Education as *Tritya Ratna*

*Towards Phule-Ambedkarite Feminist Pedagogical Practice**

*Sharmila Rege***

Abstract

It is now well-accepted that colonial knowledges in India were structured on binaries that distinguished India from the West, Orient from the Occident, thus homogenising the Indian experience into a Hindu brahmanical one. The nationalists too, imagined alternate knowledges within these binaries, reversing them to claim over the West, a civilisational superiority located in the Vedas. This normalisation of knowledge as Hindu and brahmanical structured by both the colonial and nationalist binaries had/has implications for curricular and pedagogical practices in our classrooms.

In this lecture, with an apology to the innumerable modern day Shambhukas and Eklavyas, and to students reduced to cases of suicides on campuses, I shall map some of the hidden injuries caused by the violence of these pedagogical practices. In the last decade and more, there has been a welcome change in the gender, caste and class composition of students. But this, as we know, is happening in a context constituted by the conflicting demands of discourses of democratic acceptance of social difference, conservative imposition of canonical common culture and of marketisation of higher education. Invoking Phule-Ambedkarite feminist perspectives which envision education as Tritya Ratna and are driven by the utopia of 'Educate, Organise, and Agitate', I seek to dialogue with fellow teachers on the different axes of power in our classrooms; more specifically to explore modes through which inequalities of caste are reproduced in metropolitan universities and classrooms. How may we as teachers and co-learners address questions of pedagogy and authority, pedagogy and transformation by throwing back the gaze of the 'invisible' and 'unteachable' students in our classrooms on our pedagogical practices?

---

* This is the written text of a lecture delivered during Savitribai Phule Second Memorial Lecture Series at SNDT Women's University, Marine Lines, Mumbai on 29 January 2009, published by NCERT.

** Sharmila Rege is the Director, Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre, University of Pune.

Education as *Tritya Ratna*
Towards Phule-Ambedkarite Feminist Pedagogical Practice

> "O learned pandits wind up the selfish prattle of your hollow wisdom and listen to what I have to say"
>
> (Mukta Salve, About the Grief of *Mahar* and *Mangs*, 1855)
>
> Let me ask you something oh Gods!... You are said to be completely impartial. But wasn't it you who created both men and women?
>
> (Tarabai Shinde, A Comparison of Men and Women, 1882)[1]

I begin this lecture with words written by Mukta Salve, a fourteen year old girl student of the *mang* caste in Jotiba and Savitribai Phule's school and Tarabai Shinde a young maratha woman trained in the *Satyashosdhak* (Society of Truth Seekers) tradition. For what better tribute can one pay to the greatest teachers of modern India than the words of fire with which their students talked back to the injustice of their times? I am deeply honoured to be delivering the Savitribai Phule Memorial Lecture organised by the NCERT in collaboration with SNDT, Mumbai. Savitribai in her writings and practices addressed the complex relations between culture, knowledge and power and sought not only to include girl students and students from the ex-untouchable castes but also to democratise the very processes of learning and teaching. This memorial lecture is particularly special because it is instituted in the memory of this great woman visionary and institution-builder. I am grateful to the NCERT for deeming me worthy of delivering this lecture instituted in her memory. I would also like to place on record my sincere thanks to the faculty, staff members and students at Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre and the Department of Sociology at the University of Pune, as also the Phule-Ambedkarite, Left and feminist community for providing meaningful contexts for the practice of critical pedagogies.

This lecture in many ways is a collection of 'stories' of our classrooms, relationships between students and teachers and the political frameworks which constitute these stories. Like all narrators, I have selected some and ignored or postponed other stories; interpreted them in one way rather than another. As narrators, we imagine that we shall achieve something by telling the stories the way we do to the people. These stories, I imagine, are a dialogue with fellow teachers on addressing caste and gender in the metropolitan classroom. The present set of stories are put together from diary notings made on teaching, discussions with colleagues and students, notes written by students of their experiences – often in moments of disruptions or departure, comments made on formal course evaluation sheets, the comments they half scratch out from these sheets, questions raised in class and those asked hesitantly outside the class, their silences that one rushes past in the business as usual mode during peak periods of the semester and gestures that defy narrative expression.

Many of these emerge as narratives of 'betrayal laced with temporality and place' – betrayal by the system (this is not what I expected of this place; it was not like this earlier), betrayal of students

by teachers (I did not think that someone who waxes eloquent on democracy would be so selective in practice, teachers of times bygone, or in other places were/ are committed to practicing what they preach) ; betrayal of teachers by students (I thought at least students would stand with me against the injustice by authorities; it was not so in the magical 70s/is not so in other places). Often these narratives of betrayal and of decline in plurality and of standards of our university become cynical announcements of the 'impossibility' of practicing critical pedagogies in our times or place. The present state of universities then comes to be explained either in terms of incomplete modernisation or the modern university being an alien concept in 'our' culture. The explanations are thus framed within binaries that distinguish India from the West, Orient from the Occident, and thereby often equating Indian culture to the Hindu brahmanical practices. That is to say the liberal voices bemoan the loss of pluralism arguing that the din of 'parochial identities' of caste, community, gender on our campuses is the result of 'bad modernity'; the indigenists call for *gurukul* like alternatives that may better suit 'our' culture.

It is not a coincidence that these narratives of decline come in times or places where the entry of a new generation of scholars and students from vulnerable sections in Indian society is posing challenges to the social homogeneity of the classroom, boards of studies and other academic bodies leading to obvious frictions on issues related to decline of standards and merit. A new generation of *dalit* scholarship for instance, drawing upon the modern *dalit* testimoniol, has underlined the limits of pluralism of the Nehruvian era and bringing to centre the violence of the bleeding thumb of Eklavya and death of Shambhuka; rejected the regime of the *gurukul* as an alternative. This scholarship, following the Thorat Committee Report on AIIMS, suicide of Rajani (a *dalit* girl student who committed suicide because the banks did not find her credit worthy for a student loan) and Senthil Kumar (a *dalit* Ph.D. student whose fellowship was stopped) has raised questions both about the accessibility of higher education and the limitations in making it enabling for those who struggle to gain entry into it[2]. The nexus of networks of exclusion that operate formally and informally on campuses in the absence of transparency to reproduce caste inequalities in the metropolitan university are being debated[3].

While there are at present several efforts at 'talking/writing back'[4], I would like to mention a few by way of examples– Insight: Young Voices, a journal published by students and researchers from Delhi, the work from Hyderabad of research scholar like Murali Krishna, who employs his autobiography to theorise educational practices, Indra Jalli, Swathy Margaret, Jenny Rowena who bring caste to centre to interrogate feminist practices in the academy, the film 'Nageshwar Rao Star' which starts with reflections on the star/asterix, the marker of caste identity in the admission list and moves to reflect on and recover new knowledge on the Tsunduru massacre, 'Out-caste' an informal, public

wall-journal which looks at caste as a category that structures both exclusion and privilege, discussions on caste on campuses on several list-serves like Zest-Caste, and on-going M.Phil. and Ph.D. thesis across campuses in India. Closer home, in Pune University, mention may be made of Dilip Chavan's caste-class critique of the debate on reforming the UGC-NET, the efforts of *Sajag* (conscious) students' research group to reinvent the relationship between social movements and the academia and the 'Research Room Diaries' put together by researchers in women's studies reflecting on their diverse histories of hidden injuries and privileges experienced as students on 'teacher's day'[5].

These and several other efforts are seeking to challenge disciplinary regimes of caste, opening up new ways of looking at the present of our disciplines and pedagogical practices and suggest that critical teachers should be 'listening' rather than bemoaning the loss of better times. I wish to argue that these are 'new times' in the university, the suicides and other forms of 'routine' pedagogical violence notwithstanding. Men and women from vulnerable castes and classes are entering higher education for the first time and those for long considered 'unteachable' are talking/ writing back. This makes it possible to throw back the gaze of the students who have long been 'invisible' and 'nameless' in the classrooms onto disciplinary and pedagogical practices. Is it that years of confidence and certainty of teaching in our areas of expertise makes us embedded in certain kinds of arguments so that we foreclose other possible ways of looking and listening?[6] Do we as teachers become used to ferreting out inconsistencies in stories offered to us by students and prematurely discard them as irrelevant? This lecture is an exercise that is both restitutive and exploratory; I seek to re-listen, reflect and assign new value to 'stories' and 'voices' ignored and discarded earlier as also to present recent experiences from the classroom for exploration.

Recently, a young *dalit* researcher and colleague narrated to me his experiences of the school and the university, the ways in which the curricular, extra-curricular and academic success (lesson on Dr Ambedkar in the textbook, elocution competition, becoming a UGC-JRF scholar) were all instances that reproduced caste by reducing him to a 'stigmatised particular'[7]. Pointing to a paradox, he asked 'why do even sociologists whose object of analysis is caste, believe that caste identities do not matter in academic practices'? I wish to take this question for consideration in the next section, reframing it a little provocatively to ask – Why are 'we' afraid of 'identity'? Why do we assume neutrality when it comes to identities of caste, ethnicity, and gender and presume that they do not affect the content and practice of our discipline? Do we disavow caste – say it does not exist in our context and talk of it in other terms and codes – like standards, language and so on? It is common for many of us teaching in state universities and colleges not only to categorise our students into neat categories of English and Marathi medium or English and Gujarati medium but also reduce these

students to this singular identity (for instance in a local college where I taught it was customary to ask students to add an EM or MM when they introduced their names in any gathering). However, we may not always be open to discussing the different and contradictory identities of teachers, students and other players in the social relations of teaching and learning. In the next section, I want to explore this issue of medium of instruction – the 'language question' so to say and fear of identity on a ground I am familiar with, namely the practice of sociology.

Hidden in the 'Language Question' — Tracing the Fear of Identity [8]

The hierarchy of standards between central and state universities, it might help to recall, draw not only on superior infrastructural facilities but also on English being the medium of teaching and research in the former as against the local/regional language in the latter. As teachers in state universities and local colleges, we may counter this logic through an opposition that assumes all social science practised in English to be elitist and that in the vernacular to be more down to earth. At other times, we may respond to the 'language question' through efforts to find quality reading material in Indian languages and develop English language proficiency through remedial classes. Interestingly, this 'language question' appears quite prominently in some of the discussions that sociologists have had on their discipline being in 'crisis'.

Sociologists more than other social scientists in India, have from time to time described and reflected upon the crisis in the discipline, with a more concentrated debate happening in the 1970s and 1990s. If we revisit some of the articulations of 'crisis in the discipline' in 1970s, it is apparent that the 'language question' is strongly implicated in the salient features, causes and solutions suggested to the crisis. The crisis is described in terms of unrestricted expansion of sociology at the undergraduate level and in Indian languages, market-driven textbooks and takeover of 'pure' pedagogies by politics. The script is one that narrates the story of expansion of sociology at the undergraduate level and in regional languages as 'provincialisation' of higher education, in general, and sociology, in particular. Re-reading this debate, one is struck by two rather paradoxical anxieties of the sociological community. On the one hand, is the angst with academic colonisation (why do not we have 'our own' theories and categories), while on the other is the apprehension about the new and diverse 'expanding public' (what will happen to 'standards', if teaching and learning is no longer to be done in English). The new publics of sociology are denigrated and assumed to be 'residual', those who are in sociology, not because they want to because of a politically imposed expansion of regional universities/colleges.

The calls of 'crisis' in the discipline surface again in the 1990s with comments on the increasing number of students registered in doctoral programmes and their ignorance of elementary facts and concepts. It comes to be argued that both teaching and research are in a deplorable condition because most of our universities and

other centres of higher learning have become cockpits for caste, regional and linguistic conflict and intrigue. As the enrolment rates of the 'upper caste'[9], middle class metropolitan students mark a relative decline and the sociology classroom comes to be more diverse in terms of caste, region and linguistic identities, the anxiety about the expanding 'public' turns into a script of accusation. The accusation operates at two levels; the upsurge of identities in Indian society and politics is seen as causing the demise of merit and any appeal to questions of identity and language on the campus and in the classroom come to be viewed as always and already interest group politics. In times of *Mandal*, these narratives of decline of the discipline from its golden age have to be contextualised in the battle between the pan-Indian English educated elite and the new regional elites moving on the national scene.

Interestingly it is practioners located on the institutional and organisational margins of 'national' sociology who shifted the axis of the debate from standards to questions of equality; inquiring into the legitimacy of sociological knowledge and the pronouncements of decline. Further, the 1990s were marked by prominent 'national' sociologists lending support to the anti-*Mandal* position which dominated the middle class urban perception of the issue. Additionally, the debate on *dalits* joining the Durban Conference against discrimination based on race and caste underlined the ways in which sociologists in the name of objectivity valued the opinion of experts while rejecting perspectives emerging from the lived experience of caste and the horror of atrocities. If in the 1970s, as seen earlier, 'national sociology' described the expansion of sociology in regional languages as provincialisation of the discipline; in the 1990s the claims of 'National sociology' stood 'provincialised'. 'National' sociology was 'provincialised' as it failed to say anything beyond popular commonsense on the *Mandal* controversy though its identity hinged upon theorisation of caste; as also because several questions came to be raised about nation as the 'natural' unit for organising sociological knowledge and about selective processes that equated happenings in the elite set of institutions in Delhi to Indian Sociology.

So if we go back to my colleague's question with which we began – why do even sociologists assume that these identities have no consequences for the content and practice of their discipline? Why was there an expectation on his part that sociologists would be different from other social scientists? Probably because caste, gender, and ethnicity are their object of study and they have been the first to include courses and modules on women, *dalits* and tribals in the sociology curriculum? Yet as we just saw, it is sociologists more than others who seem to be afraid of any claims to caste or gender identities. They appear to assume that avowal of gender and caste identities will lead to feminification of theory or demise of merit – in other words to 'pollution' of academic purity. It might help here to focus on the ways in which sociological knowledge and practice are organised by the professional bodies and the curriculum. Women, *dalits, adivasis*, may be included as substantive research

areas of sociology and in optional courses but this inclusion keeps the cognitive structures of the discipline relatively intact from the challenges posed by *dalit* or feminist knowledges[10]. Thus 'good sociology' continues to be defined in terms of the binaries of objectivism/ subjectivism, social/political, social world/knower, experience/knowledge, tradition/modernity and theoretical Brahman/empirical *Shudra*.

So every time, the problem of expansion of the discipline in Indian languages or the language question comes to be discussed, we gloss over the several layers of identities and assume simplistic binaries of sociology practised in English being national and rigorous, and those in Indian languages being provincial and simplistic. Alternatively, indigenists and nativists assume sociology practised in English to be elitist and incapable of grasping 'our culture' and that in regional languages down to earth and applicable to 'our culture'. While the former position seeks to resolve the tensions through remedial English courses, translation of textbooks or a simple commitment to bilingualism; the latter proposes teaching and writing in Indian languages as a 'cultural duty'. These positions though they seem different are similar in that they see language only in its communicative aspects as if separable from power relations and the cultural and symbolic effects of language. In contrast, *dalit* imaginations of language, wedge open the symbolic and material power of language. In the next section, I shall bring to centre some *dalit* imaginations of language to underline ways in which caste and gender identities remain hidden in what we discuss as a 'language question'.

Dalit Imaginations — Wedging Open the 'Language Question'

> "*Now if you want to know why I am praised – well it's for my knowledge of Sanskrit, my ability to learn it and to teach it. Doesn't anyone ever learn Sanskrit? …That's not the point. The point is that Sanskrit and the social group I come from; don't go together in the Indian mind. Against the background of my caste, the Sanskrit I have learned appears shockingly strange. That a woman from a caste that is the lowest of the low should learn Sanskrit, and not only that, also teach it is a dreadful anomaly …*"
>
> (Kumud Pawade, *1981 : 21)*

> *"In a word, our alienation from the Telugu textbook was more or less the same as it was from the English textbook in terms of language and content. It is not merely a difference of dialect; there is difference in the very language itself. …What difference did it make to us whether we had an English textbook which talked about Milton's* 'Paradise Lost' *or* 'Paradise Regained'*, or Shakespeare's* 'Othello' *or* 'Macbeth' *or Wordsworth's poetry about nature in England, or a Telegu textbook which talked about Kalidasa's* 'Meghasandesham'*, Bommera Potanna's* 'Bhagvtam'*…. …. We do no share the content of either; we do not find our lives reflected in their narratives"*
>
> (Kancha Ilaiah *1996 : 15)*

> *"Through his initiatives, Lord Macaulay was to re-craft a new intellectual order for India which threatened the dominance of the Brahmins and questioned the relevance of the Varna/caste order. This was to give* Dalits *a large breathing space … Should we know our past the way we like to, or we know the past as it existed? Or should there be any distinction between History Writing and Story Telling? Those who condemn Lord Macaulay for imposing a 'wrong' education on India do never tell us*

what kind of education system which Macaulay fought and eventually destroyed".

(Chandra Bhan Prasad *2006 : 99 and115)*

"While giving calls of 'Save Marathi', the question I am faced with is 'which' 'Marathi' is to be 'saved'? The Marathi rendered lifeless by the imprisonment of the oral in the standardised written Word? The Marathi with its singular aim of 'fixing meaning' which loses rhythm, intonation, emotion, Rasa*? The Marathi that generates inferiority complex in those speaking* 'aani- paani'[11]*? The Marathi that forms centres of power through processes of standardisation of language? ..... Or the Marathi sans the Word that keeps the bahujan knowledgeable?*

(Pragnya Daya Pawar *2004 : 45)*

.....I dream of an english
full of the words of my language
an english in small letters
an english that shall tire a white man's tongue
an english where small children practice with smooth round
pebbles in their mouth to the spell the right zha
an english where a pregnant woman is simply stomach-child-lady
an english where the magic of black eyes and brown bodies
replaces the glamour of eyes in dishwater blue shades and
the airbrush romance of pink white cherry blossom skins
.....
an english that doesn't belittle brown or black men and women
an english of tasting with five fingers.....

(Meena Kandaswamy *2007 : 21)*[12]

Kumud Pawade's story of her Sanskrit, Kancha Ilaiah's comment on the sameness of the English and Telegu textbook, Chandra Bhan Prasad's counter commemoration of Macaulay, Pragnya Daya Pawar's interrogation of the power of the printed word over the spoken word and Meena Kandaswamy's dream of a global English in small letters offer immense possibilities for wedging open the 'language question'.

Kumud Pawade, a *dalit* feminist intellectual in her testimonio 'Thoughtful Outburst' (1981), reflects on her journey into Sanskrit, teasing out in the process the complex character of the 'language question' in our academia. Kumud Pawade foregrounds memories of her school teacher Gokhale *Guruji*, a prototypical Brahman dressed in a *dhoti*, full shirt, a black cap and the vermilion mark on his forehead; who she expected would refuse to teach her Sanskrit. However expected responses stand interrogated as he not only taught her but also became a major influence in her life. People in her own community often discouraged her from pursuing a Masters degree in Sanskrit arguing that success at matriculation need notembolden her to this extent. At college the peons as also the higher-up officials usually commented on how 'they' were taking strides because of government money and how this had made them too big for their boots. At the university, the head of the department, a scholar of fame took great pleasure in taunting her. She would find herself comparing this man apparently modern in his ways to Gokhale *Guruji*.

However, on successfully completing her Masters digree in Sanskrit achieving a place in the merit list, her dreams of teaching Sanskrit received a rude shock as she could overhear the laughter and ridicule in the interview room about people like her being

government-sponsored *Brahmans*. Those passing these comments, she recalls were not all *brahmans*, many of them were from the *bahujan* samaj who thought of themselves as *brahman*-haters and even traced their lineage to Mahatma Phule and yet the idea of a *Mahar* girl who was a part of this *bahujan samaj* teaching Sanskrit made them restless. After two years of meritorious performance at the Masters level, unemployment and her marriage to Motiram Pawade, a *Kunbi* Maratha, she finally got an appointment as an assistant lecturer in a government college and in later years went on to become a professor in her alma mater. However, a thought continues to trouble her – it was 'Kumud Pawade' and not 'Kumud Somkuvar' who got the job. Pawade's critical work of memory unfolds the complex gender and caste parameters in the 'language question' and lays bear the dynamics of a *dalit* woman acquiring an authorised tongue. Importantly she underlines the operation of language as a marker of subordination and exclusion in our academia and thus the impossibility of viewing the 'language question' as a matter of communication separable from power relationships and cultural and symbolic effects of language.

Ilaiah comments on the sameness of Kalidasa and Shakespeare, despite the former appearing in the Telegu textbook and latter in English. He draws attention to the difference between brahmanical Telegu and the *bahujan* renderings locating the difference in the latter emerging from production based communication. He argues "the communists and nationalists spoke and wrote in the language of the *purohit*. Their culture was basically sanskritised; we were not part of that culture. For good or ill, no one talked about us. They never realised that our language is also language, that is understood by on and all in our communities……." (p. 14). Ilaiah further underlines the sameness of the English and Telegu books in being 'alien' to the *bahujan*; their only difference being that one was written with twenty-six letters the other with fifty-six. Ilaiah's reflections problematise the secular vernacularist position, underlining the complete domination of Hindu scriptures and sanskritic cultures in vernacular education. Any easy equation between English as alien and Telegu as 'our language' – yielding 'our categories' of analysis stands interrogated. Further, Ilaiah suggests that the question of culture mediates between the axis of equality and the academia and the 'language' in which education takes place is an epistemological issue more than a matter of mere instruction.

Prasad's celebration of Macaulay's birthday on 25th October 2006 and installation of a '*Dalit* Goddess of English' to underscore the turn away from tradition has been brushed aside often as an attention seeking gimmick. This counter commemoration of Macaulay has significance for destabilising the hegemonic memory of Macaulay as the 'villain' who declared that a single shelf of Shakespeare was worth more than all the Sanskrit and Arabic literature of the East. Prasad re-reads 'Minutes on Education' to underline Macaulay's argument about the British having to give scholarships to children to study in Sanskrit and Arabic, even when they

were ready to pay for English education. This re-reading disrupts the ongoing processes of collective remembrance of language and education in colonial India. Prasad's act of counter commemoration renders Macaulay's argument as not directed against the vernaculars; but against the outmoded literature of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, and thus an important moment in the history of *Dalit* access to education. It is important to note Prasad's comments on discovering the top secrets of the language politics of Macaulay in his explorations into the tensions between history writing and story telling; thereby suggesting that an engagement with the 'language question' is also essentially an engagement with 'reinventing the archive' – the very methods of knowledge.

Pragnya Daya Pawar (2004) talks back to those giving calls in Maharashtra to 'save Marathi'; asking them the pertinent question 'which Marathi?' and teases out the collusion of state and elites in framing the 'language question'. Interrogating the processes of standardisation of the language, she points out to the homogenisation of meaning constituted by the processes of standardisation. She draws attention to the efforts of the Maharashtra state to empower Marathi as a language for science and technology which freeze and de-root the diversity of words into the singular 'Word'. Standardisation on one hand brutalises/marginalises/fails the *dalit bahujan* who bring into the system the 'non-standardised' language practices. On the other hand, more violently, it wipes away the epistemic value of all oral forms of knowing of the *bahujan*. She recalls that the dictum of the liberal humanists 'society will improve when its people gain wisdom from education' was first called into crisis in India by Jotiba Phule. That a *bahujan* struggling against all forms of cultural colonisation, should have been the first to call this liberal agenda into question – she observes 'is logical and not coincidental'. The 'language question' thus opened up, traces the politics of internal fragmentation and hierarchisation of the vernacular in post-colonial Indian states and sees these processes as inseparable from those that monitor the differential epistemic status of different knowledges – particularly of the printed and the oral.

Meena Kandaswamy in 'Mulligatawny Dreams' dreams of an 'english' full of words selected from her language, an 'english' that challenges both the purity of standardised vernaculars and the hegemony of English. It is an 'english' in small letters, a language that resists imperialist racism and casteism of both English and the vernacular. Such hybrid formations of language are seen as enriching English by opening it up to appreciate brown bodies, black eyes and eating with five fingers. English as the language of modernisation, is disrupted suggesting that in the present conjuncture spread of English has gone beyond the worldwide elite thus opening up possibilities of challenging the hegemony of imperialist English with many resisting 'englishes'. Further, 'the dreams of english' point to the limitations of framing the language question in terms of proficiency in English language, leaving little space for playful radical innovations in pedagogy.

It is not coincidental, that *dalit* imaginations engage with the power relations that are glossed over in debates on 'language question' discussed earlier and thus wedge open and interrogate not only the Right-Wing and state agendas of the 'language question' but also that of the liberal-humanists. We can see that the liberal humanist fear of identity, of decline in standards comes from a commitment to a particular idea of democracy. It is not as if those who complain of decline in standards are opposed to including 'all others' in their system of knowledges – be it the university or the cognitive structures of the discipline. Within this idea of a democratic university, the masses will have to wait until they receive a degree of formal training (learn to 'speak like us') to comprehend requirements of a plural and democratic university. However, since the 1990s, those considered incapable of comprehending democratic requirements have come to the fore to defend democracy, even as it pertains to the knowledge of democracy, while the imagined champions of democracy began moving away from processes that inform it[13]. 'All others' are entering the university with new vocabularies and moral economy, and as the *dalit* imaginations on language suggest – are interrogating the assumed hierarchy of different knowledges, archives and methods of knowledge. For critical researchers and teachers, fear of identity and masses can no longer be an option as the radical instability of the many languages of the subaltern citizens of mass democracy calls for careful 'listening'. If we as teachers are to participate in the 'new times', exercises in re-imagining the content and methods of knowledge becomes inseparable from those in reinventing pedagogical practices. In the next section, I argue for reinventing pedagogies through Phule-Ambedkarite-Feminist (PAF) perspectives; asking why these perspectives came to be excluded in debates on education in post-colonial India.

Phule-Ambedkarite-Feminist Pedagogies — Location and Exclusion

Having neither the expertise nor the intention to draw a set of guidelines for PAF pedagogies, what I seek to do in this section is to historically map the 'difference' of Phule-Ambedkarite perspectives on the project of education and the probable reasons for the exclusion of these perspectives from imaginations of 'alternative' perspectives on learning and teaching. If following Paulo Freiere[14] we see critical pedagogy as contesting the logic and practices of the 'banking method' for a more dialogical and transformative project of education, then PAF pedagogies, simply put, may be seen historically as constituting one school of critical pedagogy. Historically, we can read in the colonialist and nationalist discourses on Indian society, a battle over the function and nature of knowledge. While the colonialist project represented India as the spirit of Hindu civilisation and therefore distinct and disjunct from the West; the regime of classification and categorisation of 'Indian tradition' created norms for colonial rule enhancing the status of *brahmans* as indigenous intellectuals. While, colonial

knowledges were structured on binaries that distinguished India from the West, Orient from the Occident; the nationalists imagined alternate knowledges by reversing the claims of superiority of the West, locating the superiority in the *Vedas*. Thus, though the colonialists and nationalists contested the function of knowledge in colonial India, for both, the nature of knowledge of India was essentially Hindu and brahmanical. After the Second World War, social science discourse refashioned the binaries of Orient/Occident through the tradition/modernity thesis or indigenous approaches; both of which glossing over the structural inequalities in Indian society normalised the idea of knowledge and the educational project of/in India as Hindu and brahmanical[15].

Phule and Ambedkar in different ways, by weaving together the emancipatory non-*Vedic* materialist traditions (Lokayata, Buddha, Kabir) and new western ideas (Thomas Paine, John Dewey, Karl Marx for instance) had challenged the binaries of Western modernity/Indian tradition, private caste-gender/public nation and sought to refashion modernity [16] and thereby its project of education. Phule and Ambedkar in several writings and speeches but more particularly the former in 'Gulamgiri' (1873), and the latter in 'Annihilation of Caste' (1936), 'The Riddles on Hinduism' (Compiled and published in 1987) and 'The Buddha and His Dhamma' (1957) undertake a rational engagement with core analytical categories emerging from Hindu metaphysics which had been normalised as 'Indian culture and science'[17].

Throughout the text of 'Gulamgiri', Phule stresses that Hindu religion is indefensible mainly because it violates the rights and dignity of human beings. He turns the 'false books' of the *brahmans* on their head by reinterpreting the 'Dashavataara' of Vishnu to rewrite a history of the struggles of the *shudras* and anti-*shudras*. He moves swiftly between the power and knowledge nexus in everyday cultural practices, myths and history. In his 'Memorial Addressed to the Education Commission (1882)' for a more inclusive policy on education and in his popular compositions like the short ballad on 'Brahman Teachers in the Education Department (1869)', Phule demonstrates how state policy and dominant pedagogical practices are intrinsically interlinked. He comments at length on the differential treatment to children of different castes and the collusion of interests of the Bombay government school inspectors and teachers. He calls for more plurality in the appointment of teachers and the need to appoint those committed to teaching as a truth-seeking exercise. Ambedkar in 'Annihilation of Caste' (1936) argues against the absolute knowledge and holism idealised by brahmanical Hinduism and critiques the peculiar understanding of nature and its laws (*karma*) in the Shastric texts. Both Phule and Ambedkar underline the preference for truth enhancing values and methods through an integration of critical rationality of modern science and the skepticism and self reflection of ancient non-*Vedic* materialists and the Buddha. It is clear both in and through their works that they see organisation of

knowledge as complexly related to the interlocking connections of different identities. This leads them to value situated knowledge but such that they do not collapse all experience into knowledge but do highlight how certain experiences (oppression based on caste, gender) do lead people to certain kinds of knowledges.

Phule in the first modern Marathi Play *Tritya Ratna* draws complex linkages between religious-cultural and educational authority and re-imagines education therefore as the *Tritya Ratna* (third eye) that has the possibilities to enable the oppressed to understand and transforms the relation between power and knowledge. Ambedkar in a speech in Nagpur in 1942 at the All India Depressed Classes Conference, advises the gathering to 'Educate-Agitate-Organise' (a motto that became central to the Ambedkarite movement and community) arguing that this was central to the battle for freedom. Phule's conscious adoption of the dialogical form of communication and Ambedkar's insistence in the Bombay University Act Amendment Bill (1927) to move beyond the examination-oriented patterns of learning and teaching underline their conviction on the centrality of dialogue in the project of education. Ambedkar, debating the Bombay University Act Amendment Bill, highlights the linkages between issues otherwise thought to be disjoint – namely understaffing, dictation of notes and the lack of adequate representation of backward castes on administrative bodies such as the senate. Countering arguments regarding examination-centric education as a safeguard for promotion of standards; he underscores how this exam-centric mode in fact reproduces caste inequalities in the university. He underlines the significance of combining efforts to increase access to education for vulnerable sections with those to reconceptualise administrative and curricular practices of higher education.

Both Phule and Ambedkar, as may be apparent from the discussion above, seek a rational engagement with the pedagogy of culture to see how power works through the production, distribution, and consumption of knowledge within particular contexts and re-imagine a culture of pedagogy based on truth-seeking. The 'difference' of Phule-Ambedkarite pedagogical perspectives lies in a double articulation that conceives education then not only in terms of cultures of learning and teaching but also dissenting against that which is learnt and taught by dominant cultural practices. This entails constituting teachers and students as modern truth-seekers and agents of social transformation who seek to become 'a light unto themselves'. The methods are those that seek to integrate the principles of *prajna* (critical understanding) with *karuna* (empathetic love) and *samata* (equality). This democratisation of method of knowledge marks the difference of Phule-Ambedkarite perspectives from methods based on binaries of reason/emotion, public/private, assumption of neutral objectivity/celebration of experience that inform much of our teaching and research. One sees significant intersections with Black feminist pedagogies that directly link pedagogy with political commitment in envisioning

education as the practice of freedom and thereby seek to challenge the assumed divide between mind/body, public/private and reason and emotion[18]. Why then have social scientists in search of alternative pedagogies rarely turned to Phule, Shahu or Ambedkar? Why did the search for alternatives usually end with Gandhi, Aurobindo and Nehru? How might this '*Dalit* Phobia'[19] or exclusion in the academia and its cognitive structures be explained?

Baburao Bagul, the revolutionary *dalit* writer has explained the exclusion of this discourse in the formation of knowledges in post-colonial India in terms of the intelligentsia turning the national movement, into a form of historical, mythological movement and ancestor worship thus reducing the other movements to a secondary status[20]. The nationalist labelling of the *dalit* discourse as anti-national, ideologically particularistic, specific to certain castes or as emergent from the British policy of divide and rule resonated in the practices of higher education in post-colonial India. In the 1970s the ideology and practices of the *Dalit* Panthers and *dalit* literature including the compositions of the mud-house cultural activists – the *shahirs* (composers of ballads) foregrounded the experience of caste to challenge the feudal backwardness of Hinduism normalised in educational practices[21]. This challenge was co-opted in the academia through frames that included *dalits* in disciplinary knowledges while keeping intact the core of disciplinary knowledges. Since the 1990s, as discussed earlier, tensions between different forms of modernities in Indian society are being played out and a new scholarship is making convincing arguments about appeal to caste not being casteism and of claims unmarked by caste made by the dominant to represent and classify the modern as being situated, local and partial.

Since the 1990s, this 'secular upsurge of caste' at the national level interfaced with local *dalit* movements and international contexts like the U.N. Conference against Racism is shaping varied trajectories of *dalit* studies in different regions in India[22]. PAF pedagogies are enabled by this conjuncture and the assertion of *dalit* feminism which have opened up possibilities of new dialogue between Phule-Ambedkarite and feminist perspectives. PAF pedagogical perspectives are critically different from the two much discussed projects in higher education of the same decade, viz., value education and autonomy. They are different in that they contest the logic of projects based on essentialist apriori set of morals or on neo-liberal rhetoric of choice that comes without freedom. The practice of PAF pedagogies thus seek to develop cultures of dissent through analyses of the various categories of oppression underlying the structures and organisation of knowledge, but without reducing them to a mere additive *mantra* of caste, class and gender differences and inequalities. The practice of PAF obviously needs more than a simple transplantation of the guidelines through which PAF perspectives work to our situations. In the next section, I shall try to grapple with some of the issues that emerge in the practice of PAF pedagogies in our academia.

Phule-Ambedkarite Feminist Pedagogies — Issues in Practice

PAF pedagogies, as argued earlier view the pedagogical as a cultural practice that cannot be separated from the contexts of articulation. This requires then analyses of the ways in which caste and gender organise knowledge in our educational setting, not as some unchanging essence but rather as interlocking connections of different identities and the articulations between them. Therefore differences of caste, class and gender do not become readymade answers to which all pedagogic practices may be reduced but the history of their intersections, formation within particular historical events and spaces are the problems that propel the pedagogical practices. This would require us to be historically grounded in the contributions of the oppressed to creating a democratic world, in general, and the anti-caste feminist struggles, in particular, and to think through not just the classroom but also the academy. The academy as a part of the larger socio-political arena both domesticates and manages differences and inequalities and enables struggles against domination. If education, as discussed earlier is the space between the pedagogy of cultural practices and culture of pedagogy, our practices have to be located in specific historical conjuncture and institutional contexts which both enable and constraint the articulation[23]. One may make a modest beginning by delineating crucial features of our present and developing methods to ground historically and theoretically the organisation of relations of power and knowledge including the expectations and demands made on us as teachers and on relations with colleagues and students.

The present conjuncture is marked by intense scrutiny and attack on higher education constituted by conflicting and crisscrossing demands of several discourses – more specifically those of post-*Mandal* mass democracy, state with token acceptance of social differences, reactionary brahmanical elitism seeking to impose canonical notions of ' common Hindu culture' and privatisation, economic and technological rationalisation of higher education. On our campuses we see this unfold through the everyday events like changing social composition of students and faculty members, instrumental rationalisation and Hinduisation of curricula in the name of vocationalisation and indigenisation, opening up of centres/ cells for study of socially excluded groups which remain at the margins of the institutions, shortage of hostel facilities for students, privatisation of mess facilities, greater pressures to combine work and studies, increased surveillance by authorities to regulate student politics and an increasingly intolerant meritocracy that expresses itself through a rhetoric of choice and freedom without any reference to power and inequality.

The struggles of the feminists, *dalit-bahujans*, tribals and religious minorities in the 1980s and 90s have enabled to some extent formerly silenced groups to reassert and reclaim experiences and knowledge in the educational setting. This identity politics has covered complex and diverse terrains of theoretical practices and not all positions move

unproblematically from resistance to broader politics of democratic struggles. Yet it would be simplistic, as discussed earlier to dismiss all claims to identities as separatist, reactionary and detrimental to academic standards. The campuses at present are a site of violent and hidden breakouts, skirmishes and injuries over forms and ownership of cultural capital. Many faculty members, administrators and students who see this as a decline of standards and spirit of 'real debate' are turning to private colleges and universities. Some others stay back but withdraw from the everyday of academic bodies and classrooms for the 'new cultures' they argue have scant regard for 'civility'[24]. What does this conjuncture produce in terms of positions and practices for the pedagogical, in general, and for PAF pedagogical practices, in particular? Drawing upon Ambedkar's notion of history as being crucial to the recovery of hope in future; the present educational setting becomes an opportunity for drawing up a moral imagination beyond the existing configurations of power.

Many of us who see education, in general, and the classroom, in particular, as a site of struggle do often discuss several of the issues that have been raised in this lecture so far. Yet, in practice the challenge seems to be to move beyond personal blaming or/and feelings of guilt and to design and develop pedagogies as a political project. The challenge is to develop a method of reflexive analysis, employing self-questioning as an analytical and political process – to see how experiences are socially constructed. To review how a 'normal/good' teacher, student and classroom are socially and politically constructed and thereby interrogate our different and contradictory locations within the social relations of teaching and learning. Thus understanding and transforming the social relations of learning is a struggle that is both personal and political. What we do not have as a resource for such an exercise and need to put together is a sustained project to collect, document and analyse the diverse life stories and everyday experiences of teachers in different contexts. This will allow 'biographising' of the social structures and processes of education and 'structuralising' of biography of those engaged in teaching[25].

The search for new subject positions as teachers and students is constrained by the given educational settings and therefore cannot be entirely straightforward. Even as we search for new subject positions, we may still desire approval within the given terms, estimate a cost-benefit analysis of taking pedagogical risks or sometimes realise that interests are served better by remaining within the dominant discourse. In the relative absence of critical pedagogies as an issue for departmental or college staff meetings, many of us turn to making notes from the lives of great teachers, scan the burgeoning literature on feminist pedagogies or make observations about the pedagogical atmosphere in renowned colleges and universities in order to understand the possibilities and limitations of our own teaching practices. Often, one is disappointed, for efforts and experiences of others seem so far removed from what is happening in our

classrooms. The first response to this gap in experiences often is to gloss over the unease with justifications related to material settings of the educational settings differently equipped facilities, difference in number of similarly interested colleagues, difference in the levels of intervention by academic bodies. While these material settings do matter, these are a part of the problem – of the political project of 'unsettling the relations'[26] in the university and we cannot as if postpone question of pedagogies until the material setting is set right. The tensions between what one thinks is good teaching and what students expect from us; desire to be popular/is accepted/to be made permanent and to challenge dominant pedagogical practices is as much a part of the material setting.

Both as teachers and students we enter the institutional space of education as persons with a set of experiences related to social location and informed by set of discourses of education. Practices of academic training and knowledge production generally ignore these social relations of the teacher and students and create an illusion of a common academic ground. This has at least two immediate and serious implications for our educational setting – actual relations of power are glossed over and social differences get articulated in ways that reduce difference to a singular identity. Consider for instance the case of a *dalit* colleague, an engaged teacher of Political Science who despite his on-going research into Ambedkarite thought finds himself opting to teach courses other than Ambedkar thought. As he explains – he is uneasy with the tensions between what he calls 'reservation' of certain courses for faculty from the reserved categories and the pressures to prove that these faculty members have the more 'universal' and 'theoretical' knowledge that teachers of that discipline are supposed to possess. The actual relations of power are glossed over as the difference; the social location of this teacher becomes not a lens through which the normative/assumed universal of the discipline has to be interrogated but rather a ground to make suspect his commitment to 'universal'.

As feminists teaching courses on gender, participating in the organisation of academic life we have often contested similar assumptions about women teachers and criticised the ruling practices of our institutions which exclude women – from the theoretical and the universal. As 'upper caste', middle class, women teachers, while naming ruling practices which regulate our educational settings; we may often name gender but evade interrogating own power and privileges (caste, class, region) through practices of non-naming ('we' often claim that we do not even talk about caste, it is 'they' who talk about it all the time). The ways relations of power and knowledge are organised it's quite possible to live these relations without reflecting on the power of non-naming and ways in which academic success and failure are produced. As feminist teachers we cannot rest with the multiplication of seminars, workshops, modules and courses on women/gender in our academia. We need to interrogate this 'success of gender' in the academy and to ask if these are driven merely by state policies and/or market imperatives.

Furthermore, we need to give up the comfort of working with the homogenous category 'woman'; for though the liberal humanist subject of feminism stands challenged the feminist imagination in the classroom continues to assume the model of unitary student and feminist teacher[27]. Consider for instance the account by Jenny – writing as a research scholar from a Backward Caste, analysing her complicated relationship to women's studies – "Today I know that it is not enough to open up research to feminist frameworks. If feminist research cannot open itself up to the problems of caste and religion in a casteist-patriarchal society like India, it will forever close the doors of research to so many women who are molded by the experience of gender and caste religion."[28] This account disrupts any simplistic understanding of alternate spaces like women's studies; once again drawing attention to the ways in which power and knowledge come to be organised even within alternate spaces in the academy. From the significance of understanding contexts and differences in our relationship to the academy in general, in the next section, I move to the more specific but related questions about the relationship between teachers and students.

Interrogating Teacher as God or Saviour — Pedagogy, Authority and Cannon

In the present conjuncture how is the relationship between the teacher and the taught performed? How does the intersection of generational and 'other' differences between them disrupt this relationship? We may as practitioners of PAF pedagogies reject the Hindu principle of teacher as 'god embodied' (*Guru sakshat par brahma*) but then do engaged pedagogies such as PAF instal teachers as the new 'saviours' of the students? Since the classroom seems to be the best place to start to discuss these issues, I would like to put for your consideration here two autobiographical notes on disruptions from the classroom[29] which I believe are situations commonly encountered by teachers. The first refers to the shock, anger, disgust and pain that one recognises in the body language of a student who has just been handed her test paper with the marks or grades. The student often lets some time elapse before contesting the evaluation, probably checking the marks, grades of others in the class comparing and contrasting, thereby estimating the level of injustice (imagined and real), done to her.

Two students and not by co-incidence, one from a Nomadic community in Maharashtra and another a tribal student from Manipur, mustered enough courage to encounter me and asked in different ways if their lower grade had anything to do with the less space they had given in their answer to Phule-Ambedkarite critiques of 'mainstream' perspectives on caste. As a teacher, I had at that point at least three options – respond in terms of some absolutes (it's not really good, you have not covered it all, your expression could have been better) thereby exercising my authority as final judge of the standards. Legitimise my authority as an evaluator by making transparent the parameters of my evaluation. Most difficult of all options seems to be the third option that of calling into question my judicial

authority as a teacher-evaluator by translating the student's contestation of grade into an opportunity for dialogue. Dialogue here is not suggestive of a strategy of appeasement (of increasing the marks) – but of 'listening' to the contestation and reflecting upon and reviewing in this context the very parameters of evaluation and possibly transforming them. Obviously these students were raising questions that moved within and outside the classroom, for one they were raising questions about the possibilities of an evaluation remaining 'fair' in the context of the teachers avowed commitment to a Phule-Ambedkarite politics and about their own alienation from a curriculum that hardly engaged with 'their' histories and experiences.

The second autobiographical narrative relates to the comments of a tribal girl student from one of the most underdeveloped regions in Maharashtra who had opted for three of my courses in consecutive semesters and who I saw as bringing considerable enthusiasm and intensity into the classes. However, at the end of the Masters Programme, she told me, to my dismay, that the classroom experiences had been profound but troubling because of the immense loss of 'certitude of definitions' that she had experienced. That sometimes I seemed to her (and probably to many others) like a person who does not know the basics of the discipline (for instance when I reply to a query with another query rather than give a definition/definitive answer). For the student, the unlearning and problematising of much that she had grasped through undergraduate textbooks and excelled in, was rendered into a state of confusion. As Phule-Ambedkarite feminist teachers contesting the cannons, one has often come up against similar criticism from colleagues who argue that students get confused in 'our' classes because we introduce critical debates before students have mastered the cannons of the discipline.

These cases of students contesting evaluation and efforts at building critical thinking in the classroom raise questions about the relations between pedagogy, authority, cannons and transformation. The second narrative allows us to ask awkward questions – do we as teachers of particular disciplines have responsibility and accountability to the cannon – so to say initiate the students into the discipline? When is the 'right time' at which the critique can be as if introduced? In other words are we saying that the initiates in sociology must know G.S. Ghurye, Louis Dumont, M.N. Srinivas on caste before engaging with the critical perspectives of Phule, Periyar and Ambedkar and Andre Beteille and Dipankar Gupta before reading more contemporary *dalit-bahujan*-feminist writers on caste? Does such a move not gloss over the ways in which through the design of courses, assignments, list of prescribed and 'supplementary' readings, selection and elimination of topics as legitimate for classroom discussion; knowledge comes to be categorised and organised into legitimate/canonical and illegitimate/non-canonical. At the level of practices of teaching it means attributing value to the canonical *per se* and not to the labour of interpretation. Am I then suggesting that the Phule-Ambedkarite feminist

teachers do away with the canon? Far from it, the canon to be deauthoricised and demystified must be seen relationally; so that the canonical and the non-canonical emerge in oppositional confrontation at the historical level.

The first narrative pushes us to question the canon built on the conviction of the radical teacher – does she too build a cannon to render 'her truth' as natural and beyond the conflictual politics of interpretation? There is a desire for a stable 'saviour' ideology and easily identifiable home[30], or fixed truth; but as Jenny's account discussed earlier more than bears out, a Phule-Ambedkarite feminist teacher must guard against the exclusions and oppressions which such a desire would entail. The problem, therefore, is not only about teaching the canon but canonicising whatever we teach and the challenge is to make the learning process always uncertain and contingent. Often the most difficult question for progressive pedagogies like PAF pedagogies is to retain passion and partnership of the oppressed and yet breakthrough the canonical compulsions that exist at the heart of all pedagogy.[31]

While the relations of power organised by the curriculum and the approaches to the curriculum have been discussed to some extent, those related to the organisation of college-university classroom as a physical and intellectual space have been relatively unaddressed. Discussing pedagogies requires that we discuss the ways in which power is enmeshed in the discourses and practices of the more *mundane* everyday of the classroom. The classroom is a relatively autonomous space which can both empower the teacher and render her vulnerable. The everyday of this classroom is routinely managed through the regime of time-tables and rules published in the handbooks. But on the field so to say – the real questions are – How do we manage the conflictual imperatives of quiet and talk, responsibility and control, risk and safety? Often these conflicting imperatives mean that classroom learning comes to be achieved through issue of threat (threat to cut marks, freeze on classes) competition and point scoring (setting groups or individuals against each other to get them to be responsible) and status consciousness (sanctions for those who talk and interact within given parameters and achieve learning within approved terms). Intentionally or unintentionally our strategies of getting the immediate done may often conflict with strategies of PAF that seek to encourage collaboration and foster democratic and social justice values. Are there models of progressive pedagogy that may guide us to move beyond these brahmanical-patriarchal practices of discipline and control in the classroom? In the next section, I will address some of the issues emerging from this question.

Circuitous Relations between Educate-Organise-Agitate — The Risky Paths of *Tritya Ratna*

Generally speaking, teachers who believe that learning is linked to social change, struggle over identities and meanings, may practice variants and combinations of three possible models of progressive pedagogical practice[32]. The first model is

the one in which the PAF teacher believes that she understands the truth/ the real relations of power and imparts it to the students. The second model believes in a dialogical mode and making the silenced speak. While in the third the focus shifts on developing skills – so that students are enabled to understand and intervene in their own history. It is possible that different combinations emerge from these models, for common to all three are a set of similar assumptions. The first model believes that the teacher can and does know the truth – the real interests of different groups brought together in the classroom and has to just impart the truth to them, the second overlooks the real material and social conditions which may disenable some from speaking and others from 'listening to silences', and the third assumes that the teacher knows and can impart the 'universal skills'. These assumptions become problematic, for as PAF pedagogues, we agree that students are neither cultural dopes that have to be brought to predetermined positions but this is not to say that the dominant institutions do not seek to dupe them. There is then a loss of certainty for the teacher, she does not have a readymade *mantra* to save the world nor can this be replaced with a set of relativist celebration of different voices and experiences

This kind of a rendering of the PAF pedagogical model which rejects convincing predefined subjects to adopt the teacher's truth; draws upon not a unilateral but circuitous understanding of the Phule-Ambedkarite principle of 'Educate, Organise and Agitate'. Education, organising struggles over recognition and redistribution identities and social transformation related in a circuitous path; are constitutive of each other and as such the possibilities and constraints on agency as it intersects with social formation cannot be predefined. If we look again at Mukta Salve's essay with which we began, it is clear that education becomes *Tritya Ratna* in Jotiba and Savitribai Phule's school because what was demanded from students was not conformity to some image of political liberation but of gaining understanding of their own involvement in the world and its future. This makes the task of the PAF pedagogues slippery and hazardous – since the focus is on contextual practice, one of multiplying connections between what may seem apparently disjoint things.

This returns us once again to the question of authority in the pedagogical process – to ask if the critical pedagogue practicing such a model needs to make a difference between abandoning all claims to authority and offering new forms and positions. The teacher still remains responsible for production of knowledge in the classroom but is required to traverse risky grounds that interrogate the binaries of knowing teacher/ignorant students, public/ private and rational/emotional. She recognises that often the students are uninterested in the classroom not because they do not want to work or because of the difficulties of jargon or theory but they do not see reason. Probably the questions being asked and answered are not 'theirs'. This realisation cannot be followed up with a simple dictum that from now on students will define the questions. The challenge is to

discover the questions on the terrain of everyday lives and popular cultural practices.

Such a model throws open to question then a simple model of authority – one that poses an opposition between mind and body as also authority and affection. Black feminists[33] have underlined the ways in which the body is erased in the process of learning. Entering the classroom is as if about giving up to the mind and making the body absent. It is assumed that denial of passion and Eros as if is a precondition for learning to take place. They remind us that Eros is the moving force that propels life from a state of potentiality to actuality and therefore central to the energy of the classroom. It is often argued that there is no place for the affective in the classroom because this may affect effective control or neutral evaluation of students. And yet all of us know there have always been teacher's favourites – there have been and are affective ties that are exclusive and privatised. The Eklavya narrative is a reminder of the violent consequences of selective, exclusive affective ties between students and teachers.

The pedagogical power in critical practices cannot be wished away by giving up claims to authority and following Black feminists like Hooks[34] persuasion of students may be seen as an option. In a diverse classroom, Hooks argues there will always be students who are afraid to assert themselves as critical thinkers. Counter to several feminist claims that the silenced come to voice in atmosphere of safety and congeniality, she prescribes a 'confrontational' style of dealing with this. This can be very demanding, painful, frightening and never makes the teacher 'instantly popular' or the classes 'fun' to be in. Hooks problematises the rather easy opposition between risk and safety, affect and authority by putting at centre processes of democratic persuasion as crucial to the goal of enabling all students and not just the assertive few in the classroom.

How do we understand the multiple and contradictory positions that we play out in the classroom? It has been pointed out[35] that there are tensions between the three competing selves of the teacher – the educative, the ideological/moral-ethical and personal. How may we 'discover' these tensions, the gaps between what we think we do and what we actually do? Student evaluations of teachers with all their limitations can be an eye-opener. Going over recordings of class discussions can sometimes be a veritable discovery! Recordings of classroom proceedings, ways in which we as teachers moderate a discussion, interrupt it or let certain questions pass can point to the tensions between the multiple and contradictory positions we occupy and our dilemmas. For instance, a PAF pedagogue introducing a powerful texts like Ilaiah's 'Why I am not a Hindu' has to address on one hand the uncomfortable silences or resistance of students (articulated through passing notes or nudging that seems to suggest here she goes again on her trip) who may feel interpellated in the identity of the oppressor. On the other hand, the persistence of silence of the subaltern students who, one imagines would experience instant identification with the text and find voice also needs attention.

The hesitance in naming and reclaiming identity in public; the tears shed in private conversations, the unease with emotionally charged classroom pose several dilemmas.

I am in no way arguing for reflexive explorations by teachers on either student evaluations or classroom recordings as ways to bring 'balance' in positions – for balance as we know has became a dirty word ever since *hindutva* sought to denigrate all engaged left and feminist thinking as imbalanced. Rather, the effort is to reflect on the many intended and unintended omissions between the conceptual and material terrain of PAF pedagogies as produced partly by attempts to create a democratic space within an undemocratic academy and society but also by our own investments in particular subject positions.

Critical pedagogies do not in themselves constitute a method, and micro level pedagogical implications of PAF which are crucial to the everyday work of the classroom need to be discussed and developed through dialogues in and across classrooms. We need to dialogue more on our efforts in the everyday of the classroom to develop different tools, methods, strategies to combine social critique with skills of doing critical work. In the concluding section, I would like to share some notes on implementing PAF and collective efforts to develop tools and methods.

Pappu can Dance '....' (?) Possibilities and Limitations of Pedagogical Experiments[36]

In the present of our academia, any effort to develop new courses, pedagogical tools and methods have to as if prove their 'applicability' and 'employability' value. Many of us seeking to develop new courses in interdisciplinary fields, such as women's studies, *dalit* studies and culture studies encounter these demands to prove 'entrepreneurial' value on one hand but on the other are faced with the serious ongoing intellectual debates on the relevance of practices of these fields in the academy. Courses in women's studies and *dalit* studies which are often seen as fields 'naturally' linking theory and practice, knowledge and power may in practice face the risk either of creating 'alternate cannons' or emptying political content in 'applying' theory to the field. While those in cultural studies, more specifically the study popular culture, face another kind of risk, that of not been taken seriously for they are not easily recognised as a site of the political[37]. In this section, I shall limit the exchange of notes on experiments in developing pedagogical tools to a course on 'Popular Culture and Modernity in India'.

In the concluding section, I detail some of the experiences of teaching a course on 'Popular Culture and Modernity in India' least because I or anyone else involved imagine it to be a narrative of success. This detailing is by way of opening a dialogue with fellow critical pedagogues on the nuts and bolts of developing pedagogical methods and tools for our present. This course on 'Popular Culture and Modernity in India' was floated over two semesters in classrooms that were socially very diverse and where the co-learners sometimes shared very little in common by way of nationality, region, language and also in terms of their investment in,

desire and pleasures of what they saw as constituting and constituted by the popular (the range included motorcycle clubs, annual village fairs, Sharukh Khan films, old Hindi film songs, the 'new' Marathi cassette cultures, cultural practices of movements and collective actors, particular newspaper columns, blogs, 'days' celebrated on campuses and so on).

The course began with three readings – one by Bell Hooks interrogating the binaries that operate in the cultures of teaching and the other by Samata Biswas[38] on caste and culture as it unfolds on the seemingly *mundane* site of the notice board in the students' mess and selections from Phule's 'Gulamgiri'. These readings made way for several discussions on interrogating the binaries of history and memory and cultures of teaching and the teaching of culture in the academy and had implications for the conduct of the course. The course it was mutually agreed would be constituted through integrating dialogue, participation, experience[39] the important elements of PAF pedagogies. At the level of practice it meant being open to multiple viewpoints, learning to 'listen' so as to better understand what others are saying than just stick to words they say, to suspend judgement to create an environment where participants could reflect, communicate and interact.

More specifically the dynamics of learning and teaching was sought to be rethought and reinvented through a research-based approach to the course. This posed challenges for both the students and the teacher and in our case, the teaching assistants[40] (Research students and students who had recently completed their Masters Programmes) became very important resources in enhancing dialogue and participation through a research-based approach. The teaching assistants in this course did much more than the 'prescribed' role of getting together course, readings, and correcting tutorials and in the process fractured the assumed divide between teacher and student. They 'translated' the teacher's classroom discussions to the students when required but in doing so pushed the teacher to become a student by seeing how and why the students found them more accessible. They became research and writing consultants for students who were framing 'researchable' themes for the paper and in the process could revisit and redraft their own on-going research and writing.

The course sought to build in experience, dialogue and participation through conscious selection of resources materials and therefore the questions brought to the classroom that came from the everyday/ordinary of students' lives (*tamasha*, local museums, Hindi films, newspapers, documentaries, music videos, magazines, commemoration of days on campus), continuous group work and intra-group evaluation, and developing writing and research as a method of classroom learning. Group work and evaluation met with considerable resistance as groups were drawn once by lots and another time through introducing a diversity quotient. There was pessimism and resistance to working with given groups, several students were very uneasy grading their own and group members work and there

was much frustration, tears and anger over group processes. But what was novel and was that they were often viewing their own culture (youth/village/city) critically and it was the teacher who was on their territory.

The group work sessions were conceptualised, designed and conducted by the group members in the classroom; sometimes in the process driving the content of the course. Group work on local museums for instance propelled the way in which the course interrogated the assumptions of the nation/national in our everyday life. Some groups for instance compared and contrasted the politics and aesthetics of the Gandhi and Ambedkar museums to interrogate received notions of history of the nation. Yet others drew attention to the tensions between nation and region, the public and private, tribal and Indian in the arrangement of artifacts at the Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum or to the interesting museumisation of modern city life in the most unexpected of places – the toy railway museum. Group work on the contemporary cultural practices of counter commemoration of the anti-caste movements propelled discussions on the significance of popular in the formation of counter publics. Several individual papers on the recasting of caste and gender relations in the local annual fairs propelled discussions on caste in the constitution of the popular.

In the process of this group work, there were disruptions in dialogue and participation – between students and between teachers and students. Often conversations came to be controlled by expectations of what each thinks the other should say or in forcing students sometimes to talk against their will. The teacher, teaching assistants and students despite efforts were not always listening and pre-judgement of 'others' was continued through bodily gestures that discarded some issues while validating others. However, sometimes disruptions in dialogue were taken up as an opportunity to view the complex linkages between practice and content – for instance impatience and tensions between group members (emerging from differences of language, investment in different genres of popular, access and ease with using audio-visual equipment, ways of reading a text and discussing it) became a ground to reflect on the central theme of the course – namely 'our modernity/ies'. Heated discussions sought to address how courses on 'Modernity in India' could not push the experience of the epistemic wound of colonialism, the messy patterns of Indian modernity, the exciting instability of forces of mass democracy in our classroom to the backyard.

The course sought to shift the focus from students as consumers of knowledge to producers of knowledge by developing writing and research as a method of learning. Reinventing the teaching-learning nexus through research was also envisioned as countering the logic of vulgar vocationalisation and applicability. Students were expected to submit regularly written responses to events and to develop independent and collaborative student research projects through the semester. Writing of responses to films watched or the celebrations in the city of the nation on

15th August or a music video of Kings XI Punjab among others became sites for developing critical thinking skills and social critique. Writing response pieces; the format for which was kept relatively open became a recursive process as students admitted that writing required them to reflect, assess value and appropriateness of argument, reconstruct and rewrite.

Individual and collective research projects not only reinvented the pedagogic space but helped establish mutually rewarding links with academics inside and outside the university and external community groups. One batch of students (2007-08) produced a film on 'Cell phone Cultures'; researched and produced collaboratively. The process involved developing new intellectual, practical and technical skills as students researched the biography of the product, it's travels to different constituencies, SMS as cultural consumption, the perceived dangers and anxieties related to the product, celebrity scandals with camera phones and so on. The film focused on how cell phones were organising and conducting students' own lives. The second batch of students (2008-09) wrote and published a book; a collection of researched articles in English and Marathi on 'Exploring the Popular: texts, identities and politics'. The papers though individual were discussed right from their conception in the classroom and in group exercises designed both to think through the questions critically and to write academically. To use words from the foreword to this book by Uma Chakravarti, "these essays tell us something about why and how we make meaning of life around us and they do so with zest and enthusiasm."[41] The essays not only showcase student writings but also document the intellectual processes by which the students came to their 'theme of research'. The students had in the process of producing the book engaged with tasks of calling for submissions, reviewing, editing, designing and publishing and were pleasantly shocked by the quality of the product.

The 'social utility' of the several group projects, film or the collection of essays lies in their capacity for inducing conjectural questioning. Many of these are being integrated in a handbook for teachers in Marathi on popular culture and modernity in India. However, there was not much effort on our part to ask significant questions about how these skills of combining critical thinking with social critique, of writing academic papers, making films, scripting might transfer to other contexts of collaboration or employment. Further, not all participants were satisfied with the focus on writing and research as a method of learning as some student evaluations suggested this took away time from more interactive exercises in the classroom. Some participants argued that 'too much of democracy' and insistence on group work had resulted in loss of precious working time. There was a case of plagiarism, but the group concerned collectively agreed that the 'crime' be made an object of analysis and the concerned student wrote finally wrote a reflexive essay on his own journey from being an engaged student-activist with a celebrity status in a town college to a metropolitan university.

The pleasure and politics of the popular came to be debated as several students narrated 'problems' that family members and room-mates were having because of their becoming critically engaged with popular culture. The teacher, the teaching assistants and several students commented on how many, otherwise 'quiet types', those who rarely spoke in class (those considered *Pappus*) were talking so much in class when it came to films music videos or the pleasures of the 'Trax cultures' (local taxis that ply from the *taluka* place) of rural Maharashtra. At one level, it appeared as if contrary to the popular Hindi film song ('*Pappu* Can't Dance …'), investigations into the world of the popular could make 'Pappus' dance. But, at another level – could they really? For as students worked in English, Hindi and Marathi, in different settings, the uneven flow of knowledge and methodologies was more than apparent. The student research projects made apparent how the study of culture has emerged differently in different regions and languages and a question worth asking but not risked in the classroom was – how might the course have looked if cultural studies did not speak only English but also spoke, for instance Tamil, Ahirani, Bundeli or Marathi[42]? In a socially diverse classroom there are 'many languages of studying culture' and specific understandings of 'popular' are constituted differently and differentially through them. Our collective efforts at 'dialogue' through research and writing as methods of learning did, to some extent, disrupt traditional understanding of power and knowledge but were constrained by the limits set on 'dialogue' by powerful languages.

Lest we celebrate prematurely the 'success' of dialogue of our PAF pedagogies; the words of Bhujang Meshram, an engaged tribal poet who passed away recently, are a reminder of the ways in which power is already enmeshed in dialogue.

"The Teacher asked,
'Name any three tribal villages',
So I told.
Slap me if I was wrong
But do tell me do closed doors open without a push?
I only told – Shelti, Varud, and Kondpakhandi'.
The teacher asked,
'For what are these villages famous?'
I only told,
Shelti for Holi,
Varud for the woman – Gowarin Bai,
And Kondpakhandi for the theft of cotton.
The teacher roared and slapped with his hands
He broke a couple of staffs of the Mehendi bushes.
Go get a reference from three people
Or else no entry for you in this school – he said.
That's when I decided to get introduced
to Birsa kaka, Tantya nana and Ambar Singh Maharaj!!"

(Bhujang Meshram,
Mala Bhetlelya Kavita, 2007)

Meshram's words historically grounded in the struggles of tribals over resources, identities and meanings are a reminder that power is never really external to 'dialogue, participation and experience' and that the task of making education *Tritya Ratna* is indeed an arduous long march.

REFERENCES

1. English Translations of Mukta Salve and Tarabai Shinde's writings were first published in Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, *Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to Present,* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991). Vidyut Bhagwat, the regional editor of this section highlighting the politics of selection and erasure involved in the building of archives discusses how Tarabai's writing was 'retrieved' in 1975 by S.G. Malshe and that there is no account found of later writings of Mukta Salve. Scholars like S. G. Mali and Hari Narake have countered the doubts raised about the authorship of writings of Savitribai Phule with historical documents; thus highlighting the erasure of intellection of women and women particularly of the non-*Brahman* and *dalit* castes from the processes of established archiving.
2. See Senthil Kumar Solidarity Committee, 'Caste, Higher Education and Senthil's Suicide' in *Economic and Political Weekly*: August 16, 2008, pp. 10-12, as also Anoop Kumar, 'Casteism in Higher Education' in *Insight*, Vol. 1, No. 1: Sept-Oct. 2007, pp. 8-10 and 'Excerpts of Thorat Committee Report' in *Insight*; op.cit., p. 10.
3. See Anveshi Law Collective, 'Caste and Metropolitan University' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, March 23, 2002, pp. 1000-2 and also Sanjay Palshikar and Arun Kumar Patnaik, 'Violence in a University: Defending the Indefensible' in *Economic and Political Weekly,* April 20, 2002, pp. 1490-9.
4. I use writing back/talking back in the sense post-colonial and Black feminist scholars employ the term; see for instance Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back* (London: Routledge, 1989) and Bell Hooks, *Talking Back: thinking feminist. thinking black* (Boston: South End Press, 1989).
5. See http://www.insightfoundation.org, M. Murli Krishna, *Autobiography as a Resource for Educational Theory: A Dalit Life Story,* M.Phil. dissertation in English Literature, (Hyderabad: CIEFL, 2004); *IAWS Newsletter*, (Pune: Women's Studies Centre, December 2003); Nageshwar Rao Star, is a film made by Nikhila Henry, Shonreichon, Rajesh and Nageshwar Rao, a group of mass communication students at HCU, Hyderabad; Out-Caste is an informal, public wall-journal started by the *Dalit* Studies class under the guidance of course instructor, Dr K. Satyanarayana. This is an open forum that engages with the caste question in a specifically Indian context see http://out-caste.blogspot.com/ 2008 02 25 archive.html. See also Dilip Chavan, '*Bharatiya Uchh Shikshanatil Gunvatcha Prashana*', *Vatsaru,* Vol. 8, No. 4, June 16-30, 2008; the *Sajag Vidhyrathi Shodharthi Gaat* edited issue of *Vatsaru*, Vol. 8, No. 15, 1-15 December, 2008 and *Research Room Diaries*, Pune Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre, University of Pune, November, 2008.
6. The Department of Sociology, University of Pune tried to address this question by organising a two day national workshop in January 2008 for teachers and students on 'Caste in the Curriculum' : Documentary Films as Pedagogical Tools. I am grateful to the speakers, film makers and participants in this workshop for suggesting new ways of listening and addressing caste in the curriculum and the classroom.

7. I am grateful to Sanjay Kumar Kamble for the conversations we had on reproduction of caste inequalities in education, particularly his insights on the renderings of the issue in Marathi Cinema which I hope to pursue in the near future.
8. The debates on the 'language question' and the 'fear of identity' as they appear in the calls of sociology in crisis have been detailed in Sharmila Rege, 'Exorcising Fear of Identity : Interrogating the 'Language Question' in Sociology and Sociological Language' in Sujata Patel (ed.) *Critical Reflections on Sociology of Indian Identity, Perspectives and Practices*, (New Delhi, OUP, forthcoming). I am thankful to a number of colleagues for their insights from diverse positions and locations on pedagogical practices; to Sujata Patel for continued conversations and discussions on the history and politics of formation of sociology and its implications for the pedagogical; Kushal Deb, Shruti Tambe, Maitreyi Chaudhari and Satish Deshpande for periodic exchanges on the experiences of teaching and 'translating' sociology, Sadhana Natu and Vaishali Diwakar for sharing experiences on the diverse and exciting worlds of undergraduate pedagogies in Maharashtra.
9. Words like 'upper castes', 'lower castes' are put into single inverted comma to mark a disagreement with and distance from the ideology in which such linguistic practices emerge.
10. For accounts of this marginalisation, distortion and erasure in cognitive structures of sociology, see Vivek Kumar, 'Situating Dalits in Indian Sociology', *Sociological Bulletin*, 54, 3 (2005), pp. 514-532 and Edward Rodrigues, *Dalit* Struggle for Recognition within Indian Sociology' in Maitrayee Chaudhari (ed.) *The Practice of Sociology*, (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2003), pp. 221-258; S.M. Dahiwale (ed.) *Understanding Indian Society: The Non-Brahmanic Perspectiv*e (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2005) and Sharmila Rege, 'Feminist Challenge to Sociology: Disenchanting Sociology or 'For Sociology'?' in Sharmila Rege (ed.), Feminist Sociological Knowledge, (New Delhi: Sage, 2004).
11. *Aani Paani* – literally means 'and water' but as a phrase it refers to the Brahmanical colloquial reference to *dalit* rendering of Marathi which is considered 'impure' and technically incorrect.
12. For details see Kumud Pawade, *Antasphot* (Aurangabad: Anand Prakashan,1981); Kancha Ilaiah, *Why I am Not a Us?* (New Delhi: Vitasta, 2006).

    Hindu, A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy (Calcutta: Samya, 1996); Chandra Bhan Prasad, *Dalit Phobia: Why do they Hate Us?* (New Delhi: Vitasta, 2006); Pragnya Daya Pawar, *Kendra aani Parigh,* Mumbai: Dimple Prakashan, 2004) and Meena Kandaswamy, Touch (Mumbai: Peacock Books, 2006).
13. I am drawing this argument from Javeed Alam, 2004, Who Wants Democracy? Hyderabad: Orient Longman.
14. See Paulo Freire, Education for critical Consciousness, (New York: Continuum,1973).

15. I am drawing this argument from Bernard S. Cohn, 'African Models and Indian Histories', in *An Anthropologist Among Historians and Other Essays* (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, pp. 224-54); Sujata Patel, 'Beyond Binaries : A Case for Self Reflexive Sociologies', *Current Sociology*, Vol. 54, 3 (2006), pp. 381-395 and Sharmila Rege, *Dalit Studies a Pedagogical Practice : Claiming More than a 'Little Place in the Academia'* Malcolm Adiseshiah Memorial Lecture, Chennai: MIDS, 2006.
16. For details see Gail Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: The Non-Brahman Movement in Western India (1873 to 1930)*, (Bombay: Scientific Socialist Education Trust, 1976); Rosalind O'Hanlon, Caste, Conflict and Ideology : Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Low Caste Protest in Nineteenth Century Western India (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985); Meera, Nanda, *Breaking the Spell of Dharma and Other Essays* (New Delhi: Three Essays, 2002); Gopal Guru, '*Dalits* in Pursuit of Modernity' in Romila Thapar (ed.) *India: Another Millenium* (New Delhi: Viking, 2000) and Sharmila Rege, *Writing caste/writing gender: narrating dalit women's testimonios* (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2006).
17. All references to the writings of Phule and Ambedkar are drawn from Y.D. Phadke (ed.) Mahatma Phule Samagraha Vagmay (Bombay; Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Sanskruti Mandal, 1991) and volumes particularly volume 2, 4, and Vol. 11 of Vasant Moon (ed.) Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches (Government of Maharashtra, Education Department,1987) and Changdev Khairmode, Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Vols. 1-12, (Pune: Sugava Prakashan, 1992).
18. See for instance Bell Hooks op.cit., 1989.
19. Chandra Bhan Prasad, *Dalit Phobia —Why Do They Hate.*
20. See Bagul quoted in Arjun Dangle (ed.) *Poisoned Bread: Translation from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman Limited, 1992).
21. For details see Sharmila Rege, *Caste, Identity and Public Sphere: Mapping Ambedkarite Counter publics in Maharashtra* (Kolkata: Samya, forthcoming).
22. For a nuanced and critical review of the local, regional and international contexts of emergence of *dalit* studies see K.Satyanarayana, '*Dalit* Studies as a New Perspective in the Indian Academia' in Arun Kumar and Sanjay Kumar (eds.) *Dalit Studies in Higher Education: Vision and Challenges* (Delhi: Deshkal, 2005), pp. 81-95.
23. For a cogent argument on this, see Lawrence Grossberg, 'Introduction: Bringing it All Back Home – Pedagogy and Cultural Studies' in Henry A. Giroux and Peter McLaren (eds.), *Between Borders — Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies*, (New York: Routledge, 1994: 1-29).
24. For instance, a highly qualified Professor who left a renowned campus recently for private consultancy commented that with too many 'mofusil' students in his class he was worried that if he stayed longer he too would introduce himself as "Myself so and So from So and So place" thereby making a dig at the vernacular styles of personal introduction. Some other colleagues commented on how they would have nothing to do with a board of studies that was largely manned by the 'Safari Brigade'; commenting on the Safari suit — a style of the early 1980s now considered passé by the elite but which has been reinvented as a modern

formal wear by male teachers and bureaucrats from *dalit-bahujan* classes. The sartorial and other routine practices of our different and unequal modernities are begging for serious academic investigation.

25. See Lis Stanley, 'An Autobiography in Sociology' in *Sociology* (Vol. 27, No. 1,1993, pp. 41-55).
26. 'Unsettling Relations' is the title of an excellent collection of essays on the university as site of feminist struggles. See Himani Bannerji, Linda Carty et.al., *Unsettling Relations — The University as a site of Feminist Struggles,* (Boston: South End Press, 1992).
27. I am thankful to a number of colleagues for their insights on interrogating the 'success' of women's studies in the academy; to Vidyut Bhagwat for long standing conversations on fractures of limiting the practice of women's studies to English, Uma Chakravarti, Mary John, Tejaswini Niranjana, Rekha Pappu and Vandana Sonalkar for discussions in different contexts on pedagogies in women's studies, Anagha Tambe, Swati Dyahadroy for continued exchange of notes on the pains and pleasures of 'teaching gender studies' and Sugeeta, Sneha, Sanjay, Nirmala, Tina, Nagesh, Sangeeta, Deepa and Roopali for their weekly reflections from diverse social locations on processes of teaching and learning women's studies.
28. See Jenny, 'Opening Up to Research : A Personal Narrative' in *IAWS Newsletter*, Women's Studies Centre, University of Pune, December 2003.
29. I am thankful to the several batches (from 1991 to the present) of Masters, M.Phil. and Ph.D. students at the Department of Sociology and since 1995 at the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre for the collective efforts in building and disrupting the pedagogical space. Their classroom interactions, 'traditional' day celebrations, parties, note and letters of criticism and appreciation, in fact makes the very exercise of this lecture possible.
30. For a provocative and evocative account of 'home' See Biddy Martin and Chanda Talpade-Mohanty, 'Feminist Politics: What's Home Got to Do with it?' in Teresa De Lauretis (ed.) *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).
31. This is a question R. Radhakrishnan pursues profoundly in his accounts of cultural politics of parenting and pedagogies in the diaspora. See R. Radhakrishnan. *Between Identity and Location: The Cultural Politics of Theory* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2007).
32. I draw upon and seek to rework the models of progressive pedagogies outlined by Lawrence Grossberg, op.cit., 1994.
33. See Bell Hooks, 'Eros, Eroticism, and the Pedagogical Process', in Henry A. Giroux and Peter McLaren (eds.), *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies*, (New York: Routledge, 1994:113-119).
34. For a nuanced discussion on confrontation as against safety in the classroom, see Hooks; op.cit., 1989.
35. See Carolyn McKinney, 'A Balancing Act: ethical dilemmas of democratic teaching within critical pedagogy' in *Educational Action Research* (Volume 13, No. 3, 2005: 375-91).

36. This draws upon the hit Hindi film number '*Pappu* can't dance…' from the film *Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na*. *Pappu* in the vernacular generally refers to those young people considered to be 'not so smart or happening' by those who name what's in and out. This section will look at moments in which it seems that "*Pappus*' can also dance – but do they?"
37. For a compelling argument on complex relation between these fields and their pedagogical practices especially on the pedagogical challenges to feminism in the cultural studies classroom, see Tejaswini Niranjana 'Feminism and Cultural studies in Asia' in *Interventions*, Vol 9, No. 2, pp. 209-218.
38. See Samata Biswas, 'Culture and Caste in CIEFL: The Classical Debate Continues', in *Insight*, September10, 2005
39. For more on critical feminist pedagogies of dialogue, participation and experience see Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, Chadveck Fleck et al. 'Exploring Critical Feminist Pedagogy: Infusing Dialogue, Participation and Experience in Teaching and Learning' in '*Teaching Sociology*, Vol. 31, No. 3, July 2003, pp. 259-275.
40. I would like to thank for their insights, interventions, energy and affection – Anil Jaybhaye, Nagnath Shelke, Deepa Tak and Tina Aranha who assisted in teaching the Popular Culture course over the last two semesters.
41. Uma Chakravarti, 'Foreword', in M.A. Class of 2008 (ed.) Exploring the Popular: texts, identities and politics (Pune: KSP, Women's Studies Centre, University of Pune, 2008).
42. I am rephrasing the title of Mariscal's article – see Jorge Marsical 'Can Cultural studies Speak Spanish?' in Toby Miller (ed.) *A Companion to Cultural Studies* (MA: Blackwell Publishers: 2006).