

# SOCIAL CHARACTER OF LEARNING

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## Preface

THIS book, or a substantial part of it, would have appeared many years ago, had I not read Eleanor Barman and Ian Montagnes' *The Thesis and the Book*, soon after completing my doctoral dissertation at the University of Toronto. This 'nasty' little book, which has now become available in India, forced me to reconsider my plan to publish my work. As years went by, the plan went through major changes, but refused to die. In the meanwhile, the perspective I had applied in my thesis faced the dire challenge posed by my return to India'. I wondered whether the perspective was any good for post-doctoral life. I was also worried about the charge one frequently hears, that returning Indians bring with them alien points of view and methodologies only to pollute the Indian research environment. Luckily, the discipline to which I belonged could hardly boast of a research environment without straining credulity. I could not possibly pollute it even if my perspective was poisonously foreign. But how could it be so 'foreign' after all, I often asked myself, if the results to which it led my researches were remarkably consistent with the work I had done long before I had stepped on foreign soil.

Indeed, there is hardly anything startlingly new in this book for those who have read my earlier work, *Raj Samaj aur Shiksha*. However, the fact that few Indians who read social sciences read Hindi might make this book appear like something fresh. The elaborate text analyses it presents are but a growth over time of the seed my senior friend, Hindi poet and journalist, Raghuvir Sahay, had planted in the early seventies when his *Dinaman* was in its most vigorous, unique phase. He asked me to survey school textbooks of all the Hindi states for the Independence Day number of 1972. I had no training in text analysis, but under the pressure he built up with the help of what was once Delhi's swift local telegram delivery system, I developed a method. Years later when I worked with Bryant Pillion at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and learnt to ponder on frequencies and cross-tabulations, I often wondered whether my own method was so bad after all. But even Raghuvir Sahay had started by the mid-seventies to ask me to look at the marvellously systematic work that Western analysts do. He was thrilled by my analysis of school prayers, but we both knew that it would have gained enormously from some formal training in this kind of work. We were both confident, vernacular Indians. When I left for Toronto, I had no *fear* of foreign knowledge. When I returned, I had little patience for people who found my research reflexes too Westernized. The writings of Kenneth Burke and Hugh Dalziel Duncan, to which Bryant Pillion introduced me, along with the exciting tradition of symbolic interactionist sociology, are a part of the foreign knowledge which made the book possible. If there are people who feel that symbolic interactionism has little applicability in India (indeed, few Indian sociologists ever refer to it), they might as well not open this book.

Three of the four studies included in this book are exercises in comparative education. Now a standing myth in the field is that only comparables deserve comparison, so India should only be compared with countries that have a high rate of early elimination ('drop-out'), bureaucratic processes of curriculum development, an overarching examination system, and so on. I doubt if much will be gained by such comparisons. My initiation into comparative education occurred while I was in Canada, during a course with the late Roby Kidd, who knew the 'developing' world well, and thought we must constantly compare it with the 'developed' world in order to make sense of the problems that bedevil the relationship between the two.

An earlier version of the studies presented in Chapters 3 and 4 appeared in the *Economic and Political Weekly*. The study presented in Chapter 5 first appeared in *Canadian and International Education*. I am grateful to these journals for permission to use these studies here. The study of Literacy primers (Chapter 4) was jointly undertaken with Ross Kidd. I thank him for his contribution. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) supported me for the study of Canadian television programmes (Chapter 5). The Centre is of course not responsible for the conclusions.

Many institutions and individuals have contributed to the work that has gone into this book. It is just not possible to name them all, and some I have already named. One left is my wife who witnessed the first as well as the second birth of this book, and has contributed to both in many subtle ways.

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## 1.

### Study of Educational Texts

ALL educational activity makes use of texts. In the present-day world it is hard to imagine an Institution where no texts mediate between the teacher and the pupils. True, with the growth of technology, new forms of communication have appeared, some of which suppress the text. Radio and television, for instance, use texts that the audience mostly cannot see. These media create the impression of a direct dialogue between the audience and the person whose image or sound is being disseminated. They also create an impression of being purely oral media. The impression is misleading, for the dialogue has a text as tangible and significant as the textbooks used for conventional teaching in the classroom. The difference is that the text on which such dialogue is based is not visible. It is suppressed. But it can be retrieved, and it can also be reconstructed. Reconstruction is usually the only way to analyse the texts used in the modern media. But even with the old textbook, it can be quite challenging to ask: 'what is the text in it?' For we are not talking merely about the numbered pages stitched together between the covers. Nor do we refer just to the print arranged on each page. The purely physical and graphic aspects of the textbook do not tell us much about its educational function. In order to make sense of the 'text' contained in it, we would have to deal with the words that make up each lesson, though we will not be looking at the words in the way a linguist might. Words concern us in terms of the units of meaning they form, the images they convey, and the worlds they evoke.

An important technique for dealing with words and their meanings in a systematic manner is that of content analysis. It originated in the need for mutual surveillance that powerful nations perceived during and after the Second World War. Surveillance was required not just on each other's preparation for war, but also on each other's ethos and mind. The need to study the media in reliable ways arose along with countless little technologies of production, storage, and reflection out of the circumstances associated with the last major war.'

Content analysis; is essentially a means to probe propaganda. It is hardly fortuitous that it found among its users a large number of educational researchers who wanted to probe educational texts. Education in modern times is not quite separable from the media that promote ideologies, opinions and consumer products. As a state apparatus, education is in fact a prime agency of propaganda although its instrumentality is more complicated than that of state-owned media or advertising. The complication arises mainly out of the respect and popularity that certain educational concepts enjoy. One such concept is that of teaching as a process of arousing the learner's interest and curiosity. Such concepts continue to inspire some of the people professionally involved in education, and such individuals disrupt the use of education as straightforward propaganda.

There are, however, limits to such disturbance. Idealistic predilections do not inspire, all professionals of education, and those whom they inspire may not be in positions to hamper seriously the use of education as a tool of propaganda. With the emergence of the modern state, with its instruments of self-analysis and remediation fairly refined, the use of education for propaganda has entered into a more mature stage. Corrective procedures are working all the time to minimise the clues that indicate the propagandist nature of education.

Content analysis has played a particularly important role in this regard, and it is hard to say with certainty whether it has helped more by way of analysing and thereby demystifying educational texts or by way of creating the possibility of increasingly refined texts. Let us examine this duality in one area, that of the depiction of sex roles. Studies using content analysis to detect sex stereotyping in school texts outnumber studies on any other problem, and now just about every educational system in the world has had its sex bias exposed. Researchers have gone beyond school texts to complete this expose, into children's literature and the media. We now have a substantial body of competent studies that shows the extent of sex stereotyping, the ways in which it is expressed, and the methods used to cloak it. What impact has this respectable body of research had?

One aspect of the impact is the greater consciousness that those in charge of approving curriculum materials and teachers have developed towards sex stereotyping. In many countries, textbook authorities explicitly disapprove the

use of materials carrying a sex bias. Many teachers on their own in certain countries, not including India unfortunately, consciously reject such materials. The other aspect or the impact pertains to the materials and this aspect is more complicated. Those who prepare teaching materials, both writers and publishers, are now aware of the fact that sex bias will invite criticism and disapproval. They also know how sex bias is judged. Many of them have adapted to the danger of having their products rejected by writing bias-proof materials. They do this by avoiding references that they know, will be caught. Often the structure of stories remains the same; only explicit attribution of sex-related characteristics or habits is avoided. Sex-bias actually goes deeper, to a level where conventional content analysis cannot capture and demonstrate it. An interesting instance of this process can be found in the story 'Sahasi Roopa' which is part of a grade four Hindi reader. It shows a girl boldly rescuing a classmate who is just about to drown in a bog. The story places a female character in a role conventionally assigned to males. But it does not permit the female character to complete successfully what she has started to do. Roopa's efforts to rescue her classmate exhaust her, and just before it is too late a male watchman takes over. The sex bias reflected in the story is obviously at a deeper level than ordinary detection methods can reveal. Many new texts and media products are similarly sanitised in terms of sex role depiction precisely to skin conventional research methods.

The point is that although educational texts were always expected to disseminate messages acceptable to authorities, modern texts are expected to be prepared, according to pre-specified criteria of evaluation. A manual written by McCullough (1968) for the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) provides a list of problems, steps in solution, and satisfactory endings recommended for authors of children's reading materials. McCullough lays that 'the author should be very much concerned with the kinds of conclusion about life that the child may draw from the story,' Those who manufacture school or media-related materials for children are obliged to be conscious of what is acceptable and what is not. Modern school texts and media materials are likely to have a pre-emptive strategy towards the approach and techniques traditionally used in content analysis. Techniques more sophisticated than the ones used so far are required to identify messages and values contained in value-controlled texts.

The majority of school text studies made in the last two decades were concerned with the detection of bias. The method used in these studies consisted of first, identifying the categories reflecting the theme or bias under study, and second examining a sample of texts to find out how often the categories appeared. While this method does succeed in revealing the extent of bias (for instance towards women or minority groups) present in a set of texts, it projects a rather simplistic view of the problem that biased texts present. The method assumes that bias has to do with the presence or absence of a character or characteristic. The possibility of bias being embedded in the structure of relationships portrayed in a text, as well as in isolated features, eludes this popular method.

There are a few studies that first define the structure of relationships portrayed in a text, in terms of a model of human behaviour of culture, and then look at individual characters or characteristics against the background of this model. The strength of studies of this kind depends on the strength of the model they apply. The studies made by McClelland (1961), for instance, were based on a rather limited vision of development and society. The vision identified development as a consequence of certain behaviours, for instance, achievement-orientation. It was based on the structural-functionalist theory of social change, more commonly known as the modernisation theory. With the help of content analysis, made along the lines of this theory, McClelland did obtain some interesting insights into socialisation, but these insights suffered from the same limitations as the modernisation theory. One of these limitations is the theory's inability to explain the origin of a given behaviour. McClelland's study of the theme of 'giving' in Indian stories, for example, fails to show why it is such a prominent theme in Indian culture.

Another limitation of several studies of school texts is that they do not relate the texts to the actual conditions under which the texts are going to be read. They typically stop at describing the patterns formed by symbols in a given sample of texts. Surely it is important to know that certain content features or symbols are part of a pattern, but the role of a content feature cannot be adequately considered within the perimeter of the text alone. We cannot understand the function that a symbol performs in a text unless we take into account the conditions under which the text will be used. As Alter (1979) points out, the attempt to 'exercise the other-than-literary presence of the real world by reducing everything to the text' represents a serious weakness of several structuralist accounts of stories. Every communication

system, whether it is education or television, refers to a cultural context in which it operates. A symbol used in the system depends as much on its associations within that context as it does on its relationship with other symbols,

## **SYMBOLS AND MILIEU**

There are two main areas, then, in which we need to improve upon conventional text analysis. One is the need to define in terms of an adequate model the structure of relationships embedded in a text, and the other is to relate the symbols used in the text to the actual conditions under which that text will be read. I will illustrate the usefulness of these two points by applying them to a short story. The story 'Price of Eyes' is a part of the official Hindi textbook for grade four in Madhya Pradesh, It opens with the following two paragraphs;

Once upon a time long ago in a certain town there lived a merchant. He had millions of rupees and hundreds of servants. His elephant was always ready at the door. He traded in far-away centres. His hand was ever open for giving charity. The people revered him. The most important thing was that he was an art connoisseur.... Everyone acknowledged his wisdom.

In the same town there lived a smith. That is, he was a smith by caste but he had never actually done any such work. He lazed about all day long, cursing his fate. What property he had at home gradually got sold off, it became a matter of starvation and begging. Although he had a strong, stout body, when he went about begging people used to taunt him, joke about him, and he used to get even more irritated. He would start berating God loudly and cry, beating his breast. He always felt that God was unjust to him.

One evening when the merchant was enjoying a musical performance the smith went past the mansion, shouting, curses at God and his fate. The merchant sent for the smith and asked him why he was cursing God. When the smith explained that he needed help, the merchant offered to give him money in return for one of his eyes. Astounded, the smith hurriedly mentioned first a hundred rupees (the price of his eye, then revised the amount several times until he reached the figure of a hundred thousand. The merchant agreed to pay him this much, but the smith himself backed off at this point, acknowledging his folly in blaming God, who had given him a body worth several hundred thousand rupees, and thanking the merchant for opening his eyes.

According to the story, the prosperous merchant and the poor smith are endowed by nature with two different sets of personality traits. The merchant is described as charitable, aesthetically inclined and intelligent. The smith is described as lazy and fatalistic. The incident portrayed in the story involves an interaction between the two men, but this interaction denies any connection between the two economic states in which the two men exist. The interaction is imbued with a pedagogic dimension. The merchant, performing the role of a teacher or facilitator (to use current adult education parlance), helps the smith to see his folly. In the lesson that the smith learns with the trader's assistance, the value of money is explicitly negated. The message not only hides the means by which the merchant has fulfilled his caste role, but also the means by which he has obtained *his* status and tastes. Thus, the story mystifies money and the power money has\* to shape social relations. It is ironical that the value of the body—as a means to earn a livelihood—should come within a smith's intellectual reach through a merchant's pedagogic intervention. In the programme of social mystification, the merchant performs his role appropriately by engineering a pedagogy that is specifically designed for the learner who is a manual worker by caste.

To generalise from the story, we are taught that the defective and disabling culture of the poor is the cause of their poverty. In order to understand how poverty is caused, we are asked to note what the poor are doing to themselves on account of their ignorance and laziness. The poor are so submerged in their defective culture that they cannot see the source of their poverty without the cooperative intervention of the prosperous. The theory and the role of the teacher symbolised in this story offers us a model of economic pedagogy that denies any conflict between the rich and the poor. What interaction does take place is harmonious and friendly, and in this interaction it is the poor person who is 'learning' and the rich who is 'teaching'.

Having analysed the structure of relationships within which the symbols of poverty and riches appear in the story, let us now turn to the conditions under which the story has been used as an educational text for a long time. The present-day social composition of Madhya Pradesh has a thin crust of feudal aristocracy and a large population of small-scale peasants and labouring people. If we combine the people designated as 'tribal' with those designated as 'Scheduled Caste', we have accounted for one-third of MP's population. In the few cities and some one hundred small towns of Madhya Pradesh resides the so-called middle class, consisting of salaried people, mostly in government jobs. The landed aristocracy is politically dominant though not always politically visible; but it is the middle class which creates symbolic forms for the modern media, such as the press, and education. Despite the advantage the middle class has due to its presence in the state apparatus and its access to education, it cannot afford to keep any but the most harmonious and pleasant relationship with the feudal aristocracy. This may appear strange to those who assume a conflict between a rising middle class and the landed gentry. The conflict did not arise in many parts of India such as Madhya Pradesh simply because the middle class did not consist of enterprising bourgeois. The salaried middle class of MP accepts the political hegemony of the aristocracy and allows the hegemony to find symbolic expression in the media which it has the skills to use. This is the milieu where the 'Price of Eyes' originates—in a social situation where the rich are legitimised as teachers of the poor.

With the help of this brief sketch of the milieu in which the story serves as an educational text, we can identify its social function. The story socialises children to perceive poverty as a consequence of certain personality traits rather than as a consequence of social and economic relationships. The agenda fits in nicely with the role that the middle class—the creator of texts—has that of mediating between the aristocracy and the large population of the poor. The story places the rich on a new, modern pedestal that of being guides of the poor. It so happens that the symbolic figure representing the aristocracy is not that of a feudal landowner, but rather of a great merchant. This is hardly material, for the characteristics attributed to the merchant are those normally attributed to members of royal families. With these characteristics and the successful accomplishment of the task he had set for himself, the merchant illustrates the virtuousness of his own way of life. The poor must learn, and they must learn from the rich. Conflict between the poor and the rich is resolved in a pedagogical relationship.

## **TEXTS AND SOCIALISATION**

I have attributed to the story a 'socialising' function. It is important to discuss how a text might socialise, for in normal usage, socialisation results from encounter between children and the adults around them, first the parents and other members of the family, and later, the members of the larger community. In these encounters the child extends his limited perception by first identifying roles and then enacting some of them. The enactment takes place through the use of language and in all those activities we label as play. Through language and play, the child locates himself in the world he sees. He enhances his participation in the world round him by coming to terms with the roles available in it. He sorts them out, chooses among them, and tries out the ones he chooses. The process is both vocal and quiet, and it does not end with childhood although it stops being as vigorous an activity once the child has found his place in the world in a way at least temporarily acceptable to him.

If we compare this process with what happens through exposure to texts, particularly narrative and dramatic texts, we are likely to be struck by the similarity of the two processes. Listening to a story or reading one, the child takes on different stances towards the world depicted in the story. The stances are those of the characters involved in it and that of the narrator who may or may not be visibly present in the text. A story forces us to see the world from viewpoint<sup>^</sup> other than our own. It forces us in the sense that it leaves us with no choice once we agree to pay attention to it. We would fail to see the point of an action narrated in it if we do not at least momentarily take on the position of the persons engaging in the action. Narrative texts engage us in a sequence: of symbolic participation in the world. By agreeing to participate in this way, we place ourselves in the roles attributed to the characters and thereby extend our acquaintance with these roles. The experiences of these characters become our experience.

The process of involvement in a text differs from that, of involvement in a social situation mainly because it permits us a safe distance from the emotional tangles facing the characters depicted in the text. The distance protects us from the responsibility of taking decisions and acting^ it allows us to be 'spectators' in the sense in which Britton '(1970) uses this term. As spectators, we are both in the situation and out of it; our emotions are stirred by it, and at the same time we can appreciate, if we care to, the means by which our emotions are being stirred. This aspect of encounter with texts, however,' does not prevent the formation of collective patterns of response. Recurrence of certain types of characters, styles of narration, choice of incidents, and choice of locations in texts may act as a pat tern-forming force on individual readers' responses. In principle, each reader may be free to reflect upon texts as a unique spectator, with his own repertoire of experiences; yet, readers may act as collectivities whose responses are similar and predictable. This may be the result of accretive exposures as through the presentation of texts in the modern media and in institutions of mass education. These systems specialise in the preparation, assembling, and trans-mission of texts in a systematic manner. Patterning of symbols under the auspices of mass education is not altogether different from what happens in the folklore of a culture; it is only more accentuated because formal educational arrangements involve conscious and carefully monitored organisation of symbolic resources.

Modern media like television require an even greater measure of organisation of symbolic resources. This is partly because of the extraordinary reach of these media, and the fact that their reach is not dependent upon prerequisites such as literacy or education. The potential audience of each programme prepared for television is many times larger than that of a successful literary text. This is one reason why the preparation of television texts U fraught with extra caution exercised by those involved in text-preparation in response to the demands and conditions imposed on them by the owners of telecasting technology. In India, the owner is the state whose bureaucrats are acutely aware of the role that television plays in the creation and maintenance of a political climate. Choice of symbols and their patterning is understood 10 have immediate as well as far-reaching implication for the political order. Hence, artistic freedom and spontaneity are held as inconsequential in comparison to the need to follow orders from above.

Like textbooks, television texts need to be studied in relation to the actual conditions prevailing in a society. But first we need a method of analysis which permits us to study televised data in terms of dramatic Interaction. We must ensure that our analysis does not isolate language, argument, or image from the drama in which it is placed by the creator of the televised text. Thus, the problem of analysing televised texts is similar to that of analysing school texts. The problem is to study data within the symbolic structure in which they appear in the text. It is necessary in the case of televised texts too to go beyond typical content analysis which breaks up the data into quantifiable, interpretable categories, but largely ignores the structural relationships within which the data originally appeared. To go beyond this limitation of conventional content analysis, we require a model which parallels the structure of relationships represented in a programme. Once we have such a model, we can place the content data, whatever form they might be in, within it in order to classify and interpret then..

A peculiarly difficult challenge to text probing is posed by the materials used to teach illiterate adults how to read. These texts are of great significance in a country like India where illiteracy is far more widespread than the ability to read. The importance of these texts lies not just in the fact that they are written for a very large number of people, but also in that the people they are addressed to constitute the poorest, most economically exploited strata of society. Literacy programmes have traditionally treated the illiterate adult as a child, which is not surprising, considering that adult literacy was first taken up as an educational enterprise by missionaries who, like colonisers, treated their clientele as child-like adults, in need of help and moulding. Teaching poor adults how to read continues to be regarded as a socialising, acculturating task, even in programmes that are supposedly committed to purely functional uses of literacy. But it is no easy job, to decode the socialisation agenda of literacy primers and other materials. Not that the primers themselves are difficult. The problem lies in the fact that they are deceptively simple. Behind the single-sentence or single-episode lessons of the typical primer is hidden a whole world of power relations. These relations cannot be identified without the help of a considerable amount of information about contemporary political economy. The four studies that follow are projects undertaken along these lines. All of them had two aims. The first was to develop methodologies more adequate than the ones conventionally used in terms of the limitations I have discussed. The

second was to find answers to questions relevant to the study of socialisation taking place through educational texts. The attempt to develop methodologies for an analysis of such texts was inspired in the first place by the urge to study this aspect of socialisation.

## **2. Society in Stories— A Comparative Study**

THE study reported in this chapter consists of an interactionist analysis of Indian and Canadian textbooks. Its purpose was to compare the prominent symbols of social relationships used in children's reading materials in two societies as distinct as India and Canada are, economically and culturally. From India, the sample consisted of two sets of texts: the *Bal Bharati* series published by the Madhya Pradesh Textbook Corporation, and the reading series published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training. In the Canadian sample as well, there were two sets of texts: the Nelson Language Development Reading series, and Ginn Starting Points in Reading series. These were the two most commonly used among the officially approved series in Canada's most populous and affluent province, Ontario, at the time the study was conducted. The Indian sample represented both the state and the central level of text-creation. From both samples of textbooks, all short fiction—including myths, fables, and short stories—and one-act plays (there were very few) were taken up for analysis. In all, there were 77 selections in the Indian sample and 196 in the Canadian sample.

Both samples were confined to the textbooks used in grades four, five, and six. In both India and Canada, the normal age of children's entry in grade one is 6 years, so the intended readers of the textbooks of grades four to six are in the age-group of 9 to 12 years. Both in terms of cognitive development and the growth of personality, this period signifies a transition—from one stage to the next. In Piagetian terms, the period covers the last part of the concrete operations stage and the initial part of the formal operations stage. In Freudian terms, it ranges from the last phase of latency to the early manifestations of puberty. In either classification, the developmental stability reached in the early part of the period is of great significance to the challenges of the latter part.

From the theoretical perspective used in this study, literature can be seen as a means of classifying the experiences for which we are dependent on society, such as interaction with other people. By representing people and objects in a certain way so that we can participate in what happens to them, the writer of a literary work orders our life in society. This function of literary reading is significant for children in the 9-12 age-groups. One of the major attainments, of children in the concrete operations stage (ages 6 to 11) is the ability to classify experiences. In his study of the developmental stages of children's response to story structure Applebee (1978) says that concrete operational thought 'bring with it a new ability to classify and organize; instead of a set of elements enactively chained together, symbolic representation involve a reorganisation of experience into hierarchies of categories and subcategories. If we see literary reading as a classificatory asset in the child's social interaction and socialisation, its importance during grades four through six, and the need to study the classification of social reality that the literary readings offer, become obvious.

### **PROCEDURE OF ANALYSIS**

The instrument of analysis (Figure 1) which was developed for this study is structured around the 'dramatistic pentad' proposed by Burke (1945) and later recommended by Duncan (1962) as a means to examine the structure of symbolic acts. The main procedure for using the instrument is to conceive the action depicted in a story as a dramatic event. To enable us to dramatise a story, the instrument provides a framework of five elements, and several categories within each element. The five elements are:

- Agent (the person, or the kind of person, who performed the act depicted in a story)
- Act (what took place in thought or deed)

Scene (the situation in which the act took place)

Agency (the means used in the performance of the act)

Purpose (to what aims or person the act was addressed)

The five elements offered a compact and adequate structure for developing an instrument (Figure 1) which could be used as a means of tracking and comparing the patterns of social interaction symbolised in two distinct sets of children's reading materials. The first step towards designing an instrument-was to develop specific categories, within the purview of the five elements that would reflect the characteristics of the literary writings available for children in India and Canada. This task was accomplished through trial analyse of small randomly selected samples of the two sets of materials with the help of tentative categories. These categories were reviewed after each trial analysis; the ones that were being applied too widely were refined by further subdivision, and others that were being used rarely were dropped or collapsed into larger categories. For instance, 'community' and 'institutions' were treated as one category under both agency and purpose during the trial runs. On the other hand, spaces such as 'bazaar', 'park' and 'street' were earlier regarded as separate categories, and were later collapsed into one category labelled 'socially shared spaces'.

*Social Character of Learning*

Figure 1

Title \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_

(Make as many choices as necessary under items 3.1, 4, and 5, but only one choice under items 1 and 3. Asterisk indicates need for detail.)

1. Agent

Child		Adult		Non-human	Group Agent
Male	Female	Male	Female		
1	2	3	4	5	6

1.2 Agent's background in terms of occupation and/or social status, if available (in the case of agents who are dependents of someone else, use the background of the person on whom they depend, e.g., parents in the case of child agent):

2. Act (summary of the plot-line, in terms of the agent's action, in one sentence):

3. Scene:

Rural/Small Town	Urban	Unidentifiable
1	2	3

3.1 Space/s used in the text:

Agent's Home	Socially Shared Spaces	Work Location	Nature	Institutional Spaces*	Another Person's House	Other*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Agency (means used in the performance of the act):

Personal Ability or Idea	Family	Peers	Community	Institution	Non-human	Situation Improves Itself	Other*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

5. Purpose (context in which the purpose of the act is established):

Self	Family	Peers	Community	Institution	Work/Money	Recreation	Moral/Religious/Altruistic Aims	Other*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

6. Special comments \_\_\_\_\_

Each selection in the two samples was read, and its agent, act, scene, agency, and purpose were recorded. The descriptive data recorded under the element 'act' were classified, by a process of successive abstraction, into 10 types, so that the act in each selection could be classified under one category alone. The next step was to find the total frequencies of the categories under all five elements. Under items 3, 4 and 5, in which the instrument allows the choice of a constellation of categories (i.e., two or more categories), the frequency of distinct constellations was determined. These frequencies were plotted on matrices, and the interaction among the categories was measured. The matrices were also used to classify the constellations into simpler types by the technique of pragmatic reduction and all the units in the two samples were recoded according to these types. With the help of these recodings, the data for agent were cross-tabulated with the data for act, scene, agency, and purpose.

## AGENTS

In the agent role, adults outnumber children in the Indian materials, but the opposite is true for the Canadian materials (Table 1). The small number of child agents in the Indian texts suggests that the social universe symbolised in these texts is dominated by adult. Evidently, the children who read these texts are for the most part denied the opportunity to identify with characters of their own age. In the Ontario textbooks, the distribution of agents in terms of age is more evenly balanced. In two out of every five stories, the agent is a child. In the Indian stories, only one out of five agents' is a child, whereas one out of every two agents is an adult.

Both literatures are male dominated. In the Indian textbooks, the most frequently shown agent is the adult male, and in the Canadian textbooks it is the male child. More than half of the agent roles in each sample are performed by male characters including men and boys. In proportionate terms, there are more female adults in Indian textbooks than in the Canadian textbooks. While both samples show fewer females than males in the agent role, in the Indian sample women outnumber girls, whereas the opposite is true for the Canadian sample. Thus, girls are least likely to be agents in the Indian stories, while in Canadian stories the characters who are least likely to be agents are women.

Table 1

### AGENTS

	Child		Adult		Non-human	Group Agent
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
India	12 (15.5)	4 (5.1)	32 (41.5)	8 (10.3)	15 (19.4)	6 (7.7)
Canada	52 (26.5)	27 (13.7)	49 (25)	9 (4.5)	25 (12.7)	34 (17.3)

$\chi^2 = 19.65$   
df = 5  
p < .01

(Figures in brackets under the actual frequencies represent the proportion of a frequency out of the total N in per cent.)

The disfavour surrounding female characters in children's textbooks has been noticed and discussed by several researchers. What is important for us now is to notice the impact of age on the symbolic value of female characters in the two societies. In his psychoanalytic study of childhood in India, Kakar (1978) shows how the female adult, particularly as mother, is treated as an object of fear and veneration in Indian mythology and society, while the female child is an object of rejection. The selection involved in symbolic representation in stories disfavors girls at two levels: first, at the level of age, and second, at the level of sex.

Though the female adult is present throughout the Canadian sample, in most cases she is a minor character who is merely mentioned, typically as a mother performing such functions as making sandwiches when the children are going on an expedition with their father, or as a housewife doing the chores that fathers are never shown doing:

The big red house stood in a beautiful garden which was Mr. McAdam's pride and joy, and after supper, almost any evening, you could find Mr. McAdam there, hard at work. He would be trimming the hedges, or mowing the lawn, or tying up the roses. Mrs. McAdam would be washing dishes, or mending socks, or talking on the telephone.'

In the society depicted in the Canadian stories, the Newfoundland fisherwoman who averts her family's economic disaster with an imaginative idea for drying fish is a rare type of agent. The activities associated with the adult female in the Indian stories are not very different from the ones in the Canadian stories, except in the case of some famous and mythological women, such as, respectively, the Rani of Jhansi and Savitri.

Non-humans are depicted in the agent role in nearly one-fifth of the Indian materials and in about one-eighth of the Canadian materials. In the latter, non-humans are mostly depicted as household pets, and their role is generally subordinate to that of their human masters. The non-humans shown in the Indian stories often enact human roles within their own milieu. Such roles typically lead to insights for moral or practical conduct. Environmentalist messages are conveyed in a number of Canadian stories, but in only one story—one which is remarkably similar to the single Indian story with an environmentalist message—do we see a human character's response to animals transformed in a dramatic way. The typical relationship between humans and non-humans shown in stories of both samples is one of friendship and harmony. When conflicts occur, they are initiated by animals, and humans are shown as being in danger.

The agent role is performed by two or more characters in a group in about one-sixth of the Canadian stories, but in less than one-tenth of the Indian stories. In most of such Canadian stories, the group consists of children, often both boys and girls though there are more all-boy groups than all-girl group. In the Indian textbooks, no story shows children in a group agent role. Performance in a group depends on peer relations which are seldom given prominence in Indian stories. On the other hand, peer relations are an important part of the image of society offered in the Canadian stories as the discussion under Agency and Purpose will clarify below. Out of the six Indian stories that have a group agent, two are set abroad, two are mythological, and one is about two oxen.

An attempt was made to collect information about the social and economic background of the agent. No definitive clues to the agent's background were available in nearly one-third of the Indian sample and in more than half the Canadian sample. Discounting the stories with non-human agents, we are left with nine (11.6 per cent) stories in the Indian sample, and 80 (40.8 per cent) stories in the Canadian sample which provide no clear indication of the agent's socio-economic background. Why is the proportion of such materials so high in the Canadian sample? One reason for this may simply be that the number of stories in which a child is the agent is much higher in Canadian textbooks. Such stories seldom point out the occupation or social background of the child's parents unless a family or community is poor—and this is very rarely the case. The child agent is, thus, associated with a social universe in which economic details become relevant only under conditions of poverty.

Backgrounds that were indicated in the texts show that status denominators are more common in the Indian materials whereas in the Canadian materials the more common denominator is occupation or profession (Tables 2 and 3). Several of the Indian agents are related to monarchical structure, e.g., king, prince, minister, army chief, courtier, royal clown. Traditional occupations, like farming and fishing, are present, but modern occupations, such as technical or industrial jobs, are hardly seen at all. In the Canadian stories, a number of traditional as well as technical professions are represented, but hardly any service jobs. The aristocracy and the industrial workforce are both rarely shown, which suggests that the society symbolised in Canadian readers is essentially middle class.

When the instrument of analysis was still in the process of being developed, an attempt was made to record the agent's ethnic, cultural, or religious background. The attempt was abandoned when it became obvious that agents from different minority groups were rare in both literatures. Leaving aside a few illustrations that might show a black character, the only cultural groups that could be identified as distinct minorities in the Canadian texts are those of Eskimos and the native Indians. It is easy to identify them because they are shown mostly in folktales, and almost inevitably in their traditional roles as trappers and hunters. The corresponding tribal background in the Indian sample appears in only one story and in one play which is based on a myth. In this myth, a tribal boy, Eklavya, sacrifices his thumb to satisfy a Brahmin whom he regards as his teacher. The teacher asks for this sacrifice to allay the jealousy his princely disciples feel towards Eklavya for his mastery in archery. The myth resolves the symbolic clash of caste backgrounds by upholding a pedagogical ideal: the pupil's obedience.

## ACT

The act performed by an agent was recorded in the form of a one-sentence summary of the plot as seen from the agent's perspective. The labels used in this classification reflect only the paramount act depicted in each type of story; minor or subordinate acts were not recorded. The Indian and the Canadian materials differ significantly with regard to their distribution in the 10 types of acts (Table 4).

Table 2

### AGENT'S BACKGROUND: INDIA

Stories in which Agent's Background could be Identified	53 (68.8 per cent of total N)	
Occupational/Status Background	Frequency	Per cent of Identified Backgrounds
King/Queen; Prince/ss	12	22.64
Farmer	4	7.54
Ascetic	3	5.66
'Poor'/Jobless Person	3	5.66
Student/Disciple	3	5.66
Fisherman	2	3.77
Fruit/Nut Seller	2	3.77
Minister of a Kingdom	2	3.77
Teacher	2	3.77
Trader	2	3.77
Tribal	2	3.77
Gate Keeper	2	3.77
Army Chief, Beggar	1 of each	1.88 in the case of each
Courtier, Doctor		
Pipe Player,		
Hunter, Royal Clown,		
Sailor, Servant,		
Smith, Tailor,		
Village Overlord's wife, Village Senior,		
Woodcutter		

Table 3

### AGENT'S BACKGROUND: CANADA

Stories in which Agent's Background could be Identified	91 (46.4 per cent of total N)	
Occupational/Status Background	Frequency	Per cent of Identified Backgrounds
Eskimo/Indian	17	18.68
Farmer	5	5.49
Fisherman/Woman	5	5.49
Merchant/Store Owner	5	5.49
'Poor'/Jobless Person	5	5.49
King	4	4.39
Pilot	4	4.39
Servant	4	4.39
Settler/Pioneer	3	3.29
Trapper/Hunter	3	3.29
Apprentice	2	2.19
Company Officer	2	2.19
Knight	2	2.19
Magician	2	2.19
Researcher/Scientist	2	2.19
Teacher	2	2.19
Train/Boat Driver	2	2.19
Air Mechanic, Ambassador, Baker, Circus Owner, Dancer, Detective, Estate Owner, Film Actor, Factory Worker, Grocer, Journalist	1 of each	1.09 in the case of each
Minstrel, Navy Officer, Potter, Professor, Rail Engineer, Sea Captain, Sexton, Team Manager, TV Director, Student, Wealthy Man		

Table 4

## ACTS

Type of Act	India	Canada
1. Acts involving an attempt to survive under difficult circumstances	14 (18.1)	12 (6.1)
2. Acts involving encounter with evil characters	3 (3.8)	7 (3.5)
3. Acts of revenge	3 (3.8)	3 (1.5)
4. Acts which consist of doing good	19 (24.6)	32 (16.3)
5. Acts in which achievement of one's aim is involved	13 (16.8)	32 (16.3)
6. Acts performed out of deference to another	8 (10.3)	7 (3.5)
7. Acts in which making a choice leads to results	6 (7.7)	32 (16.3)
8. Acts involving routine life situations	5 (6.4)	17 (8.6)
9. Acts in which the agent responds to a supernatural/fantastic experience/character**	2 (2.5)	24 (12.2)
10. Acts involving agent's response to coincidences	4 (5.1)	30 (15.3)

$\chi^2 = 29.77$   
 $df = 9$   
 $p < .001^{**}$

(Figures in brackets indicate proportion of total N in per cent)

\* The chi-square test is applicable on this contingency table despite some low expected frequencies, since the number of cells where calculation showed an expected frequency of less than 5 was not more than 4 or 20 per cent of the total number of cells (Siegel 1956).

\*\* Stories in which supernatural characters/experiences are involved in the main action are included in this category. Stories in which supernatural characters briefly appear to perform a minor function are classified according to the main action depicted in them.

One-fourth of the Indian stories were classified under the 'doing good' type of act. These stories generally involve self-sacrifice—to the point of risking or actually losing one's life—by the agent, usually rescuing others in t crisis. Eventually, such acts often lead to some kind of reward for the agent in the form of self-consolation and acknowledgement by others of the agent's attainment of a 'purer' self or earned merit. This is a common theme in several myths and folktales included in the textbooks, and realistic stories also follow this pattern. Self-sacrifice U an important ideal of feudal life, and applies particularly to males. Two other types of lets that together cover over one-third of the Indian sample are: 'survival under difficult circumstances', and 'achievement of one's aim\*. The agent's survival under difficulties, which are often caused by an oppressive enemy or unforeseen developments, rarely involves struggle, hard work, or judgement in these stories. Only one story, where the agent is a housewife, offers such behaviour. Most frequently, the agent depends on the success of an imaginative idea and good luck. Under 'achievement of one's aim', the agent's aim involves a moral or intellectual pursuit more often than the attainment of a desired object.

A prominent feature of the distribution of the 10 types of acts in the Canadian stories is that no single type covers even one-fifth of the sample. This suggests that there is no dominant or recurring theme in the Ontario readers. The four types of acts which together account for about two-thirds of the Ontario sample, and which are almost equally distributed are: 'doing good', 'achievement of one's aim', '-making a choice that leads to results', and 'responding to coincidences'. The first two of these are 'among the prominent types of acts portrayed in the Indian readers. However, the way in which these acts are performed by the agent in the Canadian texts is different. 'Doing good' in the Canadian stories typically involves a concerned gesture or some extra effort, the common beneficiaries being peers and animals. A good example is a story where two university students, on their way to a Christmas supper, take the time and trouble to rescue two homeless cats. A serious self-sacrifice is made under such acts mostly by non-human, agents. A native Indian boy who risks his life to save his teacher in a flood is a rare type of human agent in the Canadian materials. Native Indian folktales offer most of the few examples in the Ontario textbooks of the 'doing good' type of act addressed to

the community rather than to one or two individuals. Acts involving achievement of one's aim are centred around a target set by the agent, such as mastery of a skill like horseback riding or ballet dancing, or the possession of a desired object, such as a new pair of shoes or a parakeet. Canadian agents typically depend on their own resources and hard work to attain such ends.

Acts in which the agent makes a choice lead to good and bad results in almost equal proportions in the Canadian textbooks. This type of act supplies much of the didactic content in these books. The Eskimo hunter, who uses a caribou's bones despite his promise to the caribou not to do so, suffers in the end even though he made the decision under pressure from his wife. Acts of this type appear in less than 8 per cent of the Indian stories, and almost always lead to a tragic end since the choice made by the agent is usually the wrong one, as in the case of a peasant's wife who kills the good mongoose who had saved her baby.

Acts involving a coincidence are usually centred around passive agents whose role is to respond to, and sometimes learn from, what happens. Fewer examples of such acts can be found in the Indian than in the Canadian stories. The rarity of passive behaviour in the agent role, and the small number of group agents in the Indian sample suggest a stronger emphasis on individual responsibility and destiny than can be found in the Canadian stories. The greater responsibility invested in the agent of an Indian story does not necessarily accompany greater choice or freedom. Rather, it is the deterministic value of the act that makes the agent responsible. The agent of the Canadian stories, on the contrary, is often shown in a benevolent world in which unexpected things can happen.

An act that occurs substantially more frequently in the Indian sample than in the Canadian sample involves deference to another person, usually a figure of authority whom the agent is trying to impress. The importance of this type of act can be better understood by keeping in mind the scarcity of peer relations in the Indian texts. Acts of revenge are featured in a small proportion of both samples and the same is true of acts that consist of a struggle against an evil force. Apparently, such themes, which abound in popular literature written for children in both countries, are considered unsuitable for textbooks in both societies.

## SCENE

A primary classification was made to distinguish rural (including small town) from urban locations symbolised in the texts. With regard to the distribution of these milieu, the two samples do not differ in a statistically significant way (Table 5). This is a significant finding in terms of the relation proportion of both samples. Moreover, a greater proportion of the Indian than the Canadian sample symbolises an urban milieu, while the opposite is true for the rural milieu. The proportion of stories in which the milieu could not be identified is 32 per cent in the Indian sample and 37 per cent in the Canadian sample. This suggests a trend similar to the one noticed by Weinreich (1978) in children's books co-published on an international basis. The milieu is often deliberately portrayed in vague terms in such books, so that they may not be seen as totally unsuitable in my milieu. Textbooks could well be guided by a similar desire, since they too are intended to be used in varied settings. This is true for both India and Canada.

**Table 5**  
**RURAL VS. URBAN MILIEUX**

	India	Canada	
Rural (including small town)	30 (38.9)	78 (39.7)	
Urban	22 (28.5)	46 (23.4)	$X^2=0.87$
Unidentifiable	25 (32.4)	72 (36.7)	$df=2$
Total	77	196	NS

(Figures in brackets indicate proportion of total N in per cent)

Table 6

## TOTAL FREQUENCIES OF SCENE CATEGORIES

Category	India	Canada
1. Home	41 (53.2)	78 (39.7)
2. Socially Shared Spaces	26 (33.7)	48 (24.4)
3. Work location	6 (7.7)	23 (11.7)
4. Nature	38 (49.3)	73 (37.2)
5. Institutional spaces	22 (28.5)	49 (25)
6. Another person's house	15 (19.4)	25 (12.7)
7. Other	2 (2.5)	17 (8.6)

Notes: These figures should not be expected to add up to 100 since the categories are not discontinuous. See Table 8 for 5 types of scenes. (Figures in brackets indicate the per cent of stories in which the Scene categories were used)

Table 7

## INTERACTION BETWEEN TWO GROUPS OF SCENE CATEGORIES

Group 'A' = Home, Nature, Another Person's House, and Other, used discretely or in any combination.  
Group 'B' = Socially Shared Spaces, Work Location, and Institutional Spaces used discretely or in any combination.

	India	Canada	
Presence of Group 'A' and absence of Group 'B'	35 (43.4)	98 (50)	
Presence of Group 'B' and absence of Group 'A'	9 (11.6)	41 (20.9)	$\chi^2 = 6.25$
Presence of categories from both groups	33 (42.8)	56 (28.5)	$df = 2$ $p < .05$
Stories in which Scene was unclear	0	1 (0.5)	
Total	77	196	

(Figures in brackets indicate proportion of total N in per cent)

A more specific system of classification was developed to categorise the spaces in which writers place their stories or plays. These spaces were: agent's home socially shared spaces (e.g., street, park), work locations, nature, institutional spaces, and another person's house. In terms of the overall distribution of the different types of scenes, the two sets of literary materials do not differ in a statistically significant manner (Table 8), but certain features that distinguish them do stand out.

In the Canadian stories, the action is more likely to happen within one setting, and several stories end in the same locale in which they start. In the Indian textbooks, there is a tendency towards combinations of scenes; for example, a story starts in front of a boy's house, and ends in a king's court. In several Indian stories, nature or outdoor locations are used in combination with home and with socially shared spaces, whereas in the Canadian stories nature and home or socially shared spaces are unlikely to be used together. In other words, nature is contiguous to home and social spaces in the Indian stories, whereas in the Canadian sample the stories associated with nature are confined to a natural setting. In terms of the overall interaction between the different scene categories, the two sets of data differ in a statistically significant way (Table 7).

Scene is essentially a framing device in narrative or dramatic materials! Framing of space has been used by Bernstein as a basis for studying the distribution of power and control in society:

Table 8

## TYPES OF SCENES

Type of Scene	India	Canada
a. Home only	13 (16.8)	32 (16.3)
b. Socially Shared Spaces and/or Another Person's House	10 (12.9)	29 (14.7)
c. Nature	17 (22.0)	55 <sup>1</sup> (28.0)
d. Work Location and/or Institutional Spaces	9 (11.6)	31 (15.8)
e. Combinations of 'b', 'c', and 'd'	28 (36.3)	48 (24.4)
Stories in which Scene was unclear	0	1 (0.5)
Total	77	196

(Figures in brackets indicate proportion of total N in per cent)

<sup>1</sup> This total includes one story in which the open category 'other' was initially applied.

<sup>2</sup> This total includes five stories in which the open category 'other' was initially applied.

The concepts of classification and 'frame' can be used to interpret communication between objects. In other words, objects and their relationships to each other constitute a message system whose code can be stated in terms of the relationship between classification and frames of different strengths.... Now the stronger the rules of exclusion the stronger the *classification* of objects in that space and the greater the difference between object arrays in different spaces.... The greater the number of different relationships objects in the array, can enter into with each other, the weaker their framing. The fewer the number of different relationships objects in the array can enter into with each other, the stronger their framing.... We would expect that the social distribution of power and the principles of control be reflected in the coding of objects (Bernstein 1975; 36-37).

The 'strong framing' of scene in the Canadian stories suggests that the society symbolised in the stories expresses in distribution of power in an implicit manner. The Indian stories, on the other hand, symbolise a weak classification of space and 'weak framing', in the sense that agents and acts «re less explicitly bound in terms of space. The distribution of power cannot be expressed in implicit ways in such a symbolic structure,'

In both samples, home is the space used most often and work locations are the least often used space (Table 6). But, while home is involved in more than half of the Indian stories and about two-fifths of Canadian stories, it is mostly used in combination with other spaces in both samples- Stories in which the action is confined to home comprise less than one-fifth of either sample. The least likely agent in such Indian stories is the male child while the opposite is true in the case of Canadian stories. Apparently, the Canadian stories reflect a culture where the association between male-hood and home is no more taboo in the context of children.

A number of stories use home as a starting point and reach their climax elsewhere. Agents of these stories leave home to seek and face the challenges of the world outside, and to grow up in the process. This idea has been expressed metaphorically in a poem, included in an Indian reader, about a raindrop. The drop feels nervous as it leaves its home in the sky, but when it falls into an open shell and becomes a pearl, it becomes an exemplar for people who hesitate to leave home.

Institutional spaces are typically found in the middle or towards the end, but rarely at the beginning of stories in both samples, suggesting that institutions are associated with resolution of an act rather than its initiation. Some of the institutional spaces used in the Indian stories are king's court, battleground and temple. The hockey arena, town hall, and the police station are some examples of institutional spaces used in the Canadian sample. The school figures in very few stories of either sample. In one Canadian story, it is described as an 'old pile' which eventually becomes an interesting place when two girls find out that it was once the site of a circus. Some of the Indian stories do use the ancient 'ashram-type school as a setting, but a modern school is rarely shown, indicating the strong 'hold and persistence of an ancient ideal order. The modern school has yet to emerge as a potent symbol in school literature.

Cross-tabulation of the scene data with agents revealed that when a story has an outdoor setting, its agent is more likely to be male and this is true for both Indian and Canadian texts. Thus, the use of nature as a scene is symbolically associated with male agents in both literatures. When home is the only scene of action, the least likely agent in the Indian sample is the male child, whereas in the Canadian sample, the male child is the most likely agent in such stories. Use of home as a setting for stories with child agents is more frequent in Canadian than in Indian textbooks. The association between women and home is at a corresponding level in both school literatures.

## AGENCY AND PURPOSE

These two elements provide a means to son out what Harvey (1965) calls the 'web of human relationships in which any single character must be involved'. The agent's own personality is a part of the web, It is the most frequently used agency in both samples (Table 9), although it is mostly used in combination with other available agencies. The agent's personality or 'self is also the most frequently used category under 'purpose' in both samples (Table 10), and in this role too it is used mostly in combination with other sources of purpose. The overall occurrence of the agent's personality as a category is greater under agency than under purpose in both

Table 9

TOTAL FREQUENCIES OF AGENCY CATEGORIES

Category	India	Canada
1. Personal Quality or Idea	71 (92.2)	161 (82.1)
2. Family	37 (48.0)	77 (39.2)
3. Peers	20 (25.9)	58 (29.5)
4. Community	20 (25.9)	35 (17.8)
5. Institutions	22 (28.5)	43 (21.9)
6. Non-human	23 (29.8)	63 (32.1)
7. Situation improves itself	5 (6.4)	18 (9.1)
8. Other	17 (22.0)	31 (15.8)

Note: These figures should not be expected to add up to 100 since the categories are not discontinuous. For 8 types of agency, see Table 11. (Figures in brackets indicate per cent of stories in which Agency categories were used)

Table 10

TOTAL FREQUENCIES OF PURPOSE CATEGORIES

Category	India	Canada
1. Self	48 (62.3)	111 (56.6)
2. Family	29 (37.6)	56 (28.5)
3. Peers	7 (9.0)	53 (27.0)
4. Community	20 (25.9)	34 (17.3)
5. Institutions	22 (28.5)	42 (21.4)
6. Work/Money	13 (16.8)	22 (11.2)
7. Recreation	3 (3.8)	36 (18.3)
8. Moral/Religious/Altruistic Aims	23 (29.8)	20 (10.2)
9. Other	3 (3.8)	21 (10.7)

Note: These figures should not be expected to add up to 100 since the categories are not discontinuous. For 8 types of purpose, see Table 12. (Figures in brackets indicate per cent of stories in which Purpose categories were used)

Indian and Canadian stories, implying that agents in both literatures are called upon to use their personal resources more often as the means to perform an act than as a context for deriving a sense of purpose,

Four categories of 'significant others' were distinguished in the instrument: family, peers, community and institutions. They can be seen as four spheres of social involvement available to the agent, or as sub-groups that any individual must encounter in the course of socialisation. Under agency, they function as resources or means used by the agent. Under purpose, they form the audience to whom an act may be addressed in symbolic interaction or who legitimise the act. Stories in which family, peers, community and institutions are absent under agency are those in which the agent is most prominently in the focus. More than half of such stories in both samples have a male adult agent. Apparently, acting without the aid of 'significant others' is associated in both samples with being male, especially an adult male. Many heroes of folktales are in this situation. They go out to perform daring acts, such as stealing the sun or fighting the north wind, for the welfare of their community, but in their expedition the community has no part. This type of agent also includes realistic characters who are totally alone in their predicament. Such is the case of a tribal boy, in an Indian story, who kills a wild buffalo to protect three visiting government officials.

In both samples, the 'significant others' are dispensable more often under purpose than under agency (Tables 11 and 12). In stories where family, peers, community and institutions are absent under purpose, the agent follows an inner urge that nobody else can share. If the agent is physically alone, the experience is likely to have some trace of adventure. If others are present but not available to help, the experience is likely to contain the suffering that comes from the indifference of others, or their deliberate refusal to participate. An example of this latter state is (the story from the

Middle East (included in a Canadian textbook) about a merchant's daughter who languishes and dies because her father would not let her use what little water was available to keep a plant alive. In such stories, the textbooks of both societies offer symbols of obstacles that external forces, bad luck, cruel people, or indifferent intimates can present to the agent. Outside this particular frame, there is not very much cruelty or unpleasantness in these textbooks. Unhappy events and negative forces are associated with, and are resolved in, what may be called soliloquy in a sociological sense.

**Table 11**  
TYPES OF AGENCY

Type of Agency	India	Canada
a. Family (as the only social agency)	16 (20.7)	42 (21.4)
b. Peers (as the only social agency)	6 (7.7)	27 (13.7)
c. Family and Peers	6 (7.7)	11 (5.6)
d. Community (as the only social agency)	3 (3.8)	8 (4.0)
e. Institutions (as the only social agency)	8 (10.3)	12 (6.1)
f. Community and Institutions	2 (2.5)	6 (3.0)
g. Combinations of 'c' and 'f'	22 (28.3)	40 (20.4)
h. Absence of social agencies	14 (18.1)	48 (24.4)
Stories in which Agency was unclear	0	2 (1.02)
Total	77	196

Note: (Figures in brackets indicate proportion of total N in per cent)

The circle of family and peers generally consists of, respectively, parents and friends in the case of child agents, and of spouse and colleagues in the case of adult agents. As a category, family appears more frequently than any other social subgroup under both agency and purpose (Tables 9 and 10). However, the family's role is more distinct in the Indian stories under purpose, and in the Canadian stories under agency." In other words, the Indian stories symbolise the family as the context in which the agent seeks a purpose, whereas the Canadian stories symbolise family as the agency that often assists the agent to achieve some purpose established elsewhere.

**Table 12**  
TYPES OF PURPOSE

	India	Canada
a. Family (as the only social sub-group)	17 (22.0)	29 (14.7)
b. Peers (as the only social sub-group)	3 (3.8)	29 (14.7)
c. Family and Peers	2 (2.5)	8 (4.0)
d. Community (as the only social sub-group)	10 (12.9)	16 (8.1)
e. Institutions (as the only social sub-group)	9 (11.6)	18 (9.1)
f. Community and Institutions	4 (5.1)	4 (2.0)
g. Combinations of 'c' and 'f'	12 (15.5)	31 (15.8)
h. Absence of all social sub-groups	19 (24.6)	56 (28.5)
Stories in which Purpose was unclear	1 (1.2)	5 (2.5)
Total	77	196

Note: (Figures in brackets indicate proportion of total N in per cent)

Peers are used as agency in 26 per cent of the Indian stories, but only 9 per cent of the Indian stories show peers under purpose (Tables 9 and 10). In the Canadian sample, peers are shown under agency and purpose in, respectively, 29.5 and 27 per cent of the stories. The role of peers is not only wider in the Canadian stories, it is also more distinct. Peers are an important agency for child agents in the Canadian sample but not in the Indian sample. The same is true under purpose; that is, peers play a negligible role in the Indian stories, whereas they are among the more important sources for deriving a sense of purpose as far as Canadian child agents are concerned.

Community was used as a category to cover individual neighbours as well as members of a community in general. In the Indian stories, community rarely denotes neighbours as it does in the Canadian stories, except in the case of folktales. A wise old man of the village, a stranger who is passing by, or residents of a town are the Indian counterparts of the specific, often named, neighbours who appear in the Canadian stories. Under institutions, the Indian stories most often show a king or a similar figure of authority, while the Canadian stories show the police, the media, and the school, among others. In both Indian and Canadian stories, but more so in the former, community and institutions have a more distinct role under purpose than under agency (Tables 11 and 12). In the Indian stories, they appear more often when the agent is an adult male, suggesting that a wider range of social encounters is available to a man as compared to a child in the agent's role. In the Canadian sample, community and institutions are often shown in the context of a boy agent but hardly ever when the agent is a girl, suggesting that boys encounter a wider audience in the Canadian stories than do girls. Stories where 'community' and 'institutions' both appear in either role are few in both samples, which suggests that their roles are similar and therefore do not overlap. Their main function is to provide an audience that acknowledges the agent's performance of an act and to evaluate the act:

That night Matthew slept alone in his bed, but there was a new kind of a look on his face. He felt like a different boy. A hero! That is what the newspaper man had called him. The zoo keeper had praised him for not losing his head and for taking such good care of the old lion.

Malavji (a boy): I promise that as long as I am alive I will not hesitate to serve the motherland.

Shivaji (emperor): Brave son, this is what I expect from you.

Apart from the five categories discussed so far, two additional categories were used under agency, and three additional categories were used under purpose (Tables 9 and 10). Non-human characters function as agency in slightly less than one-third of both samples. Stories where the situation improves by itself form less than 10 per cent of both samples. The additional categories under purpose were: work, recreation, and moral aims. Work appeared in a somewhat greater proportion of Indian stories, possibly because so many of the Agents are adult. Recreation and moral aims present a sharp contrast between the two samples. Recreational aims were identified in nearly one-fifth of the Canadian sample, but in less than one-twentieth of the Indian sample. On the other hand, moral aims appear in one-third of the Indian sample, but only in one-tenth of the Canadian. Not only do moral aims appear more often in the Indian stories, but are often associated with an absence of personal ends as well.

## STORIES AND SOCIETY

We can now consider what kind of relationship the stories in the two samples bear to the societies in which they are used. For such a consideration, we need to place the symbolic structures we have identified against the context of the socio-economic and cultural conditions prevailing in the two societies. What we will be looking at are broad features of the social context, not the highly specific features that may differ from region to region within the two countries.

To begin with, let us consider the agent's identity as a child or as an adult, and as male or as female in relation to the socio-economic and cultural ethos. The adult-dominated stories of the Hindi-textbooks are meant to be used in a society where the child has a precarious life and little sanction or encouragement to explore the world in his or her own terms. The child's precariousness has to do with a complex set of economic factors which determine the prevalence of poverty, malnutrition, disease and death during childhood. In India as a whole, out of the total number of deaths that occur each year, as many as 47 per cent are deaths of children below five (UNICEF 1984). Among the children who

survive beyond the age of five, many carry the scars of disease and disability through the rest of their life. According to Gopalan (1983), the proportion of children who become fully capable and healthy adults may be no more than 13 per cent. This grim scenario provides us with a clue to make sense of the poor share of children in the agent's role in Indian school stories. The agent's role is a symbol of recognition of personal autonomy. The poor proportion of children in this role is one symptom of the lack of recognition in society of the child's personality. Pointing out the significance of mortality in shaping Western attitudes towards childhood, Brooks (1969) says that before the Renaissance a child could not be considered viable, 'hence had no personality, until he had survived the dangerous early years.'

Another aspect to take into account is that of cultural norms governing the child's daily life. Kakar (1982) gives an elaborate account of the enormous love and emotional security available to the child in the extended Hindu family. Yet, the much-loved child has little freedom or encouragement to explore the world or reconstruct it in play according to his own imagination. It has been recognised that authority often takes the form of a nurturing autocrat in Indian families. Children are not normally encouraged to ask questions or to make independent decisions. Fantasising and role-play are often confined to the imitation of adults in the family, especially the parents. This is not as much due to the lack of toy figures, but rather, due to the absence of encouragement of the child's urge to imagine himself in a variety of roles. On the other hand, there is no dearth of encouragement for modelling oneself after adults, mostly the parents. This aspect of the culture corresponds to the high frequency of adults in the agent role in stories. The function of these agents is obviously to set an example of acts like doing good, surviving under difficult circumstances, and showing deference to others. These are the acts that adult agents are most frequently shown performing.

These agents are mostly male. Our analysis clearly shows that the agent's role disfavors girls and women. This aspect of the agent's role cannot be seen as a direct reflection of cultural patterns. It may be true that traditional norms in India did not permit girls and women to undertake the kinds of acts that would qualify them to be agents, but some change 'has surely occurred over the last one hundred years or so. Indeed, there is no dearth in recent history of women who would qualify for the agent's role in the kind of stories we have analysed. These women would fit not only in the structure of relationships classified under agency and purpose in our analysis, but also in the structure of spaces associated with the agent's role. The male adult agent of Indian stories performs his acts mostly outside the home. The negative association of this datum is as important as is the positive association between the male sex and out-of-home spaces. Once again, if school stories portray only adult males in association with out-of-home spaces, this could only be a matter of choice rather than simple correspondence with the prevailing culture. The choice is made by those selecting textbook material out of the available literature and by those writing stories. If the choice is exercised in favour of traditional rather than contemporary or emerging norms, it only shows the agenda of socialisation for which schools are being used by those in charge of making decisions pertaining to education.

This inference is further confirmed by the presence of status denominators—as opposed to occupational denominators—particularly those related to a feudal structure in several stories. Feudalism was concerned with manly perfection in its cultural expression. A great deal of the literature written in India's Hindi belt during the medieval period shows this. The dominance of the adult male as the agent of school stories confirms our conclusion that the agenda of socialisation implicit in education is linked to the symbols of the traditional, rather than the prevailing, socio-economic reality. The function of education under such an agenda is a conservative one, that of perpetuating « way of life outmoded by historical development but not quite obsolete or dead- Feudal norms of behaviour are still quite dominant in politics in India, and Madhya Pradesh is a particularly fine example of this.

In the Canadian stories, the child appears\* far more frequently in the agent's role, either as an individual or as part of a group, than in the Indian stories. In a very literal sense, we can call these stories 'child-centred'. They are meant for use in schools which are explicitly guided by a child-centred approach to pedagogy' and curriculum. This correspondence could be deceptive if it were not supported by socio-economic conditions and cultural choices. Economic prosperity, brought about by industrialisation, and considerably advanced welfare policies have permitted a child-oriented ethic to emerge in the school culture. This is the ethic we see reflected in the literature written for children, including the textbooks used in schools. In this matter, Canada is not an isolated case. The stories included in Canadian school books reflect a broader reality that of child-oriented creative writing used in many Western countries as legitimate

educational material.

Within this broad outline, however, it is important to delve into the specific social character of the child we find so often at the centre of Canadian stories. First of all, it is more often a male child. Second, the socio-economic background he comes from has no specific indicators, certainly no status indicators. The impression created is that of a middle class ethos in which everybody seems to be doing well, and where no one seems to pay attention to the hierarchy of power and privilege that does in fact prevail in society, in class relations as well as in gender relations. This is the well known picture of a society enjoying the benefits of advanced capitalism, without being bothered about the actual distribution of wealth or power. The symbolic materials used in schools in this ethos perform a conservative role inasmuch as they withhold from readers the awareness of the impact that social classes and patterns of gender relations have on people's life. The Canadian sociologist Porter (1965) had pointed out the existence of a 'vertical mosaic', consisting of an elite-dominated hierarchy which encircles the multi-ethnic composition of the population. The school stories we have analysed offer little more than token evidence of the existence of either the hierarchy or the multi-ethnicity. In the world depicted in these stories, no one is particularly rich, poor, or culturally different. The impression created is that of an amorphous, happy, homogenous community. It is a white middle class community of people whose work-related life seldom seems to enter the child's consciousness.

A dominant factor distinguishing the child's life under these circumstances is the presence of peers. They form the little world within which the agent performs many of his acts. This is yet another aspect in which we find these school stories corresponding to the norms of advanced industrialisation. Industrial development privatises family life, reduces adult-child interaction (by making stringent demands relating to the adult's hours of work), and enhances peer group relations among children. The general impact can be described as the emergence of distinct roles for children and adults. The same applies to space which gets more sharply classified into home and outside. This affects the general tenor of life, giving sharpness to one's acts and also one's sense of purpose. Agents act with a greater degree of conscious decision-making about where they want to be, whose help they must seek and whose approval they must get. These indicators of the clarity of the agent's vision may well be idealised projections of the challenge that the industrial culture poses—the challenge of finding personal meaning. A number of North American humanist educators have spotted this as a major source of problems associated with growing up through the adolescent years. School stories like those we have analysed apparently conceal the problematic aspect of growing up. The function of these stories in the pre-adolescence years is that of romanticised preparation.

### **3. LEARNING TO BE BACKWARD**

HOW does the learner's social background affect his response to an educational text? We will look at this question in the context of a tribal boy's experience in a senior secondary level class. The first half of this chapter presents the data of this experience and analyses the data. The second half places the analysis against a theoretical background of the problems relating to the representation of knowledge in the curriculum.

The teacher-pupil interaction reported and discussed below occurred during a history lesson in grade eleven of a Central School. The class consisted of 27 students; 18 girls and nine boys, of whom two belonged to the reserved categories—one to the Scheduled Castes, and one to the Scheduled Tribes. The medium of instruction was English, and the method of teaching consisted of lecturing interspersed with brief sequences of questioning by the teacher, sometimes to ascertain whether students had learnt the content of the day's lesson and at other times to bring the next sub-topic into focus. The lesson

*Ancient India*, a history textbook for grade eleven, first published in 1977 by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The topic was socio-economic and cultural change during and following the Gupta period (as discussed in Chapter 25, 'Transformation of the Ancient Phase in the prescribed text).

## TEXT AND TEACHER-PUPIL INTERACTION

The first question asked by the teacher was answered by a girl sitting in the front ranks. As the girl was answering, the teacher noticed some disturbance in a corner of the rear ranks where the two boys belonging to the reserved categories and two other boys were seated. The teacher asked the SC boy to stand up, and then asked him a question. He could not answer, and he kept standing after the teacher had turned her attention to the front ranks where several girls were creating rather more disturbance—snapping their fingers, crying ‘M’am, M’am’—in their eagerness to provide the answer. A minute or so later, a boy sitting in front of the SC boy whispered something to him. The SC boy hesitatingly sat down. As soon as he did, the teacher noticed and told him that he had not been asked to sit down. The boy remained standing until five minutes later when the teacher had finished another part of her lecture and was starting a fresh sequence of questions.

Having told the SC boy to sit down, the teacher asked the class: ‘What is tantricism?’ Several hands went up in the two front ranks and the interaction between the teacher and the students who were allowed to answer questions went like this:

S1: Tantricism means belief in magic and superstition.

T: What else do you understand from tantricism?

S2: M’am, it’s a mysterious ritual and it’s a sign of backwardness.

T: Which areas were most affected by it—towns or villages?

S3: Villages.

T: What type of villages were most affected?

A few hands were raised in response to the last question. The teacher looked around, then asked one of the students who had raised hands to reply. The answer that came was, ‘Tribal villages were most affected by tantricism.’ The teacher nodded in agreement and proceeded to explain how the contact between Brahmans and tribal people led to the former’s adoption of tantric practices and beliefs. After dealing with this issue, she rephrased her earlier question, this time to ascertain that the topic had been learnt. The question was ‘who did the Brahmans learn tantricism from?’ Many students raised their hands, mumbling ‘M’am, M’am’ in their keenness to offer the correct answer. The teacher looked towards the rear ranks where nobody had raised a hand. She asked the ST boy to stand up and reply. The boy stood up but could not provide the answer. The teacher translated the question into Hindi, but still the boy could not say a thing. Finally, the teacher asked one of the girls in the front ranks to reply, and got the answer she expected. The bell rang and the teacher hastened to complete the lesson by giving two questions to be answered in writing at home.

The following discussion of these interactional data will focus on the ST boy, I will interpret his response to the lesson at three levels, namely the levels of (i) language; (ii) meaning; and (iii) norms. The boy’s response to the lesson at the level of language is relatively easy to guess because the teacher thought it appropriate to translate her question into Hindi for his convenience. Apparently, she knew that the boy had difficulty comprehending English. The boy’s difficulty in English should affect his response not simply to individual lessons, but to the entire routine and culture of the school. Although located in the Hindi region, the school gives place of honour to English as do all its counterpart Central Schools. In the junior classes, some teachers use Hindi, often mixing it with English. In the senior classes, nearly all teaching, except that of Hindi and Sanskrit, is conducted in English. From the posters, captions under pictures, newspaper clippings, and notices hanging on walls, anyone can discern that the ethos of this school is steeped in English. The ST boy has to accept this condition for his education in this school.

At the level of meaning, one can ask: ‘Whose meaning and viewpoint are reflected in the curriculum?’ The term ‘curriculum’ of course refers to the amalgam of the content of a topic, the manner in which the content has been codified in a textbook, and the manner in which the teacher’s interaction with students ultimately shapes the transmission of the content. In the technical pedagogic parlance current in Indian circles of educational research and training, content is treated as the core of curriculum, and nearly all critical as well as constructive action is confined to the textbook; the roles played by the teacher and the students, and the conventions of pedagogy they follow—out of habit or

spontaneously—are totally ignored- The conventions I am referring to, under the wider rubric of curriculum, are learnt by the teacher during professional training, and are further internalised on the job through contact with colleagues and students who have already internalised their roles.

Let us first consider the content and its codified textbook version. Under the reforms that took place over the last decade in history curricula and textbooks, socio-cultural data were given more attention than they had previously received when history teaching was confined mainly to the chronology of rulers and their policies. However, even the improved texts continue to present history as knowledge independent of a point of view, as a body of facts, not as what Carr (1964) calls 'a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts.' It is true that the facts selected for presentation in these texts indicate a deeper interest in the socio-economic-conditions prevailing during different eras than older school texts had shown. But the basic style remains that of brief and un-analytical description of many different spheres of life,

In a pedagogical interaction, what meanings will be learnt by the pupil as appropriate depends on the way in which power is used by the teacher to indicate approval for assigning significance. In the interaction reported earlier, the teacher uses her power to place the ST boy in a situation where he acknowledges ignorance. His silence represents no denial of the validity of the knowledge he is being offered, whereas the teacher's articulateness represents the assertion of her knowledge (based on the textbook) as valid learning and of her power to make students accept it. There is no conflict between her authority and the ST boy's expression of ignorance, Her authority is used to prove to the boy and to the rest of the class that he is ignorant.

## LEARNING AND IDENTITY

In the context of school learning, the question 'What is learnt by pupils is no more significant than the question 'who learns and who fails to learn'. The distribution, just as much as the content of school knowledge, offers a clue to the functioning of the school as a social institution. As a functionary of the school, the teacher treats the ST boy under the school's norms of undifferentiated delivery of knowledge. One of the norms that the teacher follows is to ask questions in order to check whether the students have learnt what they have been taught. As a part of their training, students of teaching learn that it is *their* role to ask questions, and that the purpose of questions asked by the teacher is to enhance students' involvement. The history teacher was following this well-established norm in checking whether the ST boy had learnt the link between 'tantricism' and 'tribalism'. It just so happens that the question was being posed to a tribal boy.

The view of history as 'facts' is a part of the wider view of all school knowledge as facts. This view not only informs the prevailing curriculum policy but also shapes the perception of the teacher's role that is prevalent in teacher training. Neither curriculum policy, nor teacher training acknowledges the impact that the composition of a class, in terms of students' social backgrounds, has on teacher-pupil interaction and on the meanings generated in the interaction. The 'history as facts' approach implies that the teacher will treat all learners as an undefined group. The social backgrounds to which they belong and the points of view these backgrounds shape become irrelevant when history is presented as a body of facts. For the teacher dealing with history in this way, 'tantricism becomes a sub-topic of the cultural history of ancient India; it ceases to be a problematic issue which touches upon group identities, and which, depending on its treatment, can influence present-day group and individual identities.

The textbook on which the lesson was based has this to say on the relationship between 'tantricism<sup>1</sup> and 'tribes':

The most remarkable development in the religious field in India from about the sixth century A. D. was the spread of tantricism. In the fifth-seventh centuries many brahmanas received land in Nepal, Assam, Bengal, Orissa, Central India and the Deccan, and it is about this time that tantric texts, shrines and practices also appeared. Tantricism admitted both women and sudras into its ranks, and laid great stress on the use of magic rituals. Some of the rituals may have been in use in earlier times, but they were systematized and recorded in the tantric texts from about the sixth century A.D. They were intended to satisfy the material desires of the devotees for physical possessions and to cure the day-to-day diseases and injuries. Obviously tantricism arose as a result of the large-scale admission of the aboriginal peoples in

brahmanical society. The brahmanas adopted many of the tribal rituals and charms, which were now officially compiled, sponsored and fostered by them (p. 172)

Apart from the confidence with which the origins of tantricism have been stated in this passage, it is interesting to observe the features that allow the passage to be interpreted in the manner which the teacher's use of it, as a basis for her class-preparation, reflects. One is the narrative style which carries the omniscient narrator's point of view. Such a style is common in history-writing. Indeed, the difference between the storyteller and the historian has never been too easy to maintain. Only the intentions are somewhat different. The historian wants us to accept what he is narrating as a body of facts. The story-teller does not always worry about this. The historian writing a school text is tempted to project a 'facts only' image of his narration even in cases where 'facts' are sparse and where the connections between known facts are a matter of conjecture. He may present such connections as 'facts' simply because conventions of school text writing favour certainty. In this context, it is interesting to compare our text with the discussion of this particular episode of Indian history by other historians.

'The esoteric nature of Tantrism obscures its roots and rituals', says Wolpert (1977), 'though it clearly seems to antedate Brahmanic Aryan religious concepts, harking back to ancient mother-goddess worship and Shaivite forms of worship.' According to Zimmer (1969), 'Tantra may have its roots in the non-Aryan, pre-Aryan, Dravidian soil.' Thapar (1966) takes a similar view, adding that 'the emphasis on *shakti* and the mother-goddess would suggest that Tantricism was rooted in pre-Aryan culture, which is not unlikely considering that it originated in essentially non-Aryan areas.' In all three of these examples one can notice a tentative tone. In the school text, we are faced with total certainty, of how a cult 'arose' and 'spread'. The use of verbs like 'arose' and 'adopt' suggest a theory of contact between the 'brahmanical society' and the 'tribal' or 'aboriginal' peoples.

Another problematic feature of the text is its use of labels such as 'aboriginal' and 'tribal'. These terms are now commonly used in India to refer to a large category of the Indian population which is the object of the state's policy of protective discrimination. 'Tribal' is used this way all the time, to refer to the Scheduled Tribes. Many different types of communities are lumped together in this usage of 'tribal'. This is no doubt an imprecise usage, 'but it is in the ethos of such usage that the historian and the history teacher have to work.

When they use a term like 'tribal', it readily becomes associated with the common contemporary usage. The imprecise label becomes a very precise indicator of identity in a contemporary Indian classroom which has one or two students of the Scheduled Tribes category.

Meaning is generated in the course of interaction, and whoever has the power to name or assign labels is able to determine the meaning of an interaction.' Pedagogical interactions, between teacher and pupils, are mediated by texts representing the authorised version of the knowledge which the school is in charge of disseminating. The text is involved in assigning significance, but it is the teacher who ultimately shapes the meaning of a text and of the knowledge it contains. The text assigns significance by selecting some out of all the information available on a topic; the teacher uses the text to control the social distribution of knowledge. The teacher does this by exercising her power to 'approve' or 'disapprove' students' responses to the text. In order to shape classroom interaction, the teacher has to interpret the text in a certain way. With an interpretation in hand, and on the basis of pedagogical norms such as question-answering, she determines who has and who has not 'learnt' the appropriate interpretation of the knowledge which the school has to offer. This is how the distribution of approval becomes an aspect of 'what is there to be learnt'.

The teacher's power to distribute approval is hardly her own; it comes from the school's claim to be in charge of distributing legitimate knowledge. In the Indian system the teacher has far less power than in many Western systems of education in the matter of structuring knowledge, even in structuring the daily routine. The Indian teacher has no power to choose the text for pupils to read in the class or afterwards. But this does not mitigate her power to assign labels of 'approval' and 'disapproval', 'success' and 'failure', and thereby to determine the meaning of a pedagogical interaction. In the interaction reported earlier, the teacher uses her power to place the ST boy in a situation where he acknowledges ignorance. By remaining silent he indicates no denial of the validity of knowledge he is being offered. The teacher's articulations represent the assertion of her knowledge, which is based on the prescribed textbook, as valid

learning. It is also an assertion of her power to make students accept the knowledge she is offering along with her interpretation of it. By staying silent, the ST boy expresses his ignorance, and thereby avoids coming into conflict with the teacher's authority. The teacher's authority thus vindicated merely proves to the ST boy and to the rest of the class that he has failed to learn the appropriate knowledge.

Teacher-questioning and pupil-answering are routine pedagogical norms. The opposite, namely pupil-questioning and teacher-answering, also takes place but not so frequently. When students do ask a question, it is mainly in order to seek clarification. A student-question which points towards new dimensions of the topic at hand is an extremely rare event. A question challenging the authorised version of knowledge is unheard of. Who has the right to ask questions and whose role it is to answer them, and what kinds of questions are supposed to be asked by whom, are related to the total cultural context of a society and to the conceptualisation of curriculum prevailing in its education system. Family norms in India do not encourage children to ask questions. Studies of adult-child interaction in Indian family settings indicate that questioning, criticism, and independent decision-making are not among approved and encouraged behaviours among children and youth (Narain 1964). Questioning someone older than oneself, such as a teacher, is certainly not an approved behaviour; it is perceived as an expression of one's disrespect for the adult's nurturant authority. On the other hand, answering a question asked by the adult in authority is the proper behaviour expected of a younger person, especially answering it in a manner expected by the adult. In the school context, these norms are further enhanced by the 'fixed' nature of the syllabus and by the popular notion that the textbook is the de facto syllabus. Textbooks are not just recommended in the Indian system; they are 'prescribed'. The prescribed textbook is the only resource available in most classrooms since children are required to purchase it themselves. Moreover, assessment of students by means of a test or the annual examination is based on their mastery over the content of the textbook.

The history teacher whose questions we have looked at was following the well-established norm of checking whether the students in her class had learnt the link between 'tantricism' and 'tribalism'. The norm places no significance on the students' social background. This indifference towards students' backgrounds is characteristic of the overall conceptualisation of the curriculum as a body of 'received' knowledge, a logical packaging of facts. How knowledge relates to a student's identity has no place in this conceptualisation. In the case of our history lesson, it is pure coincidence that the question focusing on the link between tribal influence and tantric cults was posed to a tribal boy. Whether the question is valid, in terms of accuracy of historical information reflected in it, is an irrelevant issue here. What is of interest is to note that the ST student's options in the face of the question he has been asked are not real options in terms of his existence as a member of a recognised tribal group. If he answers the question by repeating what the teacher has told the class, he will acknowledge in an articulate manner that tribal groups are the source of those characteristics of Indian society which have already been identified (by S2 for instance) in the class as symbols of backwardness, such as belief in magic and superstition. Taking the other option, if he says nothing, he would show that he has not learnt well enough to reproduce what has been taught only a few minutes ago, and that he is indeed a backward student of this class. In other words, his 'success' as a student of a history lesson would prove his backwardness as a member of a group, and his 'failure' as a student would testify to his backwardness as a student. There is no escaping the label of backwardness. As a social institution, the school has set up a situation in which the tribal will acquire responses that match his description in society as a member of a 'backward' community.

## WHAT IS WORTH KNOWING

The tribal boy's experience has its 'roots' in the problem of curriculum construction. More specifically his learning experience is shaped by the manner in which knowledge; in this case historical knowledge is selected and represented in the prescribed text and the curriculum. The rest of this chapter looks at this issue with special reference to students belonging to oppressed social groups, such as the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. The problem we are going to discuss is not even recognised by educators who are accustomed to regarding curricular knowledge as 'a received body of' understanding that is "given" (Eggleston 1977). Our analysis of the tribal boy's experience indicates that the curriculum is not just a logical packaging of facts, but rather, a reorganisation of available knowledge from a certain perspective. The history lesson could have meant something rather different to the tribal student if the text, on

which the lesson was based, had been written from the perspective of tribal people.

We can distinguish between two aspects of the process of reorganisation of knowledge in the curriculum; selection and representative Selection involves choice of data, and representation primarily involves the choice of perspective. The body of available 'knowledge under any subject is vast. What is offered at school, and therefore gets associated with education is reconstruction which is based on selection made under given social circumstances. What kinds of knowledge become available at schools for distribution has to do with the overall classification of knowledge and power in society. Schools equip individuals with knowledge and skills that are appropriate for the tasks generated by the economy and supported by politics and culture. Schools are able to supply such individuals with the help of appropriate reconstruction of knowledge.

Gandhi's proposal for 'basic education' presents a significant example of the influence of the sociology of knowledge v/ on the school curriculum. An important aspect of his proposal was the introduction of productive crafts and skills. In functional terms, the idea was to relate the school to the processes of production in the local milieu, with the aim of making the school itself a productive institution. In symbolic term, by proposing the introduction of productive skills and the knowledge associated with them in the curriculum, Gandhi was advocating the allocation of a substantive place in education to systems of knowledge developed by, and associated with, the oppressed groups of Indian society, including what are now called the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For centuries, education had been denied to these groups, and the knowledge systems associated with them had been denied the label of 'knowledge'. Basic education was proposing a subtle plan to carve room within the edifice of school knowledge for the knowledge and skills monopolised by the lower castes. Effective implementation of basic education could have rocked the prevailing hierarchy of the different monopolies of knowledge in our caste society.

Apart from the selection of appropriate forms of knowledge, school systems also face the problem of representing knowledge through appropriate symbols. Finding a language (e.g., vocabulary and images) to represent the data is of course a major challenge involved in the translation of knowledge into curriculum, but the more immediate and crucial question, is: 'From whose perspective will the data be presented?' A. perspective represents not one person, but a structure of interests which include behavioural traits, styles of thought and the overall worldview. All of these ingredients form a structure of interests of social groups seeking dissemination and perpetuation of their culture through education. The extent to which the curriculum will reflect the structure of interests of different social groups will depend on the nature of relationships among the groups. Those enjoying power over others are likely to get a larger share of curricular representation; groups that lack power may either get only token representation or none at all.

If an examination of the curriculum and textual materials were to be made from the viewpoint of the Scheduled Tribes, it could provide answers to the following questions:

Are the ST represented:

Does the number (of lessons relating to tribal life correspond to the proportion of ST in the population?)

Which symbols are chosen to represent the ST?

The study reported in the first chapter revealed that only two out of a total of 41 story lessons included in the *Bal Bharati* series used in Madhya Pradesh had central character whose background could be identified as tribal, and no story had a central character identifiable as a Scheduled Caste. Taken together the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes comprise one-third of the population of Madhya Pradesh. Clearly, the representation of the two groups in the texts used in the teaching of Hindi was not proportionate to their physical presence in the ethos of Madhya Pradesh. More recently, I tried to ascertain the presence of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the entire school curriculum from grade one to eight as represented in the textbooks prescribed in Madhya Pradesh. This attempt showed that in all there are seven lessons and a handful of pictures that register the presence of these two groups. This count excluded the representation of tribal groups in the grade three textbook of district geography which is different for each district. But the total number apart, the presence of the Scheduled Tribes in geography texts is strictly a token which invariably consists of a brief listing of the special customs and habits of the local tribes, and a picture of their ritual dance. The geographical knowledge imparted through these texts is unmistakably based on, and oriented towards forming, a stereotype.

Let us examine the symbolic structure of the two story lessons in the Hindi textbooks which have a tribal character in the central role. One of these is the famous Puranic myth of Eklavya, the Bhil youth who has to sacrifice his thumb to satisfy a Brahmin whom he regards as his teacher. The teacher requires this sacrifice to allay the jealousy that his princely disciples feel towards Eklavya for his self-acquired skill in archery<sup>1</sup>. The myth resolves the symbolic clash of caste backgrounds by upholding a pedagogical ideal: the pupil's obedience. In the other story, a tribal boy of Bastar saves a forest officer and a brigadier from being killed by a wild buffalo. The boy's courage and bravery are shown in a context in which an army officer acts as the audience and 'certifier'. In the structure of symbolically portrayed relationships in both stories, tribal boys depend on members of the dominant groups of non-tribal society for legitimating of their achievements.

The implication that can be drawn from the study is that the Scheduled Tribes are unlikely candidates for central characters in stories that are included in textbooks. If we consider materials prescribed for use in the curriculum as microcosms of society, then the SC and ST must be described as people who are invisible in the microcosms. On the few occasions when they do find a place in a prescribed text, they are likely to be depicted in compromising positions or as objects of patronage. In a lesson given in an elementary level Rajasthan textbook of civics, the teacher tells the class about a harijan boy named Chandu, 'Look, how neat and clean Chandu appears today. We should not hate him.'

The paucity of SC and ST symbols in the prescribed curriculum materials indicates the status of such symbols in the culture of schools which itself is a reorganised version of the cultural forms prevalent in society. The reorganisation involves selection and elimination of forms—including forms of knowledge and human behaviour. As Apple (1980) says, 'the curriculum in schools responds to and represents ideological and cultural resources that come from somewhere. Not all groups' visions are represented and not all groups' meanings are responded to.' The groups whose visions and meanings 'are represented in the curriculum and text materials prescribed in India are the dominant groups in society. The visions and meanings held by the oppressed groups are cited as examples of backwardness and obstacles to progress. This tendency finds its sharpest expression in the materials prepared for imparting literacy to adults/ One finds its more subtle expression in school literature, as in the story 'Price of Eyes' which we looked at earlier.

Curricular representation of symbols relating to different social groups is a significant index of the value attached to these groups in the cultural configuration that education helps to form and to transmit. A curriculum can be regarded as a cultural form 'like house architecture, etiquette the design of roadways, or modes of civic participation (Andersen 1976). A curriculum which does not represent cultural data of all social groups in a proportionate manner can act as a means of aggression on groups whose data are excluded or which are poorly represented. The children of such groups are forced to identify with the symbols of dominant groups, and thereby have to perceive themselves as backward. The educational experience which is supposed to ameliorate the life of the SC and ST becomes a means of training the younger members of these groups to internalise their subservient position in society. It is true, of course, that whatever its content, education does assist individuals among the SC and ST to qualify for jobs traditionally inaccessible to them. It is also true that the success of such individuals can act as a source of inspiration for other individuals in these groups. Yet, for the majority of SC and ST children, the education available today is a discouraging and demeaning experience. This majority does not survive in the system long enough to qualify for status jobs reserved for them,

We can distinguish between two main strategies that can change in curricular policy. These two strategies are not mutually exclusive even though they reflect two different ideological viewpoints towards the representation of socially oppressed groups in the curriculum. The first strategy is to develop a separate curriculum and textbooks for students from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe backgrounds; the second is to reorganise the common curriculum so that it becomes more truthfully representative of a society which includes the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Support for the first strategy can be found in the point raised by several researchers that the curriculum content and the textbooks are unsuitable for tribal children (Srivastava et al. 1971; Ratnaiah 1977). For the second strategy one does not find much support in the literature. This is rather surprising in view of the fact that researchers do acknowledge the difficulties a separate curriculum would create for the tribal students who want to proceed to higher education. The actual policy in some cases has settled on the middle path—the usual curriculum and texts served in the tribal language.

The problem lies in how we perceive 'relevance', the belief that the inclusion of a few lessons pertaining to tribal cultures will make the common textbooks and curricula more 'relevant' to tribal children is based on a rather narrow view of 'relevance'. The worst weakness of the prevailing texts and curricula is not that they have no relevance for tribal children, but rather that they provide a distorted view of society to all children. A curriculum which has no respect or room for the tribal world-view cannot be described as 'relevant' for anyone in a society which includes a sizeable population of tribes. Such a curriculum makes a false representation of social reality. It cannot suddenly gain relevance for tribal children by having a few lessons about tribal life thrown in. The problems of tribal children cannot be solved by changing their vision, even if it were possible to do so with the aid of a handful of references, and allowing the vision of the rest of the children to remain what it is today.

What is needed is a change in the concept of worthwhile knowledge entrenched in the education system. If curricular reform permits 'worthwhile knowledge' to remain linked with the visions and lifestyle of powerful groups, and merely puts in a few stories about tribal life in order to satisfy tribal children, such a step cannot go very far. Far from changing education towards making it more relevant to social reality, it cannot be expected even to make classroom life more dynamic. It will leave untouched the behaviours we encountered in the history lesson about ancient India. For the non-tribal students, the lesson was simply another bit of 'received' knowledge; for the tribal student, it was another step towards the loss of self-respect. The lesson could not possibly be made dynamic unless the text on which it was based was written in view of the wider social reality as it impinges upon India's present-day children.

Finally, curricular reform cannot be a self-enclosed and isolated strategy. Change in the curriculum would remain incomplete, and largely ineffective, unless patterns of teacher-, student interaction move towards greater understanding of, backgrounds such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The knowledge of social reality, particularly knowledge related to the social structures of domination that teachers bring to the classroom and their perception of the role of education with reference to these structures, are the main determinants of teachers' behaviour. Far too many teachers believe in cultural and behavioural explanations of poverty and backwardness. They use these explanations to make sense of the classroom behaviour of students from oppressed social groups. What is worse, they relate to these students in ways that accentuate precisely the behaviours which teachers regard as 'typical' of students from 'backward' backgrounds. This vicious cycle of the teacher's role is by no means confined to India. The fact remains, however, that Indian teacher training does little to counter this entrenched role. Knowledge of social reality, and of the role of education under prevailing social conditions form an insignificant part of training curricula. Like much else in the theory part of the training course, this knowledge is conveyed in ways that are appropriate only to facilitate reproduction at the examination, and certainly not to encourage the trainee to think critically about social structures and education. Teachers cannot be oriented towards new types of classroom interaction and sensitivity towards students from oppressed social backgrounds without being exposed to specific issues of social reality and the functioning of the school system in relation to the social reality.

To conclude, my argument in this chapter has been that the experience of education, under prevailing curricular and instructional norms, can serve to assist the students who come from so-called 'backward' backgrounds to internalise symbols of 'backward' behaviour. The analysis presented in the first half of this chapter shows the role that educational texts can play in this process. This analysis should suffice to show why a claim commonly made in the literature on the education of oppressed social groups in India is a spurious one (see, for example, Chitnis 1981; Isaacs 1965; Patwardhan 1973). The claim is that education introduces bourgeois values among the oppressed, and thereby curbs their potential for radical expression. This view is based on the impact of education on an extremely small minority of students from oppressed backgrounds. Only a handful of students from backgrounds such as the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes manage to survive through the primary school years, and then move through the secondary school and college to qualify for 'bourgeois' jobs. In a society where bourgeois values have high prestige, the acceptance of such values by a minuscule number of 'successful' individuals from oppressed social backgrounds can hardly be used as a ground for berating the role of education in curbing radical social change. What we ought to be worried about is not the fate of the tiny minority of 'backward' students who become 'middle class', but that of the vast numbers of students who are eliminated by the school system with the help of external or covert instruments long before the carrot of a middle class

job can appear before them, and whose brief and demeaning educational experience merely proves to them that they are what they were alleged to be.

#### 4. Image of the Illiterate Learner

THE study presented in this chapter concerns adult education texts, such as the primers used in literacy classes. A typical literacy primer tells the learners how a poor peasant gradually became prosperous by making certain rational decisions, such as the decision to plan his family and to start a new method of cultivation. The gist of such narratives is that a man can change his economic condition by dropping a set of backward and disabling characteristics, and adopting an alternative set of characteristics that are modern and healthy. The areas covered by typical literacy curriculum follow a certain mythology. A planned nuclear family, mother-craft, sanitation, balanced diet, a positive attitude towards bureaucratic services and increased production in agriculture are some of the recurring themes of this mythology. The emphasis everywhere is on a rational and balanced view overriding all worries, fears, compulsions and needs. The cool-headed, rational and pragmatic learner projected in literacy primers is supposed to plan all aspects of his life. He sees all his problems as the outcome of a disorganised, unthinking, ignorant personality whose salvation lies in new knowledge and skills (including literacy), planning and self-control.

The origins of this mythology, and of the learner's image that it entails, lie in the programme of community development launched in the first decade of Independence. But the literacy materials we find today are not the same as those used in the fifties. Text designing for adult education went through a subtle maturation process during the seventies. The study presented below concerns this period. It was a time of significant growth of interest in adult education all over the Third World. The factors responsible for this growth are to be found in the economic and political developments that took place in several Third World countries during this time. But one reason why adult education suddenly gained in academic respect must be seen in the publication of Paulo Freire's writings. Never before had adult literacy been perceived with so much rigour of social and philosophical analysis. Nor had it ever been discussed with such precision and richness of implication for political action.

Freire's books made it dear that text preparation for literacy work was an exercise of both social science and ideology. He devised a method of discovering 'generative' themes on the basis of an interdisciplinary study of an area, and of then 'coding' these themes into words and drawings. Like earlier theorists of literacy education, Freire recommended the selection of words on the basis of their thematic value. But he emphasised that the words, narratives and pictures must interpret the world surrounding the literacy learners from *their* perspective. The crucial difference between him and earlier theorists of adult education lay in his argument that literacy programmes can succeed only when they represent partisanship against oppression because mass illiteracy was a product of oppression. It was in this argument that Freire's attraction for hundreds of social action groups throughout the world lay. The same argument, however, might be held responsible for triggering the urgency to co-opt Freire. How one big international agency involved in adult education responded to this urgency is the specific theme of this chapter. But let us first examine the decade of the seventies, particularly the economic developments that impinged on non-formal adult education, in some detail. Also, before looking into the curricula and texts that projected the co-opted Freirean theory and method, we will briefly discuss this theory.

#### DECADE OF THE PEASANT

Until the sixties, non-formal education operated on the margins of developmental activity, with little financial support and with weak links with economic projects. It usually catered to a small section of Third World societies, such as the relatively well-off farmers who attended agricultural extension programmes. As Mbilinyi (1977) has shown there was no material basis for extending education to the majority of citizens:

There was no basic economic or political need for expansion of the primary education base, since 'super-exploitation' was possible without investment in or fundamental attention to either raising the level of productive forces within

agricultural production or to fitting ideologically the peasants and workers to their place in production (p. 498).

In the late sixties, the demand for increasing food production in the Third World was heavily emphasised by international development agencies and the rich, industrialised countries. During this period, a concomitant demand was made on non-formal education to provide the training required for the new technology of food production which was publicised under the Green Revolution. In 1965, UNESCO and UNDP launched the Experimental World Literacy Programme with the aim of increasing rural productivity by combining literacy instruction with vocational training in technology-dependent agricultural practices (UNESCO 1976). This programme was essentially aimed at the creation of a qualified work force, and for this aim, areas of potential economic growth and the people who would have the resources for increasing production were chosen (Berggren 1975). The UNESCO programme coincided with, and -in many cases provided educational support, for the Green Revolution.

By the end of the sixties, the traditional structures of rural society in the Third World countries and the impact of the Green Revolution' had combined to create a disturbing situation. In order to safeguard the interests of multinational corporations and the Third World elites, it was necessary to contain social discontent. *The* strategy designed by some major International] funding agencies was a modified Green Revolution—an attempt to extend the same technology, in a modified form, to the small-scale peasant, along with credit and other government services (Feder 1976). Land reforms and other structural changes were, once again, absent from the planners' considerations. The basic aim was to incorporate the peasant into the new production system. Under the banner of 'participation' in development, he was to be drawn away from any form of political participation which could ultimately prove harmful to the status quo.

The small-scale peasant, who had so far been excluded from most rural educational provisions and agricultural development programmes, now became the target of developmental planning and 'integrated' packages of patronage. Non-formal education was to play an important role in this strategy as the training and socialising mechanism to create the new 'peasant capitalist'. This was no narrow economic programme like the earlier work-oriented literacy programme launched by UNESCO. The purpose of the new programme was to cover all those aspects of a peasant's life that could facilitate his initiation into a consumer economy; aspects such as agriculture, health, sanitation, nutrition, fertility, and small-scale entrepreneurship. Massive amounts of money were spent by international financial institutions to investigate the potential of non-formal education which now became fashionable developmental activity.

### FREIREAN CHALLENGE

During this period, when the new aims of non-formal education were being formulated, the educational philosophy and practice of Paulo Freire became widely known through the English translations of his writings. Freire had developed and tested his ideas in Brazil and Chile within the context of peasants' and workers' struggles for land-ownership, better working and living conditions, and political rights. In his writings, he presented mass illiteracy as a structural problem caused by oppression of the masses by the powerful classes in society. According to him; the problem could be solved only by breaking the oppressive structure. His work inspired many progressive groups throughout the world to use educational communication as a tool in struggles against oppression. Hal also attracted the attention of those agencies that were developing an educational methodology for the incorporation of the small peasant into the consumer economy under the auspices of the new 'integrated' packages of development. These agencies found in Freire's terminology a progressive gloss which could make their approach marketable in the Third World. By co-opting Freire's terminology and concepts, they could hope to influence the direction of political change in the Third World. The educational theory which grew out of the co-optation and distortion of Freire *is* referred to below as the 'pseudo-Freirean perspective'.

The pseudo-Freirean perspective operates in adult education through the following steps:

- labelling the central problem as 'poverty' rather than 'oppression';
- identifying the cause of poverty as the self-inflicted deficiency of the poor, rather than oppression;
- proposing, as treatment, † to change the behaviour of the poor through transmission of information and skills;

- converting Freire's method into a 'neutral' classroom technique without 'politics'; and
- defining 'action' as coping activity.

The choice of 'poverty' in place of 'oppression' is significant, since 'oppression' leaves no doubt about the cause or nature of the problem whereas 'poverty' is ambiguous and suggests many possibilities. Oppression is an aspect of exploitation in an economic and social relationship. This connotation is not necessarily present when we talk about poverty. This shift in terminology can be attributed to a theoretical basis. The pseudo-Freirean theory seems to be based on the concept of a 'culture of poverty'—the view that the poor have a distinctive set of self-inflicted habits and characteristics which explain their poverty and prevent them from improving their situation (see Valentine 1968; Rayan 1971). For example, in stating the aim of a literacy project as 'helping the learner to become critically aware of the reasons for his poverty and his backwardness' (Mehta 1978), one juxtaposes 'poverty' and 'backwardness', suggesting that it is the same learner who is poor as well as backward. The reasoning behind this suggestion can be seen quite clearly in this explanation of poverty by Mezirow (1972):

... peasant cultures are commonly characterized as lacking innovativeness, being fatalistic, seldom deferring present gratification for future advantages, and holding a limited view of the world. People in such cultures tend to believe that all the desirable things in life are in fixed supply, so that if someone accumulates an abnormally large share of good things it is at someone else's expense. This philosophy helps explain the mutual distrust in interpersonal relations, the low degree of empathy, and the limited aspirations one often encounters in traditional societies. This itemisation of putative defects and negative characteristics of the poor, as an explanation of their poverty, finds scientific justification in the writings related to the modernisation theory which cited lack of achievement-motivation, failure to conceptualise progress and unwillingness to take risks as explanations for underdevelopment and poverty.

One means of treating Freire's concept of 'culture of silence' as 'culture of poverty' is by misinterpreting Freire's use of terms like 'native consciousness', 'fatalism', 'superstition', and 'naivety'. By using these terms in an everyday sense and without establishing a relationship between these terms and oppression, pseudo-Freireans are able to justify their own view of poverty as self-inflicted phenomena. Such a view distracts attention from what the dominant classes are doing to the poor, focusing instead on what the poor are doing to themselves. Indeed, Freire describes the oppressed as 'naive', 'superstitious', 'fatalistic', etc, but he never suggests that these are self-inflicted characteristics or that the culture of silence is a self-generated phenomenon. What he means is that the oppressed are unable to objectify themselves in relation to the dominant classes, and they accept the oppressors' view of themselves. 'The only way to understand the culture of silence', Freire says, 'is to see it as a totality that is itself part of a larger complex .... it is not something born by spontaneous generation on the spot. Rather, it arises from the interrelations of the Third World and the metropolis' (Freire 1975). Thus, the 'culture of silence' is inextricably linked to and defined by the dominant word of the oppressor. The 'naivety' of the oppressed is linked to their being an object of oppression. The 'culture of silence' is not an isolated, independent culture with its own internal dynamics. It exists in relation to the dominant culture by which it is defined.

The 'culture of poverty' theory helps us comprehend how another popular Freirean term, 'critical consciousness' is used in pseudo-Freirean literature. If the operative source of poverty is to be found among the poor themselves, then the remedy must come from the same source. Thus, the pseudo-Freirean perspective suggests that poverty can be overcome by changing the poor, by helping them develop better habits and skills, rather than by fit change in the social structure. Freire says,

Lacking structural perception, men attribute the sources of their situation to something within themselves rather than to something in objective reality' (1974).

When pseudo-Freireans talk about 'critical consciousness', they mean an awareness in the poor of their needs and the information that is available in order to fulfil these needs. The social problems that cause oppression, such as low wages, unequal access to land, water and education, are ignored. The strategy is to manipulate the consciousness of the oppressed, thereby perpetuating and reinforcing the dependence of the oppressed on external definers of their consciousness. This is precisely what domestication is.

La Belle (1976) makes a useful distinction between this 'deprivation-development' strategy for social change and Freire's 'dependency-liberalism' strategy. The former is based on a psychological view of disadvantage (deprivation) and prescribes behaviour modification (development) as the solution. The latter explains disadvantage as the result of structural inequalities that create dependency and proposes to increase the power of the oppressed (liberation) as a solution. The *deprivation-development* strategy is the crux of the pseudo-Freirean argument. It provides a route out of the liberal dilemma of how to handle Freire's politics. By suggesting that poverty is self-inflicted and not a product of oppression, that the major problem is lack of skills rather than structural constraints, the pseudo-Freireans succeed in bypassing the political aspect of Freire. They are able to accommodate him within the liberal-humanist model of adult education. They create the impression that Freire is simply another in the tradition of technique-innovators. They recognise the authoritarian nature of traditional teaching, and consider Freire as yet another classroom-methodologist who can help the adult educator shed some of the authoritarianism of his traditional role. The pseudo-Freireans accept Freire's criticism of 'banking' education, and appear to use his concept of 'dialogue', but they apply this term interchangeably with 'discussion'. They claim to have 'adapted and adopted' such conscientisation techniques as the use of pictures to represent life situations and the use of generative themes. It is precisely through such 'adaptation and adoption' that Freire's codes of unemployment, hunger, oppression, and liberation could be translated into developmentalist modules of family planning, nutrition, sanitation and modern agriculture. Evidently, Freire provided a revolutionary sheen to several development projects of the seventies and his revolutionary associations supplied a smokescreen for the real intent of non-formal education which was to legitimise existing social relations in the Third World and between the Third and the First Worlds,

Pseudo-Freirean pedagogy converts dialogue into a search for the 'right' answers, predetermined by the programme planner and provided to the teacher, normally through a teacher's guide. In effect, dialogue thus becomes a subtle form of 'banking', a means of propagating the new myths of development. In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) had anticipated this dilution of 'dialogue' into an instrument for domestication: 'Without this faith in man dialogue is a farce which inevitably degenerates into paternalistic manipulation.' Authentic dialogue is possible only when people are trusted and given the chance to ask their own questions and make their own decisions. Indeed, pseudo-Freireans appear to be doing something similar, but the methods they apply show that what happens in their projects is quite different.

For Freire, authentic dialogue must lead to action which is then analysed and evaluated before further action. This process of action and reflection is what Freire calls 'praxis'.

Action is not just any action; it involves collective struggle to challenge (the existing social relations which determine some of the basic components of social life, such as, access to land, water, housing and income. In several pseudo-Freirean programmes where the idea of collective action is cultivated, collective potential is channelled towards pre-planned economic projects like chicken or vegetable farming, and no attempt is made to challenge the inequities in the economic and power structure. The assumption behind such programmes is obviously the view that low production rather than unjust social structure is the problem, i.e., only if the poor would produce more would they be better off.'

### PSEUDO-FREIREAN CURRICULA AND TEXTS — A CASE STUDY

With this theoretical framework of pseudo-Freirean pedagogy, we can now proceed to a case study of a major non-formal adult education agency operating in the Third World, namely, World Education. The main reason for the selection of this agency as a case was the scale of its coverage. It supported projects in 50 countries, and its publications were circulated in 138 countries. A second reason was that the period of most rapid growth in World Education's life of 28 years synchronises with the period in which pseudo-Freirean pedagogy developed, i.e., the seventies. World Education was established in 1951 under the name World Literacy Inc., mainly to assist Literacy House (then Literacy Village) in Uttar Pradesh. Literacy House was started in 1952 by Mrs Welthy H. Fisher, an American Presbyterian missionary. World Education's initial area of operation was confined to India, and Literacy House remained its field laboratory for a long time.

World Education's first major project outside India was in Thailand where it developed the prototype for the National Adult Literacy Programme. The methodology developed in this project was later transported to Turkey, Ethiopia, Kenya and Bangladesh, as well as to World Education's home country, the United States, under the project called 'AIM: An Exemplary Program for International Experience' (AIM stands for Apperception-Interaction Method). World Education's area of operation corresponds to the American sphere of influence. The major countries it has served during the period of our study are Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, India and Turkey in Asia; Columbia, Honduras and Guatemala in Latin America; Ghana, Kenya and Ethiopia in Africa,

Rapid and expansive growth in World Education's activities took place in 1968 after it submitted proposals seeking funds for 'linking literacy programmes and family planning education'. According to World Education's President, the aims of this programme were two-fold: (i) to attack the problems of resistance to family planning arising from tradition, religion, superstition, fear, ignorance, and economic concern, and (ii) to develop non-formal functional education programmes directed toward out-of-school young adults with the lowest literacy levels, where the needs are greatest (Keehn 1972).

The proposals were accepted, and in the next five years, from 1969 to 1974, World Education revenue increased five-fold. The project which enabled World Education to increase its revenue, staff and area of operations so remarkably was called 'Functional Education for Family Life Planning', and this programme provided the organisation with its new and overall identity in the Third World.

Like many other non-formal adult education agencies, World Education's work over the decade of the seventies carried a distinct stamp of the ideas and terminology associated with Paulo Freire. The organisation's Annual Report for 1976-77 proudly declared this lineage:

Provocative challenges to traditional assumptions about adult learning have been born and nurtured in Latin America, Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, and others have produced a new generation of educators who know from their own experience that peasants and the urban poor are both learners and teachers . . . . We find enthusiastic response among these young educators to our understanding of the partnership between learners and teachers in a dynamic educational process.

In a monograph which outlines the programme design for the Functional Education for Family Life Planning, Harman (1973) points at Freire's distinction between 'banking' education and the new, dialogue-based pedagogy professed in the monograph. Allusions to Freirean ideas are to be found all over the literacy materials and reports produced by or associated with World Education as the discussion of some of these materials will presently show. :

The functional literacy programme in Thailand, which started in 1970, offers a key example of World Education's curriculum planning. As active collaborators with the Thai Ministry of Education, World Education's personnel made a major attempt in Thailand to modernise a conservative adult education programme by offering their technical expertise and progressive terminology. The curriculum was developed on the basis of a survey of people's beliefs, habits, living conditions, needs and language patterns. People's problems were identified during the survey, and the final curriculum was supposed to reflect these problems. Such a survey smacks of Freire's strategy to send project members to the villages in order to obtain a participant's view of the oppressive conditions in which villagers live. The Thai surveys were similar to Freire's strategy only in a superficial way as we can easily see if we notice the stated purpose of these surveys in the ministry documents:

The ultimate goal of the Thai concept-oriented program of functional literacy and family life education is to improve the living conditions of the people in the rural areas by attempting to correct misconceptions and to change the outmoded behaviours.

The assumption in this statement is clearly what we have earlier shown as the pseudo-Freirean theory of the culture of poverty. Placed in the light of this assumption, the baseline survey of people's needs and problems becomes sham. It is only logical that people are described as the 'target populations' in such surveys: indeed, people *are* targets of manipulation in the Thai curriculum.

The Thai curriculum illustrates the range and the nature of people's 'problematic' behaviour which is the target of change under literacy teaching. Four main areas comprise the first level curriculum; agriculture, health and family life, economics and civics. The economic and political aspects of the material conditions of Thai people are totally ignored, whereas the need for cleanliness, budgeting, and obedience to official advice are emphasised. Clearly, the curriculum is not meant to deal with structural problems. Its purpose is to develop acceptance of the status quo. It is significant that the central symbol of the Thai programme was a Buddhist figure of achievement, the Khit-phen man who behaves rationally and with contentment under all circumstances and accepts suffering in the name of avoiding useless striving:

Suppose one is imprisoned for a certain period of time, after having explored and tried all the possible ways of getting out and failed, a 'Khit Phen' man will try to live as happily as he possibly can in that situation until an opportunity to get out arises again (Benhatt and Vorapipatana 1975).

The Thai curriculum had several of the fundamental features of the pseudo-Freirean mode of operation. In its technicist concern, it was perhaps more sophisticated than any other similar programme in the world. The use of loose-leaf covers and cards in place of the traditional primer merely disguised the real, orthodox nature of the programme.

The images used in the literacy materials developed with the help of World Education experts in Thailand and Turkey, and in the primers of Literacy House, symbolise existential reality in a highly artificial manner, totally removed from the material conditions of people's life in these countries. The crucial problems and challenges facing the people seem to undergo a process of deft concealment and disjunction through their presentation in the materials. The structural relationships of economic classes are never depicted. Instead, one finds a collection of selective images of life, in an unspecified economic setting, along with a didactic text. Objects that can provoke any dialectical understanding, such as the contrast between the rich and the poor, are simply removed from pictures and the text; and the symptoms (e.g., lack of sanitation) rather than the causes (e.g., economic exploitation) of problems are attacked. The overall image of society that is projected in the primers is that of harmony and cooperation, rather than of the actual conflicts and divisions,

Pseudo-Freireans follow Freire in calling the key problems they attack in the materials as 'generative themes' or 'codes', terms that World Education theorists Harman (1973) acknowledges to have come in their current usage from Freire's work. The themes that Freire calls generative should 'contain the possibility of unfolding into again as many themes, which in their turn call for new tasks to be fulfilled.' The themes we see in the literacy primers, on the contrary, are one-dimensional and flat, incapable of leading the learner to a better understanding of the structural context of his oppression through associative thinking. In fact, they come across as a set of slogans which victimise the learners by making them feel inadequate, and thereby reinforcing their dependence. *Aao Charcha Karen*, a literacy primer published by Literacy House with a circulation of over half a million copies during the seventies, offers some good examples of the treatment given in several other primers to common Third World situations. The key to happiness, according to this book, lies in family planning through birth control:

How lucky are the people who are born in small families. They have no dearth of anything. They face no problems. All the means of pleasure and comfort are within their reach. Life is heaven for them.

The philosophy that it is lucky to be born in a small family is parallel to the messages given in this book on other common problems:

Eating just rice has a bad effect on health. Eat eggs to make up for protein deficiency. Crowds are increasing because of increase in population.

Everywhere, the so-called 'problem-centred' lessons of the primer subtly try to divert the learner's attention away from the economic and political causes of social and personal problems. The sentence about rice-eating does not show why so many people in India are forced to eat only rice; it presents them as people who have a bad habit grown out of ignorance. The sentence about protein deficiency does not allow people to question why an age-old source of protein in Indian diet, lentil, has become scarce and expensive, and its per capita availability has declined in the post-Green Revolution period. The Indian literacy learner is simply being asked to switch from lentils to eggs (see Lappe and Collins 1979).

The pseudo-Freirean view of knowledge consists of right and wrong answers. The 'correct' answer is predetermined by the planner, and "packaged" in the primer and other materials. The teacher's job is simply to dispense the pre-packaged knowledge. While he must be prepared with the 'correct' answers to anticipated questions, he must also maintain an air of exploratory participation in the group discussion. Pseudo-Freirean programme planners insist on calling their strategy 'dialogue', but the practices they recommend in the teacher-guides are indistinguishable from 'banking'. Freire has warned against using the codes as bureaucratic formulas. The pseudo-Freirean practice is not only in glaring contrast to Freire, but also to their own theorists:

... the essence of education is that it does not drive people to accept predetermined ends but, instead, fosters the initiative for them to participate intelligently in the choice of ends. Educators do not set out to convince, persuade, or engineer consent. This is the realm of propagandists. Rather, educators help people to become more aware, to understand more clearly, to decide more rationally whether or not to adopt birth control practice (Mezirow 1972: 2).

This statement seems like mere rhetoric if we examine the Thai programme in which Mezirow played an important role. The correct answer in most of the basic lessons of this programme could only consist of one word that was to be filled in by the learner.

The irony of the teacher's behaviour in a pseudo-Freirean programme comes out most visibly in the Turkish programme where a dramatic representation is implanted in narratives to be read aloud. The purpose of this representation is to make class discussion truly 'live'. The narratives start with a conversation about a problem; enlightening information is offered in the middle, and the end presents a resolution. The dogmatic nature of the dialogue cannot be mistaken:

Doctor Ayhan Tezel (to Ali Dede): I like your village very much. Maybe the reason for this is that I am a villager myself. Your village is very poor. But it is sweet and charming. Poverty may also be overcome. Ali Dede: Poverty and prosperity depend on the person's own ability.

Ali Dede confirms the self-infliction theory of poverty which is the backbone of World Education's educational thinking. It is inevitable that the questions and answers that follow the problem-dramas of the Turkish teacher-manuals should put blatantly what the dramas convey somewhat deftly. A problem-drama titled 'How to live as a human' is followed by this set of recommended question and answer between the learner and the teacher:

Learner: Why do we get unbalanced, one-sided nutrition? Teacher: Because we don't know how to get balanced nutrition.

The learner's image is reflected in the Turkish and several other materials is that of a foolish, ignorant person. In lesson after lesson of the Turkish programme we find worried people suddenly becoming jubilant on hearing that a new habit or thing can change their world.

The point of calling these texts 'pseudo-Freirean' is not that they distort Freire's ideas. It is to show how a theory that operates under the cover of Freirean terminology provides the symbolic means to serve interests that are antithetical to Freire's aims. The cooptation of Freire is an important aspect of the political economy of education in the Third World today. The study of 'World Education' shows how a liberationist philosophy, which originated in a Third World country, can be used to develop a strategy to perpetuate dependence. Evidently, the process cannot be seen in isolation from the socio-economic forces that shape the relations between the countries that have economic and technological power and the countries that lack such power. At the same time, it is important to recognise that economic and technological power needs symbolic systems to express and disseminate it. Without such systems, economic domination can hardly translate into local and interpersonal structures of dominance. Texts used for the promotion of adult literacy constitute one such system. Literacy texts are an important symbolic system for they are aimed at the most powerless sections of the Third World societies.

## 5. Third World in Televised Texts

FOR several reasons, televised texts are far more difficult to study than are printed texts. First, the veneer of spontaneity that television programmes always carry protects them from being seen as carefully Grafted texts. Speed is an inbuilt pan of this veneer, and this too prevents television texts from being carefully examined. As researchers, we may be tempted to freeze a televised text by obtaining its script or by turning it into a script. But a script can never truly represent images and dialogue. The analysis presented in this chapter could not have been made by looking it scripts. It was made possible by the advantage I had of watching the programmes again and again. And this advantage is not always available to individual researchers, even teams. Usually, we must chase televised texts as fast as they unroll, often being left behind to work with our categories, if categories are what we must work with. The analysis presented here deals with a Canadian series on the problems of development in Third World countries. The series was produced by the Ontario Educational Communications Authority (OECA), a major agency in the world of educational broadcasting. The 13 programmes of this series would fit quite well in a curriculum for what is popularly known as ‘development education’. In India, the term is still new, and the concept behind it has not caught on, at least partly because the school subjects tend to have inviolable boundaries in our system. Interdisciplinary inquiries of the kind that ‘development education’ necessarily involves meet with considerable resistance. Even ‘social studies’ which have now had sufficient time to get established, have not yet become interdisciplinary in our curriculum.

In the West, ‘development education’ has been applied as a term to describe several related concepts whose meaning varies, depending on the historical period and the aims of the person or organisation using the term. Its beginnings can be traced to the time following World War II which saw the formation of international organisations and the launching of aid-based programmes of mass education in several newly independent nations. The internationalism of the fifties and the sixties was based on the belief that the rich countries of the West could help poor countries to develop, and on the perception that Western aid—including educational aid—would strengthen the liberal institutions of the newly independent countries which might otherwise succumb to the demand for radical social transformation. The role of education was to assist the economic and political development of poor countries along the lines of Western liberal democracy and laissez-faire economic practices (see, for example, Elliott 1966, Mazrui 1976). In the poor countries, development education took the form of mass communication programmes designed largely by American and British experts in anthropology, social psychology and social work. In the rich countries, development education served to popularise knowledge of the poor regions of the world and to ensure a supply of younger personnel for aid programmes.

Many of the challenges that development education faces today can be attributed to changes that have occurred within the developed societies and in their relationship with the underdeveloped countries. The economic momentum achieved during and after World War II has not proved lasting. Strains generated by the economic and social structures, combined with the recognition of environmental destruction caused by uncontrolled industrialisation, have eroded the confidence that several Western countries had acquired about the correctness of their path of progress. Their speedy progress along this path has also suffered from the impact of political changes in the Third World—changes that range from the formation of a cartel by the oil producing countries to the rise, or prospects of the rise, of governments that do not want to play neo-colonial games with rich countries.

A major challenge for development educators are to incorporate in new curricula and materials the changes that development theory has gone through since the fifties. These changes represent not merely shifts of focus but rather the weakening of older paradigms owing to newly discovered data and insights. Although it would be hard to trace a cumulative growth of perspective in the writings and research on development, it is evident that new questions have forced older assumptions to be abandoned; and this is a sign of growth in the process of theorisation. At the level of implementation, several studies are now available that show how inadequate is the treatment of developing countries in the curriculum materials of the developed countries (for example, Hicks 1981; McDiarmid and Prart 1971; Saltonstall 1978). The inadequacy these studies reveal is both in the information offered and in the conceptual framework applied for interpreting the information.

Equally inadequate has been the treatment of Third World problems in the media of developed countries. The demand made by the developing countries for a New International Information Order is based partly on the unbalanced and biased coverage of these countries by the media of the developed countries. As a medium for development education, television faces the enormous challenge of departing from the long tradition of the colonial view of the world. These traditions have become a part of the basic structures in which information about developing countries is gathered and transmitted, The geopolitics of information implies 'a kind of inevitability of domination' which, according to Smith (1980), 'is built into the Western conception of the world'. The tradition of West-centred communication is a major obstacle for development education. The ancestry of the West-centred view is easy to trace; what is not so easy is to replace it in educational materials and the media.

### **'ONE WORLD' AS DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION**

Several aspects of the debate concerning 'development' are reflected in the 'One World' series of television programmes which was selected for analysis in the present study. The series, which consists of thirteen programmes, was produced in 1979 by the Ontario Educational Communications Authority (OECA), popularly known as TV Ontario, with financial assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The programmes were designed to be used in conjunction with the senior high school geography and history curriculum, and are available for this purpose on video cassettes, along with teacher's guides. For the general public, the programmes have been broadcast as part of TV Ontario's routine broadcasts.

This series was selected with the help of the OECA research staff as an appropriate subject for analysis in the present study on two grounds: one, its coverage of current issues in development education, and two, its popularity in Ontario's education system. The central theme of the series is the New International Economic order (NIEO) or 'new internationalism' as the first programme in the series presents it. This theme is examined in different contexts of the relationship between developed and developing countries. Six of the programmes deal with political and economic aspects of the NIEO, and the remaining seven programmes deal with cultural and social aspects. According to the OECA's market research staff, 'One World' is one of their most popular series in circulation. The series has been directed by Barbara Barde and Susan Murgatroyd. The hosts in all 13 programmes are Hugh Winsor and Dorienne WiJson-Smillic. All the programmes use the same basic format consisting of the following stages of presentation;

1. a question is posed by the host;
2. a brief debate on the question follows, representing two opposite points of view;
3. a minimum of three guests are individually interviewed. The brief debate following the initial question is staged between two Canadian journalists, Laurier Lapierre and Barbara Amiel.

Some of the outlooks are sympathetic to the developing countries. Amiel represents a sharply conservative view which almost invariably carries overtones of Western superiority mixed with the suggestion that the Third World is faring as it deserves. In each of the 29-minute programmes, the introduction of the problem by the hosts and the debate between Lapierre and Amiel usually take up the first five minutes, and the rest of the time is devoted to interviews with guests, and a brief commentary by the hosts after each interview and at the end as well. Many of the guests are heads of institutions involved in developmental activities, and some are politicians, academics, embassy officials and journalists.

The analysis below is confined to five programmes of the 'One World' series. As a sample, these five programmes cover the range of contexts dealt with in the entire series. The titles of these programmes are: 'New Internationalism'; 'A Question of Trade'; 'Transfer of Technology'; 'Transfer of Culture'; and 'Media'.

### **PERSPECTIVE AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS**

The theoretical perspective used in the analysis is that of symbolic interactionism. A key idea in interactionist analysis is that the message of a system of communication depends on the roles that are assigned to people or objects represented in the system. The assignment of roles is a symbolic process in that the persons or objects playing different roles are not

labelled in an explicit manner, but rather, act in a certain way because of the demands that a situation or frame makes on them. Often when individuals who are not actors by profession are invited to take part in a television programme, they cannot know what symbolic roles they will perform in the televised interaction. In a television interview, for example, a guest may use words that represent his or her viewpoint, but the guest cannot find out what symbolic role this viewpoint will represent in a programme which will consist of several other interviews. An interactionist analysis of the programme will treat the viewpoint as one symbolic position and examine its relationship with the other positions represented in the programme.

Following this perspective, the method of analysis used in this study starts by abstracting or summarising each point of view represented in a programme. The unit of analysis is the guest. All the answers given by a guest in response to the host's questions are summarised in the form of one or two sentences representing the guest's stance or position in relation to the major issue with which the programme deals. When such a summary is ready for all the guests interviewed in a programme, the summaries are examined to establish similarity or difference in the positions taken by the various guests interviewed in a programme. Similarity is treated as a cluster of shared points of view. These shared points of view are further examined to determine how they might be distributed along a continuum from obvious or 'explicit' to subtly hinted or 'implicit' points.

In another direction, the analysis takes into account the interaction between the host and the guest. The host's own function is to define or identify the problem for the benefit of the viewer. The questions that a television host asks represent the predetermined territory of the problem under discussion. Implicit in any television or radio programme using the interview format is the assumption that the guest will stay within the territory mapped by the programme director, individually or as a team, since it is in view of this territory that the guest has been selected and invited to represent a point of view. Not all guests, however, act in accordance with this assumption. Some jump the territory by answering the host's questions in a way that introduces a new dimension of the problem. Even those guests who in general stay within the territory may make a point that lies outside the territory, i.e., add a new dimension. How does the host respond to such situations? With the help of this question, two kinds of themes were distinguished: 'projected' and 'interwoven'. A 'projected' theme is one which the host(s) and the guests share as a common concern. An 'interwoven' theme is one which a guest introduces but which the host does not pick up for further questioning or commentary.

To summarise, the method of analysis of each programme consists of the following steps: (i) abstracting the viewpoint expressed by each guest; (ii) establishing similarity among different viewpoints; (iii) distinguishing 'explicit' and 'implicit' points of view; (iv) determining 'projected' and 'interwoven' themes. All four steps are embodied in the summary accounts of the five programmes which follow. These accounts between Lapierre and Amiel are not reported because they follow an unvarying pattern in all programmes.

## PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

### Programme 1: 'New Internationalism'

The programme deals with the New International Economic Order (NIEO), and particularly with Canada's options for responding to the NIEO. The four guests interviewed in the programme are: Mahabub ul Haq, Director of Policy Planning for the World Bank; Ivan Head, President of the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa; Michael Manley, ex-Prime Minister of Jamaica; and Michael Dupuy, President of the Canadian International Development Agency.

Haq and Manley emphasise the need to look at the relationship between rich and poor societies from a moral perspective. They suggest that developed countries should apply the same principle of equity and justice in dealing with the developing countries as they apply within their own territories. Head and Dupuy, on the other hand, emphasise the role of a trade-based relationship between the developed countries. The responsibility for establishing or strengthening trade relationships lies with the developed countries, according to Head, but according to Dupuy such a responsibility lies with the developing countries. He says that developing countries will become equal partners in trade when they achieve a faster rate of development than they have at present. Clusters of shared points of view identified in this

programme are shown in Figure 1. The figure shows that although the two arguments take different routes, they share a common implicit assumption.

### Programme 2: 'A Question of Trade'

The main issue discussed in this programme is whether Canada and other industrialised nations should drop their protective tariffs and quota policies in order to encourage Third World manufacturing and exports. The four guests interviewed in this programme are: Vishnu Persaud, Acting Director of the Economic Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Trade Secretariat in London (England); Ernest Corea, Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to Canada; Sam Fox, Co-Director of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union of Canada; and Bernard Wood, Director of Ottawa's North-South Institute. The threat of global interdependency is acknowledged by three (Persaud, Corea, and Wood) of the four guests. The basic point these guests make is that the economic growth of developing countries is in the interests of developed countries. The stagnating economies of the West, particularly those of countries like Canada whose home market is small, will pick up only when the developing countries with their vast populations (market) have the buying power to consume Western goods. Such buying power will also stabilise these countries politically.

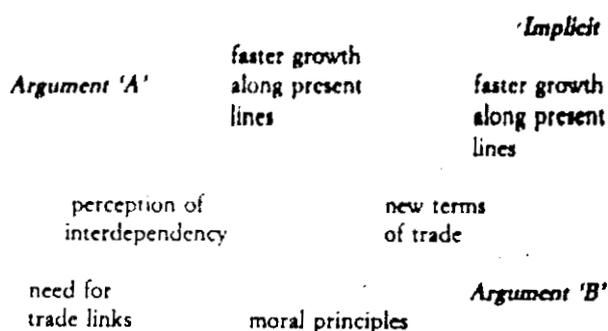
The remaining guest, Fox, stays outside the orbit of the interdependency argument. Focusing on the situation in Canada, he says that there is no alternative to protecting home industries through tariffs and quota systems. The threat that concerns him is that of increasing unemployment, and he rules out the possibility of industrial adjustment as a way to meet this threat.

Fox indicates that there is a direct conflict of interests between developed countries like Canada and the developing countries. This dimension of the problem is not picked up by the hosts for further probing. Nor is another dimension, touched upon by Wood, probed further, namely the dimension of technological change. He points out that three times more jobs are lost due to change or improvement in technology than due to competition with cheaper imports from labour-rich countries of the Third World.

The themes and points of view represented in the programme are shown in Figure 2,

Figure 1

#### CLUSTERS OF SHARED VIEWPOINTS IN PROGRAMME 1



### Programme 3: 'Transfer of Culture'

The main issues dealt with in this programme are foreign cultural domination and the government's role in protecting a country from such cultural domination. All three guests interviewed in this programme are Third World nationals, although one of them, Ken Kwaku, a political scientist from Ghana, now lives in Washington. The other two guests are Rex Nettleford, political scientist and Director of the Jamaican National Dance Theatre, and Ngugi wa Mirie, educational coordinator of a community cultural centre in Kenya.

All three guests agree on the nature of cultural domination that Third World countries continue to suffer. Only in the degree of emphasis on the economic roots of cultural domination do the three guests differ, Mirie places more emphasis

on economic relations than does Kwaku, and Nettleford puts less emphasis than Kwaku. Nettleford says that domination by colonial powers is already breaking down, and a fusion of indigenous and external forms of expression is taking place. Kwaku sees education as a means to counter domination through self-determination. Mirie does not suggest a way, but his emphasis on economic oppression indicates that cultural independence can only follow economic independence

The programme departs from the dominant style of the series in that it does not use a 'problem' format. We can say that this programme represents essentially one viewpoint, namely, 'cultural domination', and this viewpoint has been treated as a 'projected' theme.

**Figure 2**

**THEMES AND VIEWPOINTS REPRESENTED  
IN PROGRAMME 2**

		Viewpoints	
		Explicit	Implicit
Themes	Projected	Interdependency	Political stability of developing countries
	Interwoven	Conflict of interests	Logic of technological growth

### **Programme 4: Transfer of Technology'**

The basic question discussed in this programme is whether the technology sent to developing countries as part of the aid from developed countries is appropriate to the needs of the former. The three guests interviewed in the programme are: George McRobie, Head of the Intermediate Technology Development Group, London (England); Paolo Wolowski, Head of the Science and Technology Department, Brazilian Embassy in Ottawa; and Ursula Franklin, Professor of Metallurgy and Material Science at the University of Toronto.

McRobie and Franklin support the 'appropriate' technology concept whereas Wolowski is opposed to it. Ironically, the viewpoint opposed to 'appropriate' technology is presented by a guest who belongs to a developing country. According to him, 'appropriate' technology is 'second hand', and what the West is now beginning to consider 'inappropriate' (heavy technology) is what Brazil needs.

Developing countries are the focus of the programme, but Franklin forces the hosts to pose the question of 'appropriateness' of technology in the context of Canada's own needs. She reminds the host that the slogan of appropriate technology cannot be isolated from the words, 'as if people mattered', included in the subtitle of Schumacher's well-known book. When people begin to matter for us at home, Franklin says, they will begin to matter in the developing countries too.

The themes and points of view symbolised in the programme are represented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

**THEMES AND VIEWPOINTS REPRESENTED  
IN PROGRAMME 4**

		Viewpoints	
		Explicit	Implicit
Themes	Projected	Need of the poor	National needs
	Interwoven	Concern for people	Global equality

## Programme 5: 'Media'

This programme is about the coverage of Third World news by Western media. The four guests interviewed in the programme are; Peter Enahoro, Editor-in-Chief of *New Africa*, Patrick Keatley, Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Guardian*, Ralph Uweche, Editor-in-Chief of *Africa*, and Paul Doucet, Director of Communications in the Canadian International Development Agency.

Enahoro and Uweche point out the difference in perspectives between an African and a Western journalist. Enahoro says that Western perceptions of the Third World will change when the Third World countries achieve the kind of economic clout that the Arabs have recently acquired.

Keatley says that things have changed over the past three decades because television editors at home (e.g., in Canada) have become more aware of the importance of Third World events. Doucet confirms this importance of the Third World countries by pointing out their role in global power-balance and economy, and says that the Canadian media should cover the Third World more often and more accurately than they are doing at present.

The clusters of viewpoints and themes presented in this programme are shown in Fig 4.

Figure 4

**THEMES AND VIEWPOINTS REPRESENTED  
IN PROGRAMME 5**

		Viewpoints	
		Explicit	Implicit
<b>Themes</b>	Projected	Western perceptions of the Third World	Significance of the Third World for the West
	Interwoven	Change in the Third World's economic conditions	Media norms

## AGGREGATE ANALYSIS

By collapsing the five programme analyses reported above, the aggregate distribution of all 'explicit' and 'implicit\*' viewpoints in 'projected' and 'interwoven' themes was obtained. This distribution is represented in Figure 5. It accommodates the single viewpoint and theme of Programme 3, as well as the two lines of argument presented in Programme 1.'

Finally, an attempt was made to classify all the guests interviewed in the programmes according to the emphasis they placed on 'interdependency' as opposed to 'national interests'. Figure 6 shows this distribution.

## IDENTIFYING THE MESSAGE

We can distinguish the 'projected' from 'interwoven,' themes used in the programme by looking at Figure 5 where all the analytical summaries have been collapsed. This figure shows that issues pertaining to the structure of relationships between the developing and the developed countries appear to a great extent as 'interwoven' themes. On the other hand, issues relating to the perception of Third World countries figure largely as part of 'projected' themes. The attempt made in the programmes is to alter the present perception of the Third World. In place of the prevailing view of the Third World countries, the series persuades its viewers to see Third World countries as participants in trade relations with the developed countries. Such participation, it is suggested, is necessary not simply for the Third World, but also for the developed countries' own needs.

Figure 5

AGGREGATE ANALYSIS

		Viewpoints	
		Explicit	Implicit
Projected	Perception of interdependency	Stability of Third World countries	
	Need for trade links Needs of the poor	National needs (of developed countries)	
	Perceptions of the Third World	Significance of the Third World for developed countries	
	Cultural domination	New terms of trade	
Themes	Conflict on interests	Growth rate	
	Moral principles	Logic of technological growth	
	Concern for people		
	Change in the Third World's economic conditions	Global equality Media norms	

Figure 6

EMPHASIS ON 'INTERDEPENDENCY' VS. 'NATIONAL INTERESTS'

		Guests from Canada	Guests from other developed countries	Guests from Third World countries
Emphasis	Inter-dependency	Franklin Doucet Wood	Haq	Manley Persaud Nettleford Enahoro Uweche Kwaku
		Total : 3	Total : 1	Total : 6
		National Interests	Head Dupuy Fox Keatley	McRobie
Total : 4	Total : 1		Total : 3	

The two focal points of the discussion represented in the programmes are 'interdependency' and 'national interests'. These two issues are set-off against one another in different contexts. In the distribution of symbolic functions, the two focal points are shared by guests from both the developed and the developing countries. However, as Figure 6 shows, the focus on 'interdependency' is provided by a greater proportion of Third World guests whereas the focus on 'national interests' is provided by a greater proportion of Canadian guests. The two Third World guests (e.g., Corea and Wolowski) who do mention the steps their governments are taking to protect the economy are depicted in the programmes as examples of typical Third World thinking. The developing countries appear to have not only common problems but also common strategies. The commonality of their strategies is seen as a threat to an isolated developed country. In the symbolic setting of television, the isolated developed country, namely Canada, meets the threat of combined Third World countries, first, by remembering its own problems and interests, and second, by taking a future-oriented view of things. Canada's problems include its dependence on foreign capital and the small size of its home market. Its interests include expanding its employment capacity and developing a strong national identity.

The programmes show that the developing countries are useful for Canada because they have big markets and because they need help. If Canada takes a futuristic view of things, it will find that the Third World's threat will worsen unless help is given now, not because the Third World will become more powerful in future but because the aggravation of its poverty will make it politically chaotic. This will also pre-empt the Third World's growth as a market for Western goods.

The symbolic roles assigned to the developing countries in the programmes can be summarised as (i) new, big and growing markets; (ii) candidates for help; and (iii) sources of fears for the future. These three are the guiding lines of the agenda for development education that the 'One World' programmes contain.

FORMAL FEATURES

In the matter of form or style, three major features of the programmes are: framing by the hosts, dualism, and offer of choices. The hosts are intermediaries between the audience and the guests, and their apparent significance is functional. They do, however, participate in the dialogue, and not only do they participate, they shape the dialogue by introducing it, by restricting their role in it to questioning, and by commenting on it. They frame what is said by the guests, acting in an exegetic capacity. The framing authority they possess shapes the meaning of what is said by the guests. This is why

in analysing the programmes it was necessary to classify the points of view presented by the guests (whose role was that of experts) in terms of their reception by the hosts. It is the treatment given by the hosts that determines what status a point of view would achieve in the thematic structure of the programme.

One of the framing devices used by the hosts is to translate a problem into a question. This is done by splitting the problem in terms of two mutually opposed and further irreducible perspectives. The question posed by the hosts, thus, has two possible answers. Both answers are pursued *in* the programme with the help of a brief debate which serves as an extension of the initial splitting of the problem into two ways of looking at it. The debate format offers legitimacy to both perspectives, even though the second perspective, i.e., the strongly conservative, anti-Third World view voiced by Barbara Amiel, rarely finds an echo in the interviews with guests.

The dualistic presentation ultimately renders every problem as a matter of options. The programmes ask the viewer to see the costs and advantages that each of the two options carries, but they do not allow the viewer to recognise that there is *a* cost involved in restricting oneself to just two ways of looking at a problem. Nor are we, as viewers, allowed to realise that by treating the two views as equally substantial and legitimate, the programmes subtly discourage us from regarding any one of the two views as more correct than the other. In a message intended to make people choose, the need to learn the implications of a choice loses out to the necessity of making a choice.

## 6. Texts and Values

THESE studies were inspired by the idea that educational texts are powerful media and therefore deserve close analysis. *The* idea is quite common but is seldom critically examined. It does appear as if popularity endows texts with a certain power, but it is not easy to say, precisely what this power is and how it acts. Do texts influence us directly, in the sense that they 'tell' or 'suggest' to us which values, attitudes, and courses of action might be better for us? Or do they influence us by creating an ethos in which certain behaviours and values acquire popular appeal? Studies of readers' response to literature offer no clear-cut answer even though a very large number of such studies have been conducted. One finding which is shared by several studies *is* that response to literature is a person-specific process. It involves highly individual capacities, associations, and projections. True, but there are widely shared patterns of response in any society, Publishers of books often seem to know these patterns, and so do many authors, How do these patterns arise? Answers to this question can be found in the writings of scholars such as Burke (1945) and Lesser (1957) who, among many others, reflected on the problem, but empirical studies of response to literature suggest no clear solution.

In the context of television as well, researchers have been extremely reluctant to attribute viewers' behaviour to the impact of what they watched. There are indeed few choices in terms of methodology to prove such an impact through empirical research. On the other hand, the belief that television influences people is very widespread indeed. Why else would advertisers pay the high prices they do to get a few seconds to beam their message? And why would governments bother to keep television under their control? But apart from this kind of logical evidence, the fact that television is related to the rise of violence in society is becoming increasingly hard to refute. The evidence from pathological cases, such as the one of mass murderers studied by Leyton (1986), is very strong and it is no longer easy to brush it aside as having no relevance for the behaviour of ordinary people. As Fulford has argued on the basis of Leyton's study, television works on people's emotions by showing how 'poor' they are compared to the lucky people shown on the screen, It creates jealousy on an unimaginable scale which cannot be accounted for by means of the quotidian questioning of a typical survey. In a similar vein, the *Guardian Weekly* (30 August 1987) commented on the murder of 16 people in a small English town by arguing that 'it would surely be odd... if night after night the casual violence, of death as a way of life did not at the very least serve to blunt and desensitise, and suggest that life is cheap.'

## DEFINING INFLUENCE

In everyday life, we come across any number of people who express their appreciation of an article, book or film by saying, 'It made a great impact on me'. Students often tell their teachers how the readings in a course they took 'influenced' them. The influence may not last long, but we cannot say that all of it necessarily withers away. The real problem is to define the nature of this influence. Our choices are:

- (a) what we read tells us or suggests what to do;
- (b) what we read shows us what others do in given situations:
- (c) what we read creates a fraternity between us and others who have read the same thing, thus creating a common experience and understanding.

Readings that come under (a) are very few. Literary writings rarely 'tell' us what to do the way medicine wrappers and job manuals do. Some kinds of writings, those which aim specifically at moral reform, do make 'suggestions' about desirable behaviour. Such writings are seldom treated as serious or high-quality literature, but it is true that serious works of literature may contain in them passages which offer moral advice fairly directly. Tulsidas *Ramacharitmanas* is an example of this kind of literature, and we can find such instances in similar works associated with the religio-cultural traditions of different societies. The Bible, for instance, tells us what to do with our lives in fairly explicit terms. But even other kinds of works, those which do not have religious associations, may contain passages that tell us what to do with our lives, or which suggest preferable ways of acting. Novels by Premchand, Maugham, Exupery, and Hemingway, for example, could give us dozens of such passages. One could find many readers who would have pondered on such passages and underlined them in order to return to them some day. If one went beyond fiction, into discursive literature, many writings by Russell, Fromm and Barthes would fall into the category of literature that tells or suggests to us what to do.

Possibility (b) is far easier to support. The process it describes occurs all the time. Children and adults alike find in literary writings, particularly fiction, a credible extension of their ordinary life. We read about people we have never seen, yet we treat them as if they were real. Howsoever hard a school of literary criticism may have hit Bradleyan characterology, the common reader does think of characters as if their existence were not confined to the primed text. Research on response to literature gives us plenty of evidence that readers deal with characters in fiction *as if* they were real people. In order to make sense of fictional characters we use our own life experiences as a reference point. We 'approve' or 'disapprove' of characters and relate to them emotionally. Several studies show that children do not differentiate between fictional characters and real people in the manner in which they discuss their motives and pursuits. But it is not just children who 'suffer' when the hero of the story suffers, or feel pleased when the hero's problems are satisfactorily resolved. Fiction forces us to get involved in affairs quite removed from our own life. It 'generalises' the characters' concerns the way an ancient Indian school of aesthetics pointed out in the case of drama.

How does the emotional involvement we experience with one or more characters become the source of 'influence'? Or does it? Quite a few people have discussed the vicarious experience that fiction offers as a liberalising influence. This has been the gist of the advocacy of literature in the school and college curriculum for a long time, the most famous recent advocate being Frye (1964). The argument runs somewhat like this: by showing us a wide range of human behaviours under life's varying conditions, literature makes us more appreciative and tolerant of the differences in human conduct. Plausible though it sounds, even in this crude summary form, the argument is very hard to prove. Leaving its researchability alone, even in an everyday sense it may be hard to find evidence supporting it. Who can say that people who have spent a whole life time studying and teaching literature are any less given to racial, class, or caste prejudices than others?

The third choice (c) is somewhat different from the other two in that it transfers our attention away from the text and to the people who read it. Basically, it says that texts contribute to the wealth of symbolic forms that people use to bind themselves together. The fact that several people have read the same text or watched the same televised *text* builds a community among them. The more popular a text, the wider the community it creates. A popular text simply enhances the role that language performs all the time, that of giving people a symbolic form with which to size up reality. The

popularity of a text strengthens this symbolic capacity. A text such as *Ramacharitmanas*, about which several million literate as well as illiterate people in north-central India have known for about four hundred years, has a great symbolic capacity precisely because it is shared so widely. The case of educational texts is similar. The fact that they are used so widely, under the auspices of a system which reaches out to a very large readership, gives them an enormous symbolic capacity of the kind we are discussing.

## FUNCTIONS OF FORM

So far the discussion of 'influence' has been confined to the content of texts—the world portrayed in them. Let us now consider another source of influence that texts have. It lies in the 'form'. This term may be less specific than 'genre', but it serves our purpose better. The purpose is to look at features such as length, pacing, and medium. Depending on features such as these, different kinds of texts make very specific demands on us. They force us to organise our time, spaces, and relationships differently. The audio-visual character of televised texts, for example, demands that we sit in front of the TV set in a room at a certain hour. The demand has in it the hidden set of value that place a premium on private, family space. However communitarian the content of a televised text may be, it must surrender to, or at least confront, the message of its hardware which demands and endorses the architecture of the typical middle class urban home. Watched in a community centre capable of accommodating a crowd of 50 or 100 people, the little screen becomes a pathetic toy. In this role, it is altogether incomparable to its predecessor, the cinema, which negated the privacy of recreational space. We cannot associate cinema with private space simply because it forced people to come out of their houses. Even women in backward district towns were no exception; they too were brought out of their homes. The cinema screen created a socially shared space in front of it.

The impact of form on people's routines and on the mode of community is no less evident in the context of the written medium. The English novel emerged as a prominent literary genre at the time when an urban middle class was establishing itself. In the formation of the attitudes of this class towards privacy, leisure, and individuality, the novel as a genre had no small role to play. The conditions for the novel to become a popular form were created by changes in the economic organisation of society, but the translation of these conditions into commonly held perceptions, into a style of life, must be attributed to cultural forces, such as the novel as a genre (Wan 1957). In a different context, we can trace the popularity of Tulsi's epic, the *Ramacharitmanas*, to the form it provided for poorly interconnected villages and hamlets of the Gangetic belt and the Vindhya to forge a durable cultural repertoire. The leisurely pace of Tulsi's poetry and its dependence on metaphor as a means of exposition are among the features which make the *Ramacharitmanas* so characteristic of the oral yet highly literate culture of rural Uttar Pradesh, rural Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar.

School texts offer an interesting example of the values associated with form. The dominance of the short story in the typical reading textbook for elementary grades is clearly related to the time available for each lesson. The Indian education system demands strict adherence to a daily scheme of 35-minute periods for each subject. In such a system it is indeed convenient to have a short story as the basic reading and exercise material. Novels, even short novels, are rarely included in the syllabus for schools, and when they are taught, the teacher deals with them episode by episode. Since Indian school culture revolves around the prescribed text, neither the teacher nor the students can think of organising their time without the text. Hence the preference for short piece that can be independently read in 35-minute slots. Even in those systems where the daily time-table is not as rigid as it is in India, the short story continues to be the preferred form for lessons in school readers. It provides a manageable length of content for the teacher, who chooses to work with the school reader (for it is not compulsory to use it as it is in India) before going on to organising other activities.

The use of the short story as a convenient form, thus, deepens the effectiveness of the value-system entrenched in the school time-table. The system hinges on the classification of time. The complex time-table that schools follow is a product and symbol of the industrial culture and it is for life in this culture that the school socialises children by means of its time-table. The classification of knowledge into departments, and that of departments into distinct courses with specialist teachers, is all aspects of an industrial culture. Punctuality, specialisation, and acquaintance with many different spheres of information are valued in such a culture. The school time-table reinforces these values by maintaining

separateness between subjects and teachers of subjects. It asks children to develop the ability to switch from one subject to another when the bell goes, or in less explicit school cultures, when the time is up. It is obvious why radical humanist pedagogues like Tagore and Dewey pleaded flexible use of time in the school. They were reacting to the assembly-line-man agenda of socialisation- which schools in this century universally carry.

## MATERIAL CONDITIONS

The impact, of texts, then, cannot be dissociated from the conditions under which they are read. To treat texts as if the values embedded in their content were an independent force is to miss a major part of the process whereby texts transmit values. The transmission involves the conditions under which the texts are presented to readers as well as the manner of presentation. The physical conditions prevailing in the school, for instance, are an intermediary agency affecting the manner in which the values underlying the content of texts will be received by students.

Physical conditions include the nature of the school building, its architecture and the basic amenities available to children.

A school functioning under dilapidated physical conditions and with poor amenities' can hardly be expected to encourage a high self-concept in children as children. No matter what the texts used in such a school say, the physical conditions will convey to the child the value put upon his life by the larger society. As it is, child-centred texts are unlikely to be written and even more unlikely to be used as educational texts in a society which keeps its schools in a shabby and impoverished condition. But even if such texts were somehow to be written and then included in the syllabus, their child-centeredness- would compete at a disadvantage with the indifference towards the child conveyed by the poor physical apparatus of the school.

The library may be the single most influential determinant of the ethos prevailing in a school. If children are permitted to use freely—that is, independently—the permission constitutes the school's expression of faith in the child as someone who can make choices. Schools that deny children the freedom to select books on their own, on the contrary, indicate that they do not trust children. Indian schools that have a library rarely allow it to be freely used. The visit to the library is treated as a ritual, to be performed under the watchful eye of an adult. The visit is usually confined to 33-minute period, and during it children are supposed to read whatever has been selected for them. But most schools in India do not even have a separate room for the library. At the elementary level the situation is even worse as two-thirds of all primary schools in the country have no library at all. The fact that all these schools are recognised—indeed, most of them are run by the state—shows a tacit belief underlying the system: a belief that the prescribed textbook is sufficient for young children. This belief circumscribes the curriculum to the textbook. The association is further strengthened by the fact that all tests and examinations concentrate on the textbook. Typically, schools lacking a library also lack other kinds of learning resources, including play and science material. They depend on textbooks for the teaching of all subjects.

The study of development education programme on Canadian television, reported in the last chapter, included visits to two school libraries. Both of them had some literature concerning the problems of developing countries. One offered a large number of introductory materials dealing with cultural traits and economic matters related to the developing countries, but a rather limited number of analytically oriented studies. The other library had a smaller collection, but the majority of books in it were established studies. Ironically, it was the first school that had courses on Third World problems on its lists; and this school was going to use the 'One World' series as a curriculum resource for these courses. The kind of books that students would require to probe further the issues raised in the series were not going to be available to them through the school library.

Television programmes are now manufactured as a marketable package. They organise a complex subject in ways that make it sound simple. This is not a limitation of a particular programme; it is rather a basic condition for a programme to become telecast-worthy. It conflicts with the desire that teachers have of enabling students to notice how complex a phenomenon that looks simple really is. One way to overcome this conflict is to make sure that students have access to and are encouraged to read books that probe what the televised programme touches upon.

In India this solution may sound totally inappropriate. In a context where television is still a new development, its promoters do not tire of describing it as a substitute for the teacher. The argument put forward is that a well-produced television programme is far superior and cheaper as compared to what a poorly qualified teacher would teach. Supporters of television have no interest in developing printed material to supplement the programmes. This is how the supply of television sets to schools and the preparation of educational programmes have been given priority over the need to equip schools with good libraries and librarians. Television has reached the majority of Indian villages, while the village primary school remains without books (except the textbooks that children must buy themselves) and without the space to keep books if they could be purchased. The education system has leap-frogged into the stage of daily telecasts without ever going through the stage of providing schools with functioning libraries and other basic learning materials.

## TEACHING

Finally, styles of teaching have a powerful influence on how texts are presented to children and how they are received. Teaching involves the shaping of a socially-valued experience in the child's life—his school experience. Its importance, in relation to the texts and values to which children are exposed at school, also arises from the fact that it constitutes an extension of the child's socialisation through interaction with adults. In the life of a small child, the teacher takes over from where the parent leaves, sliding into the parents' position for a few hours everyday. The role he enacts has many elements of the parents' role, and that is why his work needs to be seen as a source of influence on the child's reception of the symbolic world of texts.

The teacher's personality and style intervene in the child's encounter with this symbolic world. Whether the child attaches any meaning at all to it is itself dependent on how much concern and earnestness the teacher is able to show. We can expect that a teacher whose manner of presentation is totally ritualised, in the sense that he conveys no personal enthusiasm for the texts being dealt with in the class, will convey little sense of worth in the texts. His students are unlikely to feel encouraged to relate to the text they read, watch, or listen to in a personal manner, by interpreting it in the contexts of their own life experiences. The ethos created by such teaching will have as its distinctive characteristic a sense of awed respect towards shared text without the urge and freedom to establish personal meanings in the texts.

This description meets many features of the ethos one finds in Indian classrooms, and largely in Indian society. The education system has established a sizeable body of literary, historical and civic knowledge as 'shared texts'. Television has done this in the recent past, adding to the number of text that are widely shared. These texts remain, however, at the level of symbolic property viewed with awe and respect, occasionally with wonder. There is an absence of a widespread urge to seek a personal relationship with this symbolic property. This is reflected in the so-called crisis of values in contemporary life, a crisis often described in terms of general absence of the desire to act in consistency with accepted ideals and of the ability to put words into action. Undoubtedly, this kind of situation cannot be discussed properly without taking into account the overall socio-economic and cultural reality. Value-orientation is a product of the total cultural fabric of a society, and education is just one of the many aspects of this fabric. Supporters of an explicit value orientation curriculum do realise this; nevertheless, they are tempted by what they perceive as a simple instrumentality of education in bringing about change in popular values. They hold Values' as so many lessons which can be taught and thereby transmitted. This simple faith leads them to see the syllabus and the textbooks as the arena where the battle of moral education needs to be fought. The politics of this faith apart, its naiveté extends to pedagogy. The style of teaching has as much to do with value-orientation—or with what little part of it belongs to the education system—as the syllabus and textbooks have. This aspect has been altogether ignored in the discussion of value-orientation held in India since the beginning of this decade.

Even otherwise, the idea that pedagogic styles may influence the cultural forms and values of a society has received very little attention in India. The idea is not, of course, a new one. It served as the basis on which supporters of child-centred education struggled for a change in teacher training and in the curriculum in the countries of Europe and North America. It found solid support in the Soviet Union where eminent psychologists like Luria and Vygotsky argued that the child's pedagogic experience plays a significant role in his psychological development. More recently, Freire (1973)

has shown on the basis of his work with adults that the style of communication used for teaching shapes the function of knowledge and skills in the learners' lives. Central to Freire's thesis is the ethical dimension of the teacher-learner relationship. His hope of establishing egalitarian values through 'revolutionary' pedagogy is posited on egalitarian relations between the teacher and the learner. Within the specific context of literature education, Purves (1974) has pointed out on the basis of a study conducted in 10 countries, that styles of teaching are related to patterns of response to literary reading. Explaining the country-wise achievement differential of students who participated in tests of response, Purves directs out attention towards the diversity of emphasis in curricula and in teaching styles. 'The schools do indoctrinate students to become the kind of reader—the kind of critic, if one prefers that term—that the "establishment" approves', he says.

Teaching in Indian schools continues to follow the Traditional norm of being overwhelmingly teacher-directed. Child-centred methods have not made much headway although the terminology associated with these methods has become part of training curricula and even the official documents on education. But by calling Indian pedagogy 'teacher-directed', 'we ignore a crucial, paradoxical aspect of the culture of education. The Indian teacher is in fact, a meek dictator—one who has a poor status in society and in his profession, but one who enjoys unlimited power in the classroom. The teacher's poor salary and social status constitute only one aspect of his professional role. The more important aspect of his meekness has to do with his lack of power to organise time and to structure knowledge. The Indian teacher is bound by the syllabus and textbook, prescribed by bureaucratic authority which also has many other powers including the power to recruit, promote, punish, and transfer the teacher. He acts in total compliance and fear towards this authority. He has no control over what he teaches, not even over its pacing.

Bureaucratic control leaves little room for the teacher infuses any immediate relevance into the content of the syllabus. The fixed nature of the content permits him to switch off what ability or resources he might possess for making fresh associations between texts and the life around. The fear of being perceived as departing from the prescribed text, and of running out of time to finish the required content strengthens the instinct to literally stick to the text. Freed of the responsibility to reorganise knowledge in the shape of the day's curriculum, the teacher concentrates on the task of maintaining order in the classroom. Whatever the subject or the topic, discipline and order constitute the core curriculum. The content of each lesson becomes, as it were, an excuse to re-enact the daily rehearsal of classroom discipline. The teacher's role in this rehearsal is that of a dictator. He hides his professional powerlessness and his poor social status behind the mask of being all-powerful in the classroom.

Few teachers are concerned about student questioning. In any case, students are rarely eager to ask questions, since their own upbringing does not encourage this. The only form of questions an Indian teacher does expect to hear are those seeking clarification, usually by way of repetition. Typically, the teacher ends his lesson by asking; 'Anything you want me to repeat? Anything unclear? The message is that a question indicates unclear understanding. There is no scope to welcome a question that opens up a possibility of fresh inquiry; for such a question would be seen as a challenge to the teacher's authority. 'Good' students are supposed to regard a teacher's discomfiture in the face of a genuine challenging inquiry as unfortunate. The teacher is never supposed to say, 'I don't know. It may take years of classroom visits for one to hear a sentence like 'I'll look it up', or 'why don't you check it?'

The teacher's dictatorial role is not a modern creation. It is a continuation of the ancient Indian tradition under which the teacher is regarded as supreme. He possesses knowledge, and he knows how to impart it. The pupil's job is to be modest, obedient, and receptive. Several ancient texts and stories describe the supremacy of the teacher and the modesty of the ideal student. The traditional teacher-student relationship can be seen as the pedagogic symbol of a feudal social order, its expected rigour indicating the importance of patronage as a means of maintaining social cohesion. This symbolic function of the teacher-student relationship has not changed much over time. Now if we regard value-orientation as essentially a function of social order, we will appreciate that the teacher's supremacy in the sense we have discussed it, will continue to stand for feudal-style domination and patronage. This symbolic value of the common style of teaching prevailing in India will largely override any changes that might be made in educational texts in favour of anti-feudal, democratic values.

**END OF BOOK**