leads to shame and revulsion at the signs of one's own imperfection. And then, what most concerns me here, shame and revulsion, in turn, are all too often projected outwards onto subordinate groups who can conveniently symbolize the problematic aspects of bodily humanity, those from which people would like to distance themselves.²⁶

The other side of the internal clash – and this part I think Gandhi got brilliantly right²⁷ – is the child's growing capacity for compassionate concern, for seeing another person as an end and not a mere means. . . One of the easiest ways to regain lost omnipotence is to make slaves of others, and young children initially do conceive of the other humans in their lives as mere means to their own satisfaction. But as time goes on, if all goes well, they feel gratitude and love toward the separate beings who support their needs, and they thus come to feel guilt about their own aggression and real concern for the well-being of another person. As concern develops, it leads to an increasing wish to control one's own aggression: the child recognizes that its parents are not its slaves, but separate beings with rights to lives of their own. Such recognitions are typically unstable, since human life is a chancy business and we all feel anxieties that lead us to want more control, including control over other people. But a good development in the family, and a

good education later on, can make a child feel genuine compassion for the needs of others, and can lead it to see them as people with rights equal to its own.

The outcome of the internal clash is greatly affected not just by situational structures, but also by external political events, which may make the personalities of citizens more or less secure. In writing recently about religious tensions in the United States, I have documented the way in which specific periods of political and economic insecurity lead to increasing antipathy, and even at times violence, toward religious minorities who seem to threaten cherished stabilities.²⁸ Such insecurities make it particularly easy to demonize strangers or foreigners, and, of course, that tendency is greatly augmented when the group of strangers is plausibly seen as a direct threat to the security of the nation. Educators cannot alter such events; they can, however, go to work on the pathological response to them, hoping to produce a more balanced reaction.

IV. Three Abilities

Now that we have a sense of the terrain on which education works, we can say some things, quite tentative and incomplete, but still radical in the present world culture, concerning the abilities that a good education will cultivate.

Three values, I would argue, are particularly crucial to decent global citizenship. (Interestingly, these three capacities are stressed from the very beginning of philosophical thought about global citizenship in the Western tradition, particularly in Stoic writings about liberal education.²⁹) The first is the capacity for Socratic self-criticism and critical thought about one's own traditions. As Socrates argues, democracy needs citizens who can think for themselves, rather than deferring to authority, who can reason together about their choices rather than simply trading claims and counter-claims.

Critical thinking is particularly crucial for good citizenship in a society that needs to come to grips with the presence of people who differ by ethnicity, caste, and religion. We will only have a chance at an adequate dialogue across cultural boundaries if young citizens know how to engage in dialogue and deliberation in the first place. And they will only know how to do that if they learn how to examine themselves and to think about the reasons why they are inclined to support one thing rather than another --

rather than, as so often happens, seeing political debate as simply a way of boasting, or getting an advantage for their own side. When politicians bring simplistic propaganda their way, as politicians in every country have a way of doing, young people will only have a hope of preserving independence and holding the politicians accountable if they know how to think critically about what they hear, testing its logic and its concepts and imagining alternatives to it.

Students exposed to instruction in critical thinking learn, at the same time, a new attitude to those who disagree with them. Consider the case of Billy Tucker, a nineteen-year-old student in a business college who was required to take a series of "liberal arts" courses, including one in philosophy.³⁰ Interestingly enough, his instructor, Krishna Mallick, was an Indian-American originally from Kolkata, familiar with Tagore's educational ideal and a fine practitioner of it. Students in her class began by learning about the life and death of Socrates; Tucker was strangely moved by that man who would give up life itself for the pursuit of the argument. Then they learned a little formal logic, and Tucker was delighted to find that he got a high score on a test in that: he had never before thought he could do well in something abstract and intellectual. Next they analyzed political speeches and editorials, looking for logical flaws. Finally, in the last phase of the course, they did research for debates on issues of the day. Tucker was surprised to discover that he was being asked to argue against the death penalty, although he actually favors it. He had never understood, he said, that one could produce arguments for a position that one does not hold oneself. He told me that this experience gave him a new attitude to political discussion: now he's more inclined to respect the opposing position, and to be curious about the arguments on both sides, and what the two sides might share, rather than seeing the discussion as simply a way of making boasts and assertions. We can see how this humanizes the political "other," making the mind see that opposing form as a rational being who may share at least some thoughts with one's own group.

The idea that one will take responsibility for one's own reasoning, and exchange ideas with others in an atmosphere of mutual respect for reason, is essential to the peaceful resolution of differences, both within a nation and in a world increasingly polarized by ethnic and religious conflict. Tucker was already a high school graduate, but it is possible, and essential, to encourage critical thinking from the very beginning of a child's education. Indeed, it has often been done: it is one of the hallmarks of modern progressive

education, from Froebel, Pestalozzi, and Maria Montessori in Europe to Rabindranath Tagore in India, to Bronson Alcott in nineteenth century America.

Critical thinking is a discipline that can be taught as part of a school's curriculum, but it will not be well taught unless it informs the entire spirit of a school's pedagogy. Each child must be treated as an individual whose powers of mind are unfolding and who is expected to make an active and creative contribution to classroom discussion. If one really respects critical thinking, then one respects the voice of the child in the planning of the curriculum itself, and the activities of the day. In Tagore's school, for example, students were encouraged to deliberate about decisions that governed their daily life and to take the initiative in organizing meetings. Syllabi describe the school, repeatedly, as a self-governing community in which children are encouraged to seek intellectual self-reliance and freedom. In one syllabus, he writes: "The mind will receive its impressions...by full freedom given for inquiry and experience and at the same time will be stimulated to think for itself...Our mind does not gain true freedom by acquiring materials for knowledge and possessing other people's ideas but by forming its own standards of judgment and producing its own thoughts." Accounts of his practice report that he repeatedly put problems before the students and elicited answers from them by questioning, in Socratic fashion. Another device Tagore used to stimulate Socratic questioning was role-playing, as children were invited to step outside their own point of view and inhabit that of another person. This gave them the freedom to experiment with other intellectual positions and to understand them from within. John Dewey had a very similar pedagogical idea, connecting it to the health and indeed the very possibility of democracy.

Let us now consider the relevance of this ability to the current state of modern pluralistic democracies surrounded by a powerful global marketplace. First of all, we can report that, even if we were just aiming at economic success, leading corporate executives understand very well the importance of creating a corporate culture in which critical voices are not silenced, a culture of both individuality and accountability. Leading business educators to whom I've spoken in the U. S. say that they trace some of our biggest disasters – the failures of certain phases of the NASA space shuttle program, the even more disastrous failure of Enron and WorldCom – to a culture of yes-people, where critical ideas were never articulated.

But our goal, I've said, is not simply enrichment, so let us now turn to political culture. As I've said, human beings are prone to be subservient to both authority and peer pressure; to prevent atrocities we need to counteract these tendencies, producing a culture of individual dissent. Asch found that when even one person in his study group stood up for the truth, others followed, so that one critical voice can have large consequences. By emphasizing each person's active voice, we also promote a culture of accountability. When people see their ideas as their own responsibility, they are more likely, too, to see their deeds as their own responsibility. That was essentially the point Tagore made in Nationalism, when he insisted that the bureaucratization of social life and the relentless machine-like character of modern states had deadened people's moral imaginations, leading them to acquiesce in atrocities with no twinge of conscience. Independence of thought, he added, is crucial if the world is not to be led headlong toward destruction. In his lecture in Japan in 1917, he speaks of a "gradual suicide through shrinkage of the soul," observing that people more and more permit themselves to be used as parts in a giant machine, to carry out the projects of national power. Only a robustly critical public culture could possibly stop this baneful trend.

The second key ability of the modern democratic citizen, I would argue, is the ability to see oneself as a member of a heterogeneous nation, and world, understanding something of the history and character of the diverse groups that inhabit it. Knowledge is no guarantee of good behavior, but ignorance is a virtual guarantee of bad behavior. Simple cultural and religious stereotypes abound in our world, for example the facile equation of Islam with terrorism, and the first way to begin combating these is to make sure that from a very early age students learn a different relation to the world. They should gradually come to understand both the differences that make understanding difficult between groups and nations and the shared human needs and interests that make understanding essential, if common problems are to be solved.

This understanding of the world will promote human development only if it is itself infused by searching critical thinking, thinking that focuses on differences of power and opportunity. History will be taught with an eye to thinking critically about these differences. At the same time, the traditions and religions of major groups in one's own culture, and in the world, will be taught with a view to promoting respect for one's fellow world citizens as equals, and equally entitled to social and economic opportunity.

In curricular terms, these ideas suggest that all young citizens should learn the rudiments of world history and should get a rich and non-stereotypical understanding of the major world religions, and then should learn how to inquire in more depth into at least one unfamiliar tradition, in this way acquiring tools that can later be used elsewhere. At the same time, they ought to learn about the major traditions, majority and minority, within their own nation, focusing on an understanding of how differences of religion, race, and gender have been associated with differential life-opportunities. All, finally, should learn at least one foreign language well: seeing that another group of intelligent human beings has cut up the world differently, that all translation is interpretation, gives a young person an essential lesson in cultural humility.

An especially delicate task in this domain is that of understanding differences internal to one's own nation. An adequate education for living in a pluralistic democracy must be a multicultural education, by which I mean one that acquaints students with some fundamentals about the histories and cultures of the many different groups with whom they share laws and institutions. These should include religious, ethnic, social and gender-based groups. Language learning, history, economics, and political science all play a role in pursuing this understanding, in different ways at different levels.

The third ability of the citizen, closely related to the first two, is what I would call the narrative imagination.³¹ This means the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have. The cultivation of sympathy has been a key part of the best modern ideas of progressive education, in both Western and non-Western nations. As I've observed, the moral imagination, always under siege from fear and narcissism, is apt to become obtuse, if not energetically refined and cultivated through the development of sympathy and concern. Learning to see another human being not as a thing but as a full person is not an automatic achievement: it must be promoted by an education that refines the ability to think about what the inner life of another may be like – and also to understand why one can never fully grasp that inner world, why any person is always to a certain extent dark to any other.

Instruction in literature and the arts can cultivate sympathy in many ways, through engagement with many different works of literature, music, fine art, and dance. I think Tagore was ahead of the West in his focus on music and dance, which we in the U. S. cultivate only intermittently. But thought needs to be given to what the student's particular blind spots are likely to be, and texts should be chosen in consequence. For all societies at all times have their particular blind spots, groups within their culture and also groups abroad that are especially likely to be dealt with ignorantly and obtusely. Works of art can be chosen to promote criticism of this obtuseness, and a more adequate vision of the unseen. Ralph Ellison, in a later essay about his great novel Invisible Man, wrote that a novel such as his could be "a raft of perception, hope, and entertainment" on which American culture could "negotiate the snags and whirlpools" that stand between us and our democratic ideal. His novel, of course, takes the "inner eyes" of the white reader as its theme and its target. The hero is invisible to white society, but he tells us that this invisibility is an imaginative and educational failing on their part, not a biological accident on his. Through the imagination we are able to have a kind of insight into the experience of another group or person that it is very difficult to attain in daily life -- particularly when our world has constructed sharp separations between groups, and suspicions that make any encounter difficult. For Tagore, a particular cultural blind spot was the agency and intelligence of women, and his instruction, in consequence, insisted on giving women expressive leading roles.³²

So we need to cultivate our students' "inner eyes," and this means carefully crafted instruction in the arts and humanities, which will bring students into contact with issues of gender, race, ethnicity, and cross-cultural experience and understanding. This artistic instruction can and should be linked to the "citizen of the world" instruction, since works of art are frequently an invaluable way of beginning to understand the achievements and sufferings of a culture different from one's own.

There is a further point to be made about what the arts do for the spectator. As Tagore knew, and as radical artists have often emphasized, the arts, by generating pleasure in connection with acts of subversion and cultural criticism, produce an enduring and even attractive dialogue with the prejudices of the past, rather than one fraught with fear and defensiveness. That is what Ellison meant by calling Invisible Man "a raft of perception, hope, and entertainment." Entertainment is crucial to the ability of the arts to offer

perception and hope. It's not just the experience of the performer, then, that is so important for democracy, it's the way in which performance offers a venue for exploring difficult issues without crippling anxiety.

In short: children need to learn that sympathetic receptivity is not unmanly, and that manliness does not mean not weeping, not sharing the grief of the hungry or the battered. This learning cannot be promoted by a confrontational approach that says, "Drop your old images of manliness." It can only be promoted by a culture that is receptive in both curricular content and pedagogical style, in which, it is not too bold to say, the capacities for love and compassion infuse the entirety of the educational endeavor.

V. Democratic Education on the Ropes

How are the abilities of citizenship doing in the world today? Very poorly, I fear. Education of the type I recommend is doing reasonably well in the place where I first studied it, namely the liberal arts portion of U. S. college and university curricula. Indeed, it is this part of the curriculum, in institutions such as my own, that particularly attracts philanthropic support, as rich people remember with pleasure the time when they read books that they loved, and pursued issues open-endedly.

Outside the U. S., many nations whose university curricula do not include a liberal arts component are now striving to build one, since they acknowledge its importance in crafting a public response to the problems of pluralism, fear, and suspicion their societies face. I've been involved in such discussions in the Netherlands, in Sweden, in India, in Germany, in Italy, in India and Bangladesh. Whether reform in this direction will occur, however, is hard to say: for liberal education has high financial and pedagogical costs. Teaching of the sort I recommend needs small classes, or at least sections, where students get copious feedback on frequent writing assignments. European professors are not used to this idea, and would at present be horrible at it if they did try to do it, since they are not trained as teachers in the way that U. S. graduate students are, and come to expect that holding a chair means not having to grade undergraduate writing assignments. Even graduate students are often treated with distance and disdain. Even when faculty are keen on the liberal arts model, bureaucrats are unwilling to believe that it is necessary to support the number of faculty positions required to make it really work.

Another problem that European and Asian universities have is that new disciplines of particular importance for good democratic citizenship have no secure place in the structure of undergraduate education. Women's Studies, the study of race and ethnicity, Judaic studies, Islamic studies – all these are likely to be marginalized, catering only to the student who already knows a lot about the area and who wants to focus on it. In the liberal arts system, by contrast, such new disciplines can provide courses that all undergraduates are required to take, and can also enrich the required liberal arts offerings in other disciplines, such as literature and history. Where there are no such requirements, the new disciplines remain marginal.

So the universities of the world have great merits, but also great problems. By contrast, the abilities of citizenship are doing very poorly, in every nation, in the most crucial years of childrens' lives, the years known as K through 12. Here the demands of the global market have made everyone focus on scientific and technical proficiency as the key abilities, and the humanities and the arts are increasingly perceived as useless frills, which we can prune away to make sure our nation (whether it be India or the U. S.) remains competitive. To the extent that they are the focus of national discussion, they are recast as technical abilities themselves, to be tested by quantitative multiple-choice examinations, and the imaginative and critical abilities that lie at their core are typically left aside. In the U. S., national testing (under the "No Child Left Behind" Act) has already made things worse, as national testing usually does: for at least my first and third ability are not testable by quantitative multiple choice exams, and the second is very poorly tested in such ways. (Moreover, nobody bothers to try to test it even in that way.) Whether a nation is aspiring to a greater share of the market, like India, or struggling to protect jobs, like the U. S., the imagination and the critical faculties look like useless paraphernalia, and people even have increasing contempt for them. Across the board, the curriculum is being stripped of its humanistic elements, and the pedagogy of rote learning rules the roost.

What will we have, if these trends continue? Nations of technically trained people who don't know how to criticize authority, useful profit-makers with obtuse imaginations. As Tagore observed, a suicide of the soul. What could be more frightening than that? Indeed, if you look to Gujarat, which has for a particularly long time gone down this road, with no critical thinking in the public schools and a concerted

focus on technical ability, one can see clearly how a band of docile engineers can be welded into a murderous force to enact the most horrendously racist and anti-democratic policies.³³ And yet, how can we possibly avoid going down this road?

Democracies have great rational and imaginative powers. They also are prone to some serious flaws in reasoning, to parochialism, haste, sloppiness, selfishness. Education based mainly on profitability in the global market magnifies these deficiencies, producing a greedy obtuseness and a technically trained docility that threaten the very life of democracy itself, and that certainly impede the creation of a decent world culture. If the real clash of civilizations is, as I believe, a clash within the individual soul, as greed and narcissism contend against respect and love, all modern societies are rapidly losing the battle, as they feed the forces that lead to violence and dehumanization and fail to feed the forces that lead to cultures of equality and respect. If we do not insist on the crucial importance of the humanities and the arts, they will drop away, because they don't make money. They only do what is much more precious than that, make a world that is worth living in, people who are able to see other human beings as equals, and nations that are able to overcome fear and suspicion in favor of sympathetic and reasoned debate.

Notes

- ¹ Rabindranath Tagore, Nationalism (Delhi: MacMillan, 1950), p. 20.
- ² John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Dover Publishing, 2004), p. 227.
- ³ A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U. S. Higher Education, available online. A valuable counter-report is College Learning for the New Global Century, issued by the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP), a group organized by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (Washington, D. C. 2007), with whose recommendations I am largely in agreement (not surprisingly, in that I participated in drafting it).
- ⁴ It was Bill Richardson of New Mexico.
- ⁵ Nussbaum, The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence, and India's Future (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, and New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2006); chapters 7 and 8 are devoted to analysis of educational issues.
- ⁶ The "human development" approach to the measurement of quality of life is embodied in the annual Human Development Reports issued since 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme in New York; the Journal of Human Development publishes much related material. That journal in turn, has a close working relationship with the Human Development and Capability Association, now five years old, whose members include approximately 700 scholars and policy makers from about 60 nations, and which holds annual meetings to debate the future of the approach and to develop it further. (Amartya Sen and I have been the first two Presidents of this Association.) My own work on human capabilities can be found in: Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), and numerous articles, particularly "Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements," Feminist Economics 9 (2003), 33-59. The relationship of this approach to constitutional law is developed in my "Constitutions and Capabilities: 'Perception' Against Lofty Formalism," Foreword to the Supreme Court Issue, Harvard Law Review fall 2007, 5-97.
- ⁷ I discuss these textbooks in detail in The Clash Within, chapter 8.
- ⁸ Delhi, NCERT, 2003.
- ⁹ Contemporary India, p. 141.
- ¹⁰ See especially Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, India: Development and Participation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, second edition 2002), passim.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² See my Women and Human Development, ch. 1.
- ¹³ A particularly influential statement of this position is in Sen, "Gender and Cooperative Conflicts," in Irene Tinker, ed., Persistent Inequalities (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 123-49; another valuable development of this theme is Bina Agarwal, "'Bargaining' and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household," Feminist Economics 3 (1997), 1-51; see also my Women and Human Development, ch. 4.
- ¹⁴ Makkal Lal, Ancient India (Delhi: NCERT, 2002).
- ¹⁵ Ancient India, p. 3.
- ¹⁶ Meenakshi Jain, Medieval India (Delhi: NCERT, 2002); I note that this volume is in some respects an exception in the series, being of higher intellectual and literary quality than the others.
- ¹⁷ For a detailed account of these people, see The Clash Within, chapter 7.
- ¹⁸ Tagore, The Religion of Man (Rhinebeck, N. Y.: Monkfish Press, 2004), 141.
- ¹⁹ Sen's use of the approach, for example, is merely comparative: he does not identify specific benchmarks that would be necessary for minimal justice.
- ²⁰ For a concise summary of Milgram's and Asch's research, see Philip Zimbardo, The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil (London: Rider, 2007), 260-75.
- ²¹ Christopher R. Browning, Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland (New York: HarperCollins, 1993).
- ²² Reported in Zimbardo, 283-5.
- ²³ See my review of Zimbardo, Times Literary Supplement October 10, 2007, 3-5.
- ²⁴ Again, my summary is based on a wide range of research described in Zimbardo.
- ²⁵ The two general books are Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of the Emotions (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), see especially chapter 4, and Hiding From Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

²⁶ See Hiding, chapters 2 and 4. My psychological account owes a large debt to the concepts and arguments of Donald Winnicott.

²⁷ As, famously, did Winnicott.

²⁸ Liberty of Conscience: In Defense of America's Tradition of Religious Equality (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

²⁹ See my Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), chapters 1-2, discussing Socrates and the Stoics, particularly Seneca's letter on liberal education (Moral Epistle 88).

³⁰ See Cultivating, ch. 1.

³¹ See Cultivating, ch. 3.

³² See Amita Sen, Joy In All Work (Kolkata: Bookfront Publication Forum, 1999).

³³ See The Clash Within, especially chapters 1 and 9.