

Routledge Research in Special Educational Needs

LIBERAL PERSPECTIVES ON INCLUSION

**ENLIGHTENMENT VALUES AND DEBATES ON EQUITY
AND DEMOCRACY IN THE CLASSROOM**

Joseph Mintz



Liberal Perspectives on Inclusion

Providing a theoretical underpinning for the idea of inclusion within education, this book recognizes the fundamental role political values play in our understanding of inclusion in the classroom, providing a philosophical lens on the inherent tensions that exist within sociological perspectives on social justice, equity and diversity.

Chapters address value tensions from the perspective of classical liberalism and the extent to which this can be reconciled with values pluralism and Berlin's notions of negative and positive liberty. The book argues for a re-framing of inclusion as a process of negotiation between teachers, parents, children and young people which involves a recognition of the complex trade-offs involved in working with difference in the classroom. These tensions are explored through a series of case studies of real-world dilemmas in the classroom, ultimately serving to highlight the ways in which varying political value positions, including liberalism, are inescapably embedded within the practice in education.

Considering topics such as decolonization of the curriculum, freedom of speech and social justice, this seminal volume will be highly relevant for researchers, scholars and postgraduate students in the fields of inclusive education, special educational needs, philosophy of education, social justice and education and critical theory.

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Enlightenment Values and Debates on
Equity and Democracy in the Classroom

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This book is dedicated to my parents, Professor Barrie Mintz and my late mother Mrs Jennifer Mintz (may her memory be a blessing).

The links in the chain that taught me all I know.



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Introduction

I myself am pursuing the same instinctive course as the veriest human animal you can think of: ...staring at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness – without knowing the bearing of any one assertion, of any one opinion...

John Keats, Letters, 1819

In 2020 the BBC released the television short film *Education* as part of the *Small Axe* series directed by Steve McQueen, a Londoner of West Indian heritage.¹ The series focused on various aspects of the experience of the West Indian community in London from the 1960s through to the 1980s and *Education* tells the story of a 12-year-old boy Kingsley who is sent to an ESN (“Educationally Subnormal”) special school in the mid-1970s. The film portrays the cultural racism inherent in English society and the education system, and the ways in which the label of ESN was applied particularly to black boys. Kingsley is clearly very bright, but perhaps has some specific learning difficulties with reading, although this is not explicitly made clear in the film. The head teacher at his mainstream school uses IQ results to “objectively” justify the need for Kingsley to be transferred to special education. The ESN school he is sent to has very low expectations of its students and sub-standard teaching. The message conveyed is that of special education at the time as essentially serving as a means to hide away and not very much bother about a group of people not much valued by society. However, the film goes on to show how, through local community action, Kingsley’s family are empowered to fight back against the system, at the same time as reclaiming an understanding of the richness of African history and culture.² It is fiction, but it is nevertheless based on clear evidence about what happened to immigrant black children in that period in England.^{3,4} Although the picture is more complex than in the 1970s, fairly recent research has shown that in England, children identified as Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean are twice as likely to be identified with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs as White British pupils.⁵ Research in the US has shown similar disparities continue to the present day.⁶

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2 *Introduction*

The need for the international movement for inclusion in education is demonstrated by the historical narrative so powerfully portrayed for us in Steve McQueen's film. The ongoing racial and cultural disparities in the labelling of children with the categories of special educational needs similarly shows the need for the moral imperative which is at the heart of this movement. This movement is closely entwined with academic enquiry into difference and oppression, in a variety of fields, although its roots are most importantly in disability studies.^{7,8} The sociological critique of difference at the centre of this academic enquiry is predicated on uncovering the cultural and historical processes that may be at play in how difference is addressed in society, particularly in terms of how structures, processes and knowledge are applied differentially to particular groups. In this book, my intention is to explore what we can learn from other perspectives, particularly that of classical liberalism, when considering the important questions raised by this critique.

In its activist form, the critique involves a key premise, shared in fact with classical liberalism, at least in its stated aims: that everyone, no matter what their inescapable characteristics, is entitled to equality of opportunity. There may be differences in terms of how that might be achieved, and the extent to which equality of outcome is seen as desirable, but the sociological critique shares with liberalism a notion that everyone has the same essential value as a human being.

The sociological critique of difference, and the activists who have taken it up, often coalesce around a range of political perspectives on difference more widely in left politics.⁹ My aim in this book is not to sharply differentiate between left and right politics as a primary marker for debates, mainly because I don't tend to find such labels as particularly useful in this context. Communitarian perspectives on liberalism, for example, do not fit neatly into a left/right split. Nevertheless, in the UK and US in particular, and I am writing in England, the disability and inclusion activism which I identify in this book, primarily drawn from Foucault and others' deconstruction of the human sciences, and applied in education spaces to the issues of inclusion, tends to be allied with a range of other positions commonly adopted on the left of politics. These include ideas from Marxism, postcolonial theory and critical theory. I will consider them and their intercalation with education and inclusion, in a more rigorous manner, later in the book. For now, though, I want to note the impact of the events of October 7th. For many, many Jewish people and writers such as myself, the Hamas terrorist atrocities, and perhaps more importantly, the reaction to them particularly in the university and schools sector in the UK and US and internationally, have been seismic. Wilfred Bion, the seminal Kleinian psychoanalyst and thinker of the late 20th century, writes, following Freud, about the caesura of birth¹⁰ – the in a sense unknowable rupture, both awful and creative, that occurs when a child suddenly moves from the safety of the womb to the cold hard reality of the world. This caesura, rooted in violence and the new, is in Bion's view foundational for identity and contains within it the seeds of thought, of the ability for the child to engage

in the very act of thinking. For many people, particularly those whether nominally on the right or the left, who feel a commitment to the ideals of a liberal democratic state, October 7th and its aftermath was such a caesura. In particular, the realization, which was perhaps too long in coming, that much of left politics truly excluded Jews from its preoccupations, inevitably raised the question of what was in fact the basis for those preoccupations. Just as Western communists could not escape questioning the basis of Marxism in the wake of Stalin's atrocities, so today we similarly have to ask what values and frameworks underpin the political agenda of the left, and are these ones that we can share in? Inescapably, this also involves probing what values underlie the activism of those adopting a sociological critique of education and inclusion, and are those values that we can all share? As an orthodox Jewish writer on inclusion, I cannot but contend that this is a crucial, inescapable question for education and inclusion.

Answering such questions involves grappling with the challenge and difficulty of uncertainty. This is something Bion was not afraid of and in this he followed in the footsteps of Keats. As Keats illuminates for us in the quote from his letters at the start of the book, uncertainty can have a terrifying quality. This is not though, a reason to turn away from the fray.

In this book I refer to education and inclusion, as opposed to inclusive education, or inclusive pedagogy. This is because I feel that these terms come with an unwarranted unity, i.e. that they suggest a settled and uncomplicated position on what they mean. My aim with this book is to illuminate and explore how complicated and importantly unsettled inclusion is as a term. Specifically, I explore the values and political value systems that underpin the ways in which difference is conceived broadly, consider how these values are often in tension with each other, and then consider the implications of that tension for education, with a particular focus on the classroom and the class teacher. Thus, I aim to provide further theoretical underpinnings for the concept of inclusion through an examination of tensions inherent within current approaches to it. In particular, I use the lens of value pluralism¹¹ to interrogate such tensions. I explore the implications of a range of political value systems, including classical liberalism, much neglected in debates in the field. Drawing on Berlin's idea of negative liberty, I explore the extent to which sociological perspectives on inclusion, which might be considered as having resonance with Berlin's notion of positive liberty, have drawn on hegemonizing conceptualizations of inclusion rooted in social justice perspectives. Through identifying and exploring the tensions such approaches have tended to ignore, and identifying the different value positions entailed, I consider the extent to which such tensions can or cannot be resolved in the classroom.

This does not make the book an argument for a liberal approach to education or to inclusion, but rather its aim is to highlight the ways in which varying political value positions, including liberalism, are inescapably embedded within practice in education. This I believe then serves to open up a space for a debate on the ensuing complexity, which I argue is more useful than current

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approaches, particularly in terms of helping teachers to deal with difference in the classroom.

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1 What Is Wrong with Inclusion Today

Special Educational Needs and Its History

How to conceive of and make sense of differences from what is perceived as the norm, or the typical, is not a new question. Foucault¹ suggests that in the West prior to industrialization, people who nowadays would be identified as having mental illness, and perhaps also some of those who would also be identified today as coming into the categorization of special educational needs (SEN), were regarded not as something apart from society, but more as an integrated element that also had some special truth on knowledge or ideas that were hidden from others. Whether this may be an overly idealized view of the past, such an analysis at least indicates the possibility and indeed likelihood of changing perspectives on difference over time. In the 21st century, in liberal democratic societies, and indeed also more widely across countries with a wide variety of other political systems, there has been for over 30 years an increasing consensus of how, at least in an idealized sense, disability, special educational needs and difference more widely should be conceptualized, and addressed in both national policy and local practice. Of course, in many non-democratic countries, on some aspects of difference such as for example in relation to ethnic minorities, there is considerable divergence from liberal democracies on policy, notwithstanding some far from inconsequential diversity of views within such democracies themselves. Nevertheless, the ratification by many countries of the Salamanca Statement,² as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities,³ has led to significant policy developments across the world, broadly conceived as a move towards inclusion, which have at least aimed to implement the perceived corollaries of these international agreements in terms of local policy enactment. As such, there is a real sense in which inclusion has gained almost world-wide acceptance, as a working concept, for how societies can conceive of and operationalize policy in relation to difference, particularly in relation to special educational needs.

Others have outlined in helpful detail the development of thinking on special educational needs through the medical model, the social model and attempts to resolve the two perspectives in biopsychosocial models,⁴⁻⁶ and economic approaches such as capability theory.^{7,8} I will not go over that

well-trodden ground in significant depth here. Following Barton, I have previously positioned this debate in terms of ontological splits between positions on both knowledge and conceptualization of special educational needs.⁹ The psychological position,⁴ perhaps best considered as a realist perspective on knowledge, is reflected in clinical and cognitive psychology, and psychiatry, and gives rise to the conceptualization of special educational needs as categorical diagnosis, and the insertion of these categories into the educational space. The sociological position,⁴ rather, sees difference not as deriving from a fixed quality inherent within individuals, but as something discursive that arises from the way that particular features of an individual are interpreted, and indeed the way that knowledge about such features arises, within the human sciences, and intercalates with power relations that are expressed within societal rules and norms. The social model / sociological critique of a psychological view of difference is a trajectory of theory, activism and policy development, arising first in the field of disability studies,¹⁰ and then being picked up in terms of difference more widely, leading ultimately to the agenda for inclusion, internationally, within the field of education.

The term inclusion in the field of education, as others such as Hegarty,¹¹ Reindal¹² and Norwich¹³ have noted, can be critiqued as being lacking in specificity or even content. This is illustrated, in my view, by the endless debates on defining inclusion.^{14,15} As Norwich notes,¹⁶ concepts which take on a totalizing quality, as many think inclusion has, end up losing meaning, or at least a specific and thus useful meaning. I have in a linked critique⁹ noted that some inclusion theorists such as Florian in 2012¹⁷ have come up with definitions of inclusion which can be interpreted as identifying inclusive practice with general educational practice – thus inclusive pedagogy becomes undifferentiated from general notions of pedagogy. We also end up with statements, occasionally seen in the academic and practice-based literature on inclusion^{18,19} to the effect that good teaching for children with special educational needs is good teaching for all, which is another way of saying that general and inclusive pedagogy are undifferentiated. However, it's unclear how an undifferentiated concept can truly be of use to educators or policy makers in making the actual decisions which they are faced with. I contend in this book that inclusion does signify something specific, in that it serves to identify sites of tension and debate. Such a signification is, though, potentially of considerable use within the field. However, what is needed is a clearer understanding of the concepts that underlie the tension and debate, as, I argue, it is through such an understanding that we make effective use of the term.

Tracing the Sociological Critique and the Gaps It Leaves

The sociological critique in disability studies owes a significant debt to Foucault's analysis – Foucault's analysis of power and knowledge²⁰ and through it the identification of modes of power, subjectification and resistance, which have formed a key part of the underlying impetus of the social model, when

applied to gaze of the human sciences falling on the disabled body and individual, and then by extension the child with special educational needs. As Olssen²¹ notes, Foucault and indeed other deconstructive thinkers, particularly Derrida, use such models to play with how we might interpret the actions of social actors, shying away from actual prescriptions about the real-world policy implications of their work. This, as Ball²² identified, derives at least from some extent from their recognition of the relativism of their position in that if social practices and rules are inescapably historically and culturally constructed, then it's not immediately clear what the basis is for privileging one model or approach over another. Indeed, one of the key critiques that Foucault makes of Marxism is that it fails to recognize its positioning as an Enlightenment mode of thinking tied to the conditions of the late 20th century.²¹ Foucault is also critical of Marxism for its underlying rationalist focus on human agency. We can perhaps extend this criticism to Soviet psychology and cultural-historical theory. For Foucault, a key element of his thought is the deconstruction of the pre-social autonomous human agent – regarding the subject as both arising from the social field, and not having an existence that can meaningfully be considered as separate from the social field. It is of course this insight that, perhaps sometimes too simplistically, underlies the critique made in the social model – that to regard the individual as having internal (and thus autonomous) qualities that exist separately from the social field, is untenable. Linked to this, Foucault's positioning of power and knowledge as mutually constitutive, and at play in all social fields, similarly suggests that it is through discovering their particular applications now and in the past (i.e. "archaeology"), for disability theorists at least, that patterns of oppression instantiated through the operation of the human sciences could be uncovered and remedied. As noted though, the extent to which Foucault himself argued for an activist position, i.e. to make recommendations for social change based on his philosophy and analysis, is somewhat unclear.²² Olssen²¹ suggests that Foucault may have considered his approach suited to bringing about change in a local rather than global way, whereby local patterns of power, subjectification and resistance can be explored and revealed thus allowing the actors in the social field to at least understand experiences more clearly, or change them to bring about, in local contexts the equalization of power relations. Thus, Foucault, answering the question, "what replaces the system?", responds:

I think that to imagine another system is to extend our participation in the present system ... I would rather oppose actual experiences, than the possibility of a utopia. ^{23(p.230)}

Thus, it seems that Foucault, in terms of the possibility for change, could be seen as setting out a non-idealist perspective, i.e. one that recognizes the impossibility of idealism. However, it's fair to say that the translation of Foucault's ideas into the sociological critique of the medical model in disability studies and the field of special educational needs, has been much more

sanguine in calling for both local and global change.²⁴⁻²⁶ It's hard not to see the supranational movement around inclusion in educational settings as indeed pointing towards some sort of utopia. However, as Berlin notes,²⁷ utopian movements carry a risk of a form of oppression themselves, particularly if their underlying rationales remain unclear. The more salient point for the argument I am making here is that in this move to activism, and the specific content of what precisely we might draw from sociological critiques, as translated into a "movement" for inclusion, is unclear.

At the same time, in material reality, of course, no one can doubt the importance and force of this movement. There is, for example, near universal acceptance that, in terms of special educational needs, nobody wants to go back to the situation in many countries in the 1940s, 1950s and later, where some children were regarded as "educationally subnormal", and consigned in some cases to bleak specialist provision where they were both conveniently out of sight and out of mind, and where no real thought was given to their potential, their agency or their needs. There is, as Nussbaum²⁸ might put it, a broad agreement on the "conception of the good", in terms of thinking about difference in educational contexts. However, this wide acceptance has masked considerable complexity and tension.¹¹ The term inclusion, widely accepted as such a conception of the good, lacks conceptual clarity and specificity. It is true that approaches such as the biopsychosocial model have attempted to overcome the unresolved tensions between sociological and psychological perspectives on difference, particularly by recognizing the bodily reality of impairment.²⁹⁻³¹ I would posit that the actuality is that despite these efforts, the tensions remain unresolved. The evidence for such lack of resolution is all around us. Anyone who has attended an academic conference in the field of education or examined the papers published in many leading education journals will have seen the presentation of papers and research, which whilst no doubt not decrying the broad conception of the good of inclusion, come from radically different epistemological positions on how to conceive of difference. In parallel, despite the warm sounding preambles of international agreements and local legislation, following the trajectory of policy development post Salamanca, the phrase "reasonable adjustments" or "reasonable accommodations" invariably appears in the text.^{3,32} One does not need to consider in depth the political debates, primarily led by communal and activist groups, about the problematic nature of this language,^{33,34} to understand that the word reasonable reflects a significant site of unresolved tension. Some of this tension, in fact a crucial element of it, arises, I propose, from the idealist underpinnings of the inclusion movement. Sociological perspectives on difference, whether deriving from discursive sociological approaches such as Foucault or Derrida (at least in their activist forms), or from Marxist perspectives, tend, as Berlin³⁵ pointed out, to have an idealist underpinning, in that they at least create the impression that a final undisputed resolution to the question of how to deal with social issues, including the issue difference, is possible to achieve. It is this that has led us, in contemporary debates on inclusion in education, to naively

consider that there are simplistic solutions to the complexity of dealing with difference in the classroom. If only we can make sure that teachers have the correct attitudes and beliefs,⁹ if only we can get schools to adopt the right leadership models, if only we can get the correct mix of placement decisions and parental choice, if only we can have some more funding, then we can achieve truly inclusive schools, and a truly inclusive educational system.³⁶ It is not, of course, that we should not debate these matters, nor that they are not of crucial importance in the lives of children with special educational needs, their families and their communities. Indeed, they are of crucial importance to school leaders and teachers, particularly those teachers at the “chalk face”, who are at the locus where tensions in policy get played out. However, the point I am making is that the conceptual emptiness of the term inclusion, the lack of definition of what it might actually mean, prevents us from properly engaging in this debate. Conceptual terms which lack proper definition and derive from critically undertheorized idealism have a tendency to undergo a sort of mission creep. In respect of the term inclusion in the education space, this means that inclusion has at times been considered as equivalent to, or to encompass, concepts such as equity, democracy, diversity and so on.³⁷ Yet too often this happens by a sort of sleight of hand, whereby this conceptual elision is just accepted as unproblematic. However, it is not at all unproblematic, as it deprives us of the very critical conceptual tools that we need to make sense of the sites of tension, and the resulting debates about what actually we can do, and the limits of what we can do, in terms of working with difference in educational settings. I will return to some of the ways in which this happens in more depth in the next chapter.

One consequence of this conceptual elision in current debates on inclusion is that, in a sense, only one side of the argument is being properly considered. There are plenty of accounts of education and inclusion from the perspective of the sociological critique^{6,38,39} and from a sociocultural perspective.⁴⁰⁻⁴² Yet there has been, in my view largely due to the underlying idealizing tendency in how the term inclusion has been conceived of and deployed, a lack of consideration of other perspectives, which implicitly adheres to critique of psychological perspectives. Specifically, classical liberal, neoliberal, communitarian and indeed neo-conservative perspectives on underlying concepts including the purposes of education, the positioning of agency and autonomy in society, and political perspectives on the responsibilities or not of the state to individuals and families, and the resultant implications of such concepts for notions of inclusion in the educational field, are to a significant extent underplayed in the literature. This means that the relevance and implications of the value priorities of these perspectives, which cannot be ignored given their penetration into the real world, are largely absent from the debate. Now I should note that arguing for a full consideration of perspectives is not the same as arguing that the missing perspectives are, in some sense, correct or the right ones. It is rather to argue that the conceptual elision of the term inclusion, in masking over the different perspectives that can be taken, renders the debates that do take place

in a sense ineffective. Thus, my aim in introducing them is to achieve a fuller account, which will better inform the ways in which we can effectively discuss and come to necessary decisions in educational policy formation and educational practice.

Tensions and Dilemmas

It is not of course that tensions between sociological and psychological perspectives on difference have not been considered. However, I contend that this has usually been at the level of process, rather than from the perspective of differing value systems. Commonly, use has been made of the concept of “Dilemma of Difference”, which arises from the field of legal studies, as formulated by Minow.⁴³ Minow notes that categorization and labelling (typically inherently psychological) can form useful purposes but at the same time, mirroring a discursive sociological perspective, the very act of labelling brings with it the risk or the inevitability of stigmatization. Florian et al.⁴⁴ trace out in detail how this applies in respect of special educational needs (SEN) in schools, and Norwich¹³ illuminates where particular forms of the dilemma arise and translate into tensions for practice. I summarize below this approach and then go on to consider its limitations.

Identification/Resource-Stigma

Norwich considers that these include primarily identification, i.e. the act of applying the categorization and label to the child. In the dilemma of difference framework, identification (or as Norwich puts it the resource-stigma dilemma) is considered as providing a gateway for the allocation of resources and required provision, but at the same time carries with it the stigma of the label. In relation to provision, Daniels⁴⁵ has questioned whether in educational settings this is meaningful, pointing out the frequent lack of connection, in his view, between traditional diagnostic categories and educational strategies. In respect of stigma, there is also the linked issue of teacher expectations and of fixed notions of ability.^{46,47} In other words, the teacher, and indeed the wider community of school adults, can translate a diagnostic label, or even a fuzzy label such as special educational needs itself, or terms just used to denote that children need a bit more help, such as the use of “SEN Support” as a category in England mainstream schools, into a perception of individual children as inherently lacking potential, and not just lacking potential now, but in a fixed way throughout their school careers and beyond.⁴⁸

Placement

A related site of tension in relation to the dilemma of difference identified by Norwich is that of placement. Placing students in specialized provision such as special schools can potentially allow them to access provision which is more

tailored to their needs, in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and resources such as augmented communication.¹³ Teachers in specialist provision may also have more specific training and/or experience which can mean that they are better able to meet the individual needs of children with special educational needs. On the other hand, specialist provision means separation or exclusion from the mainstream “community” of their peers, both physically and socially. This separation can be considered in itself as a form of stigmatization, with potentially a significant impact on children’s self-concept. Almost inevitably, the curriculum in specialist settings will be a restricted adaptation of that which is available in mainstream settings. This, linked to the danger of reduced teacher expectations and notions of fixed ability, can mean that children with special educational needs in specialist settings may not fully meet their academic and social potential. This debate about mainstreaming has of course been one of the most perennial points of contention in international and national policy on special educational needs in recent decades.^{49,50} It also touches on other extant debates in wider educational policy, particularly that of parental school choice. There are also “downstream” linked debates about placement in mainstream settings. These debates include (a) the extent to which children should be placed into ability groupings either in primary or secondary schools,⁵¹ (b) how teaching assistants should be deployed in classrooms, particularly when assigned to or working with children with special educational needs⁵² and (c) the use of withdrawal whereby children with special educational needs are taken out of class for periods of time for specialized support or instruction (often by teaching assistants)⁵³ or via placement in specialist units attached to mainstream schools which may involve periods of time in both the unit and mainstream classes.⁵⁴

Curriculum

Curriculum is also identified as a site of tension in relation to the dilemma of difference.¹³ There is considerable overlap with the tensions identified with respect to identification and placement. Particularly in terms of whether tailoring the curriculum to meet individual needs runs the risk of stigmatization, separation and reduced expectations. This is clearly bound up with the issue of placement, in terms of special versus mainstream, as well as in relation to ability grouping and withdrawal. There are also wider issues of the national and local scoping of curriculum aims and content, linked to considerations of the aims of education. Theorists (and activists) have argued that a curriculum which is conceived of in relation to tightly specified measures of academic achievement, and aligned with the requirements of similarly tightly specified public examinations, reflects a limited or impoverished aim for education.^{55,56} This impoverishment includes the valuing of particular forms of knowledge, or overly favouring knowledge in terms of skills, leading to a restricted idea of ability,⁹ which inevitably reduces the potential for achievement of some children, usually those children who are, in a circular fashion, those identified as having special educational needs.

There have been some attempts particularly to overcome some of the tension in respect of curriculum via the adoption of “universal” teaching approaches, which focus on the individual needs of all children. For example, Universal Design for Learning (UDL)^{57,58} has now quite a long history in the US, in particular, and proposes that by flexibly assessing and responding to the individual needs of all children, issues of stigma and reduced expectations can be overcome. Norwich,³⁷ whilst somewhat doubtful that UDL has quite achieved this in practice, also broadly suggests that it is possible to overcome the dilemma of difference, in respect of at least some of its sites of tension, by ensuring that teachers are both aware of and actively manage the risks of identification, at the same time as taking account of the individual needs of learners.

Dilemmas and Values

The dilemma of difference is in my view a useful heuristic tool in terms of setting out a framework for both categorizing different aspects of sites of tension in attempts at inclusion. Some attempts have been made to make connections to value tensions, and particularly Norwich has laid the groundwork for considering dilemmas in relation to Berlin’s ideas on value commensurability.¹⁶ This is a theme which I develop considerably further in this book, and I argue that issues of tension in inclusion need to be examined at the level of political values, rather than the legal level of process which is the focus of the dilemma of difference. To clarify, by political values what I mean is the consideration of values within wider positions on the political organization of society and public services, not of course in the sense of everyday party politics.

If we take a short, fictional but illustrative example of what happens in classrooms, this will help illuminate this point. Imagine a six-year-old girl who her parents see as bright and articulate, and very interested in things like dolls, and Disney franchises like *Frozen*, and who can recite off by heart the latest pop songs. However, she struggles with decoding and reading and is not making age-appropriate progress. There are 30 other children in the class, some also who are struggling with different aspects of the curriculum. There is also a teaching assistant who is with the class some of the time. The school is also dealing with the aftermath of the COVID pandemic and the impact of missed schooling on a number of children. The school staff perceive the school as inclusive and the school uses a graduated approach to identifying and responding to needs. So taking this fictional scenario, the following questions might arise: How should the teaching assistant be deployed? What curriculum should be adopted in the class? How should we define its aims? Should it be modified for our putative subject alone, or for her and some of her classmates, or for the class or indeed the school as a whole? How much responsibility should devolve on the class teacher for the progress of this individual child? Are claims that the teacher or other teachers in the school, or

the school leadership corporately, might make about the issue of resourcing valid? What if the teacher feels overwhelmed by the complexity of the task of meeting all these needs – how should that be regarded?

These are questions primarily of resource allocation, including importantly the allocation of a key limiting resource – that of the teachers. Political values are the level at which such issues, i.e. dilemmas of and choices about resource allocation, occur. We can attempt some mapping between the legal and political value level to exemplify this. Thus, the identification dilemma could be mapped to a site of tension between the value of participation or belonging versus a value of equality of opportunity. Such a tension could operate in multiple ways. For example, the stigma attached to identification could reduce participation or belonging, yet labelling could allow for targeting of needs leading to more equal participation in learning. Alternatively, the identification dilemma could be considered a site of tension for the value of liberty (i.e. the free opportunity to maximize one's individual potential) versus the value of equality of outcome in that identification implies preferential resource allocation or changes to the classroom to meet the needs of individual children which may not always be optimal for other children. Liberty versus equality of outcome as a site of tension can also be considered to apply in the placement and curriculum dilemmas. Placement in mainstream might imply differential resource allocation to meet individual needs and specific curriculum adaptation which implies tension between meeting the needs of the individual (equality of outcome) and the needs of the wider group of children in the school (liberty). The dilemma of difference, as a legal and thus process level analysis, tends, I argue, to mask these value-based tensions, which operate at a wider political value level. Its application in the field may also mask the resource restraints which underpin sites of tension. Mapping the dilemma to value tensions shows how the dilemma is usually about how to allocate scarce resources, i.e. how much scarce resource could be allocated to meet the needs of an individual child as opposed to meeting the needs of the whole class. A focus on value tensions I contend has more potential to illuminate the actual sites of tension, particularly in regard to limited resources. Thus, the dilemma of difference does indeed help in identifying these questions and tensions, but perhaps does not give enough purchase in terms of working through in more useful depth how these questions might be properly answered. For example, how much time and effort should the class teacher allocate to the needs of our putative actor? What are the limits? Is there a minimum and maximum expectation? Where does the responsibility for effort lie? How much responsibility in terms of effort (also a resource issue) devolve on the child themselves (or their family), or are considerations of individual effort extraneous (whether in whole or in part) to what we should be thinking about with regard to inclusion? The point is that the current debates in the field about inclusion too often refuse, often due to ideological overdetermination on the part of theorists, to dig under assumptions about the political values and frameworks we might use in answering such questions.

The issue of resources and how they are allocated, and how we might think about whether this allocation is fair, and what impact that might have on others either in society more widely or in the microcosm of the society of the classroom or school, is a fundamental underlying issue in philosophical debates about the political structures of society and formulation and application of public policy in modern day societies, and in terms of debates on the aims, purposes and formulation of education policy in particular.^{59,60} Yet there is currently limited discussion of the underpinnings of such debates on political values in relation to the issue of inclusion in education. I propose that by delving in these underlying debates on political values, we can further illuminate the answers to some of the questions I have identified. The importance of such an endeavour can be seen by reflecting for a moment on the point that these are questions which, whether explicitly or implicitly, are “live”, every day, in the minds of all teachers and school leaders.

Hegemony

There is, as noted, a sense in which inclusion as a term has undergone a form of “conceptual creep”. Some have referred to this as a form of conceptual hegemony.^{61,62} Hegemony in modern times is a term heavily influenced by Gramsci’s^{63(3.2)} use of it in Marxist theory to indicate the development of consensus in society by which modern states, often through the activities of intellectuals, won over “potentially hostile social groups and classes”⁶⁴ and thus deflected threats to the power of the state. Thus, hegemony involves a mix of both consensus and compromise in relation to ideology (which penetrates through structures of civil society, such as the church, schools etc.) and which is operationalized in a pragmatic political sense, thus requiring a level of consensus across potentially disparate positions. It is in this sense of trying to achieve consensus across positions that are actually disparate that we might apply the term hegemonic to inclusion. The epistemological point, independent of the term used, though, is that inclusion has tended to expand the reach of areas that it covers and often is presented in the literature as being either equivalent to or overlapping with terms such as democracy, equality, equity and social justice.^{65–67} As Norwich¹³ has noted, if it means all these things or equates to any or all of them, then it is hard to specify what it does mean as a differentiated concept. Putting this in Gramsci’s terms, consensus might be achieved, but importantly what is meant in terms of material relations might be unclear. Consensus for Gramsci is linked to the “foundational Marxist principle that social consciousness ‘corresponds’ to material relations of production”.^{64(3.5)} I would propose that a Marxist view of material relations is not fundamental to recognizing, as Gramsci does, that political economic questions underpin ideological consensus and cannot be ignored. In other words, we need to understand what a concept means in terms of its implications for resource allocation to make sense of it in a political sense. Thus, although I make use of the term hegemony in this book in relation to

inclusion, it is with a caveat in terms of not necessarily accepting a specific view of materialist economics in relation to it, but rather to illustrate how concepts can “grow” and, through such growth, lose cohesion and practical meaning, particularly in an economic (i.e. resource related) sense.

One example of such hegemonic concept growth is the elision of inclusion as a concept with that of democracy. Thus, for example, Booth and Ainscow^{68(p.20)}, in their influential *Index of Inclusion*, write:

Inclusion in the *Index*, then, is a principled approach to the development of education and society. It is linked to democratic participation within and beyond education. It is not about an aspect of education to do with a particular group of children. It is concerned with bringing coherence to the development activities that take place under a variety of headings so that they encourage the learning and participation of everyone: children and their families, staff and governors and other community members.

Such a move often involves a particular positioning which even though it may conceptualize democracy as deliberative, i.e. as a process for the negotiation of different perspectives within society, ultimately uses the force and authority of the majority to come to decisions on such different perspectives. This is often linked to a universalizing function, in which once such decisions are made, the state takes on a role to promote such perspectives as a good within society, the authority for such positioning as a good comes through the decision of the majority. Olssen’s discussion of thin communitarian perspectives on education,²¹ and Carr and Kemmis⁶⁹ (broad) critical perspective on education, are two good examples of this approach. Of course, there have been considerations of the relationship between inclusion and democracy, with Marion Young⁷⁰ in particular focusing, through a critical theory lens, on how inclusion in respect of democracy needs more focus on facilitating participation in the political process, specifically for marginalized groups in society, in addition to notions of deliberative democracy. As Biesta⁷¹ discusses, considering Young’s approach in relation to education, schooling plays a central role in the question of how and under what circumstances the capacity for participation is developed. However, for both Young and Biesta, a detailed discussion of what inclusion might mean in this context is lacking, except for their assertion that it has some connection, as above, with a critical, revolutionary concept of the “good”, which is unproblematically to be imposed via democratic processes. Yet there is of course a quite different liberal perspective on democracy, the tradition of Mill, Locke, de Tocqueville, and Berlin, which sees the primary function of democracy as a structure and associated processes to defend the rights of the individual against the power of the state, a key element of which is to protect private property rights. One could consider these two quite different approaches as, in Berlin’s terms, a positive liberty versus a negative liberty approach to democracy. These different approaches potentially imply quite contrasting emphasis on political values and on resource allocation – most

obviously a positive liberty approach might emphasize the value of redistribution of resources to achieve equality, and a negative liberty approach might give more emphasis to the protection of individual economic rights (liberty). Based on my contention that value tensions in inclusion and education are usually economic, it is clear that (a) a simple equation between inclusion and democracy is not possible, and (b) attempting to simply “add in” democracy as a concept to inclusion does not help to illuminate for us what inclusion might mean in any useful sense.

Exploring Values Further

If then we need to go further in exploring the values underlying sites of tension related to inclusion, I want to consider what framework might be useful in thinking about values and what specific values might be in play. Of course, the place of values in educational decision making has long been noted. Willower⁷² noted that values are key to the practice of education as it so often involves multiple decisions, with the constant choosing one action over another. Values influence the decisions that we make. There is though little agreement across disciplines about precisely how to define values. Taking Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s⁷³ seminal paper, they consider that values are conceptions of the desirable, either of individuals or more widely across groups, that influence actions. Desirable in his sense is normative, meaning what should be desired, rather than what necessarily is desired. Hodgkinson,⁷⁴ writing in relation to education, differentiates between simple preferences, values which can by rational discovery be linked to consequences or that enjoy a consensus within a particular society, and values that in an idealist sense are “transrational”. Hodgkinson cites justice, equality and dignity as examples of the latter. How and why such transrational values might arise and be sustained or defended against is the subject of much debate. This is closely linked to the issue of how to judge between different values when they come into conflict when making decisions. Some, notably Dewey, have argued that the demarcation between rational and transrational values, based as it is on some form of teleological or Kantian view of a universal moral law, is unclear.⁷⁵ Rather, Dewey argues that values are pragmatic, always linked to the consequences of particular actions, and that it is a kind of post-hoc evaluation of their contextual impact that allows for the assignment of moral worth to values, rather than any transrational or idealist framework.

Notwithstanding the varying perspectives on what values are, and how they are derived, lists of values in relation to inclusion and education are not uncommon. For example, Booth’s framework of inclusive values is quite commonly referred to in the literature. His list is as follows:^{76(p.309)}

equality; rights; participation; respect for diversity, [concern for] community, sustainability, non-violence, trust, honesty, courage, joy, compassion, love/care, optimism/hope, and beauty [in] gratuitous acts of kindness.

However, quite how these are selected, established and derived, who they apply to or indeed how they might intercalate with each other is somewhat underexplored by Booth and by most writers making use of the list. Nor is it very clear how conflicts between these values might be considered in the practice of inclusion. Some of the terms are also used in a particular way – so for example courage is used perhaps in the sense of being courageous in overcoming oppression. This is of course a perfectly laudable value in itself, but it is also quite different from how courage, or other omitted values such as loyalty and responsibility, might be employed if coming from a classically liberal or conservative, as opposed to, as Booth does, a postmodern largely Foucauldian-inspired perspective.

Going back to our fictional classroom story, might there be a conflict between compassion and honesty, for example? Could honesty involve an evaluation of the limits of ability for example, and would this be in conflict with the values of hope or compassion? Putting this another way, should the teacher have realistic limits on the expectations for what individual children can achieve, i.e. expectations and thus curriculum aims which are tailored to their needs? If so, is that in conflict with maintaining their self-esteem? It's not clear to me that this list, and others like it, in their raw form, do particularly help teachers in understanding what inclusion might mean for classroom practice. It's also notable that in Booth's list and others,^{77,78} no in-depth account is taken of resource constraints. Thus, in these lists of values for education and inclusion, the omission of consideration of the tensions between equality of opportunity, equality of outcome, and liberty, contingent on resource limitations, central to such debates in all spheres of the work of the welfare state, including very much in education,⁵⁹ seems a notable absence. I argue that at least part of the reason for this lack of clarity and indeed precision in terms of what value conflicts there might be is due to the hegemonic quality that inclusion as a concept has taken on in its trajectory from discursive sociological critique through to activist agenda in education, which has served to empty it of truly useful content. In order to arrive at a more productive account of inclusion, one which takes proper account of underlying conflicts about values, I will turn in the next chapter to a more in-depth discussion of political values in relation to public policy.

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2 Value Pluralism and Liberalism

Berlin, Liberalism and Other Perspectives

A key aspect of political debates about public policy is that of disagreement. There is no one position that theorists or governments have adopted. Foucault's discursive analysis, although certainly not lacking in impact on political thinking, particularly in relation to public policy and the welfare state, is in the end just one perspective. As such, even if it had a kind of universal acceptance within inclusion and education, given that in the real-world classrooms are very much not at all split off from the rest of the world or from wider public policy, it's something of a non-starter to suggest that in any practical sense, we can just stay with that one perspective and still find it a useful concept for the practical challenges that education and educators face. Value conflicts and different political perspectives on value prioritization are in all aspects of our lives, all the time. In this chapter, and the book as a whole, I consider debates on political values, including John Rawls' seminal thinking, very much underplayed in the writing on education and inclusion. I also have a particular focus on Isaiah Berlin. This is because much of Berlin's writing, and that of his commentators (such as John Gray and George Crowder), focus on value conflicts and their persistence in the public policy sphere. I also focus on Berlin because of his specific commitment to (a) the importance of negative liberty (or freedom), a value that many theorists writing about inclusion and education underplay,¹⁻³ and (b) as John Gray⁴ argues, his straddling of Enlightenment values at the same time as his opposition to its one of its fundamental positions – that idealist universality will overcome the particularity of culture.

Berlin's focus on liberty was, in my view, linked to his early experiences. He was born into a Jewish family in Russia in 1909 and witnessed the 1917 revolutions before his family fled to England in 1921. Just after the start of the February revolution, Berlin went for a walk and saw a group of men dragging another terrified man away. It later came to light that the terrified man was a policeman who likely was being dragged away to be lynched.⁵ This and other experiences of the revolutions, as a young boy, had a lasting impact on Berlin, and it's fair to say they influenced his focus on freedom

in his scholarly writing. As such, Berlin's conception of liberalism is rooted in a concern to protect the liberty of the individual against the power of the state. Thus, he sees liberalism's most important feature as lying in the lessons learned in Britain during the Reformation,³ namely that it is better to allow for different conceptions of the good life, and to restrict the role of the state in deciding on such matters for people or families. In other words, it is better to allow plurality of religious thought rather than to burn people at the stake for holding to a different theology from that adopted by the state at any one time. It is this lesson, which for Berlin could be observed as a lesson arising from history as much as from his own personal experience, which explains his focus on, and to an extent privileging of, the concept of negative liberty in liberalism, although as Gray⁴ notes he was also well aware of the possible abuses of negative liberty. Berlin also agreed with Popper⁶ that Enlightenment rationality, in differentiating between superstition and reason, also underpins the idea of liberty, as from this perspective it is only through rational open debate that we can come to a conception of what the good might be. However, as with other liberal thinkers, this commitment to pluralism, and specifically in Berlin's case to values pluralism, raises the perennial question of how, in a pluralist system, we (a) underpin the general agreements about what we might expect as minimum conceptions of the good in liberal democracy – that is how we avoid a collapse into relativism, and (b) how in terms of public policy we balance between different values. It is this focus on balancing values, or indeed value choice, that is particularly relevant to inclusion and education.

Berlin was of course writing at a particular point in time, and other theoretical positions in political philosophy are also germane to the questions I raise. Which values are given priority and how conflicts between them are assessed varies between (classical) liberalism/libertarian, neoliberal, communitarian, and conservative or neoconservative modes of thought.¹ The balance between the emphasis on economic (i.e. approaches for the allocation of resources) and other concerns also varies between these modes. However, the impact of these different modes on how we think about education cannot be denied. This is particularly important if we consider, as noted by Olssen, that education is the most significant way in which public policy in modern states is enacted.⁷ The differential connections between these modes to questions such as the aims of education, the content of curriculum, the balance between knowledge, skills and attitudes, how to position activism within the sphere of education, the extent to which we are or are not free rationale agents, and the place of liberty within education and its relative importance compared say to tradition, is multifaceted. As such, they bring to bear, inescapably on how we might think about the idea of inclusion in education, and when it comes to value choices, they underpin, in my view, how we can come to make sense of, if not come to any easy resolution of, the choices faced by educators when dealing with difference in the classroom.

Forms of Liberalism

Classical liberalism takes many forms although most would agree that in its initial forms it developed as a reaction against the unrestrained power of the monarch over the individual in the 17th century.^{8,9} Laissez-faire liberalism, associated with Adam Smith, Hayek, Locke and Nozick, has a more economic focus, positioning private property rights and the working of the market, along with restrictions on the role of government in interfering with either of these. Of course, concerns about a particular sense of justice also interpenetrate in this mode of thinking with concerns about the right of the individual and the family to be free from interference from the state, particularly in terms of culture and family and religion, in a much wider sense than the purely economic. In contrast, social liberalism^{8,9} has a modified conception of justice, privileging a concern for fair allocation of resources to ensure that all members of society have a minimum set of those required to achieve their goals. Rawls, Dworkin, Kymlicka and even perhaps Nussbaum are commonly associated with this type of liberalism,¹⁰ which tends to give a greater role to the state, particularly in terms of ensuring that resources are shared out in a more equal fashion.

The focus on what Berlin would call negative liberty in liberal thought raises the issue, as noted, of the warrants, in liberal thought, for privileging the ideas of non-interference by the state given the commitment to pluralism. A universalist perspective on liberalism, based on the liberal conception of the free agentic individual coming in a Kantian sense via rational enquiry to an understanding of the untethered ideal, proposes that liberal principles and structures (most commonly the structures of liberal democracy) are the best possible form of government, and have a universal application independent of culture, geography or time. In contrast, a particularist perspective on liberalism makes more restricted claims, namely that liberal principles and structures might best apply to those who have a tradition aligned to liberal values or value ordering. Therefore, the idea that liberal democracy is something that should be promulgated across the world has less resonance. Crowder^{8,9} notes that the most common approach in the literature to justify liberalism is neutral universality, which Crowder argues Rawls¹¹ adopts in his influential *Theory of Justice*. Such a conception draws on Locke and Mill in setting out that the role of the state should be restricted, as in Berlin's negative liberty, to preventing harm to others in a narrow sense, tolerating (neutrally) a range of conceptions of the good life and associated modes of community living and operation.

Rawls and Justice

Rawls proposed that we can reach a “reflective equilibrium” on questions of justice not just on questions we might be sure of (such as opposition to religious intolerance or racial discrimination) but also where there might be less immediate clarity. In order to achieve clarity, he proposes an imaginary “first conditions” situation which leads via rational enquiry to a set of principles for justice. Rawls

calls this the original position and in this there is a “veil of ignorance” which prevents the individuals in the situation knowing anything about people in the situation, including themselves, such as their age, gender, wealth, religion, or their conception of the good. This means that, as Mandle and Roberts-Cady¹² note, they must consider the principles from the perspective of everyone. What they do know, Rawls explains, is that rationally they would prefer a particular share of what he calls primary social goods, such as basic political freedoms, and fair equality of opportunity to access positions within society. Rawls argues then that the principles which would be derived from the first position are:^{11(p.266)}

First principle: Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberties for all. [the liberty principle]

Second principle: Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both:

(a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged [the difference principle] and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity [fair equality of opportunity principle]

The difference principle is a key element of the social liberalism of Rawls, which avers a strict definition of justice and rather argues that if there are to be unequal social and economic social positions, then these must serve to overall benefit the least advantaged in society than if they were not there (i.e. if everything was distributed equally). As Mulholland and Swift¹³ note, Rawls’ implication is that the innate capacities with which we are borne are random and that inherently there is no intrinsic rationale for reward based on such capacities, although there may be a consequentialist one if they serve to benefit others. That does not mean that there should not be reward for effort. It should as this will benefit everyone, and this individual reward and distributive justice can coexist – thus, for example, if someone is incentivized to find a cure for cancer, everyone benefits. Cureton¹⁴ applies this in relation to disability, noting that the rationale for Rawls’ theory of justice is that a system of mutual cooperation, within limits of liberty (the first principle), will bring greater benefits to everyone in the society, than if there were no system of mutual cooperation at all. How though to differentiate innate capacity and effort remains an issue in Rawls’ theory and more widely. Rawls’ perspective on justice also implies a particular view of the individual as both asocial in the Kantian sense and psychologically driven primarily by self-interest.

Further Rawls advocates that the liberty principle has to take precedence, and in other writing ^{15(p.209)} notes in a similar way that the “right takes precedence over the good”, i.e. that there is in general no preferencing of one theory of the good over the other, but that when the liberal framework encompassing the social field comes into conflict with one conception of the good, it is the liberal framework that takes precedence.^{8,9} Rawls’ insistence on this reflects his

underlying liberalism in that it reflects his belief, shared with Berlin, that it is the ability for the individual to make choices that is an overarching value.

Justice and Other Values

The values that are in contention in public policy are wide ranging and often subject to debate as to definition (see for example Sen¹⁶). It is not within the scope of this book to interrogate all of those debates; however, it will be useful to set out a stance on some of the key values considered here. Rawls considers justice ‘as fairness’, i.e. that society can only be properly just if there is a social redistributive aspect, albeit within limits, to its structures. Berlin, and classical liberals such as Hayek or Nozick, adopt a strict, and indeed common usage, view of justice as a value in which justice is primarily about desert (i.e. reward) for effort and choice, although as noted, in less strict, form social liberals such as Rawls do not discount in whole the importance of desert. Effort is of course itself a choice and this view of justice reflects the belief, following Kant, that it is the ability to choose, and potentially to choose well, that is the defining feature of our humanity. This is a view of (strict) justice as the justice of the court-house, and by extension to life in general, for example as in the justice of equal application of rules in the classroom. Such a view of justice also encompasses a notion of equal treatment under the law.

Redistribution is also important in the debate on the values of equality and equity. Minow,¹⁷ writing in 2021, notes that these terms have both taken on a political polarization in recent decades and lacked conceptual clarity in their application in the literature and policy application. For this book, I prefer, following Minow, to consider the debate in terms of equality of opportunity, in contrast to equality of outcome. It is often equality of outcome that is positioned in liberalism, such as by Berlin, as being in tension with the value of liberty (or freedom, terms used mostly interchangeably by Berlin⁸). Minow notes how equality of outcome can conflict with liberty, justice as desert, and indeed diversity as values. In illustrating this, Minow,^{17(p.186)} echoing liberals such as Hayek, forcefully cites Vonnegut’s dystopian account of a world in which the law “dictate[s] that all Americans are fully equal and disallows anyone from being smarter, better looking, or more physically able than anyone else. Enforcement of the ‘equality laws’ forces citizens to equip themselves with disabling devices, including an earpiece radio that blares loud sounds to disrupt the thoughts of intelligent people and heavy weights that burden the strong or athletic”.¹⁸

Objections to the Liberal Position

Objections have of course been considerable to the general liberal position set out above. This critique focuses on the assumption of individual autonomy and/or agency, counter arguing, particularly from sociological discursive¹⁹ and communitarian²⁰ perspectives, that the idea of the agentic individual which can

be separated from societal connections, a foundational point in liberalism, is untenable. In its Marxist form, this critique focuses on liberalism's inadequate consideration of material cultural and historical factors that influence society as a whole.¹³

A related aspect of these critiques is the objection to the idea that even in their neutral form, liberal political structures are not really neutral and in fact have hidden differential impacts on different segments within society.²¹ For example, historically marginalized groups, even in Rawls' social liberalism adopting a sufficitarian position,²² can be regarded as lacking proper equal opportunities.^{23,24} Crowder notes the assumption against tradition in liberalism: that in the very act of creating the space for individuals to pursue their own ideas about the good life, supposedly neutral liberalism promotes "certain values in preference to others: toleration rather than orthodoxy, freedom rather than solidarity, diversity rather than community, debate rather than agreement, experiment rather than tradition"^{8(p.30)} Communitarian critiques^{25,26} note the assumption of the socially unanchored autonomous agent and the values associated with this that underlie classical liberalism.

The liberal defence to these objections can be an appeal to a limited pluralism. It may well be the case that liberalism is not wholly neutral, but as Rawls²⁷ and Dworkin²⁸ argue, it is the best attempt possible, a best approximation, of allowing the maximum space within public structures, for different conceptions of the good life to be freely expressed. Rawls seems then, in response to such critiques, to move in his later writing²⁷ to a more particularist position on liberalism. Thus, Rawls argues that liberalism draws its foundation from a shared political culture, which all can agree on, such agreement being found in particular nations, which are not then part of a comprehensive liberal programme, and that there is a limit to the political discourse of ideas in liberal democracies. Thus, for example, liberalism if taken to imply support for diversity may set limits on the extent, at least in public discourse, to which individuals and groups can criticize or otherwise object to forms of diversity such as sexuality. The consequence for Rawls' reliance on this defence is that it becomes much more difficult to make a universalist claim for liberalism, specifically to claim its international application across the many societies that do not have a history of liberal democratic culture.

Rawls and Disability

Rawls has been criticized for ignoring the fact that there are many people in society who may not be able to either (a) engage in the reflection involved in the original position scenario, or (b) contribute to society in terms of the mutual cooperation implied by Rawls, and as such, it would seem that Rawls ignores or even excludes from citizenship individuals with disabilities, particularly those whose disabilities might be considered profound. Thus, Kittay²⁹ and Nussbaum³⁰ suggest that Rawls ignores the care that any "just society" needs to give to those with disabilities (as well as children and the elderly).

Rawls can, I think, be defended from these critiques. As Cureton¹⁴ notes, firstly Rawls did not set out to solve all issues that could be presented in a society in his analysis, noting that societies would undergo a process leading to reflective equilibrium in which competing demands and needs would be resolved. More importantly, the critique of Rawls misses the point that his notion of mutual cooperation in no way precludes the idea that society cannot include people with disabilities nor that caring for them and ensuring that they have equal access to primary social goods undermines mutual cooperation or a notion of justice. In fact, just the opposite, the difference principle implicitly proposes that justice involves taking note of those who are least advantaged, which would include those with disabilities.^{14,31} The crucial argument of Rawls is that if society is made up of people with a typical amount of self-interest, the model of mutual cooperation he proposes is better than no system of cooperation at all and serves to balance the competing needs and demands of individuals. Thus, individual liberty is balanced with a wider (redistributive) notion of equality of outcome. Rawls' theory does, though, as a liberal position, imply limits to such balancing. If a society was required to provide an enormous amount of resources to meeting the needs of individuals who could not mutually contribute, then the overall system of mutual cooperation would likely collapse. Putting this another way, within Rawls, there is a clear recognition that accommodation has to be reasonable when balancing individual liberty with equality of outcome.

Public versus Private Spheres

There has been considerable attention by liberal theorists to the difference between public and private spheres. Rawls²⁷ argues, to a significant extent, as part of his defence of critiques of liberal positions, that individuals or families that do not accept liberal values such as diversity, tolerance etc. or who give stronger preference to opposing values can still adopt these in the private sphere, i.e. within the family or localized community. Thus, the assumption is that in the public sphere and in terms of political and public policy structures, liberal values will be dominant, and individuals or groups who disagree with these will have their freedom, for example, to stridently advocate views based on these values curtailed. This is of course a key issue for education, and the extent to which the state, particularly via curriculum requirements, should impose liberal values on all children and families illuminates the tensions that Crowder⁹ and others such as Galston^{32,33} have noted in this defence by Rawls. If one of the aims of education in liberal societies is to give children the necessary tools to engage in liberal civic activity and discourse, it becomes difficult to see how Rawls' tight demarcation between public and private operates.

Other liberal thinkers such as Raz³⁴ have taken a much more explicit universalist stance, arguing that we can know that some ways of life and values

which underpin liberal democracy constitute the path to the good life, and the state is fully justified in intervening, all the way down through public and private structures, to promote this. Thus, from the perspective of Raz, in respect of education, the state is justified in promoting a required curriculum that actively promotes liberal values, even where they conflict with the private values of families.

Such debates are represented in the influential writings of Terry Mclaughlin³⁵ on political values in education, particularly in relation to civics. He discusses how, whether in terms of a specific civics curriculum, or more widely in terms of the broader hidden curriculum of the school, civics can be positioned as either thick, actively promoting liberal values, or thin, minimizing the extent to which such values, beyond a minimum required for social functioning within the school, are promoted. Mclaughlin's importance is his reminder to us that the extent to which common schools (i.e. mainstream schools funded by the state and potentially open to all children) should or should not be involved in promoting a particular conception of the good life has been an area of considerable debate.

A thick position such as that adopted by Raz is, in Berlin's terms, much closer to a view of positive rather than negative liberty. For Berlin, the danger of such a position, in my reading, is the risk of the active denial of freedom by the state. Berlin, in *Two Concepts of Liberty*, argues that the dangers of positive liberty, as proposed by theorists such as Raz, are that once this view is taken, once it is assumed that the real self, perhaps unknown to the individual, can be uncovered through his education into the true morality, then the natural tendency is for those who know best to "bully, oppress, torture them..."²(p.180) in the name of freedom. As Gray⁴ notes, Berlin argues that counter to the Enlightenment, there is such real "higher" self that can be so differentiated. Of course, there is potentially quite a distance between bully and torture, and as Olssen⁷ rightly points out, considerable difference between oppression in authoritarian states and oppression in liberal democracies. However, I tend to disagree with Olssen, as indeed did Berlin,⁴ that somehow the mere fact of democratic structures or consensus obviates the risk of state oppression. It's also the case that Berlin did not make this critique specifically in relation to universalist liberal thinkers (although neither did he exclude them). His target was more widely all hegemonic modes of thinking, all approaches which he saw, as outlined in his essay on *Historical Inevitability*,³ as predicated on a view of the one true approach to the good life – idealist perspectives (including those stemming from the Enlightenment) which privileged the march of historical forces, such as in Marxism, and which we could extend, I think, to the hegemonic tendency implicit in activist forms of the sociological critique. It is also relevant to note again here that Berlin did not have a simplistic view of positive versus negative liberty – he saw a place for both, but wanted nevertheless to emphasize the risks of positive liberty.⁹

Communitarian Perspectives

The communitarian critique of Rawls in particular challenges the liberal account of justice, arguing that it fails to adequately consider the relationship between individuals and their communities, leading to a limited view of the state's role. This critique is particularly focused on Rawls' concept of the self, which is seen as overly individualistic and detached from communal values.^{36,37} Sandel's^{20,25} well-known communitarian critique of Rawls argues that Rawls' (and other social liberals) argument that the asocial Kantian individual is a pre-attached consciousness that is split off from ends when making decisions about them, i.e. that they somehow choose in some disinterested way, is untenable. Sandel argues that in fact ends are constitutive of identity (as the self is at least partially socially situated), and thus decisions about ends involve an intra-subjective awareness of how the individual is linked to wider community-based ends as well as ends purely related to the individual's own self-interest. This ontological reality, Sandel argues, is masked, for example, by the way Rawls' constructs the first position scenario. Rawls' response to these critiques in his later writing¹³ is that he does not set out a metaphysical account of the person overall but rather an account located in relation to the political sphere only, i.e. people can have ends and attachments and community and identity in the private sphere and this is to be expected as long as this is voluntary (although communitarians might ask how voluntary).²⁷ Thus, Rawls argues that it is in the political sphere that it is important to preserve a democratic space for the "right" before the 'good'. However, as discussed, it is questionable whether the private and public can be so neatly split off either ontologically or practically, and if they can, whether this then reduces the scope of the claims of liberalism.

Communitarians such as Sandel also make the useful distinction between identity formation and agentic action, arguing that rather than being asocial, identity is created through positioning in community, and that a distinction can be drawn between the creation of the self and the self as an active agent. Thus, it can be argued that for Sandel and other weaker communitarian critiques, their position is not to suggest a full-blown deconstruction of the subject as an active agent,⁸ and the debate may be considered more practically as being about how we balance these values with others in the political and policy structures within liberal democracies.¹³ However, this still leaves the question as to practically how such balancing should happen or what values should be involved.

Neoliberalism, Liberalism and Economics

Biebricher³⁸ sets out a view of neoliberalism as a coherent development from classical liberal thought which is characterized by a concern to consider how the freedoms offered by the operation of the market can be properly conceived of and supported to function in modern technological societies. Neoliberalism

supports political structures that are committed to negative liberty in viewing “big government” with suspicion, particularly the regulatory state, and is disapproving of large government spending. Neoliberalism is also committed to democratic institutions and the welfare state within limits. In particular, compared to *laissez-faire* trends of thought in classical liberalism, it has a far clearer commitment to the requirements to correct failures in the market, and thus in a Rawlsian sense, ensure from a sufficitarian and/or consequentialist perspective that everyone has the resources/goods to participate in the economy, and thus supports in principle the welfare state including services such as universal access to education and healthcare.

Although neoliberalism is often considered as primarily economic in orientation, the main neoliberal theorists, such as Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, did not see a sharp distinction between wider political structures and purely economic ones. As argued by Whyte,³⁹ this is because, as in classical liberal thinking, the operation of a free market is linked both to a) the structures necessary to allow the proper functioning of such a market and, b) further in terms of ends, the implicit conception of the good life within neoliberalism that is based on the idea of freedom, and the idea that it is through free market choices, as opposed to any other possible system, that individual preferences can best be expressed and resolved.

Similarly, Hayek and Friedman take a somewhat neutralist view of public policy, being largely neutral on what constitutes the good life.⁴⁰ They do not argue, as some have,⁴¹ that a key element in neoliberal thought is that competition between people or profit seeking is some sort of privileged value. Neoliberalism is also not, as some have suggested,⁴¹ opposed to the state or typically in favour of the state as a night watchman, such as in Nozickian libertarianism.³⁹ Although neoliberal theorists are concerned about the limits of state power, this concern arises from how to deal with the requirements of modern technological states, as well as being a response to the negative consequences arising from centralized state planning in the post war era in the Soviet Union, China, and the fascist experience during the war. Neoliberal concerns are also a response to big state social democratic, particularly Keynesian, macroeconomic policies and their implementations, and perceived negative consequences in, for example, Roosevelt’s New Deal and the Labour party’s welfare state in the UK.³⁹

From the perspective of the argument I am developing in this book, it is interesting to note the way neoliberalism is used as a kind of catch-all term for the evils of much government policy,³⁸ particularly in relation to inclusion. It is striking how often the general literature on inclusion fails in a serious attempt to account for the normative theoretical underpinnings of neoliberalism (or classical liberalism) and to properly critique these.⁴² Linked to this, the discussions of issues of resourcing (i.e. economics) in the literature on education and inclusion, in most of the literature, are also limited. Resources, whether capital or revenue, or in terms of the workload and expectations on individual teachers, are often absent from the debate. Yet at both national and

local level, resources are a key issue, as the neoliberal policy trajectory suggests, for any aspects of the operation of public policy.⁴³

Hayek's Social Knowledge

Neoliberalism is often non-idealist, rejecting the possibility of coming to an understanding, through a central function, of what works best.³⁹ Hayek,⁴⁴ in his theory of social knowledge, argued that the information in modern-day societies is too complex and fragmented for any central authority to be able to in any sense properly capture it, and that attempts to do so will inevitably lead to inefficiency, as they cannot adequately reflect the complexity of aggregate personal preferences. He believed that the free market, with its decentralized decision-making process and price mechanism, represents the only practical way to capture preference information, and thus is a more effective way to allocate resources, encourage innovation, and respond to the diverse needs and preferences of individuals. Linked to this, Hayek^{45,46} and other neoliberal thinkers also consider, resonant with Berlin's critique of positive liberty, that the idealist position in socialism and some forms of social liberalism – that government policy can change people to a significant extent so that altruism rather than justice becomes their defining internal value – is misguided. Taken together, these two positions highlight for neoliberal thinkers, on a consequential basis, the risks to liberty and happiness of an over emphasis in public policy on central planning. As Hayek noted: ^{46(p.133)}

[coercion is] ... made to serve another man's will, not for his own but for the other's purpose.

These are both economic and political concerns. Decisions on taxation, the public administration of the welfare state, public pronouncements on what the good life should be by government, the “nudging” of people's behaviour proposed by some thin communitarians,^{7,47} all involve, in social democratic policy, the coercion that neoliberal thinkers like Hayek fear. However, despite these concerns, in terms of public policy, the imperative to consider and respond to difference or disadvantage, and to provide for these via the welfare state, is one of the defining aspects of neoliberalism, in contrast to classical liberalism.³⁸ However, neoliberal thought has also set limits on the welfare state and its size, and prioritized personal responsibility and choice in ways which often contrast, significantly, with “progressive” perspectives.⁴⁸ Yet in bringing a critique of neoliberalism in public policy, many coming from an activist sociological, Marxist, or social democratic positions have failed to give a proper consideration to the actual positions made by theorists such as Hayek. As Kristol noted,⁴⁹ the tendency is to just assume the argument, and thus to avoid debating whether there might be sites of tension to be considered. From the perspective of education and inclusion, such an approach fails to consider that there are different values and perspectives which are inevitably in play

materially in schools in modern technological societies. Thus, Seldon³⁸ noted that social democrats in favour of the unrestricted expansion of the welfare state tend to note the benefits of welfare but ignore the negative aspects in terms of taxation, family cohesion, liberty and conflict arising from the imposition of particular modes of thinking on minorities. The welfare state's implementation leads to value tensions, and in particular choices in relation to these often have economic implications. As I will explore in later chapters, such tensions extend down into the classroom and the school. I contend in this book that teachers and schools cannot effectively engage with these tensions if they are swept under the carpet.

Liberal Thought and Education

I turn now to the application of liberal thinking to education policy. Tooley, in discussing the contribution of the seminal liberal educational theorist E.G. West,⁴⁰ highlights key issues for liberalism and education as (a) the role of education in providing the tools or resources for citizens to be autonomous, (b) the linked question of the extent to which compulsion in terms of liberal beliefs can be imposed on citizens and whether this can or cannot be separated into public and private domains, (c) the rights or duties of parents in relation to children and how the family is conceived of as a unit and in relation to the state, (d) the linked question of the duties of even a relatively minimalist state in the protection of the child, and (e) what Friedman classifies as externalities or neighbourhood effects, i.e. the extent to which a lack of effective education of the individual child has wider impacts on other people in society.⁴⁰

Friedman⁵⁰ noted that for a democratic liberal state to operate, children need to have a minimum level of literacy, knowledge and common values, and that if they don't have these, then this per force impacts on other people. Because of these externalities, Friedman advocated a minimum level of schooling should be mandated for children, although, following general neoliberal principles, he felt argued that the state should not be involved in the direct provision of education, and proposed the use of voucher systems. Hayek⁴⁶ adopts a similar perspective and both Hayek and Friedman argue as well for a protectionist view of the state in relation to children and specifically as well with regard to education.⁴⁰ Thus, they reject libertarian views of the child (e.g. Nozick⁵¹) which position children in practice as the property of their parents, and they require, on protectionist grounds, parents to be individually and solely responsible for providing a minimum level of schooling to their children. There is of course very considerable ongoing debate on these matters, and thinkers such as Kymlicka,⁵² Mclaughlin,⁵³ Gutman,⁵⁴ Taylor,⁵⁵ Scheffler,⁵⁶ Reich,⁵⁷ and Galston^{32,58} have debated the extent to which a liberal conception of schooling, whether in thin or thick³⁵ formulation, should lead to detailed curriculum specification as to what should be taught in schools in terms of civics for the development of public democratic autonomy, and

how this intercalates with the private domain and the rights of, for example, minority groups who opt for an unexamined life for their children.

Hayek felt, as with Friedman, that the state's involvement in directly providing education, in order to obviate risks to freedom, should be minimized and in particular argued, in common with Adam Smith,⁵⁹ that the state should not be involved with the training and provision of teachers and thus for an independent market for teachers to offer their services, as state control would 'corrupt' the teachers as well as erect unnecessary barriers to entry to the profession.⁴⁰ Thus, they argued for a position which was common in England prior to the 1870 Education Act and the advent of universal state education. Of course, such an argument may well appear, to many of us, as jarring in the 21st century, although it is relevant to note that historically, in general, the advent of mass schooling preceded government regulation of education.⁵⁹ Further, quite a few modern theorists (not least Foucault) have argued for greater consideration of the negative impacts of state regulation in the caring professions.⁶⁰⁻⁶²

I spend time reflecting on these historical trajectories not to bring an argument for some kind of laissez-faire utopia (or dystopia), but rather to note that the common international consensus about both education and education for inclusion obscures, as perhaps Foucault might have argued, particular patterns of thinking, which have a history and derivation, and that uncovering these may allow us to better understand, in my terms, the tensions (if not the power relations) that we need to deal with in approaching difference in the classroom.

Protection and Neighbourhood Effects

As discussed by Tooley,⁴⁰ West's position on education⁶³ recognizes and largely agrees with the concerns of Hayek, Friedman and Seldon. However, whilst agreeing with the need for protection (including protection against ignorance), West draws a comparison to the protection that parents are expected to give their children against being hungry. Very few political systems propose that parents should not be responsible at least prima facie for feeding their children, and most position the role of the state in a protective role only in the minority of circumstances where this might not be possible. Of course, concerns about child poverty are very real, and I don't think West was discounting these concerns in pointing out that in contrast to education, states don't tend to set up national provision of food to their citizens as a matter of course. As West noted,⁶³ it's hard to see people agreeing to such a system, particularly, I would argue, given the example of real child starvation that has accompanied any society attempting such an approach, such as North Korea.⁶⁴ As such, why then West asks is education qualitatively different so that national provision by the state is required to meet the needs of the principle of protection.

West makes similar points in relation to education and neighbourhood effects, i.e. although there may be a role for education in relation to such

effects, whether education needs to be provided universally by the state is for West much less clear. In relation to the key issue of the role of education in developing the civil skills required for engagement in democratic processes, West proposes, similarly to his arguments on protection, that in fact in most cases, if children develop basic literacy skills, and there is a free press, then the ongoing discussion of issues in the public square will ensure the development of democratic skills. West was writing before the internet, and there is a sense, I would suggest, that this point has even more force of argument now. There is also a link here to debates on the delineation between public and private in liberal perspectives on education. This is why I foreground West's arguments. Compulsory schooling is here to stay in technological societies, and for good reason, but by questioning the very notion of the need for compulsory state schooling if not for education, West reminds us (a) of the potential negative consequences of the role of the state in education, and (b) to reconsider, as for example others have done in say initiatives such as Summerhill,⁶⁵ a unified idealist perspective on how education should work. Such a reminder could also be applied more widely to the central concerns of this book about education and inclusion.

Civics and Publics versus Private

In respect of the public versus private debate in liberalism, West's arguments impinge on the relationship between civics education and the private beliefs of minority groups. A range of theorists^{57,66-68} have argued about the extent to which teaching of the critical thinking skills, which might be viewed as needed for engagement in democratic processes, can be taught in schools without inevitably interpenetrating with private family beliefs, particularly in terms of common schools and religious minorities. Taylor in particular argued that liberalism needs to accommodate the unexamined life,⁵⁵ thus proposing that critical thinking skills should not necessarily be a core aspect of a civics curriculum. This raises the question as to whether critical thinking as a skill can be taught whilst keeping it separate from the content of what is taught.⁸

The Role of Education in Developing Autonomy

In terms of how difference is accommodated in common schools, the issue of to what extent the liberal state should promote autonomy, the associated issues of the relationship between public and private spaces in the state, and the overall aims of education from a liberal perspective are important aspects of the debate. If citizens of the liberal state are to engage in civic duty, which, at the very least on the principle of neighbourhood effects, is needed for the state to minimally operate, then it would follow that education should play a role in developing the autonomy of the individual. No one, not even, I would argue, the most *laissez-faire* classical liberal or the most ardent advocate of student voice, really believes that children somehow magically develop autonomy

and critical reasoning, i.e. the ability to discern between different propositions and make choices, independently of their parents or community. The fact that universally in criminal systems, account is taken of a child's age and that they are treated differently from adults in terms of their choices and actions, provides an acknowledgement that children are not viewed as inherently autonomous and that although they may well be borne with the capacity for autonomy, in its application this is a skill that they need to develop.⁶⁹ Children are inescapably borne into particular societies and particular families, with particular parents. In fact, it can be argued, as in communitarian approaches, that the development of autonomy is dependent on networks of social relations and on a process of learning.⁷⁰⁻⁷² Children are thus, in such a framework, inherently non-autonomous as they start out and gradually develop the skill of autonomy. We are not therefore self-creating as autonomous individuals, in some rationalist asocial Kantian sense, but can, as we achieve maturity, develop (or have developed) our capacity for autonomy, i.e. we can develop the capacity for self-direction.⁵⁷ Some theorists, though, such as Galston,⁵⁸ privilege concerns about negative liberty, arguing that, as with critical thinking, as some groups do not value autonomy, a commitment to diversity of the conception of the good life means that autonomy is not necessarily something that the liberal state should actively promote even in the public sphere. Galston⁵⁸ overall argues that what is most important for the liberal state to value is tolerance of diversity of opinion, and that all but a very minimal promotion of civics should not be undertaken by the state in the public sphere, particularly in terms of what the state mandates in relation to education provision. Thus, a Rawlsian delineation between public and private spheres is unworkable, as it runs the risks of the state actively promoting autonomy as a value which may be antithetical to the private values held by particular groups in society, with the caveat common to many liberal thinkers that there remains a right of exit from the sub-group protected by the state.⁸

Autonomy, Duty and Tradition

What I think is clear from this discussion is that any conception of autonomy as a value to be promoted is not a neutral value with regard to particular groups who hold different views. Reich⁶⁹ for example in his discussion of autonomy does admit of the possibility of individuals autonomously choosing to do things because of a sense of duty, as to a significant extent it is the individual as an autonomous agent who chooses what they think will give them the most benefit or pleasure or value. Yet autonomy in the liberal tradition seems, as in its presentation by Reich, to have its own primacy. In contrast, Raz⁷³ argued for the primacy of duties over rights, in the context of "orthodoxy", and Etzioni⁷⁴ also placed significant emphasis on the obligations deriving from communal bonds. Traditional faith communities, and the Judaeo-Christian tradition, also tend to place more weight on duty. For example, the Talmudic dictum "Greater is he who performs an action

because he is commanded than he who performs the same action without being commanded”⁷⁵(Baba Kama 87a) is a well-known concept in Jewish education. It is regarded as more praiseworthy to undertake a commandment from G-d simply because this is a duty from G-d, than to come to think it is a good thing via one’s own process of (autonomous) rational inquiry. Of course, Jewish thought on rational inquiry is complex, and this dictum does not mean that inquiry has no place in its thought systems. However, without entering into that complex debate, what it does show is that the idea of duty, along with linked ideas of tradition and belief, is at least as important in this value system, if not more important, than autonomous choice and associated notions of liberal freedom. This reflects a differing perspective on freedom within religious and (potentially) neoconservative thought,⁷⁶ in that unrestricted choice is not viewed as synonymous with freedom and is seen more as itself a sort of servility – the servility of the confusion and uncertainty of the constant choice and of the “idolatry” that comes from placing man and his rational choice at the centre for existence. As in other religious traditions (e.g. Aquinas’s views on duty – see Hause and Pasnau⁷⁷), true freedom is regarded as coming through the acceptance of obligation. As the critics of liberalism point out, even if it’s the best system we have for political structures, it still involves implicit choices about values.

Liberalism, the Family and the Child

As Witte⁷⁸ notes, natural law arguments for the family were often adopted by classical liberal thinkers, and it has to be said continue to have purchase today. Thus Christian and natural law traditions on the family have considerable resonance with the rights of parents and families as set out in various supra national policy statements such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Of course, both earlier and modern liberal thinkers have diverted considerably, in some aspects from this natural law perspective on the family, although it’s also the case that a number of thinkers agree at least, in the ideal scenario, with the idea that children are best served by being raised by their biological parents who stay together amicably when raising them.^{79,80} However, a key critique of traditional systems which is raised by liberal thinkers is that more emphasis needs to be placed on the rights of the child as individuals.^{40,81} Children, no differently to anyone else, have in liberal thinking the right to freedom and agency, and as such there are clear limits in liberal thought as to the power of parents over their children, and as a corollary children have rights that are separable, at least in principle, from the rights of their parents. In terms of education, this might, according to some broadly liberal thinkers, mean that in contrast to Galston they in fact have the right to learn about different modes of thinking to those of their parents, and to develop the critical thinking skills that might allow them to critique different conceptions of the good life, and then using their rational will, to choose between them.^{81–84} This raises the question though of how to conceive of the relationship

between parents and children. There is a common recognition, across liberal, social democratic and communitarian perspectives, of the “stickiness” and unique intimacy of the relationship between parent and child across societies.⁸⁵ Some such as Noddings,⁸⁶ or Arneil⁸⁷ have employed a care ethic as a means to explain the particularity of parent-child relationships. I would like though to focus on Ramaekers and Suissa’s⁸⁸ account. Ramaekers and Suissa consider the care ethic account as being too one dimensional and failing to account for the depth of the relationships. Rather, they note that the intimacy between parents and children is unique in that it is not equivalent to the intimacy between adults, as it is inherently built on unequal positioning with the adult caring and nurturing and developing and the child being cared for and being nurtured and developed. These positions are also inherently reciprocal, and again in terms of intimate relationships this reciprocity is unique. The parent cannot care and nurture without the child and the child cannot be cared for and be nurtured without the parent. As such Ramaekers and Suissa position this relationship not as something that is to do with externally imposed political values and structures, with rights and duties, but as something that can only be understood experientially from within the intimacy of the relationship itself. This also means that the parent child relationship is something that is a site of constant iterative negotiation between parents and children, which is suffused by the intimacy, and changing dependencies of the relationship. I think there is some considerable resonance here between this account and Winnicott’s⁸⁹ (modernist) model of the mother-child relationship with its reciprocal, interpersonal, symbolic features. This unique experiential quality between parents and children is also something, for Ramaekers and Suissa, that goes all the way up and down, i.e. its moral consequences ripple out to impact on how we should politically think about the family and its relationship to the state. Ramaekers and Suissa do not discount that there are indeed limits to parental rights but that these lie at the extremes, and that we should not allow the rare cases of systematic parental abuse to change our moral view of the parent-child relationship. They contrast their perspective to the Arneil’s discussion of an ethic of care and its implications, who suggests that a truly caring state would instigate a Ministry of Children that meets all the “developmental needs” of children.^{87(p.90)} There is, at least for me, a kind of visceral horror in reading such proposals (although they are of course very well intentioned) which Ramaekers and Suissa’s analysis foregrounds. It is the horror, for families, for anyone who has been a father or a mother or a son or a daughter, that is tempered perhaps by Winnicott’s reminder that the mother “holds” the baby, contains their fears and their terrors in a unique intimate relationship, and that such holding is always contextual, always contingent, and doesn’t hold within it any empirical sense of external measurement or approbation. The mother is always (except in the tiny minority of extremes) “good enough”. When liberal and other approaches question the relationship between parents and children, for example by suggesting that the autonomy of children needs to be given greater primacy, which may well be true, they

do not, I contend, manage to account effectively for the unique properties of the child-parent relationship.

Although it's perhaps not the connection that Ramaekers and Suissa themselves would make, I propose that their arguments, as with others who focus on the unique intimacy of the parental bond, are making a traditional (or conservative) connection, which echoes the natural law argument, between kin, tribe and psyche (as in the psychical dynamic constitution of the individual). It is perhaps this bond, and all that flows from it in terms of the particularity of identity, that Berlin, who characterized himself as always a "Russian Jew",^{90(p.11)} reflected in his challenge to the Enlightenment's idealizing tendencies and his primacy of the importance of values pluralism. A conservative religious perspective also adds another layer to this argument. In particular, the intimate inequality which Suissa identifies at the heart of the parent-child relationship can also be considered as constitutive of duty as a value in family life. Not duty in a purely legalistic sense, but duty in terms of the, as I discussed before, the voluntary giving up of freedom. New parents are often told that having children will "change their lives". This can be taken to mean the sleepless nights, and the school pick-ups and so on, but in a religious sense it's in the very act of selflessness, of duty in terms of the sacrifice of the self for others, that brings a unique and valuable type of freedom – it is this that changes your life. Adding to Ramaekers and Suissa, this selfless duty is also a unique aspect of the child-parent relationship that interpenetrates with the child's knowledge, subliminally as they grow, of the unique sacrifice made by the parent, that someone has uniquely placed them and their needs above themselves. In Christianity this resonates strongly with the idea of the suffering shepherd and the sacrifice that G-d made for the world. In Judaism, when a parent dies, the tradition is to say Kaddish, the memorial prayer, for a period of one year. For all other close relatives, including the tragic loss of a child, the period is one month. This recognizes the unique duty, the unique investment that the parent makes for their child. This is not an investment, not a duty, that can be replicated by the state. Straddling particularist and universalist positions, Berlin, in setting out his emphasis on negative liberty and value pluralism, whilst privileging the specificity of identity and the fundamental right of choice, also argues against relativism and proposes an empirical (minimum) common human horizon of values shared across societies. I would contend that such a common human horizon includes and even is predicated on the bonds based on the unique reciprocity between parents and children. Other liberal thinkers, such as Kekes, have made similar essentially natural law argument based on the unique features of the family.⁹¹ Thus, there remain tensions, which as Gray suggests, Berlin in a sense highlights in his arguments for value pluralism, between liberal notions of autonomy and the traditional view of the uniqueness of the bond between children and parents. Such a perspective is also in significant tension with Marxist, feminist and postmodernist perspectives which critique family structures.⁹² Such tensions inevitably play out in educational spaces and present conflicts that teachers and schools need to address.

Liberal Education and Special Educational Needs

Liberal perspectives on education have not given, it is true to say, significant enough attention to disability and disadvantage.⁴⁸ Rawls has been critiqued for not placing enough focus on what have been called epistemic as well as economic social goods.⁵⁰ The sociological critique of the medical model, in its Foucauldian form, can be considered as a critique of (a) the normative assumptions and values, and the normative accumulation of advantage that are hidden behind the supposedly neutral liberal facade, and (b) the similarly hidden linkages between power and the knowledge of the human sciences, when applied to difference, within the liberal order. Thus, the sociological critique questions the assumptions, and thus the privileging of certain values in liberalism. In its various forms, liberalism's focus on justice and private property, particularly on individual economic rights and liberties, as opposed to wider conceptions of social responsibility, is also the target, in its activist form, of the sociological critique. The critique thus appears subsumed into a critique of neoliberal economics, and is re-presented as an argument for significant social revolution, including in relation to the structure of the family. Whether of course it's the role of teachers or the education system at all to engage in such "public" activism for such social re-engineering is one of the key questions that liberal perspectives on education poses which tends to remain unexamined in such accounts. Further, given that the revolution may be some time coming, the real implications for practice in the real world of teaching and schools of such a positioning often tend to be unexamined, as in for example accounts of neoliberalism and early years education by Robert-Holmes and Moss.⁹³

The Capability Approach

One way in which the issue of resources and disadvantage has been addressed is in the work of Amartya Sen⁹⁴ and Martha Nussbaum⁹⁵ on capability theory. Sen's key point, as expressed by Anderson,^{96(p.320)} is that:

Because of differences in their internal capacities and social situations, people are not equally able to convert resources into capabilities for functioning. They are therefore entitled to different amounts of resources so they can enjoy freedom as equals.⁹⁶

Thus, Sen notes that in order to ensure equality in the social goods required to participate in society, account needs to be taken of the fact that people have different abilities to convert economic resources (i.e. money or services) into such goods (capabilities for functioning) and that social constraints may similarly cause differential ability to make use of resources. Both Sen and Nussbaum see education as a central capability. Terzi⁹⁷ has considered in some depth how the capability approach can be applied to inclusion and education, arguing

that it offers a way to overcome the social/medical model divide by providing a framework for addressing the diverse needs of students with special educational needs. Thus, individual characteristics and environmental factors are reframed not as deficit or failure in social adaptation but rather as the context in which individuals can differentially convert resources into functionings. Whether such an approach, or its close cousin, the biopsychosocial model,⁹⁸ truly do anything to resolve the tensions inherent in education and inclusion, is in my view highly questionable.⁹⁹ Although it is true that compared to Rawls, difference is certainly foregrounded as an issue, resource constraints and the tensions that arise from them in respect of how to deal with difference seem, at least to me, to continue to persist.

The Rawlsian (or resourcist) response to the capability approach is to argue that such a model requires some sort of quite expansive listing of these desirable functionings, which involves a prescription of the good life which lies outside of the requirements of fairness implied by a (social) liberal theory of justice.¹⁰ Pogge and Pogge¹⁰ also note that understanding for any individual exactly how they can, on any meaningful comparative basis, convert resources into capabilities is also problematic. In particular, how one can differentiate between inherent ability and effort, and thus how a criterion of desert in respect of justice as value can be properly considered, is quite unclear in accounts of the capability theory, even though both Sen and Nussbaum emphasize the role of agency in the theory. This is an important point in terms of education and inclusion – in that very often a key question for teachers is how to differentiate between ability and effort, in that when a teacher sets a child a task, there is no easy informational basis to decide between the two. This issue becomes even more acute with children who are considered to have difficulties with learning in a particular area of study.

Critiques of Participation

Critiques of liberalism from communitarian and social/relational perspectives also focus, particularly in terms of disability, on whether enough account has been taken of the need to develop the autonomy and thus the ability to participate of the disabled child.²⁵ Thus, Felder²³ argues for a social relational view of inclusion and education, emphasizing the important role of education in ensuring that both disabled children and their families have sufficient political power to engage in meaningful representation. Although it's true that liberal perspectives can be rightly criticized for not giving such issues enough attention, I think that there are in fact strong liberal arguments that can be brought to bear on such concerns. As discussed, there is a classical liberal concern to promote the autonomy of children. Further, equal representation and protection under the law are in fact classical liberal concepts,⁶ and equal protection, in law, requires that individuals have the capacity to represent their perspectives, and that such assistance as is required to allow for such representation is to be made available.

Autonomy

Liberal perspectives on autonomy and agency also have wider relevance for inclusion and education. Autonomy provides the foundation for agency, and in the liberal tradition, part of the rationale for autonomy is very much its role in facilitating agency. Agency in Kantian terms is the rational individual mind exercising the right to choose, whether this is through, as McGee¹⁰⁰ puts it, the classic case of deciding whether or not to raise your finger in the air, or by extension in any number of other arenas areas such as, for example, deciding as a teenager to go to the shops after school rather than come home. Liberal thinking positions autonomy and by corollary agency as central values, although as we have seen in communitarian and conservative critiques of liberalism, this is balanced by social concerns or competing values such as duty. Thus, Rawls and his communitarian critics don't deny the importance of autonomy but rather debate what emphasis should be given to it. Thus, it may well be that other values and related needs suggest there are good reasons to constrain autonomy, particularly when this is about protecting others from harm.

Implications in School

In terms of education and inclusion, the teacher in the classroom is continuously confronted with the issue of autonomy and agency. What space should be given for children to express their own views, to choose what they study or not? Should children be allowed to go to the toilet during lessons without asking permission (something of course that we would never expect of adults)? Thinking of Summerhill, should children be allowed to choose whether to go to lessons or not at all? At break times, should children be allowed to choose who they want to play with even if this means some children might not feel fully included? Should children (and families) be allowed to invite who they want to birthday parties, or can the school or teacher impose rules (say for example, if more than half the class, everyone needs to be invited)? The list goes on. In coming to decisions on these matters, schools and teachers are, whether implicitly or explicitly, balancing other values and concerns, such as the needs of other children for effective teaching, the expectations of family and state with regard to curriculum, the need to develop aspects of civics such as skills for autonomy and critical thinking, and the efficient use of resources. The latter is also important in respect of teachers – their energy, their capacity for mental attention and the number of hours in the day is limited. So, for example, let's say a particular elementary-age child has a very strong interest in space and a discussion in morning form time happened to touch on this and the child says to the teacher "Can we learn about space today?". How should the teacher respond? How far if at all should she balance the agency of this child against the limits of resources? In some idealized world where time and resources were not limited, the teacher could well say yes that's fine let us spend today on

space, we can come back to everything else tomorrow. Yet in the real world of limited time and resources, there are losses involved for the children, perhaps for the state even, in making such a decision. So I think it's quite safe to say that in the vast majority of classes in the vast majority of countries, the teacher would say no, or might perhaps spend a limited time on learning about space, because of the need to balance the autonomy and agency of this one child with both the autonomy of other children (let's assume that not all of them want to spend the day learning about space) and wider concerns about limited resources for teaching the rest of the curriculum. Concerns about resources then intercalate with concerns about autonomy and agency in the classroom. If we now consider a child identified as having special educational needs, say age 6, in a mainstream primary classroom. Let us say that this child has some specific learning difficulty and finds it more difficult than her classmates to recognize phonemes and blend words. The teacher prepares some scaffolding for her in the afternoon before the lesson, to help her access the written work. This helps but still during the lesson the child keeps calling the teacher over to help her with the blending. What should the teacher do? Perhaps she could sit her next to a more able child by her to help with the reading? Perhaps she should come and sit with the child for an extended period, leaving other children in the class who might also need her attention? Perhaps she should encourage the child to try and work by herself, looking out to praise her when she makes this effort? Perhaps she should give her in the moment an alternative text that is easier for her to access even if it does not help her develop her reading skills? Now, of course, there is considerable literature on these kind of issues on education and inclusion and literacy teaching, which proposes many helpful things to consider in terms of classroom organization and pedagogy,¹⁰¹ particularly around differentiated instruction and universal design for learning^{102,103} and the teacher and the school may well be able to make significant use of these suggestions in making decisions both in the moment and reflectively later on how best to approach supporting this individual child in the context of the whole class. Nevertheless, these approaches are not, I contend, a complete solution to the issues of limited resources and of conflicts in relation to autonomy and agency that this case and the million others like it that take place in classrooms across the world every day throw up. In an obvious sense, the time that the teacher spent on for example developing scaffolding resources for one child is a limited resource that cannot then be used on doing something else, whether that something else is something in the teacher's life (from the perspective of work/life balance) or preparing other things for the class as a whole. The case also raises issues of autonomy, agency and liberty – thus what if the child asked to help with the reading does not want to, and even if they are willing, harbour somewhere a resentment that they could not get further with reading the book they wanted to at the pace they wanted to. There is also an intercalation between ability and effort, linked to agency. When deciding whether to ask the child to essentially be more independent and try harder, the teacher needs to make a judgement and thus a decision on

the balance between ability and effort on the part of the child. How much is it about an impairment in their ability to do the task (or a variation in capability) and how much is it about the amount of effort that they are making. Putting this another way, to what extent are they exercising the agency that they do have to decide to or to not make that effort, and if they are not making it, then there is a wider value that the teacher is likely wanting to promote about “working hard” or “doing our best”, which is an emphasis on excellence as a value. As Pogge and Pogge¹⁰ note, although they might want to make a judgement about this, differentiating between ability and effort (for anyone making such a judgement in any context) is not always very straightforward, and as such, this makes it more difficult for the teacher to make a decision. However, whatever decision is made is a balancing between issues of equality in terms of how resources are allocated to ensure equality of opportunity, and agency. Lukianoff and Haidt,¹⁰⁴ writing about higher education, suggest that from a liberal perspective there should be more emphasis in education on the old aphorism of “Prepare the child for the road, not the road for the child”, i.e. in dealing with difference in education we should give more primacy to matters of simple equality in resource allocation, partly because a principle of equal treatment (an aspect of strict justice) places limits on the extent to which we should vary resource allocations. In my view, this is inescapable in any real world where resources are limited. Of course, in terms of both national and supranational policies, which are inevitably located in the real world, there is clear recognition of resource limitations, which is why phrases like “reasonable accommodations” are a feature of their language. The word reasonable implies that because resources are not unlimited, there are limits, based on a principle of justice, to how far the state or organizations (or individuals) can go in terms of meeting individual needs. Shakespeare¹⁰⁵ has shown, in respect of disability studies and sociological activism, the importance of considering real-world constraints and the limits of how the social model can be applied. Thus, Shakespeare notes how the idea of universal wheelchair accessibility is subject to real-world constraints, such as the fact that it would be virtually impossible to make the “mountains, bogs, beaches”^{105(p.213)} of the world fit for wheelchair use.²

Inclusion and Value Conflict

It is the case that many who disagree with the liberal and neoliberal conception of education have objected to the inclusion in policy documents of this phrasing. Sometimes this is aligned to a sociological critique of disability.^{106,107} Sometimes the critique goes further and is aligned to a wider critique of capitalism in general, and/or that sees the political structures of liberal democracy as reflecting historical patterns of unequal resource allocation which needs to be corrected.¹⁰⁸ These are legitimate positions to take, although they are only positions that are themselves subject to critique and debate, and it’s also unclear, in my view, how useful they are to teachers and schools in most of

the real world in terms of thinking about policy and practice. The concept of inclusion, particularly as it is applied in respect to education in the academic literature, tends however to ignore such issues of resource limits, resource allocation decisions and value conflicts. Inclusion is seen in an idealized way, and the process of idealization that it undergoes in its application in the real world, means that it becomes somewhat denuded of content. Cigman¹⁰⁹ has argued that inclusion used in this way can become blind to suffering, suggesting for example that sometimes when inclusion activists argue for mainstreaming for all, this involves a lack of consideration of how this might work in practice, and a lack of concern for potential harms, in that some children may well be much happier in special rather than mainstream settings. I think this overstates the case in that inclusion theorists and activists are, I think, usually very concerned with individual suffering – they are certainly not, as perhaps implied, Robespierres of 21st century education. However, I think the substantive point is that the idealizing tendency in inclusion does often mean that there is a lack of sufficient consideration of how things might actually work in practice. The argument I am making is not that the concerns of inclusion in education are not important, they are, but that in order to properly understand those concerns and how they can be addressed, we need to consider more precisely the different values involved, and the tensions and clashes between them. I shall turn now to Berlin's account of value incommensurability and Crowder's account of Berlin's value pluralism, which will provide some tools for considering this matter.

Berlin and the Pursuit of the Ideal

Olssen⁷ notes that Berlin, in his essay *the Pursuit of the Ideal*,¹¹⁰ contrasts the difference between the values of Machiavelli's political realism, which might be characterized as pagan and associated with classical imperialism, and those of Christianity. Berlin contrasts the former's privileged values as "bravery, courage, pride" with the latter's as "humility, meekness, suffering, acceptance, unworldliness",^{110(p.8)} at least as publicly professed. Berlin's key point, as Olssen notes, is that, as Machiavelli admits, these two systems of values are incompatible.⁷ What Berlin importantly does is note that as well as being incompatible they are also incommensurable. This means that there is no external point of reference for measuring different values, so that one could say that value X is worth more than value Y, or that there is any fungibility between them, i.e. that a measure of value X could be taken to replace some measure of value Y. As Kekes⁹¹ notes, incommensurability is contingent on local incompatibility between values (e.g. wanting to do two things reflecting differing values that cannot practically be achieved at the same time). We don't need to go as far as considering, for the issue of education and inclusion in the 21st century, as to whether we have clashes with the value system of the Roman Republic to understand, as I have set out, that value conflicts are inherent in public policy, particularly in terms of the welfare state and education. We

could equally consider, as I have noted before, value system conflicts between liberal and communitarian perspectives – freedom versus solidarity; diversity versus community, or between liberal and conservative views – debate versus agreement, experiment versus tradition, and the liberal downplaying of other values such as duty, courage and perhaps love. Berlin’s point is as much that when we have such value conflicts, choosing one over the other leads to an absolute loss, and as Crowder notes, “the losses that result from trade-offs cannot be wholly compensated but will inevitably possess an absolute and perhaps tragic quality”.^{8(p.62)} In my classroom example above, the child who is asked to help with the reading absolutely loses the time that they could have spent pursuing reading at their own level and interest. One of the notable things about education is that the time that children are children is short and limited, and I think, as Berlin suggests, that whatever the social recompense, the impact on “neighbourhood effects”, you cannot ever get the time back. This argument is also at the core of those liberal thinkers (such as Hayek¹¹¹ or more recently Stokes¹¹²) who argue that social justice is a meaningless or at least misleading term, in that social effects and strict justice, in liberal terms, are not commensurable. Berlin also uses this point of value incommensurability to (heavily) critique idealist philosophies and theorists who think that such value conflicts are easily resolvable or that if they are not resolved, this is not due to actual conflicts between values but rather to human wickedness, ignorance or self-interest, particularly class self-interest.³ For Berlin, this concern plays a central role in his preoccupation with negative liberty, as a bulwark against the idealizing tendency and its inherent dangers in thinking that (a) simple solutions are possible, and that (b) the state can impose their view of simple solutions on individuals and families without costs. At least in part, his experiences during the Russian Revolution persuaded him that they cannot. If we apply this to education and inclusion, there are a number of resonances. For example, the idea that there are simple solutions or formulations such as “Good teaching for children with SEN is good teaching for all children”¹¹³ that can allow us to escape the need to think about the trade-offs involved in dealing with difference in the classroom. As well, the idea that simply changing attitudes and beliefs, that is teacher self-interest, or teacher ignorance or indeed teacher wickedness in not having the right attitudes and beliefs, in and of itself can somehow solve these tensions. There are more areas which can be noted, but the point is that inclusion as an unexamined concept does not obviate the value tensions involved in education.

Critics of Berlin, notably Dworkin,¹¹⁴ have suggested that Berlin overplays incommensurability, and that by restricting the scope of their conception of values, i.e. so that (in some ways similarly to Rawls) more recognition is given to their contingent composite nature (for example, liberty means freedom to do what you want as long as it does not impinge on others), the issues identified by Berlin become much less troubling. Berlin and others argue in response that many people hold perspectives that are deeply attached to the “pure” conceptualizations.¹¹⁵ However, if Berlin is right in proposing that

values are incommensurable and that there are absolute losses involved in making decisions, then, as such, decisions and trade-offs still need to be made. Crowder^{8,9} highlights that Berlin wants to highlight that national and local political decisions about such trade-offs are very serious and significant. Crowder agrees with Berlin that compromise is possible and that this can best come about through processes that are both democratic and liberal and that pay due regard to the importance of the values at stake; it involves “negotiat[ion] in the spirit of ... pluralist virtues”.^{8(p.255)} Further, Berlin, in common with Kekes, and as agreed with largely by Gray, argues that cultural tradition should play a significant part in making choices amongst incommensurable values,⁸ and linked to this, Gray⁴ argues that this implies that it is the pragmatic, concrete particulars of individual conflicts (which are inevitably cultural in a wide sense) that need to be taken into account, as opposed to higher level idealist perspectives, when making decisions.

Implications?

If then value pluralism is viewed as important in public policy, and there is no easy idealist set of measures that can be appealed to in deciding between different values, what should we do?

Mclaughlin⁵³ adopts a similar stance to Berlin in his proposal that in addressing such value conflicts in the classroom, teachers should adopt an approach based on (an Aristotelian) *phronesis*, whereby teachers exercise their localized professional expertise and experience. Thus, judging individual situations based on our local practical wisdom offers the best approach to choosing between values in day-to-day experience. Such decisions in relation to the particulars of cases will involve qualitative judgements based on the ethical experience of that situation, rather than any quantitative measure. In the context of education and inclusion, this might be considered a call for the exercise of professional judgement based on both experiential knowledge¹¹⁶ and an individual’s wider understanding of their own individual conception of the good life and what is accepted (in a limited fashion which respects individual and family autonomy and diversity of perspectives) in their society as constituting the good life.^{2,91} From Berlin’s perspective and that of liberal educational theorists, as I have noted, that conception of the good life would recognize that civics in common schools needs to be limited in its scope. It would include a recognition that a range of values could be recognized as worthy of note. It would hold a neutral perspective on the good life.

Relativism?

This is not, however, a retreat into relativism. A frequent criticism of Berlin is that he is, in proposing value pluralism, a sort of relativism and that he has no clear defence against the paradox of toleration. Olssen⁷ makes this critique of

Berlin and proposes as a defence against such relativism, a moderate vitalism such as that espoused by Deleuze or Bergson,^{117,118} whereby what contributes to the continuation of life acts as an external reference point for deciding on values. Olssen, in common with other thin communitarian critiques of the liberal position, suggests that this gives a reasonable mechanism for making decisions on what should be valued or not; however, Olssen's preoccupation with particular causes seems to suggest, again in common with similar critiques, that it is more a question of his set of preferences that is being considered rather than anything with an objective external purchase. It's also untrue in my view that Berlin adopts a relativist position. This is far from the case – Berlin was very clear in his opposition to totalitarianism. Ferrell¹¹⁹ argues that Berlin did agree that there are issues in trying to simplistically resolve relativism in an epistemological manner as this can lead to self-contradiction. He also disagrees with what he sees as the extreme subjectivism inherent in a cultural view of relativism, i.e. that human societies and the value systems they create are culturally and historically situated and thus can only be judged by local, not universal, criteria. Berlin³ argues that this suggests that different human cultures and value systems are closed off and have no points of contact. Berlin instead suggests that, whilst still being differentiated and specific, all human cultures still have quite a lot of common points of contact – what he calls a common human horizon based on a set of universal values that we find in all cultures forming, in an empiricist sense, a universal natural law. Others have proposed similar approaches to value pluralism, such as Keke's quasi-natural law concept of deep conventions.⁹¹

Berlin's wider point is that, apart from within quite wide limits, which in general even across cultures we can agree on, there are no defensible or workable idealist solutions to the value trade-offs we meet. That is not to say that we don't have frameworks or internal ethical resources to employ in making decisions, far from it, but that, as Hayek⁴⁴ argued, these are inherently both limited (we cannot know everything or easily create universal rules) and, as Berlin agrees, generally local in character. As noted, Mclaughlin⁵³ argues that debates about political positioning with regard to values in education has its limits and that teaching is inherently local and contextual in character and, resonating with Berlin's positioning, suggests that it is local, experientially based professional knowledge and ethical reflection (i.e. *phronesis*) that is primarily necessary in resolving the value tensions inherent in education.

I have begun to touch on the potential value conflicts involved in education and inclusion and where a proper account of different perspectives on values might help illuminate, as Crowder indicates, the significance and seriousness of the trade-offs involved in making decisions in relation to these. I will briefly now enumerate some of these in more detail to help orientate the discussion further.

Selected Sites of Value Incommensurability in Education and Inclusion

Normality and Deficit

The issue of how to think about difference in the classroom inevitably relates to the sociology of knowledge and the role of categorization. The sociological critique of the medical model, derived from a discursive approach, problematizes the way in which, in education and more widely, the lens of the human sciences focused on the child with special educational needs masks the ways in which power might be wielded and abused. Thus, as in the *Short Axe Education* film, the seeming objectivity of the IQ test is used to reinforce false assumptions about the ability of boys of Caribbean heritage and then to use labelling, falsely, to allow teachers to have low expectations about them and to impose those expectations on the child, their family and their wider community. The sociological critique deconstructs the very basis for the knowledge represented by the IQ test or psychology more widely, positing the medical idea that some objective deficit in the child themselves is based on a false ontological and epistemological assumption.

The idea of deficit thinking is prominent in contemporary educational thought and practice, often linked to accounts of racist and classist modes of thinking.¹²⁰ Anecdotally, in teacher education, certainly in England, particular approaches to special educational needs which are based on categorization and labelling are often criticized with phrasing such as “Oh that’s deficit thinking”. Yet this is only one way in which this can be viewed. Mapping this onto debates about liberal political values, there is unquestionably a link to differing perspectives on knowledge. This is something I will explore in more depth in Chapter 3. Broadly, scientific realism in some form¹¹² which considers knowledge, to a lesser or greater degree, as having a purchase independent of what is perceived, i.e. to represent something that can be objectively known, and that has some freedom from the social and cultural context in which the knower and the known are embedded, is associated with classical and neo-liberalism. Berlin in *Historical Inevitability*^{3(p.150)} notes that if all things are regarded as inherently subjective, then (a) they have no meaning particularly if terms such as subjective cannot be taken to mean their opposite, and (b) such a position robs us of the possibility of assigning choice (agency) or desert to individual actors, who cannot logically be taken to have the possibility of escaping their local contextualization. Thus, for Berlin and indeed most classical liberal thinkers, notions of the objectivity of knowledge and of agency, responsibility and by extension individual justice, are inherently linked. A liberal perspective, whilst not at all ignoring concerns about differential treatment based on false assumptions, nor the issues identified in the dilemma of difference at a process level, raises the question of whether there is some sense in which we can and indeed should sometimes, on ethical grounds, make empirical determinations

about individuals and their capacities that have some independent reality. This raises a number of questions for education and inclusion, including the status and role of assessment; whether there are truly deficits internal to the child; and the status and relevance (e.g. for teacher education) of evidence on special educational needs derived from the human sciences.

Disability as Identity

Disability activists have for some time made the argument to “re-classify” disability not as a negative marker but as a form of identity. The sociological critique of the medical model, particularly in terms of its use of Foucault, provides the space for resistance, and one way that can be seen to have occurred is by oppressed groups taking the label applied as an act of oppression, and subverting or reclaiming this as a badge of identity.¹²¹ Although originally more visible in respect of clearly recognizable disabled groups such as the deaf community,¹²² in recent years the move towards such a reclassification has spread more widely in terms of general societal perceptions, notably in relation to the autistic community.¹²³ Debates about perceived language markers have also accompanied this development, and the move to use an adjectival label (i.e. autistic person rather than person with autism) links directly to the move to re-claim autism as a badge of identity. The move towards disability as identity is linked to motivations around representation, autonomy and agency, as well as the desire to promote a sense of pride, and to autonomously negate the negative associations of the label. One can view such a move perhaps as part of a biopsychosocial perspective on difference, in that it seeks to mediate between internal characteristics (by positioning these as markers of identity), whilst not denying their reality, and providing an alternative lens through which the interaction of internal characteristics with societal mechanisms can be viewed. They also stake out a position on entitlement. They argue, in contrast to much of the liberal perspective on difference and economics, that the criteria by which, for example, resource allocations are judged, and thus what justice might be taken to mean, are flawed. Thus, they argue against a social liberal Rawlsian notion of justice as fairness, in terms of how difference is positioned as a deficit in terms of mutual cooperation. They also reject a Rawlsian (and certainly more libertarian) perspective on justice, which sees limits to the extent to which resources should be allocated towards the needs of individuals with disabilities.

In the classroom, such considerations intercalate with previous questions raised in this section, particularly the extent to which difference should be accommodated to meet the needs of the minority, even when this conflicts with the needs of the majority.

Family and Parents, and the Place of Voice

Earlier I set out a particular position on the child in relationship to parents and the family in relation to the state, which might be called traditional, and which

conceives of the child as being in a state of dependency and development. The child is regarded as qualitatively different in philosophical as well as legal terms from adults and from parents.⁸¹ In liberal thought, the child has the capacity for autonomy and agency, but this still needs to be developed.⁵⁷ Criticisms of this conceptualization of the child have particularly come from theorists proposing what is sometimes termed the new sociology of childhood.¹²⁴ This questions the cultural and historical normativity of this idea of the child and childhood and alternatively suggests that seeing children as “becomings”, rather than as complete individuals in themselves, both misreads the ontological reality of what children are and, as a corollary, places unnecessary restrictions on children’s lives and, in particular, children’s choices. The new sociology of childhood is closely linked conceptually to the student voice movement, which aims to create structures, processes and attitudes that will allow children’s views and perspectives to be heard and empower them in making choices.¹²⁵ In values terms, we might consider the clash here between traditional and sociological perspectives on childhood, and by extension the relationship between child, parents and state, as a clash between an emphasis on tradition and an emphasis on debate and experiment. Of course, a nuanced reading of the new sociology of childhood indicates that what is being proposed is a recognition that children have the ability to talk about their own lives and experiences and to express choices in that context, not that they in truth have the capacities, particularly at elementary age, for autonomous political citizenship.¹²⁶ There are also points of connection between the new sociology of childhood’s focus on voice and the recognition in the literature on education and inclusion²³ that one of the issues with liberal perspectives on education has been the lack of consideration of how to promote, as noted, equal participation of children with special educational needs and their families. It is also the case that classical liberal perspectives have similarly placed an emphasis on the autonomy of the child. Further, as discussed, the unique relationship of the parent and the child also raises issues for both liberal and postmodernist perspectives on education.

Space does not allow for a full consideration of the debates around autonomy, protection, choice and ability inherent in these arguments, but in terms of inclusion and education, the new sociology of childhood raises questions including: how and if to promote autonomy in children with special educational needs, including what account to take of “voice” (for example in respect of autistic children who might not want in simplistic terms to learn to be collaborative); and the balance between parental versus child perspectives on educational and placement decisions in special educational needs. It is also worth noting that such questions also have a particular dimension when applied to children with profound and multiple learning disabilities who may not be able to directly verbalize their ideas and choices.^{23,48}

Performative Assessment

The sociological critique suggests that the way that the lens of the human sciences is brought to bear on difference assumes a range of normative

liberal conceptions about difference and how difference is conceptualized. This critique of liberal conceptions of difference and knowledge about difference is particularly pertinent to the issue of assessment. National and local testing systems, which are based on predefined (pre-categorized) academic benchmarks, often use a restricted set of assumptions about knowledge, the relationship between knowledge and skills, and the relationship between ability, effort and outcomes.¹²⁷ As such, they can tend towards, in terms of the sociological critique, a restricted conceptualization of, and parameters for measuring, success and achievement within the educational system as a whole, which tends to penetrate down through the age phases.⁹³ Neoliberal state policies often adopt a focus on excellence and wider economic development and gain as criteria for curriculum, pedagogy and in particular assessment.¹²⁸ Debates about assessment represent, therefore, sites of competing value tensions, particularly excellence (and liberty) versus equality of outcome. In the next chapter, I will consider how debates on knowledge relate to debates on liberalism, the sociological critique and education and inclusion in more depth.

Notes

- 1 I do not use neoconservative in its “everyday” use which is usually conceived of in terms of a particular stance on US and Western policy on foreign intervention. Rather, I use it in the sense it is applied to Scruton, Hazony and other conservative thinkers such as Robert George, in the last two decades, to denote those theorists who have wished at least to some extent disaggregate traditional conservative from classical liberal thought, particularly in terms of how the rationality of the liberal Enlightenment opposed the idea of tradition and natural law. This is not to argue that there are no connections from this mode of approaching neoconservatism to the everyday use of the term, but rather to note the focus in neoconservatism on the recovery of tradition on the political right, which is the sense in which I approach it in this book.
- 2 I would contend that it is situations of resource constraint such as this that the capability model fails to provide a solution for.

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3 Knowledge and Liberal Perspectives on Inclusion

Classical liberalism is often associated with particular perspectives on knowledge. Various forms of realism, particularly scientific realism, can be seen as overlapping with classic liberal ideas, particularly as the emphasis in realism on an autonomous knowing subject corresponds with the emphasis on individual autonomy and agency in liberalism. In respect of education and inclusion, the postmodern sociological critique, particularly of the knowledge of disciplines such as psychology of the human subject, clearly stands in tension with such realist positions on the knowing subject and the implied ontological basis of such knowledge.

However, perspectives on knowledge and an account of values are linked. In particular, the sociological critique, in decentering the knowing subject, as well as undermining notions of typicality, also has a radically different view of values, for example in relation to strict justice on the individual level, in that if the individual is decentered, then such a strict notion of justice or indeed a Rawlsian notion of justice as fairness, based on an account of the essentially selfish individual, cannot be maintained. However, there has been little discussion in the literature specifically on the relationship between epistemology, political structures, values and tensions in education and inclusion, as discussed in this book. Debates have focused more on whether there is a specific pedagogy for teaching children with special educational needs. Norwich has argued strongly, in what I argue is a variant of the “good teaching for children with special educational needs is good teaching for all”, that no such separate pedagogy exists,¹ although I have argued that such a position is hard to maintain, based on what can be seen in terms of actual practice, particularly for certain categories of need such as autism.² However, there is broader agreement^{3,4} that there may be a set of knowledge specific to special educational needs that may be relevant to teachers’ work. The argument being that drawing on such a body of knowledge may help teachers in making appropriate pedagogic decisions in relation to individual needs, even if the quality or form of such pedagogy, at least as argued by Norwich,¹ may not be substantively different enough to constitute a separate pedagogy. However, how to conceptualize such knowledge in terms of trajectories of thinking within the sociology of

knowledge and its application to education, or how such trajectories might articulate with political value tensions and dilemmas relating to education and inclusion, has not been given any significant focus in the literature to date. Such a conceptualization can, and in my view should, have implications in relation to (a) the curriculum for teacher education for inclusion, i.e. what is it that teachers should or should not learn about special educational needs and what relevance that has (or not) for effective practice for difference in the classroom, (b) the wider debate on evidence-informed practice in schools and the linked question of the appropriate agenda and priorities for educational research for education and inclusion, and (c) a circling back and connection to prior arguments about values such as tradition, innovation excellence, democracy, and the value choices involved in the practice of education and inclusion in schools.

Debates on the Sociology of Knowledge

Young⁵ notes that debates about the sociology of knowledge in education in the past had a somewhat impoverished quality, partly because educational theorists have been somewhat insulated in disciplinary terms, as educationalists, from important debates and trends in the purer discipline of the sociology of knowledge. Young's project,⁵ in his seminal role in the "knowledge turn" within curriculum studies, was to reclaim this "purer", more robust conceptualization about knowledge from outside education as a discipline, and to insert it back into the debates in order to provide a justification for an emphasis on knowledge within the curriculum, within the wider ongoing controversies over knowledge versus skills.^{6,7} Young's preoccupations with curriculum and knowledge for compulsory age schooling are not central to the arguments I present here, although there are points of connection to the issue of the curriculum for teacher education. However, his broad argument about the need to think about the place of knowledge within education and the philosophical / sociological debates about that, and his investigation in particular of social realism, are germane to my discussion of education and inclusion, particularly in terms of how we can conceptualize difference in the classroom.

Realism and Its Critiques

The sociological critique of the knowledge of the human sciences in disability studies and education and inclusion parallels the wider critique of realist epistemology. Realism proposes a Cartesian split between the mind and a world that is independent of the mind / the knowing subject, and proposes that at least to some extent we can come to know, even if only in approximation, about that world in a way which has a measure of independence (objectivity) from ourselves, i.e. we can come to know about the world as something separate from ourselves.⁸ In the philosophy of knowledge, the warrant for how we might then know something or not about the world was traditionally

considered as the justified true belief conception of knowledge. In this, knowledge is a belief that is known to be true because it is well justified, either because there is empirical evidence to support it that can be observed in the world, or because it is otherwise reliable (for example due to direct perception or memory).⁹ Despite considerable philosophical discussion (such as the Gettier problem¹⁰), such an approach to knowledge does fundamentally underpin realism as an epistemological approach. Realism also discounts a wide variety of fundamental attacks on justified true belief, which amount, to differing degrees, in scepticism of the possibility of any warrants for our beliefs, repositioning them as just that – beliefs, without any objective claim that could constitute knowledge of something independent of ourselves.¹¹

Realism also has a strong consequentialist or common-sense claim to objectivity, in that the success of modern science, based on a realist perspective on knowledge, in producing predictive claims that are materially borne out in our experience of the world – such as the application of scientific knowledge to the achievement of flight, antibiotics, the internal combustion engine and so on – strongly supports the existence of an objective knowledge. Notwithstanding sceptical positions, as Toulmin¹¹ notes, the idea of a knowing subject somehow independent of the world is the fundamental basis of realism and, it can be argued, is in parallel fundamental to classical liberal beliefs. The arguments for realism, as made in relation to the natural sciences, are of course more complex when applied to the social field, as that field is both socially constructed and includes knowledge (i.e. those who know and the way they know⁸). The consequentialist argument for realism in the natural sciences, i.e. the success of the predictions of science, is also much less compelling when applied to the social field. Nevertheless, the basic arguments as to the agentic knowing subject, and the differentiation between the knower and what is known, can still, I argue, be applied.

Of course, realism has come under sustained attack since the beginning of the 20th century, from postmodernism, feminism, and other directions such as postcolonial theory. Moore and Muller¹² put these perspectives together as “voice discourses”, i.e. because they resonate, in their view, with a focus on identity and the representation (voice) of groups who are traditionally oppressed. Voice discourses propose an empiricist rather than rational view of knowledge in which it is emotionality or experience, not a justified true belief based on evidence and a notion of a structure of knowledge, that determines value and truth. Moore and Muller¹² also suggest that this discourse, by deconstructing the idea of the knowing subject, represents a collapse into relativism. They go even further in arguing that (a) such an anti-realist relativist position is not tenable in terms of any practical perspective on knowledge, and that (b) one reason that such voice discourses has shown such tenacity in the academy and more widely as a perspective is more because of the social function it serves for academics and activists – i.e. suggesting that the existing body of knowledge and ways of knowing as false is both exciting and a way for new academics to make a name for themselves. Young⁵ argues that the progressive left, in

adopting such a position, has in fact done real harm, not least because by decrying realist perspectives on knowledge, and particularly the place of knowledge within the curriculum, it has denied oppressed groups the chance to use such knowledge to help themselves overcome that very oppression. However, in making such an argument, Young⁵ does tend somewhat towards the polemical and somewhat elides the complex debates about realism, putting the horse rather too much before the cart. Others have made similar moves. Stokes¹³ for example has also critiqued decolonization as a movement within higher education, without staking out the connection between accounts of realism and its critiques and such a position. A particular gap in such accounts is to make a reasoned connection between public policy positions, values and knowledge.

The Sociology of Knowledge and Ethics

Postmodernist perspectives on knowledge, as with the sociological critique of the human sciences and their role in special educational needs, propose that there are no very good bases for differentiating between perception/experience and knowledge as an idea of truth,⁵ partly or mainly because they deconstruct the very concept of the knowing subject and posit that the mind is simultaneously and iteratively created by contact with the world at the same time as engaging with it. As such, to suggest that the mind and the world can in a meaningful way be separated so that we can talk about someone knowing something independently of the world becomes meaningless. Some including Young,⁵ as well as Willower¹⁴ and Moore and Muller,¹² suggest that this postmodernist critique engages in a sort of straw man argument. So it may be the case that positivism, as a kind of scientism, proposes a very strong Cartesian duality between knower and object, in which knowledge takes on, in a Kantian sense, a free-floating context-independent quality that the mind through rational investigation comes to know and into which no social or cultural or historical factors come to bear. Going back to *Small Axe*, such positivism argues, for example, that the IQ tests used by the school on black boys in that film were in fact objective. Of course, that view of positivism is nonsensical and unsustainable. Yet, argues Young, the postmodernist critique uses this as a straw man and suggests that any idea of knowledge and independent purchase, in any way, is similarly fatally flawed. Realism's project, so to speak, in its different flavours is to rebut this charge and to show how such an objective view of knowledge is still possible even when the social context of knowledge production and use is taken into account. This project coincides with, or is identical to, liberalism's focus on the importance of values of autonomy, agency, and even perhaps tradition in our accounts of knowledge. A link can also be made to Berlin and value pluralism, and Berlin's modernist notion of a common human horizon (and other similar arguments), in that it could be argued from a realist perspective that if there is no claim to knowledge as truth, and if knowledge claims that can be made need to be seen as both positional and thus relativist, then there is potentially no such common human

horizon that is knowable. As per Berlin, in the extreme, the positioning of the knower rather than knowledge as the arbiter of truth can be seen as lying at the root of totalitarian abuses of the individual.

Young also suggests that the straw man argument put forward, as he sets out, by some postmodernists against knowledge, by only engaging in a somewhat extreme position on knowledge, effectively avoids having to engage in a proper debate about knowledge, and debates about knowledge become a form of “attack”,^{5(p.25)} I would argue that one could see this as a form of defended idealism (not something picked up on by Young), which we can see in the instantiation of inclusion as a concept without very clear content. Although not directly stated perhaps in the postmodernist sociological critique, for some academics and activists it still represents something of a final, even teleological truth, and that leads to a monist tendency whereby critical engagement with content becomes undesirable, leading eventually to a concept that is somewhat empty. One aspect of this emptiness, following Young’s logic, would be an inadequate account of both what knowledge is or could be, and its potential or actual role in either policy or practice. In terms of teacher education for inclusion, for example, following Young, if process and product in relation to what we know about difference in the classroom are elided as in the postmodernist critique, then there is no external independent purchase point for determining criteria for what is true or useful for teachers to know. Further, particularly relevant in terms of education and inclusion, if identitarian position, i.e. who knows rather than what is known – another aspect of denying a properly independent purchase point for truth or value – are given primacy, as in some views within postcolonial¹⁵ and critical theory,¹⁶ then it is unclear whether we have a useful or indeed true basis for deciding what it is that teachers should know about that may help them with effectively dealing with difference in the classroom. It can be argued that understanding the social and cultural contexts of knowledge production and use, one aspect of which is how individuals may feel about such production processes that exclude them, or understanding the false application of such knowledge and its consequences is important. I would strongly agree that it is. Social realism, however, argues that equating this with the position that knowledge itself is relativist (the straw man argument) is false.

Social Realism

Durkheim’s social realism attempts to give a more effective account of the social context of knowledge by proposing that we can split off the social and historical context of knowledge production from the independent constituent features (the truth value) of such knowledge.^{17,18} All knowledge is produced by social actors working in a particular time, place and a particular social and cultural context. Thus, there is always a risk that there are cognitive biases in what knowledge producers (science and scientists in its wider sense) choose to focus on, the methods they use, and the way they interpret the evidence

that they procure. This can indeed result, taking the sociological critique of the positioning of children with special educational needs by the human sciences has demonstrated as one example, in unequal opportunity. However, whilst recognizing these constraints, social realism simultaneously notes that such biases are not inherent to the process of knowledge production and use, nor are they necessarily the dominant factors. The development of systems of knowledge, including the relationships between concepts, and their differentiation from every day concepts are a key part of Durkheim's theory,⁵ and are linked to disciplinary rules and processes, which tend to be agreed across groups of scientists. Such processes and rules thus provide a warrant for knowledge as justifiable belief. Thus, Durkheim was interested to seek out a demarcation, or the possibility of a demarcation between what is social and what is independently true in knowledge production and use.

Durkheim also proposes a particular ontological basis for knowledge, based on its social nature. Starting with the observation that social ideas such as religion arise from social fields yet are not linked to actual phenomena in nature, Durkheim theorizes that this demonstrates the way in which networks of concepts arise, which are validated and given their truth value by their social acceptance within the group, and argues that scientific concepts, albeit linked to observable phenomena, develop and are validated in a similar way. Durkheim further argues¹⁸ that this validation arises from a correspondence between the structure of society and the structure of knowledge. Thus, Durkheim's view on knowledge can be seen to be a quasi-Kantian view where social structures, which have an independence from (albeit supervening on) individual minds, provide the inescapable structures through which knowledge is produced and used. Within that context, classifications of structures of knowledge then have, through their mapping back onto such (a priori) social structures, a claim to objectivity.

However, as Young⁵ notes, Durkheim's theory has a distinctly modernist and indeed idealist flavour in that it suggests that the social structures that map onto knowledge structures are often common across different societies, which opens it up to the (sociological) critique that is ahistorical and indeed even asocial (as if every society is essentially the same in these structures, societal differences, at least in terms of their mapping to knowledge structures, dissolve). Thus, some argue that Durkheim either collapses back into a naive realism (or positivism) or makes the perhaps more limited point that external biases can impact on knowledge producers, which is something that we should be careful to monitor for.⁵ I would argue that liberal/traditional "natural law" arguments, following Kant (discussed below), in terms of common societal structuring (such as Kekes¹⁹), do provide further support, albeit not without possible critique, for some common social knowledge structures across societies. However, I contend, as does Young, that despite these critiques, the differentiation between external and internal factors is the most important contribution that Durkheim's theory makes, in that it provides support for a view of knowledge that differentiates clearly between the value of what is known

and the knower, at the same time as recognizing the potential biases arising from the cultural and historical location of knowledge in a wider social field.

Scientific Realism, Knowledge and Values

Scientific realism also aims to respond to the critiques of postmodernism, feminism etc., and parallel critiques by Kuhn²⁰ and Feyerabend,²¹ which suggest that the social context of knowledge production in science goes beyond mere context and ontologically implies a relativist rather than foundationalist account of knowledge. Dicken²² encapsulates scientific realism as essentially Kantian in form. Kant's Copernican revolution was a response to a key issue with realism in that the idea that our sense impressions directly represent the world is impossible to have certainty about, as the sceptics point out, as acquiring such certainty would require us to have an independent purchase point outside of our sense impressions, which we clearly can't have.²² Yet given the fact of the success of our scientific theories, Kant's solution as to why this is the case, and thus give a basis for realism, was a rationalist attempt to treat such independent purchase as illusory, and to note that (a) experience of the independent world must be accessed via our human sensory equipment, and that (b) as these are the necessary conditions for any experience, then in a rationalist sense our theories must be true as they are created by those conditions for experience.⁸ Causation, therefore, for Kant is an a priori synthetic, and thus, as is one of the problematic issues with Kant's account,²³ the noumenal world of "things in themselves" is something that in the phenomenal world (i.e. the world as structured by our sense structures) cannot be accessed by us.²⁴ Whilst not getting into all the complexity of Kant's epistemology (see for example Ward²³ for a useful account), I note that Kant's transcendental idealist account of perception and knowledge supports Kant's wider ethical agenda in the Copernican revolution in his three critiques, thus linking knowledge to ethics (and values). This rests on the argument that given the split between the noumenal and phenomenal world, and given that it seems to ourselves that we at least in some conditions have agentic choice, then the only way to explain this is via the noumenal world acting as a first cause for action, in some way, in the phenomenal world, thus meaning that we can act as knowing subjects who have autonomy and agency.²⁴ Magee²⁵ highlights this argument, as noted previously, via the seminal finger test. If you sit in a room with no distractions and look at your finger, and decide to move your finger up and down once, and reflect on this, where is the first cause coming from such an action that can be said to reside outside of yourself as an agent? Magee²⁵ proposes that this is the root argument of Kant's transcendental idealism that his Copernican revolution in thinking about perception and knowledge underpins. Thus, Kant's epistemology implies the fundamental nature of human beings as moral agents who are also, because of their unique ability in the world (apart from G-d) to be first causes, inherently ends and not means. Kant's ethics also subordinates such autonomy to a concept of natural moral

law, which also derives from his Copernican revolution and the idea that the laws we have are necessary in nature and also related to the structuring of our sensory equipment. At the same time, for Kant, autonomy is the autonomy to make choices (i.e. first cause choices as ends and not means) in relation to such natural moral law, and thus to do the right thing.^{23(p.152)} Thus, for Kant, people are autonomously moral and, within the phenomenal world, are also rationalist knowing subjects. We can trace a connection between Kant's approach to rationalist autonomy and choice and classical liberal ideas.²⁶ Although it is true that Kant's transcendental idealism simultaneously opened up the idea of constructionism, and thus perhaps also laid a path which lead to the deconstruction of the knowing subject,²⁷ Kant's Copernican revolution lays out a particular view of the knowing subject which is quite different in terms of its focus on autonomy, agency, freedom and responsibility from that laid out in postmodern frameworks.²³ It also crucially implies a minimum common set of values (as in Kant's categorical imperative), based on the idea that as everyone has fundamentally the same sensory apparatus, natural laws will be common across culture, temporally and spatially.

Durkheim's social realism, as I noted, follows Kant in its idealist positioning; however, it moves the locus of the ideal "apparatus of perception" from the individual to the social.

Critiques of Kant and Underdetermination

If Kant is taken as a starting point for scientific realism, then as Dicken²² notes, there has been consideration about whether Kant's account survives the challenges presented to it by later scientific developments which do not so easily support the idea of a rationalist mapping between our sense structures and their representations and accounts of the phenomenal world, such as non-Euclidean geometry. This has led to significant debates within scientific realism and further attempts to give substantive warrant to our beliefs of true knowledge and the evident material success of scientific theories.²² These attempts have in particular followed linguistic lines which aim to replace a representational idea of truth (things are true because our medium or representation is identical to them) with a linguistic one (i.e. things are true because they follow on from our linguistic use of them²²). However, as a defence for realism this has not been particularly successful, as it would seem to suggest that different languages or sets of speech codes within languages would lead to both different knowledge production and scientific predictions about the world. Thus, in the end such a position does not serve to provide a warrant in any useful sense for why scientific theories are effective in practice. Indeed, a very similar position – that language both structures and represents what is, without any substantive role for a knowing subject – is an important element of postmodernist thinking.

The debates about scientific realism are ongoing, noting that Kant's accounts do not in the end give a clear enough warrant for how we can achieve

a purchase point outside of our own representation, and which continue to seek an objective warrant for the success of scientific theories. A key element of these debates is the issue of underdetermination of theory by evidence.²⁸ This critique proposes that scientific theories are not, and indeed cannot be, complete descriptions of reality (even from a Kantian perspective of the phenomenal world). To take a prosaic example, science initially proposed that a table is made up of atoms, which consist of neutrons, protons and electrons, but then over time goes on to propose that such objects are constituted of smaller and smaller entities such as quarks.²⁸ This illustrates that what we think of as scientific correspondence to reality changes over time, and this in itself is an argument (pessimistic meta-induction) for disbelieving that scientific theories approximate objectively to a real world.²² It also highlights the idea that science can perhaps only ever give us heuristic tools (models) that are a way of making sense of our observations of the world, but cannot give us any understanding, even if only approximate, in an objective sense about the real world. There are plenty of defences to such critiques from realists,^{29,30} although space precludes considering here in any depth.

A Common-Sense View of Knowledge

Given that no one really doubts the predictive success of scientific theories, then even if justifications are only instrumental or pragmatic, many argue that these debates about scientific realism, at least as applied to the natural sciences, are pseudo problems. Hilary Putnam,³¹ for example, holds an “internal realism” perspective that if science can successfully predict the phenomena of the real world, in ways that are useful (such as creating antibiotics that stop people dying), then that is good enough. Putting this another way, Putnam treats the debates such as the ones sketched out above as an example of a category error, in that the point of such knowledge production is whether they help us in organizing and making sense of the world, not whether they fully represent in an objective sense an independent reality. This can be regarded as a common-sense view of what knowledge actually means in the world. Berlin, in *Historical Inevitability*, makes a similar point about both knowledge and the knowing subject,³² in the social field as well as in relation to natural science. As with many others (e.g. Magee²⁵), Berlin notes that in our everyday lives, and indeed when looking back at history, we apply standards of moral agency to individual actions. We view Stalin and Hitler as having been moral agents who made very bad moral choices, which were not just dependent on the impersonal forces of history. Similarly, today we might apply such standards of moral agency to say Hamas terrorists who raped young women on October 7th – i.e. that they had moral agency independent of impersonal forces around them, and made very bad choices as moral agents. Berlin notes the parallel between the knowing moral agent and the knowing subject more generally. Following Kant, he argues, that it is the delineation between the knower and the subject, the fundamental ability to

categorize between one thing and another, in a general sense, that leads to the ability to differentiate between good and evil, or between one value and another and make choices in relation to them. Similarly, Furedi,³³ mirroring Adorno,³⁴ has argued that this ability to differentiate between values is a fundamental ethical function, and that such differentiation interpenetrates with how we ethically make sense of foundational knowledge concepts in society as well. This can be linked to how we might make sense of difference in the classroom so, for example, the very idea of different versus normal or typical could be considered as consequent to the idea of a moral agentic knower differentiated from what is known. This presents quite a different perspective on the role of categorization in special educational needs from that of the sociological critique. Such a position resonates with Young's⁵ and Moore and Muller's¹² consideration of an emphasis on "voice discourses" coming out of postmodernist and other progressivist positions as being a threat, perhaps similarly to Putnam, to the application of useful knowledge in society. Thus, an interrogation of what knowledge is is recast as not just a debate on knowledge but on values as well.

Implications for Education and Inclusion

What then are the implications for such debates about knowledge for education and inclusion?

Two key areas are the curriculum for teacher education for inclusion and related debates about evidence-informed teaching. I have previously argued that too little consideration has been given to knowledge, particularly propositional knowledge in teacher education for inclusion.^{2,35} As Young³⁶ and Rata³⁷ have noted, one of the risks of postmodernist and other critiques of realist positions on knowledge is that they can deny particular groups things that they need and want. Thus, if voice and identity discourses are, as suggested, sometimes a way of giving primacy and status to those who are challenging the status quo with regard to knowledge, then they run the risk of, as in Durkheim's analysis, not differentiating carefully enough between external bias factors and internal objective truth value when considering the provenance of knowledge. In this context, Rata³⁸ notes that if disciplinary knowledge is excluded from children from lower socio-economic groups, partly on the basis that such children either can only access local knowledge situated in their "own culture", or are somehow better suited to experiential rather than scientific kinds of knowledge, then this translates in fact to a poverty of expectation, and means that their chances to compete in the labour market (i.e. to have equality of opportunity) are usually, in practical material terms, reduced. Rata³⁷ also notes that the people (academics, activists, politicians) who promote such a "voice discourse" view are often those who have themselves benefitted economically from school curricula and pedagogies focused on such disciplinary knowledge. Such debates are common in education policy and have significant interplay with political philosophies and value

tensions in education and inclusion. For example, during the 2010–2015 Conservative-led UK government’s period of office, Michael Gove was the Secretary of State for Education (primarily with responsibility for England as education is a matter devolved to the four nations). Gove³⁹ waded strongly into the skills versus knowledge debate and pushed hard for a move towards a more knowledge-based curriculum. There was also some debate⁴⁰ as to the extent to which this “knowledge turn” in policy was or was not influenced by the “knowledge turn” in academic debates on curriculum, spearheaded as it was by Michael Young. Due to these and other largely neoliberal policy developments, Gove became very unpopular amongst education academics, teacher unions, and many (although certainly not all) teachers.⁴¹ In many circles, including the ones I mixed in as a teacher educator, to have spoken about inclusion, education and Gove in the same sentence, would, I think, have been met with either ridicule or icy stares. Yet taking a step back, and as I have proposed, looking beyond inclusion as a hegemonic yet perhaps somewhat empty concept, we can see that there are arguments on both sides. For a particular school system, in a particular country, particularly a liberal democratic capitalist technologically advanced society, there were choices to be made about disciplinary knowledge and difference. Although not mapping quite directly onto the previous discussion on value tensions, this debate on knowledge I think does highlight different approaches to achieving justice and promoting autonomy. We can see Gove as adopting what might be termed a Durkheimian cognitive view of the social basis of knowledge, in which knowledge has a common cultural basis independent of who it is who knows, and thus viewing all groups as being entitled to access and benefit from that. An alternative postmodernist critique sees the social basis of knowledge and its inherent biases and positioning with regard to power as constitutive of such knowledge, and in its activist form sees the role of education as to both uncover and correct such biases. Both may well have a similar aim in wanting to improve the lives of children, but it’s not clear that a priori, in terms of “inclusion”, one perspective is immediately preferable to the other.

Teacher Education

I have elsewhere argued that a similar critique to Rata’s can be brought to bear upon the relevance of disciplinary knowledge from science, mainly psychology, for children with special educational needs, in terms of teacher education and inclusion.² Such knowledge might include disciplinary knowledge from psychology about for example autism as a diagnostic category, or could also encompass knowledge often straddling psychology and education about the effectiveness of particular evidence-based practices^{3,42} in relation to different categories of need such as social, emotional and mental health or areas of physical disability. This could also include knowledge about typical and atypical child development, and common pedagogies that are thought to be effective or helpful.

Models of education and inclusion based on a postmodernist critique – such as Florian’s⁴³ – discredit, based significantly on Foucault, the idea of any essentialist difference within children and thus implicitly of the role of any disciplinary knowledge, or even of there being meaning to such a construct, in the teacher’s understanding of said children. It is of course a post-modernist lens on disciplinary knowledge, albeit in relation to curriculum content, that provoked such a reaction from many educationalists against Michael Gove and the UK Government’s refocusing on disciplinary knowledge. They argue that knowledge about the child is not something that can be found in notions of normality or typicality and ability within the child. There is no possible model of justice that can be based on desert and a combination of the child’s innate differential ability with their efforts. There can be no such notion of justice as desert at the individual level, the justice of Rawls or Nozick (despite their differences) or Kant, as the child as a knowing agentic subject does not exist, or cannot be seen at all in isolation from their surrounding social bonds and constraints. Knowledge is not a justified true belief with independent purchase, but rather something more akin to experience that arises intersubjectively in the interaction between teacher and child or parent and child, and is constituted not primarily by two knowing subjects but by a notion of knowledge as equivalent to that localized experiential contact. The concept of inclusion that arises or is possible in this context is contingent, therefore, not primarily on values of strict justice, individual freedom and agency, but rather on other values such as community, reciprocity and a revised conception of (social) justice as primarily, not secondarily, redistributive in character.

Yet, following on from Rata’s³⁸ argument, what if knowledge from psychology could make a difference to children with special educational needs? What if a liberal perspective on the child as a knowing subject, associated with a recognition that internal ability and effort, both as qualities of that subject which are differential to others (albeit noting the difficulty of differentiating between these in practice in any sphere or human endeavour), led to a recognition that disciplinary knowledge from psychology might be able to help teachers help these children achieve their potential? A Durkheimian view of the social basis of such knowledge would necessarily need to recognize and compensate for the potential for biases, particularly the bias and risk of a fixed view of ability (and effort, and effort’s interplay with ability), and of preconceptions about spurious associations between different groups and ability. This opens up the possibility that knowledge about special educational needs, if its pedagogical relevance is established, can and should have a place in teacher education and inclusion. Otherwise, the risk that Rata³⁷ identifies that the benefits of disciplinary knowledge, of the fruits of scientific knowledge which the Enlightenment led to, which could make a difference to the lives of marginalized groups, are lost. Where we have been amiss in thinking about inclusion is not to recognize the possibility of this as a loss, an absolute loss in Berlin’s terms. This is particularly the case

given the mass of evidence relatable to special educational needs produced by the academy. As I have noted elsewhere,⁴⁴ this is particularly the case in relation to autism education, with a range of evidence-informed approaches to interventions and pedagogical methods available. To take one example, there is now a range of evidence that video modelling can be an effective approach for developing social communication skills in autistic children.^{45,46} Of course, the predictions of social science and psychology in this type of study do not have the same predictive power as predictions deriving from natural science. Nevertheless, a realist position of whatever flavour would surely have to imply that at least some of this evidence may have implications for the classroom, and may have at least some predictive power in promoting the effective learning of children with special educational needs. Such a proposition also has implications for how such knowledge, if deemed to be potentially of use, could be accessed by and made use of by teachers. There is not enough space to address this point in depth here, but in Mintz and Roberts,⁴² we considered the challenges and complexities of achieving this. One could argue, as Rata does in relation to other marginalized groups, that not at least recognizing this possibility can impact on a range of elements linked to values, such as the potential for autistic children and their families to participate fully in society via enhanced communication and equality of opportunity and outcome via the support for academic and social learning that such an evidence base could support.

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4 Implications for Education and Inclusion in the Classroom

Teachers and school leaders are faced with choices all the time, about how to put to best use the inevitably limited resources they have. I contend that these choices usually involve tensions about which values to give primacy to. As a way of illuminating who this operates concretely, particularly within the classroom, I set out in this chapter a number of scenarios and then explore the value tensions at play. Firstly, I draw on a recent study by Tse.¹ Tse, writing in 2023, explores the value tensions that school leaders and teachers experience in working with children with special educational needs in kindergarten settings in Hong Kong. Hong Kong has a significant level of private provision of early years education, and principals in such settings have considerable latitude in setting their own admissions criteria and in making decisions about whether or not to admit individual children with special educational needs. There are also considerable pressures on principals (i.e. leaders of settings) in the early years sector in terms of expectations from parents with regard to the academic level that children will achieve. This is particularly so in relation to early reading, in the context of significant competition for places in well-regarded elementary and higher-level educational institutions. Such parental expectations also create pressure, at least in the minds of principals, about the potential impact on resources and the overall academic success profile of all students that might arise from admitting children with special needs into their settings. In Tse's study, in two kindergartens, both principals and classroom teachers were concerned about the impact of children with special educational needs, who had been admitted to their settings in some numbers, on resources, particularly the (limited) resource of teacher attention. Teachers' perceptions were that some children with special needs, in their classes, required them to give them more individual time and attention, raising the question of how "teaching resource should be allocated between the majority and the minority".^{1(p.156)} One of the teachers in the study expresses the view that "everyone is equal" and that it is not fair that the "bright ones get less attention".^{1(p.157)} One of the principals suggests that with the right training and "accommodations" teachers can effectively deal with children with

special educational needs in their classrooms; however, she adds the caveat of “even if it requires slowing down on academic learning...”.^{1(p.159)} Although the teachers in her study were not inexperienced, Tse goes on to consider the extent to which additional training about how to deal with varieties of need in the classroom might alleviate the concerns of the teachers in the study, a point also reflected upon by the principals themselves.

This example illustrates value tensions between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome, pithily expressed in the teacher comment “it’s not fair that the bright ones get less attention”. Equality of opportunity would suggest that all children independent of their background are entitled to equal teacher attention. In contrast, a Rawlsian social perspective on justice as fairness might well suggest that there is a sufficitarian argument for resources to be unequally distributed to ensure that everyone gets to a minimum level of outcome. A social relational perspective on rights, such as Felder’s² emphasis on the need to promote equal representation, would suggest that children with special educational needs should be given more attention and time so that they can develop the capacity for representation, an argument that also resonates with a classically liberal perspective on education’s role in promoting autonomy. A postmodernist or postcolonial sociological critique would significantly discount strict justice and equality of opportunity, and regard a Rawlsian sufficitarian redistributive theory of justice as untenable, and rather emphasize the achievement of equality of outcome as a key value. There is also a further evidentiary aspect to the discussion in that the question of whether additional training in “inclusive” approaches would allow teachers, even if resources of time and attention remain limited, to use that time more effectively to meet the needs of all students. Some theorists argue forcefully that universalist approaches involving modified pedagogy can overcome, at least in many cases, resource constraints and attendant tensions. A particular example is Universal Design for Learning (UDL) which involves varying (a) presentation of content in different modes to meet different needs, (b) engagement, particularly promoting small group collaborative learning, and (c) expression/assessment, giving children choices in how to present their knowledge and understanding.³ However, given in particular the lack of penetration of UDL into compulsory phase education or strong evidence for its impact,⁴ although I agree that considering the potential of such approaches is important, whether they can actually in many case overcome the reality of resource constraints and value tensions in the classroom is I contend much less clear. Other theorists, such as Florian,⁵ suggest that resource limitations and attendant tensions can be resolved in the classroom by the right mix of attitudes, techniques and training for teachers. I contend that this is similarly unrealistic, and serves to place too much of the burden for resolving resource constraints on teachers, treating their time and energy as far too elastic in character.

Teacher Deliberation

Tse's study illustrates well how value tensions are very often played out in the thinking and ongoing reflection on practice (as per Schön⁶) of teachers. Mclaughlin⁷ places an emphasis on phronesis, noting that the tensions over political values in education usually (although not exclusively) play out in the decisions that teachers have to make in the course of teaching. For education and inclusion, as with education in general, these tensions imply value choices that teachers have to make. To explore these tensions in more depth, I now bring a series of further case studies which illuminate particular value choices facing teachers in the classroom.

Case 1: Implications of "Successful" and "Unsuccessful" Inclusion

Consider the following imaginary but, I would argue, quite realistic scenario. It involves a fifth grade (age 10–11) public school classroom with 25 children in a relatively affluent but still socially and ethnically mixed suburb of a medium-sized city in New England. A new child, Daniel, joins the class after his parents moved from another city for work. The class has an experienced teacher, Mrs Marks, who takes the class for most subjects, and a teaching aide who is there with the class in the mornings. Daniel is a personable child but Mrs Marks notices fairly quickly that Daniel finds it difficult to sit still in class or to focus during whole class teaching. Despite using a range of well-honed classroom management strategies, Mrs Marks feels after a couple of weeks that Daniel has not really settled well. This is a small school and Mrs Marks has a strong relationship with the school principal Dr Clancy and Mrs Marks meets with her to discuss Daniel. Mrs Marks recounts that Daniel frequently gets up to move about the class, constantly fidgets, and quite often provokes or distracts other children by poking them or pulling funny faces. Although Mrs Marks employs a range of positive behaviour management strategies with Daniel and the class, and she feels that there is not significant disruption to the learning of other children, she is concerned that Daniel seems both socially isolated and is not really engaging with learning. Mrs Marks and Dr Clancy spend time discussing potential approaches. They touch on the question of whether Daniel might have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) but don't feel that seeking a formal diagnosis at this stage is warranted, nor that this might make any difference to the pedagogical approaches they would consider. They agree that Mrs Marks will arrange to meet with Daniel's parents. Mrs Marks does this, and the parents report that Daniel has similar issues at home and at his previous school, and that they feel that his academic self-concept as a learner is very low, and they are happy to work with the school in any way to support his learning and development. Mrs Marks comes up with a plan for Daniel, based on her discussion with Dr Clancy, the parents, her professional experience of working with children with similar issues to Daniel over her career, and various post qualification programmes on inclusion that she has

attended. The plan includes providing Daniel with a visual schedule outlining the programme for each day designed to help him stay organized and on track, and a sensory tool (stress balls) that Daniel can ask to access during the day if he is finding it hard to concentrate. Mrs Marks also tells Daniel that if he is finding it particularly hard to concentrate, he can ask for a “time out” and Mrs Marks will give him a task to do which involves getting up and moving around, like taking something to the office or another class. Over the next few weeks, this plan has a positive effect: Daniel becomes calmer in class, the provocation of other children stops, and he begins to contribute to class discussions. Mrs Marks notices that at break times he is becoming more socially integrated with the other children. Mrs Marks also skilfully leverages the sense of camaraderie and caring for each other that she had already fostered in the class, to help the other children recognize that Daniel has particular needs (such as accessing the stress balls), which the children seem to accept with equanimity. Mrs Marks is pleased with how things have gone and meets with Dr Clancy to review the progress made. Dr Clancy congratulates and praises her but at the end of the meeting also asks how Mrs Marks’ plans for a reading group were going. Mrs Marks and Dr Clancy had in the last month discussed setting up a reading group for some of the more advanced readers in the class who were particularly interested in current events. Mrs Marks says that she has not had time yet to think about this but will get on to it. At home that evening, talking to her husband Mrs Marks discusses what has been happening at school, and expresses some resentment that teachers are just supposed to deal with any new student who might turn up to their class out of the blue on top of everything else they have to do.

This is an imaginary example but not, I think, an unrealistic one, and many teachers and academics will no doubt recognize elements of it, and indeed there are many such accounts in the literature.^{8,9} In this example, the concept of inclusion might be seen as the implementation of a set of pedagogical and/or classroom management strategies to address difference in the classroom and meet the needs of individual students. Imaginary Mrs Marks demonstrates that such a body of knowledge exists, as well as perhaps that this might indeed involve differential pedagogical strategies for students with different needs. It illustrates that professional experience and training can be brought together by teachers to meet individual needs. It is also an account, albeit in a restricted context, of what might be thought of as successful inclusion in that Daniel has his needs met, at the same time as the needs of the rest of the class also being attended to. Yet, even in this successful restricted scenario, value tensions are of course not absent. In my design, Mrs Marks’ concerns about workload, again something which I think is quite realistic in terms of teacher experience, raise value tensions. Meeting Daniel’s specific needs, although in this scenario possible and successful with an attention to individual pedagogic adaptations and thus satisfying from an equality of outcome perspective Daniel’s participation and achievement, does come with a resource cost that may impinge on the equality of opportunity of others. As in the previous example, the time

and attention resource directed to Daniel has to come from somewhere. Mrs Marks' capacities are, as with anyone, limited, just as are those of the school as a whole. The group of children with more ability and/or interest and/or effort in reading did not benefit from the additional pedagogic input that Mrs Marks may have had time for if Daniel had not arrived in her class. These children thus suffered a loss, in terms of having elements of their needs met, or having them met in a timely fashion. The argument is also, of course, potentially iterative, in that the allocation of time to the specific needs of the children due to having the reading group could be similarly judged or weighed against a notion of equal time allocation to all children in the class.

This (constructed) scenario also serves the purpose of highlighting how the issue of where this resource comes from can be glossed both from the perspective of the sociological critique in education and inclusion and, indeed, as argued by Done and Murphy¹⁰ in neoliberal accounts of the welfare state which assign an unmeasured elasticity and associated unlimited locus of responsibility to staff such as Mrs Marks in this example. It could be argued, as many do,^{11–13} that this is “part of the job”, and that an open-ended commitment to meeting all and every need is one of the virtues¹² that we might in the modern world expect of teachers and indeed of schools as institutions. It is also legitimate to argue that a loss of a fair allocation of resources is reasonable, particularly if we might argue that in the round – although at certain times certain children will have particular needs that require more attention, over say for example the whole of a school year, this roughly equals out. It could be that Daniel's needs are temporary, or that the time and attention required by Mrs Marks to meet them will reduce over time, especially as Daniel settles and the particular pedagogic approaches put in place become just a routine part of classroom life. What, though, if this scenario worked out differently? Teachers, whatever their experience, can be challenged at any point in their career.¹⁴ What if, despite the good intentions and hard work of Mrs Marks and the school, Daniel did not settle? What if over the rest of the school year he continued to be distracted in class, and his provocation of other children became worse and really started to disturb lessons? What if his social integration into the class went backwards, and he became unhappy at school and started to refuse to come to school on some days, making it even more difficult for Mrs Marks to attempt to include him in class and ensure he progressed in his learning, when he was in school? What if Daniel's parents' marriage happened to break down, and his self-concept deteriorated further, and he became even more demotivated in class? Again, although fictional, I think it is as much a plausible scenario as the first iteration – one that many teachers will recognize and instances of which also feature, perhaps with even more regularity than the first, in the literature.^{15–17} Mapping out fictionally what might happen with this turn of event –let's say that Mrs Marks in conjunction with the Dr Clancy, Daniel's parents and other staff members of the school and outside agencies – all spend considerable time thinking about how to address Daniel's needs and in trying out different pedagogic approaches with Daniel. Mrs Marks never has time to

come back to the idea of the reading group, and Dr Clancy knows better than to raise it with her as he is well aware of the limits on her time and energy and indeed is concerned that even with her extensive experience, the issues with Daniel are taking a considerable toll on her. It could be argued that there is an absolute loss in terms of equality of opportunity for other children in the class. Their teacher has less time for them, gives them less attention, and perhaps even has less energy and creativity as a teacher. One could argue that there are compensations – perhaps the children in the class both learn about values such as kindness, compassion or caring, or even love. Perhaps Mrs Marks still maintains a collaborative ethos within the class in which there is still a sense of joint camaraderie and enterprise as a class and as a school in working together to help Daniel. Yet children are required to go to school. They do not get to choose the classes they are in or who their classmates are, and in this scenario, they do not get a choice as to whether or not they want their teacher to spend far more time with Daniel and his needs than on them and their needs. A liberal political perspective highlights the question of whether the exercise of values such as kindness or compassion and their consequences can be imposed on people without limit, as opposed to freely chosen, even in the case of children. If we take Berlin's point that values are incommensurable, the loss of equal opportunity – of teacher attention, and of learning that might otherwise have happened – for the children, and perhaps by extension for their parents, has an absolute quality. In that sense, equality of opportunity for all is not so easily resolved with differential resource allocation to achieve equality of outcome for some. There is also a values issue in terms of the loss of energy and time for Mrs Marks. Perhaps she takes the problems in class with Daniel home with her, worrying about what else she could do to help him. We know from a fair bit of literature^{18–20} that teachers often take intractable problems in the classroom home. She likely also spends far more time now on planning and preparing for Daniel's needs, on top of all the other planning and assessment commitments that are just there as for any teacher. She spends far more of her time, a limited resource, on her job than would otherwise be the case. This is an absolute loss in terms of strict justice for Mrs Marks, as the effort of her (unchosen) labour goes unrewarded.

Impact on Teachers

Salamanca,²¹ and other supranational and national legislation all have clauses about reasonable adjustments/accommodations. They tend, though, to say little substantively about justice as a value as applied to teachers. A reasonable adjustment implies that value tensions in relation to limited resource allocation can be resolved, as long as the trade-off is reasonable, and usually this is about what might be reasonable in terms of school budgets or impacts on other children, not in terms of teacher welfare. Berlin's liberal account of value pluralism²² reminds us that such trade-offs are not so simple. They may well be necessary in modern technological societies. They may well be

unavoidable. Yet they have, as Berlin insists, as public policy approaches, serious consequences.²² In the example above, they are serious for the other children in Daniel's class who in the second iteration of the scenario lose out on the time and attention of their teacher for a large segment of the year. They are serious for Mrs Marks and her work/life balance. They are of course serious as well for Daniel and his parents. Deciding what is the best decision or decisions in such situations is not easy. It's not easy at a policy level and it's not easy for teachers and schools. McLaughlin's focus on phronesis⁷ highlights that whatever the policy context, it's teachers who take on the brunt of the responsibility for making these decisions in the context of the day-to-day life of the classroom. The point I draw from this extended-thought experiment about Daniel and Mrs Marks is that it is unclear precisely how our current notion of inclusion, with its tendency to elide these tensions, helps in grappling with these decisions.

Resources to the Rescue

A possible solution to these tensions, of course, would be for the school to utilize more resources to meet Daniel's needs. The school could, for example, introduce a second teacher to team-teach with Mrs Marks for some part of the week. There is some evidence for the effectiveness in terms of meeting individual needs of team teaching where two qualified teachers work together with one class,²³ and it is possibly a better policy choice than introducing teaching assistants, given the concerns about their potential negative impacts.²⁴ So let's imagine that resources were unlimited, that the school did not have budget pressures, and could say introduce team teaching into Daniel's class for three days a week. This might increase the capacity of the school to meet Daniel's needs, and the needs of the whole class. All sorts of things are possible if resources are not limited. Yet from the head-teacher's perspective, what other significant competing demands on the budget would need to be ignored in order to achieve this? What is reasonable to meet the needs of an individual, the question posed in Rawls' account of justice? The term "reasonable", in reasonable accommodations, does a lot of heavy lifting. I contend that, as with the concept of inclusion more broadly, it tends to elide the significant value tensions that are, in public policy terms, whether national or local or micro-local at school or class level, at the heart of dealing with difference in education.

Case 2: Prepare the Child for the Road, Not the Road for the Child?

This again is a fictional but, I would argue, potentially highly realistic scenario. Alexia is a "high functioning" autistic girl in grade 6 (11 to 12 years of age) in a class of 30 children at Condol Elementary, a large mainstream elementary school in a medium-sized city in New Mexico with a diverse cultural and linguistic intake and many children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

A relatively new Charter school in the area with stronger academic results has recently started to attract parents away from Condol, leading to a fall in enrolments, and this in conjunction with wider budget cuts by the school district has led to significant budgetary pressures on the school leadership team. Ms Rivera, the class teacher, has ten years of experience and has had considerable training in inclusion in the classroom including specific courses on meeting the needs of children with autism. Alexia's revised Individual Education Plan (IEP), following consultation with the school's educational psychologist at the end of the summer term in the previous school year, recommended that, due to her sensory sensitivities, she would benefit from a low arousal environment. During the previous school year, with a newly qualified teacher with the class, Alexia's behaviour had deteriorated, with an increasing frequency of "acting out", which caused considerable disruption to the learning of other children. The psychologist was aware of both practice related to comprehensive frameworks for autism education and support such as TEACCH,²⁵ which included low arousal as an element, and wider research independent of such frameworks which shows the potential benefits of a low arousal approach as a generalized strategy to managing challenging behaviours with autistic children.²⁶ The psychologist consulted with Ms Rivera and Alexia's parents before the beginning of the new school year and they all agreed that aiming for a low arousal approach might give a new start to Alexia after the summer break. However, Ms Rivera found implementing this low arousal approach challenging at the start of the term. In particular, the grade 6 classroom was a new build construction compared to the lower age groups and has bright fluorescent lighting. Ms Rivera worried that this may be over stimulating for Alexia. Ms Rivera aims, in line with the low arousal principal in the IEP, to mitigate noise levels in the classroom; however, Ms Rivera tends towards a high-energy teaching style, and her training and experience in terms of what works for children of this age, in general, gravitate towards lots of open discussion, group collaboration and fun. Despite her best efforts to minimize noise levels, Ms Rivera struggles to strike a balance between meeting Alexia's need for a low arousal environment and facilitating active engagement among the other children. As part of the IEP, Ms Rivera set up a quiet space area at the back of the classroom, which is a desk facing the wall with two wooden panels on either side to provide a barrier to reduce distractions. Alexia does make use of this space quite frequently during the school day, but Ms Rivera notices that she seems quite sad when she is there, and Ms Rivera has a sense, when Alexia comes back to the class as a whole, that she is lonely and misses the closer company of her peers in the main classroom area. As part of the IEP, Ms Rivera restricts the amount of colourful display on the walls of the classroom, out of concern that this may add to visual over stimulation for Alexia. However, the grade 6 school curriculum includes an extended art project during the term, and the children create a series of colourful images based on the work of impressionist period painters. Ms Rivera feels that it would really add to the class's sense of achievement from this project to have this work prominently

displayed within the classroom, but at the same time does not want to further increase the visual clutter for Alexia. Alexia also very much enjoyed the art project and produced some of the most high-quality work in the class.

Although this is, again, a fictitious scenario, I think it is one quite recognizable in many classrooms, and is also reflected in the literature. Jordan²⁷ in particular has pointed out that it is difficult to see how making such changes in mainstream classroom settings for autistic children will necessarily be pedagogically effective for other children. She has considered the type of concerns in this vignette, i.e. that some, perhaps most children, particularly in elementary school settings, will benefit from the use of involved classroom displays and effective “social constructivist” learning may often involve reasonable levels of noise which would not align with a low arousal approach. This scenario exemplifies in particular tensions between equality of opportunity for the majority versus equality of outcomes for minority of children. It also illustrates issues about autonomy, and about the place of knowledge concerning special educational needs in teacher practice.

From Berlin’s²⁸ perspective, this exemplar case could be considered to illustrate incommensurability in value pluralism, i.e. that meeting the needs of individuals causes a loss for the wider group. This case also illuminates tensions in relation to autonomy. Issues of autonomy and identity have had particular resonance in relation to autism over a number of decades.²⁹ Of course, issues of autonomy in the context of education apply to all children. It is an issue which every teacher (and every parent) negotiates every day, in every classroom. The child wants to do A and the adult wants them to do B, often because the adult thinks that A is not good for them or not good for them at that particular time, and B is. A parent wants their 15-year-old to stop playing their video game and take out the trash. A teacher wants a child to read their book in silence with the rest of the class, not chat to their friend next to them. A parent wants their six-year-old to go to school even though they really want to stay at home, and forces them to go, perhaps with the child crying on the way. Discussions about issues of autonomy in relation to autism tend, though, to have a more intense quality. Peter Hobson, an influential theorist on psychoanalysis and on autism,³⁰ argued that autism, with its impairments in intersubjective experience, pushes difference right up in the face of society. As I have argued,³¹ how far we should go in changing the environment to meet the needs of autistic individuals, as opposed to working to increase their capacity to engage with others on their terms, is a key question for autism education. Hobson³⁰ made this point particularly in relation to impairments in social communication and social imagination. He proposed that the relationships resulting from these are “gifts”, and not gifts which we should so lightly exclude autistic individuals from. In 2024, these are much less fashionable views. Rather, it is more fashionable to consider autism, or more widely neurodivergence, from an identity perspective, in which any concept of deficit or indeed impairment is excised.^{32,33} A sociological critique proposes that it is society that needs to change, not

individuals or groups. As Tom Shakespeare has pointed out, in relation to disability activism,³⁴ such a stance can lead to absurdities in terms of resource requirements, and I would extend the point by noting that taken to its logical conclusions, it also leads to absurdities, or perhaps better irrevocable losses for others, from the perspective of equality of opportunity. In Alexia's case, there is no a priori reason to think that it is out of the question, on any level, that Alexia can change as opposed to the classroom changing. Of course, there are a whole range of factors (or values) to consider. What any child can change has limits, just as for adults. Sometimes change might mean suffering and there are many other important values, such as compassion or care,³⁵ that need to be taken into account. Some change may not be possible at all due to internal limits. Again, this is somewhat of an unfashionable view, perhaps because it is elided or confused with the notion of fixed ability. However, these are distinct ideas: no one can truly know what another's internal capacities are, nor their capacity for effort, and the sociological critique's point that what we are now and what we can do now is not predictive of what we might be able to do tomorrow is not the same as saying that there are no limits to capacity. Few argue, for example, that people with profound and multiple learning disabilities do not have limits on what they can do now or in the future.³⁶ Alexia may not now or ever be able to tolerate the noise and bustle of group activities, or she might, or she might grow to be able to tolerate it but hate it. We have of course many personal accounts of how autistic people make adjustments like this all the time and the personal costs to them ("the hating it") involved.^{37,38} It is also possible, as Hobson³⁰ argues, that Alexia may hate it in the moment but also come to recognize the benefits in time. Teachers like Ms Rivera are faced with thinking about all these things in terms of the decisions they make, just as all adults are in the decisions they make for the children in their care. These decisions all relate to values – in Alexia's case and for autistic children like her we could list – autonomy, agency, independence, love, compassion, caring, friendship, participation, identity/community, tradition (the tradition of the class, the norms of society) and so on. The arguments about these also do not of course just go one way. Liberal public policy promotes the idea of all children being able to develop the capacity to engage in autonomous democratic decision making. This might be something which is much more difficult for Alexia to achieve if she is always in her own space. Felder's emphasis on the need for there to be more focus on developing participation for disabled groups² may be hard to achieve for Alexia as an individual, without her developing some capacity to engage in collaboration. The teacher, and her parents, may need to balance this with Alexia's agency in saying "I want to be alone". As well, the educational aim of autonomy can go both ways. Alexia's parents may want her to develop some engagement for social engagement and collaboration, as they may want her to have friends. This may be because they think that this will make her happy, the aim of virtually all parents for their children. Or they may see this as an element of a common culture (similarly to Hobson's point about the gift of

communication) that they want her to develop, even if it is difficult for her. Ms Rivera may have a similar view to the parents in terms of the value of cultural tradition, and may also feel that this intercalates with an idea of the school culture. Alexia herself may also, particularly in terms of friendship, want to develop the capacity to have friends. There is extensive literature showing how many autistic children want to be engaged in meaningful social relationships and friendship,^{39–41} even if it involves difficulty and effort. Both her parents and Ms Rivera may think that she is too young (too immature, yet lacking in capacity) to understand how developing collaborative skills today may help her with friendship and belonging now and in the future. This myriad web of interlocking values and tensions are likely at least in parts incommensurable. For example, some of the suffering by Alexia now would be absolute, as all suffering is, when offset against future gains in friendship and participation. Thus, I contend that there are no easy answers. If inclusion means something, it means not an empty idealism, not one rationalist or Hegelian answer, but a series of complex choices about values. Usually, whatever the wider public policy context, these are messy, difficult choices made by teachers. They are often painful choices as they involve choosing value A over value B, and not even being sure that what you choose will lead to A or B. They are painful because they are choices about other people's lives, and inevitably sometimes they are wrong and don't work out. Of course, sometimes they do, which leads to the magical moments, too far and few between, that make the life of the teacher worthwhile.

Prepare the Child for the Road

I positioned quite a few of the tensions in this case along the classical social model / sociological critique axis, i.e. – in Lukianoff and Haidt's⁴² terms – should we prepare the child for the road or the road for the child? The sociological postmodernist critique posits a different pattern of emphasis for the values that I set out above as being in tension. In particular, the value of tradition and the notion of a set of cultural norms for the classroom, along with associated pedagogical practices, would have less primacy compared to equality of outcome linked to ensuring the freedom of particular groups from oppression. This critique would posit that the emphasis on the knowing subject and the human sciences in knowing about Alexia in a particular way fundamentally misconceives the way in which learning happens for Alexia and the class. It is from this misconception that the difficulties perceived by the school, by Ms Rivera and indeed by Alexia and her classmates arise. In terms of values, resistance might be considered important in the actions of both Alexia and Mrs Rivera. Losses in terms of justice as desert – for example the desert of individual children say in terms of having their individual artistic efforts celebrated by displaying their work within their own classroom, given that the very idea of the knowing individual subject is questioned – would take on a different weight. It also accords different weight to the issue of

resources, and inherently critiques the individual focused idea of reasonableness of adjustments, in that the premise of that is rooted in a sufficitarian concept of redistributive justice which gives primacy to the losses of other individuals when redistribution occurs.⁴³

Whilst maintaining, in Berlin's terms, a joint common human horizon across these different epistemological positions, the sociological critique in this specific case illustrates the complexity of value pluralism in practice. Of course, Ms Rivera no doubt is also aware, at least to some extent in terms of its significant wider cultural penetration and specific positioning within teacher education, of this critique and its implications, which adds further complexity to the decisions she needs to make. Yet as I have noted, the sociological critique of inclusion and education has presented very few, if any, tools for thinking through resource issues. In Ms Rivera's classroom and for the school as it is, the resource limitations are there just as much if the issues are considered from a sociological critique perspective (or indeed a capability theory perspective). Similarly, the cultural norms are also there. The norms in society, the norms in terms of how making friends requires social skills. These norms can in theory be adjusted, both in the classroom and more widely. Employers can, for example, learn about and implement policies that will make their employees more aware of and better able to engage with neurodiversity,⁴⁴ and schools can do the same.⁴⁵ Up to a point. Up to the point of reasonableness, and reasonable adjustments still involve very significant value tensions. For example, in liberal democratic societies, in fact in any type of society except perhaps some forms of totalitarianism, people like to be able to choose their friends. They would not like the idea of the state telling them who they should be friends with; the idea of some Ministry of Friendship that pre-allocates people to friendship groups in advance is clearly ludicrous – an absurdity like those Shakespeare³⁴ points out as the limits of disability inclusion. Perhaps people can be nudged more towards being more accepting of difference, but there will be limits, as the value of freedom and perhaps also intimacy as a value are incompatible and incommensurable with a notion of directed friendship. There will be limits in how society and the role of cooperative social engagement operate, because the way they operate has benefits for individuals in terms of freedom. Thus, there are limits for Ms Rivera in terms of how far she can go in making other children be friends with Alexia, if they perceive that she is giving off signals that she wants to be alone. To some extent, Alexia, as Hobson³⁰ suggests, may have to move some way in terms of her social skills, even if it is difficult for her, to meet her classmates. For sure, they can also move to meet her, but not to the extent that the school can institute a localized Ministry of Friends and make the children be friends with her. There is a limit to how much you can change the road, or at least how likely it is to change for the children in Ms Rivera's class, including Alexia. We might also posit that in liberal democracies, there should also be a limit to the extent to which the state aims to change people's social interaction patterns, i.e. their individual liberty, even as children, to follow established patterns of communication and indeed from

a liberal perspective, the role of state education in promoting such change without limit can be questioned.⁴⁶

Knowledge and Special Educational Needs

This case also raises the issue of the place of knowledge about special educational needs. Molloy and Vasil noted in a well-cited paper on Asperger's Syndrome, which effectively lays out the sociological critique of knowledge (the "voice discourse" in Muller and Moore's terms), the following in respect of special needs:^{47(p.410)}

Key assumptions in special education are that disability is a pathological condition that students have, diagnosis is an objective and useful practice, and special education is considered to be a rationally conceived and coordinated system of services for the benefit of diagnosed students...A child's poor performance in school is thus due to some problem within him or her and not as a result of educational practices...learning disabilities practice, which stresses (a) adaptive behavior; (b) coping strategies; and (c) right (i.e. normal) ways of thinking...has the effect of 'normalizing' students while leaving unchallenged conventional notions of what is normal or natural.

This succinctly sets out the "voice discourse" critique of knowledge in education and inclusion and its intimate connection to political values, particularly liberal or conservative values about tradition and normality. The application of Molloy and Vasil's analysis to the case of Alexia is clear. Autism and knowledge about it represent an accretion of culturally and historically laden associations of power and privilege, predicated on a particular view of normality, which is designed to position difference as of lesser value. As Young points out in his analysis of the knowledge turn, such knowledge definitely can be this, and definitely has been this. Yet as I have noted, if we adopt a Durkheimian realist view of bias, we can contend that we can split off the accretions of bias from what might be actual knowledge. This may be knowledge about people and their lives that could have the capacity to help them in some ways. Earlier I referred to the evidence on team teaching and its potential. As Cook et al.²³ discuss, the evidence of effectiveness in terms of student outcomes is mixed, but Scruggs et al.⁴⁸ set out how theoretically its focus on collaboration, planning and joint content mastery can bring benefits when dealing with difference in the classroom. A school interested in evidence-informed practice and in developing its organizational capacities around this might through, for example, a teacher study group engage with this literature.⁴⁹ The school leadership might consider that, as with Daniel's case, for classes with children with differences in learning, spending resources on hiring an additional teacher to team-teach might be worth exploring. They might pilot this say with a supply teacher for a while, and then if it proved effective, decide to make a permanent appointment. They might decide to reduce their budget in other areas – say for

example two teaching assistants retire or resign, and they decide not to replace their posts. They might monitor the impact, for example, on social engagement and friendships of autistic or otherwise neurodivergent children in the classes, and make further decisions on whether or not to roll the approach out more widely. In doing so, they would be dealing with knowledge – knowledge about special educational needs and knowledge derived from academic work in the human sciences. A fictional example perhaps; however, there are plenty of examples in the literature about the use of evidence to inform practice in working with children with special educational needs.^{50,51} A social realist perspective on knowledge would admit of the risks of bias, but would maintain that there is the potential for an independent purchase point on what we can know and understand about special needs and effective teaching practices that can add value to practice.

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5 Wider Aspects of Education and Inclusion

A Broad View of Education and Inclusion

In much of the book so far, I have focused on difference in respect of special educational needs, in the context of education and inclusion. Notwithstanding the inherent ontological tensions, there is an ongoing debate in the field, in K-12, about narrow versus broad views of education and inclusion, with a narrow view focusing on special educational needs and a broader view focusing on other aspects of difference including racial and cultural identity, language, sexuality and class.^{1,2} In the last five years or so, there has been a softening of this divide, partly due to the increasing dominance of sociological and identity perspectives on inclusion, which as discussed have problematized the very idea of categorization (see for example Cruz et al.³). Nevertheless, partly (or perhaps mostly) due to the need, as the line of broadly realist scholars from Kant, Durkheim, through to much more recently Furedi⁴ and Rata⁵ have argued, for categorization and structures of knowledge in order to think about anything at all, this divide between narrow and broad conceptualizations of education and inclusion persists.

In this chapter, I will focus on this broader view, thinking particularly about language and cultural diversity as aspects of difference, and the implications of liberal and other perspectives for education and inclusion in respect of these.

Reich,^{6,7} in considering multicultural education and (classical or neo) liberalism, argues, similarly to Mclaughlin⁸ and Kymlicka,^{9,10} for a “thin” liberal policy perspective on education which focuses on a shared limited public curriculum for civics, at the same time recognizing and valuing difference in the classroom. This needs, as Reich⁶ argues, to be linked to an understanding by schools, teachers and the system, of the lessons of the sociological critique. Thus, teachers need to avoid notions of fixed ability linked to biases about particular groups. In particular, biases about the capacities or abilities of children based on their language, their race, or their cultural background need to be both recognized and avoided.⁶ Reich is writing in the US context, and the long and ugly history of such discrimination in relation to these biases at individual, school, state and national level is extensive and hugely significant.¹¹⁻¹³ That such discrimination and bias is still with us in the US, the UK, and internationally is hard to doubt. Just to take one example of many possibilities,

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Hope et al.'s participatory study of the experiences of black young people in high schools in an urban context in the US included the following quote from a Grade 12 student Jamal:^{14(p.96)}

Interviewer: Why did you change schools?
Jamal: Racists.
Interviewer: And why, how do you know they were racist?
Jamal: There was thing that would be done, if um a white person, we was in an academy so therefore we had to wear uniforms, which was strictly color based. You can wear any solid color polo, any solid color pants, and gym shoes, cool. But the only thing was your shirt must be tucked in. And we would notice that the Black people have their shirts tuck, tucked out and then they'll be all, and there'll be all types of hollering and yelling going on, well you need to get your shirt tucked in...or a white guy would be walking around in school cussing and the principal will laugh and all this other stuff with 'em, and as he's cussing, but if we were to say anything of that nature it would be a problem.

Other quotes from the young people in this study indicate a similar pattern of perceptions of differential treatment in terms of behaviour and in terms of expectations for academic success. As Waitoller¹⁵ and Artiles^{16,17} have noted, there remains a need to think, beyond simplistic notions of colour blindness, more deeply about how such issues can be effectively addressed in schooling.

The parallels to some of the debates around difference as special educational needs are clear – notions of fixed ability, bias in relation to labels, the sociological construction of deficit, ideas of normality, and so on. How the sociological critique of classical liberal perspectives could be applied is also quite apparent – particularly in terms of how models of knowledge and accretions of power, which have a historical and cultural trajectory, could be masked as asocial rationality.¹⁸ The use of intersectionality as a lens also has the potential to further unmask such biases. Crenshaw's¹⁹ seminal analysis of overlaps between employment discrimination of Black women illustrated how sometimes a focus on just individual elements can obscure the full picture. As discussed earlier on, in terms of education and inclusion, there is evidence about how the (low) expectations of teachers²⁰ and the achievement of children who are both black and classified as having special educational needs is a particular intersectional locus of concern.^{21,22}

There is much which could be written about the above, but space is limited, and in terms of the aims of this book to consider the implications of liberal perspectives on education and inclusion, it will be fruitful to be more focused. Based on my concerns about value tensions in education and inclusion,

I particularly want to consider culturally responsive pedagogy and to trace from this what I will call a negotiation approach to inclusion which allows more space for the consideration of these tensions in practice and policy.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

There is longstanding interest in culturally responsive pedagogy as an approach, and recently there has been growing interest in its application to the field of education and inclusion. Waitoller and Thorius²³ have termed this an asset (as opposed to “deficit”) pedagogy, linking it to critical theory perspectives on disability. For Waitoller,²⁴ the focus is on race and ethnicity and linguistic marginalized groups, encompassing aspects of culture, identity, epistemology, (social) justice and content (i.e. self-referential consideration of epistemological aspects for example in the context of teacher education for inclusion). In its earlier iterations, sometimes referred to as culturally responsive teaching, Geneva Gay,²⁵ one of the seminal writers in this field, proposed that it was not just the existence of direct bias, whether conscious or not, such as limited expectations for academic achievement, that were holding children from minority groups back. Rather, or clearly in addition to that, children from minority groups have particular modes of local knowledge and local culture that are often not reflected in the structures, the curriculum content, and particularly the pedagogy of the teachers, often coming from different backgrounds from the children themselves. Gay’s work sits within a quite long tradition of aiming to understand how to match the common school to the experience and knowledge of minority students (see Gladson-Billings²⁶ for an overview). Gay, and many more contemporary authors,²⁷⁻²⁹ argue that this is not just about recognizing and validating the identities of children (although that is important), but rather about transforming pedagogy to take account of the different, as Bernstein³⁰ might put it, codes that underpin the hidden and open curriculum and pedagogy of the classroom and school. It is still possible, I contend, even within the context of such a transformative agenda, to apply a Durkheimian social realist perspective,³¹ differentiating between external and internal bias, rather than proposing as many theorists working in the space of culturally responsive pedagogy do³², a completely new pedagogy and curriculum. Reich⁶ undertook such an analysis of critically responsive pedagogy. Reich identifies that there clearly are externalities, which if not necessarily flowing from bias (although they might) can also come just from ignorance of other cultures. Reich makes a dividing line between what we might term these externalities and internalities about knowledge itself. Linked to this, Reich also heavily criticizes Gay²⁵ for proposing that there might be particular learning styles that suit particular minority groups, which Reich rightly notes was a significant aspect of Gays original formulation of culturally responsive teaching. Thus, Gay²⁵ and Banks³³ proposed that, for example, African American learners prefer kinaesthetic or active instructional activities, and Native American children prefer visual and spatial to verbal information. Reich notes that there is in

fact no evidence for this and later research,^{34,35} which has been critical of the whole idea of different learning styles for different groups, tends to reinforce this conclusion. Reich⁶ also similarly objects to the idea that there is a particular set of knowledge, a particular curriculum, which is the property of one group as opposed to another, and in keeping with his focus on a thin liberal policy perspective on education suggests that the limits of multicultural education, in such a framework, imply a common civics and a common knowledge set across society. In proposing this, Reich does not it seems, any more than Rawls, have a formulation for solving the issue of how, for minority groups, a delineation in civics between public and private in education might work in practice. Thus, it could be argued, for example, that the oppositional sub-culture identity that some groups of young people might form in school^{36,37} precisely demonstrate the difficulty in proposing a public civics that is split off in school from the private experiences that young people have of their home culture and identity.

Critiques

Culturally responsive pedagogy, at least in its earlier iterations, has also been criticized for having too restricted a view of cultures, seeing it as something both too undifferentiated, and lacking a perspective on the agency of individuals to use or respond to their culture in a flexible and responsive way.^{33,38,39} Linked to this, the focus on modifying teacher patterns of interactions, in some way, was critiqued for ignoring wider structural perspectives, i.e. not giving enough emphasis to culturally and historically embedded aspects of perceived power differentials between different communities.⁴⁰ Thus, culturally responsive pedagogy can be seen as essentializing (and thus homogenizing) the cultural practices of minorities. A shift to postmodernist critiques^{26,28,32} in response to such concerns has, however, meant that issues of resourcing and of what values might be at play, the potential tensions, and what this means for teachers on the ground are, I would contend, mostly absent from the field.

Value Tensions

The issue of adolescent oppositional identities developed within schools has some resonances with the case of Alexia and autism in the previous chapter. Of course, just to be clear I am not in any way saying cultural practice differences and autistic identity are the same thing at all, but there are parallels in terms of the potential for value conflicts. Although there is not enough space to consider all the possible value conflicts that might be at play in depth, they could include liberty, autonomy, tradition, representation and identity. There is though a clear tension between, from the perspective of the school and the teacher, the promotion of a public civics centred around tradition, cultural norms, and excellence and achievement from a (neo)liberal perspective on knowledge, and from the children's perspective values of liberty, autonomy,

identity and resistance. A culturally responsive, activist postmodernist, or Marxist perspective would of course reframe the weighting of these factors, just as it would in the case of Alexia. The notion of normality implicit in the cultural norms of the school and the focus on excellence in its liberal (capitalist) form could be considered as an element of oppression tied to a particular privileging of one form of identity and freedom (as a value) from that oppression. Thus, giving primacy (and indeed equality of opportunity) to that identity or at least recognizing its concerns, perhaps in terms of very radical restructuring of the operation of the school and of society more widely, might be promoted.

Nevertheless, it would not be wholly unreasonable for a teacher, perhaps a teacher who emphasizes the value of “care”, to consider that developing the capacity of a child to engage with society as it is, and to develop the knowledge and skills that will allow them to achieve their potential in that society (i.e. equality of opportunity), which might involve some (perhaps significant) element of challenge to that oppositional culture, might be important. It’s also entirely possible that the parents of the child might agree with the teacher on this. This is of course, from a Durkheimian realist perspective, potentially an important internality aspect which needs to be carefully differentiated from particularly bias as an externality (of course, the sociological critique posits that the latter too easily gets presented as, and confused with, the former).

Such tensions are all around us in education, whether they have particular labels or not. As with Alexia’s case, I would contend that the wider implications in terms of tradition and culture, as well as equality of opportunity, are important to consider – particularly given that there is not, and as Berlin argues likely there should not be, any public consensus in liberal democracies on a universal conception of the good life. Postmodernist and Marxist critiques are just perspectives, and there are very good reasons in terms of the structuring of political systems in liberal democracies, based on the values of liberty and justice, as to why they remain just perspectives. Given this, denying children from marginalized groups the opportunity to develop the knowledge that will allow them to succeed in society is itself a values-based choice with consequences. Suggesting that society as a whole should change cultural practice so that it becomes easier for the minority practice of certain groups involves value tensions – the value tensions that Berlin and Crowder identify as complex and difficult. Similarly to my argument about education and inclusion for special needs, so too here in relation to culturally responsive pedagogy, we can agree with the aims. We can agree with Artiles¹⁷ that a simplistic notion of blindness – i.e. let’s just treat everyone the same – is insufficient. But equally, simply identifying that there are cultural differences that could and likely do have an impact on pedagogy, in and of itself, is not particularly helpful for teachers or school leaders on the ground who are having to navigate these complex issues every day. My argument is that the most useful thing we can do is to bring these tensions out into the open, so that we can discuss them,

and teachers in particular can think and crucially talk about them, which might then develop their professional capacity for working through these difficult decisions that they meet every day.

Value Tensions in Responding to Cultural Diversity

I will bring now another example, more of a future forward consideration of the implications of dealing with cultural and racial differences in the classroom, and further discussion of some of the value tensions involved. Glenn Loury, at time of writing Professor of Social Sciences and Economics at Brown University, is a well-known African American academic and social commentator, sometimes described as conservative leaning, although his views have become more progressive over time.⁴¹ He grew up in a deprived neighbourhood in Chicago in the 1950s, and via community college won a scholarship to Northwestern where he completed a BA and then went on to PhD study at MIT, followed by a very successful and influential academic career.

Discussing his own life, Loury⁴² describes how he was born to working class parents and attended five different public schools before he had finished fifth grade. He goes on to paint a rich and vivid description of his early life and the energy and verve of the community that he grew up in. The substantive point I want to make, though, with which I think Professor Loury would agree, is that when he became at age 33 the first black tenured professor of economics at Harvard, this was somewhat against the odds. Professor Loury spoke recently about his achievements in relation to the US Supreme Court's 2023 judgement that race-based affirmative action programs for university admissions were in violation of the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause, which mandates that "...nor shall any State...deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws".⁴³ Professor Loury, discussing this decision and the ensuing political debates in the US about affirmative action, in relation to his own life and experiences, said, in a video for his Substack channel in 2024, the following:⁴⁴

My genius, my gift, my extraordinary abilities, were what carried me forward, notwithstanding the vicissitudes of racism and discrimination in America. To have that minimized by somebody presuming that 'Oh you didn't get to MIT without affirmative action'...God Damn It, Don't dishonor my amazing achievement by chalking it up to favouritism. I resent it, I don't like it. I don't need it. I don't want it...I'm defending my own dignity here... .

There are of course considerable nuances and complexities in Professor Loury's position both here and on the topic more broadly, although his passion for the topic still comes through even when transcribing his spoken words onto the page. It's certainly not my intention here, nor would I presume, to either speak for him or to gloss over those nuances. As Professor Loury says in the

full account, this is not an overtly party political, but rather more personal position he is taking. Nevertheless, from the perspective of education and inclusion, the segment does illuminate different value positions. Affirmative action programmes through their aim to compensate for perceived structural inequalities promote equality of outcome by distributing resources differentially to ensure that different groups, with different resources, can achieve more similar outcomes. They involve unequal allocation of limited resources (in this case the limited resource of places at elite academic institutions). As Professor Loury forcefully points out, such programmes, for particular individuals, inevitably represent losses in respect of other values. In his case, a loss of dignity (perhaps a particular value) came about through a societal perception that his abilities were or would not be recognized for what they are. Professor Loury, in focusing on ability as an inherent quality – an intrinsic and internal attribute of the individual – also, I think, implicitly illustrates the point that allocating the scarce resources of elite university places based on the social, cultural or ethnical background of individuals may mean that others not within those groups, who do have innate exceptional academic ability (and/or extraordinary effort), will lose out on access to that scarce resource. Thus, from the perspective of justice as desert and liberty (i.e. the freedom of people to make free use of their abilities and their effort), some people will lose out. What then is an inclusive position in relation to affirmative action programmes? I chose this example because when watching Professor Loury speak about his experiences and the force and passion with which he speaks, there is a real sense of something being lost for him. Yes, we can strive for criteria with which to judge between these competing values, and perhaps as Olssen⁴⁵ suggests democratic debate, deliberative or otherwise, is an effective way of making such judgements. However, to propose that there are some overarching “inclusive values” that can be applied to this scenario is I believe false. There are rather competing incommensurable values that are in tension, and there is a dilemma about their resolution and the inescapable fact that any resolution involves an absolute loss on one side or the other.

Although I am arguing that the possibility of full resolution of value tensions in relation to education and inclusion may, as per Berlin, be unreachable, that does not mean that the overall aims (the common human horizon) of the good life in relation to difference in the classroom are not amenable to critical analysis or frameworks that may serve to promote, particularly for teachers, ways of at least promoting more effective professional reflection on, and thus resolution of, the issues they need to deal with. We have in the literature a rich development of tools, interventions and pedagogies – such as for example the considerable evidence base about how carefully considered school programmes based on culturally responsive pedagogy as a framework have been successful in promoting the success of children from minority groups.²⁶

Rather, what I am arguing is that we need frameworks for helping teachers consider the value frameworks and tensions that lie at the heart of decision making when working with difference in the classroom. I propose that such

a model would have at its centre a notion of local negotiation, based on understanding of the varying perspectives of teachers, children, families and their localized cultures and identities, and simultaneously drawing out into the open the value tensions extant in dealing with difference in the classroom. One perspective, in my view, that is worth considering further in relation to this is that of the funds of knowledge approach.

Funds of Knowledge

Funds of Knowledge sits within a set of attempts in the 1980s and 1990s to use anthropological approaches to consider how to link home and school cultures.⁴⁶ However, it has undoubtedly been the most successful and influential of these over time.⁴⁷ Moll and González's⁴⁸ initial work on US-Mexican households, drawing on Wolf's⁴⁹ research into household economies, focused on using anthropological approaches to allow schools and teachers to better understand the individual lives, culture and knowledge of the children in their classes, particularly through the use of a type of ethnographic home visit. Home visits were, in the fully developed model, followed up with new classroom practices developed by teachers based on the visits and reflective teacher study group meetings. González et al.^{50(p.133)} define funds of knowledge (FoK) as "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being", related to "social, economic, and productive activities of people"^{50(p.139)} in local communities, including "social history of households, their origins and development ... the labour history of families", and "'how families develop social networks... including knowledge skills and labour, that enhance the households' ability to survive and thrive".^{50(p.133)} The implications of this knowledge for schools is a key outcome of their analysis, and González et al.⁵⁰ themselves consider the FoK approach as one way of conceiving of a culturally responsive pedagogy.

González et al.⁵⁰ present their notion of FoK from a (sociologically) critical pedagogy perspective, although the specific type of critical stance they take is not always fully clear, and their roots in anthropological methods open up, I would argue, at least the possibility of considering the FoK approach as having elements of compatibility with more realist perspectives on knowledge. Thus, it does not seem necessarily the case within the approach to adopt a deconstruction of the knowing subject, and the FoK approach could equally be considered as a way of presenting children and families as knowing subjects drawing on and interacting with cultural knowledge. I contend that this gives the potential to open up dialogue between teacher, school, child and parents that allows for a growing shared understanding of knowledge and what this might mean for pedagogy. In particular, I think this can be considered from the perspectives of a social realist division between external bias and internal knowledge in relation to epistemology, pedagogy and curriculum in the classroom. In particular, the FoK approach eschews a biased deficit view of marginalized communities, or just communities that are different from the

majority, as well as potentially recognizing the knowledge that exists within those communities, including both, in Durkheim's terms, natural and scientific knowledge. Through communication between school and family, the FoK approach can explore the potential for how this can be represented within the classroom.

Having said that, little if no attention has been paid in the literature to considering FoK from non-(sociologically) critical perspectives in any productive sense, with those that have addressed potential points of connections being critical, such as Zipin et al.⁵¹ arguing that social realism's conception of (social) justice is too "thin" as to be effective. I contend that this is not the case and in doing so it is worth noting that I am proposing a novel, if not quite revolutionary perspective on FoK. I also do not want to elide the value tensions that impinge on using FoK in this novel way, particularly in relation to the wider body of literature, but nevertheless, I contend that inherent in the work of González and Moll and its focus on drawing out the experiences and knowledge of children and families is the possibility for opening up a space for productive dialogue that crucially maintains (a) a thin view of public policy on civics and (b) recognizes (without bias) the multiple political value systems that might be held and have influence for the actors in the educational field, thus allowing for the open discussion of value tensions. Thus, this use of FoK also resonates with Berlin's insistence on the need to take account of the importance of localized cultural context and identity. At the same time, FoK, as González et al.⁵⁰ consider, views culture not in an essentialized static manner, but as dynamic and varying in the context of local activity. Thus, it avoids simplistic accounts of how children interact with their parents and wider cultural backgrounds, opening up space for critical discussion of children's autonomy and agency. It is also in this context that FoK potentially has capacity to take account of liberal democratic values such as individual freedom.

Developments in Funds of Knowledge

Since the original work on FoK in the 1980s and 1990s, it has been applied in a range of contexts, across an increasing range of curriculum subject areas. There has also been some limited application to approaches to disability in schools (see for example Stone-MacDonald⁴⁷). There has also been a move away from the emphasis in the earlier applications on parental knowledge towards greater recognition of children's own knowledge, as well as community situated contexts for knowledge such as churches.⁵² Theoretically, there has been a developing focus on co-construction with children, as well as links to social capital models, particularly of note being Yosso's⁵³ critical theory-based "Community Cultural Wealth" model which focuses on illuminating the cultural capital held by minority and marginalized children.⁵² Finally, there has also been developing interest in the idea of difficult knowledge,⁵⁴ accounting for traumatic aspects of culture such as migration experiences.⁵²

An Example

In exploring my perspective on FoK and its possible applications to education and inclusion, as negotiation, it will be instructive to consider a case that González et al. present, in their 2005 book, from one of their early research projects in the 1990s on the FoK approach using the ethnographic home visit to construct a view of the cultural knowledge of Mexican children in the southwest US. González et al.⁵⁰ present a persuasive historical analysis of the economic forces related to industrialization that have driven migration flows across the Mexican-US border since the late 19th century, which led to the development of a US-Mexican identity. They also consider the well-documented^{45,56} history of marginalization within the school system in the US of Spanish (and indeed other “minority” language) speakers. González et al.⁵⁰ note that ability grouping for minority language students was often based, as has been the case internationally in the West, on unwarranted assumptions about their language abilities. Although I would be cautious in discounting the complexities that second language (L2) teaching can add to classrooms,⁵⁷ there is of course significant evidence that L2 learners may well have more well-developed cognitive and comprehension skills.^{58,59} González et al. further note how this positioning of the Spanish language, and often the active denigration of its use as part of a wider “Americanization” drive within US schools, had an impact on the cultural identity of US-Mexican families, leading them to example anglicize their surnames and arguably internalize an oppressed identity as second-class citizens.¹

González et al. also note that prior to the economic pressures of industrialization that led to cross border migration, the ancestors of most Mexican families in the Southwest were farmers or engaged in craft and manufacturing in rural settings. They discuss the considerable practical knowledge skills predicated on this – they list for example animal husbandry, complex agrarian knowledge about soil, weather, pests, and plant biology, as well as skills around mechanics, blacksmithing, building, carpentry etc. required for example for equipment maintenance, and further knowledge on medicinal herbs and first aid, particularly relevant given the possible lack of doctors, and their expense even if available. Strikingly, they note that these “natural systems” of household and community knowledge were disrupted in a number of ways, including increasing barriers to cross-border movements between Mexico and the US as border policies tightened (which disrupted wider family kin ties and the knowledge held within these), industrialization, and the separation of local knowledge in the home and rigid disciplinary knowledge structures in the school. There is also, in their accounts, a parallel to neoconservative perspectives on family, community and knowledge, with faith and tradition playing an important role in the cases that González et al. present.

Faith and Tradition in Funds of Knowledge

In the case presented, set in the 1990s, Hortencia and Tomas are in their fifties and have four children, three of whom are married and live by with their children. Hortencia's parents live very close by. She has worked as a bank teller for many decades. As with Hortencia, Tomas's family had migrated to Mexico within the last generation, but Tomas, born in Phoenix, was "repatriated" to Mexico with his parents. After his father's death in 1945, Tomas migrated to Tucson by himself at ten years old. He was placed in foster care and at 18, with the equivalent of a seventh-grade education, joined the army and was trained as a maintenance mechanic. Tomas now works (at the time of writing of the case study) in a maintenance role for the Arizona national guard.

The idea of passing on of parental technical and economic skills is also an important element in the reported case⁵⁰ – Hortencia spent much time and effort teaching her children and now grandchildren maths computational skills, which she was expert in due to her many years as a bank teller. Tomas also exposed his children and grandchildren to his own skills, engaging them in woodwork and getting them to assist him in making and repairing household items, and learning from the process. The case, as mentioned, also gives an account of the importance of the Catholic faith for both parents, ritual activities with the children in the household and wider engagement with the Church and Church social and other activities.

Structural aspects are also presented as part of the case as sadly Tomas developed a debilitating long-term reaction to the toxic chemicals that he was exposed to spraying industrial cleaning solvents, without any personal protective equipment over many years. When asked by the researchers why he did not ask for gloves and a mask, he said that wearing them slowed him down and he did not want to be seen as a "lazy Mexican".^{50(p.57)}

It is a compelling case and I think a fine piece of ethnography that illustrates both how the FoK approach can uncover, for the outsider, something of what community and identity means for a family, with a particular focus on the interplays between "economic" knowledge embedded within kin networks. It does, though, I think, also illustrate some value tensions, which I think are not clearly articulated in González et al.'s account, but could be considered if an openness to a range of perspectives, including liberal and neoconservative ones, as held by the actors in the field, were allowed. In this specific case, although it inescapably includes the emphasis on faith within the family, as noted, there is something of an almost dismissive way in which this is handled, which does not fully reflect an openness to differing value systems.

For example:^{50(p.59)}

Because households depend on their social networks to cope with the borderland's complex political and changing economic environment, they are willing to invest considerable energy and resources in maintaining good relations with their members. One way they do this is through

family rituals: birthdays, baptisms, confirmations, ‘coming out’ rituals (quinceañeras), wedding showers, weddings, Christmas dinners, outings, and visitations. Not only do these events bring members of one’s network together ritually to reaffirm their solidarity, but staging them also often requires members to cooperate by investing their labor or pooling their resources. *Moreover, such rituals broadcast an important set of signals about both the sponsor’s economic well-being and the state of social relations with other members— through both lavishness and attendance...* [My italics]

Well, on one level this may well be true, but it also illustrates a perspective on faith as something which is largely instrumental. It ignores, or more than that denies, as McLaughlin⁶⁰ puts it when discussing Phillip’s^{61(p.186)} view of religion and faith, that “believing in G-d...equates...with participating in the religious attitude, the eternal, and living according to it”. Although space precludes getting into the full complexity of these arguments, the point is that, as argued by Scheffler,^{62,63} faith has a meaning on the inside, which cannot be adduced from external critical analysis of it. There is a similarity here to Ramaekers and Suissa’s argument about the unique intimacy of the family and parent-child relationships.⁶⁴ They are uniquely and mutually constitutive on the inside, and they go “all the way down”^{64(p.ix)} – i.e. that one element such as holding a lavish event cannot stand in isolation from the faith context in which it takes place. Hortencia and Tomas place a value, a conservative traditional value, on tradition and family which is entwined with and inseparable from belief. Their identity is not just as a family, nor just as an extended kin network, but as a part of a wider faith community which is an important part of their identity as Mexicans. This aspect of tradition (perhaps tradition in its conservative sense) is, clearly, for the researchers, somewhat in tension with the sociologically critical lens that they wish to bring on the case. Such tensions are of course much more widespread than just this case – see for example Lewis and Lall’s⁶⁵ account of the subversion (in their view) of postcolonial theory in traditional /authoritarian regimes.

The case as presented thus may well be in conflict with the values weighting of educators aligned with Marxist or postmodern perspectives, and indeed it is possible that some of the views within the faith tradition might be in conflict more widely with liberal or communitarian theorists (and indeed the state) adopting a thick perspective on civics, such as in relation to the relative emphasis placed on values of experiment and debate. However, it is still the case that the FoK approach serves to bring these different value systems, at least to some extent, out into the open. I am drawn to the FoK approach in respect of inclusion and education in terms of the capacity it offers to, in a sense, stake the ground for the values and perspectives of children and families from minorities, and open up the possibility for debate by schools and teachers. Thus, the anthropological basis of FoK inescapably positions the different localized political value systems of the actors in the social field as matters for consideration.

Bridging Knowledge between Home and School in Funds of Knowledge

In their account of the application of the FoK approach in the classroom, González et al.⁵⁰ report on a further project in which teachers undertook school visits to children's homes and worked collaboratively together in study groups to reflect on what they observed and to consider implications for pedagogy. One case involved a US-Mexican child Carlos whose family, as in the case above, were socially and religiously conservative. Carlos was, partly in response to economic pressures in his household, a budding entrepreneur and had been involved in trading all sorts of things, with customers such as neighbours, including bicycle parts and in particular candy (quite a wide term in the local context covering not just sweets but a range of snacks such as sunflower seeds). Based on the home visits, his class teacher worked with Carlos and the whole class to plan a unit of work on the topic of candy. This involved a parent coming in to talk about making a Mexican form of candy:^{50(p.83)}

...Mrs. Rodríguez, came in to teach us how to make pipitoria, a Mexican candy treat. This turned out to be the highlight of our unit. Before she came in that morning, the students divided up to make advertising posters and labels for the candy because we were going to sell what we made at the school talent show. When Mrs. Rodríguez arrived, she became the teacher. While the candy was cooking, she talked to the class for over an hour and taught all of us not only how to make different kinds of candy, but also such things as the difference in U.S. and Mexican food consumption and production, nutritional value of candy, and more. My respect and awe of Mrs. Rodríguez grew by leaps and bounds that morning. Finally, the students packaged and priced their candy...

The unit of work went on to cover aspects of maths, science, health, advertising, food production and the children also generated their own questions such as "What is candy like in Africa?" and "What candy do they eat in China?"

It is interesting how in this case there is not a clear break between natural versus scientific knowledge,⁶⁶ but also that there is at the same time quite a realist view of knowledge. In the case description, we learn that Carlos' parents, as was likely with many other parents in the class, put a high value on education, as well as on good behaviour, respect for teachers and hard work. There was not a sense in the case of there being, for example, either on the part of the parents, or the children, for some radically different curriculum, or in Young's terms, a more voice-based discourse on knowledge. It was not that particular forms of knowledge seemed to be valued because of who held them or where they came from, but more of a recognition that the children's home lives and cultures were also sources of knowledge, and that their home lives involved sophisticated application of such knowledge. It could be argued that the case study did, for the teacher, help to reduce, in Durkheimian social

realist terms, external cognitive biases about the children and their lives, or alternatively opened up horizons for responding in pedagogically valid terms to the culture(s) of her students. There was also a sense, in this case, and others presented by González et al.⁵⁰ and later González and Moll⁶⁷ of a process of negotiation, whereby the teacher, the class and more widely the parents reflected on what might be taught, why it would be taught, and what would be achieved. Such a process of negotiation did not necessarily negate or gloss over differences and value tensions, but at the same time a space was created for them to be considered, particularly by the teachers and the schools. In the accounts of González et al.⁵⁰ and González and Moll,⁶⁷ this is not always fully worked through, although there is some limited attention in later studies with the FoK approach^{68,69} of how to take into account differences in political value perspectives within the context of classroom teaching. So, for example, there may well be considerable tensions, in many classrooms and schools, in going off topic to focus on a particular area of interest to one particular child, given the need quite often to follow a prescribed scheme of work and curriculum. As well, as noted, in approaching other areas such as faith traditions in their wider sense, there may well be value tensions, in varying ways, between the perspectives of the teacher, the school, the state and those of the child and the family.

Towards Negotiation

Different positions on the public role of the state in promoting civics also raise some potential tensions with FoK as an approach. Still, what is striking about it is, perhaps because of its diverse roots in critical perspectives and anthropology, is the space that FoK opens up for bringing out the different perspectives between school and home for discussion, and from that the potential for discussion of those different perspectives. I would take this further, and argue that both from the perspective of a culturally responsive pedagogy and more broadly for education and inclusion, this idea of discussion or better negotiation is what is needed. Inclusion as an idealist position is a limited concept. There are no simplistic rules for teacher decision making in respect of working with difference in the classroom, just problems that involve trade-offs. For me, what the FoK approach highlights with its emphasis on uncovering different perspectives and its respect of local cultural contexts and knowledge is that we need to think of inclusion not as an ideal, not even as one specific question to be answered, but a whole series of interlinked questions that require negotiation. A “realist” negotiation centred on culturally responsive pedagogy, then, would be one that recognizes that (a) biases exist and need to be and can be countered, and (b) that there are different perspectives and values across home and school which can be in tension in multiple ways, and that by bringing these out into the open, this can lead to negotiation, and ultimately to decisions. This is somewhat different both to critical perspectives on FoK and specifically the idea of co-production, a term associated and aligned with

both later FoK trajectories and more broadly voice discourses across education.⁷⁰ Co-production implies that knowledge subsists in the process of interaction, and implies a deconstruction of the knowing subject, as well as a range of assumptions about power being at the root of such knowledge creation. As a concept, it assumes too much. Negotiation is a much more open and flexible concept that accepts, from liberalism, that positions and values, including about epistemology itself, are multiple and in conflict. It recognizes that children and adults are inherently in different positions, that families and schools may have much to disagree about, that families and children may have much as well to disagree about, but that crucially through dialogue we can come to understand what we agree on, what we don't agree on, what we know from multiple sources, what we don't know and what we might want to know and why. Inclusion as negotiation then becomes a series of questions to be posed, and answered, as best we can.

However, the questions that are posed, and the answers that can be considered, are not without limits. The question of limits is complex. In compulsory phase education, there is, though, wider acceptance that there are limits to both questions and answers. A concern with values of protection and the development of autonomy and agency, and freedom from oppression, converge at least to some extent across liberal, communitarian and post-modern / postcolonial modes of thinking, in terms of some of the things we should teach children in schools. The rules of the playground in early years and elementary schools have a sort of universal acceptance. There are few teachers who think that keeping your hands and feet to yourself, learning to share your toys, not stealing your friend's pencil or snack, or even not leaving people out of your games so that they feel sad are areas of disagreement. Berlin's common human horizon⁷¹ seems, at least within limits, to be somewhat simpler in compulsory teaching phases. However, when we start to think about education and adults, and post-compulsory education, things are not so simple.

Note

- 1 The role of the state and common schools in promoting a thick or thin public common set of values, or common culture, and how this relates to the rights of minority communities, are, as discussed, one of the key issues considered within liberal perspectives on education.

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6 Inclusion and Higher Education

In higher education, it is of course the case that the issues I have highlighted about education and inclusion both in terms of a narrow view of inclusion focused on special educational needs and a broader view focused on aspects of difference, such as culture, class, language, sexuality etc., are present in many forms. For example, issues of equality of outcome versus equality of opportunity in terms of the effective inclusion of autistic students in universities are also sites of significant tension and debate. There is also a recognition in the literature and in practice that particularly in relation to special educational needs, there has been much less attention paid to post-18 settings, although it has been an area of increasing attention in the last ten years.^{1,2}

In terms of the theoretical considerations about values and value tensions, the questions posed in higher education are also often similar to those in schools. A key difference is, however, that particular contextual elements present in compulsory phase education are not present in the university. Protection as an imperative (or a value) is not present in the same way within universities and, crucially as adults, issues of autonomy and agency and how if at all these are aspects for development rather than exercise are much less clear. To illuminate the specificity of issues related to education and inclusion in higher education, I will focus on decolonization as a movement³ and the wider implications of this for value tensions both within the university and more widely. In doing so, I will attempt to set education and inclusion within the context of the rationale and aims of the modern university, both in terms of what universities themselves (their leaders, their faculty) and society (for example taxpayers) more widely might consider those aims to be. As I noted in the introduction, my thinking on this has been significantly influenced by the rise of antisemitism on campus in the wake of the October 7th atrocities. This rise in antisemitism has clear points of articulation to the implementation of decolonization and Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) on campus, and I contend for the broader programme for education and inclusion. Later in the chapter, I reflect on what the implications of this discussion on higher education have for how we conceive of education and inclusion

across the educational phases including schools, also linking this back to the prior discussions on value tensions.

DEI, Decolonization and Inclusion

Decolonization and DEI are very often connected in terms of the implementation of decolonization on campus and more widely.⁴⁻⁶ The movement for decolonization, and concomitantly DEI, has developed a powerful momentum within universities^{7,8} in recent years. For example, at Exeter University, there has been a whole programme of curriculum development focused on revising the curriculum.⁹ It is somewhat curious how, within universities, such programmes are presented, as just something that should be done, and that internally, there is at least in recent times, in terms of their implementation, limited critical focus on the underlying theories and values that underlie this programme in terms of their translation into a programme of implementation within Western universities.⁷ For example, Ian Pace¹⁰ has written about the simplistic ways in which decolonization has been applied within the field of musicology. Decolonization is presented as a “good” to be promoted. In some ways, as a programme for thinking about curriculum and pedagogy, it presents itself as something historically and socially detached. Similarly, in the academic literature on DEI, there is such little focus on definitions. A literature search on SCOPUS using the terms “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” and “Education” indicates that most of the literature focuses on implementation, predominantly in nursing, medical and STEM disciplines, as well as literature from human resources management and industrial psychology. Sources go back to 2011; however, the vast majority of literature is from 2019 onwards. The provenance of the term DEI itself is unclear in his literature and there is a lack of sustained critical theoretical engagement with the potential meanings of the terms involved. For example, writing about DEI in Nursing Education, Ganek et al.¹¹ draw on the American Association of College Nurses position statement on *Diversity, equity, and inclusion in academic nursing*. The definitions covering the three terms total 94 words. Such brief accounts of definition and theory are common in this literature, and although there are some more in-depth accounts such as Freebody et al.¹² in 2019, these focus more on social justice topics than the specific concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Decolonization, though, in particular has a history, and not just a history but a set of linked assumptions about knowledge and values. In Moore and Muller’s¹³ terms, it sits broadly as a voice discourse, and certainly has points of connection with activist postmodernist thinking in that it aims to deconstruct hidden aspects of power. The key driver of decolonization, certainly in the academic literature on decolonization in academia, is postcolonial theory.^{3,14} It is somewhat strange that, in its implementation within universities, decolonization has been somewhat deracinated, unanchoring it as a movement from its impressive intellectual origins. In particular, as Gopa⁷ argues, the dialectic aspects of postcolonial theory, in relation to the colonized and the colonizer,

point rather towards a dialogue with the liberal canon, not its relativization, a point which seems often absent in day-to-day discussions of decolonization on campus.

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory has its roots in literary and cultural studies and focuses on the legacy of colonialism and imperialism and their influence on society in the past and today. Perhaps its most seminal writer was Frantz Fanon. Fanon was born in 1925 in Martinique and experienced the discrimination and racism of colonial society.¹⁵ He joined the Free French forces during the Second World War and then trained as a psychiatrist and worked in Algeria, also playing a key role as a spokesman for the National Liberation Front – Algeria’s independence movement. He died from leukaemia in 1961, but before that sad untimely death wrote a number of influential texts, most particularly *The Wretched of the Earth*.¹⁶ It is true that much of Fanon’s writing dazzles particularly for its brilliant rhetoric and for the visceral sense of the experience of oppression that it conveys.¹⁷ In one sense, the argument of postcolonial theory as put forward by Fanon is straightforward – certain societies have colonized others and used their power of arms to subdue those colonized societies for their own economic gain. In doing so, they have misused liberalism’s supposed commitment to individual rights and pluralism by positing either deliberately or unconsciously that some societies are better than others, thus giving them rights both of exploitation and of rectification. This produces a skewed lens through which non-Western cultures are viewed, and even with the fall of actual colonial rule, this lens continues to influence how non-Western cultures are considered in the West and within the societies subject to colonialism themselves.

Violence, Dialectic and Culture

There is and always has been interest in the role of violence in postcolonial theory and in the writings of Fanon in particular. Fanon was clearly, at the very least in the Algerian context, a supporter of armed struggle against colonial powers.¹⁸ There is disparity in the field on his views on violence, and some¹⁹ have interpreted his writing to suggest that he was a strong advocate of violence. Others such as Shatz¹⁷ argue that his views on violence are nuanced. Certainly, as a psychiatrist he recognized the corrosive impact of violence, when undertaken, on the perpetrator. He also viewed violence as having both redemptive and undermining consequences, in a cycle within the oppressor/oppressed dynamic – the colonized man he wrote^{16(p.16)} was “the persecuted man who constantly dreams of being the persecutor”. This ambivalence, argues Shultz,¹⁷ also transcends simplistic binaries, arguing that these were the narrative of the colonizer and that only a more nuanced understanding of identity would allow for peace both for those who had colonized and for those

who had been colonized. Shulz argues that Fanon felt, somewhat in parallel to what Arendt²⁰ called natality, i.e. the inherent innovation and creativity inherent in us all (as “natal” new beginnings), that only through such new beginnings can we overcome the accretions of history. Thus, Shultz¹⁷ positions Fanon’s revolutionary thinking as both dialectical and redemptive, illustrating postcolonial theory’s Marxist underpinnings. As Robert Young¹⁸ notes in his overview of postcolonialism, postcolonial thought has been fundamentally based on the idea of economic oppression of “North” over “South” and the historical processes of reclamation of the economic power writ large. However, postcolonial thinking transcends just economic considerations and recasts the basis for how that process may occur in terms of its subjective affects, i.e. its particular cultural expression, in what Abdel-Malek²¹ called the tricontinental context of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is perhaps in the emphasis on this localized cultural expression, such as local knowledge and practices of indigenous people, which both Fanon¹⁶ and the other foundational and seminal writer on postcolonialism, Edward Said,²² illustrate in their writings, that postcolonialism can be distinguished from both “Western” Marxism and critical theory. Thus, in a sense, postcolonialism notes that Marxism’s strength as a universalist (indeed fundamentally idealist) framework has a tendency to underplay local culture, and postcolonialism, whilst accepting Marxism’s fundamental tenet about economic power and historical processes, and indeed international struggle, aims to reintroduce the “local”, as it is the loss of the local, in terms of identity, that lies at the heart of revolution, albeit dialectically, against colonial oppression.

Young¹⁸ proposes that postcolonialism is thus inherently a form of activism, whose focus on the local means that different political foci (gender, race, for example as well as class) can come within its orbit. Postcolonial theory contends¹⁸ that the imperialist project of the West, post 1492, was in form qualitatively different from prior imperial projects, due to its size, and the extent of its dominance, partly facilitated by its technological superiority, such as in terms of sailing ships that could extend geographical reach far beyond that of the empires of the ancient world. The imposition of the colonial (by implication liberal) lens on subjected peoples and their cultures, whether in a homogenous fashion as under the French empire or a looser form as under the British created, for both the colonized and the colonizer, in postcolonial theory, a false account. Edward Said’s important contribution was to provide, in a similar way to some postmodern accounts, a framework for conceptually and discursively analysing that false account, and thus uncovering other ways of conceiving of local culture and society, which similarly allowed them to be freed from colonial oppression. Thus, Said posited colonialism not just as acts of conquest but, in his seminal text *Orientalism*,²² as a discourse of forms of domination. This focused particularly on a linguistic deconstruction of concepts used to describe the East by its conquerors from the West, although, as Young¹⁸ notes, significantly, the connections to postmodern forms of deconstruction and specifically Foucault’s analysis were not at all fully worked

through by Said. In particular, whether he fully followed the implications of Foucauldian analysis in terms of the discursive production of knowledge which decentres a knowing subject altogether, or whether instead he adopted a representational critique²³ which perhaps simplistically notes that the Orient created a skewed portrait which had no relation to the real and then self-referenced this in Western texts and thoughts, is unclear. There is not enough space here to go through the significant literature commenting on this aspect of Said's work in depth. What is key is to note that the achievement of Said was, in a sense, to bring a sociological critique to bear, from a cultural perspective, on the norms not just of society but of the academy and academic knowledge. Said thus highlighted the, in his view, cultural hegemonic positioning behind the (liberal) claim of the academy that its knowledge was objective. In Michael Young's terms, Said presaged the discourse of voice within the academy, a voice that has only grown louder and louder. It is this voice that sits behind the movement for decolonization in higher education.³

Postcolonial theory thus questions realist perspectives on knowledge and problematizes the liberal canons of the academy, which is the critique that underlies decolonization as a movement. As with other voice discourses, this of course raises the issue of whether we can have any objective forms of knowledge at all, and unsurprisingly such critiques have been made within the postcolonial field itself.²⁴⁻²⁶ Parry²⁶ points out that if a fully discursive position on knowledge is taken, by what external reference point can we then judge the material and political reality of the anticolonial movement, i.e. how is a collapse into relativism avoided. The issue of ethical and moral relativism in postcolonial thinking has been given new impetus, for many, by the rise of antisemitism on campus in the wake of October 7th.

Jews Don't Count

October 7th was a seminal event and proved a driving force, particularly in the US, but also in the UK and Europe, for the return of open antisemitism in society.^{27,28} What has been particularly striking has been the justification in demonstrations, teach-ins and interviews, of the Hamas terrorist massacre, by faculty and by students,²⁹⁻³¹ and the lukewarm, at best, response to this by university leaders.²⁸ Murder, rape, beheadings, and burning alive of families by Hamas, and their promise to do the same, was, it seems, greeted by some in the academy even with joy.³² Dara Horn, former visiting professor in Jewish Studies at Harvard, has discussed how the reaction to October 7th was and is primarily a celebration because "someone was super successful in murdering Jews",³³ tying into the premise in her wider writing that Jews are only acceptable to non-Jewish society when they are either dead or politically impotent.³⁴

The rise in antisemitism in the West in relation to events in Israel has been seismic³⁵ for Jewish communities at large, and particularly so for Jewish students and staff on Western campuses.^{36,37} This seismic development has raised the question, for many Jews and non-Jews, of how this could happen

after the years of implementation of equal rights legislation such as Title VII in the US and the Equality Act³⁸ in the UK, and the significant growth in DEI programmes after the rise of Black Lives Matter in 2020,^{9,39} and the added impetus this gave to decolonization, interpenetrated as it is at with DEI, within the academy.⁶ This question is, I believe, important, not only in its local sense (i.e. how can we address and counter campus antisemitism), but also, crucially, because it illuminates wider concerns about education and inclusion, which are relevant not just in higher education. I will consider the links between inclusion and the Jews, its intercalation with value tensions in public policy and education, and what this tells us about the models we currently have for education and inclusion more widely, particularly in terms of postcolonial theory.

British writer David Baddiel has noted, with respect to the positioning of Jews in relation to notions of equal treatment in society, that *Jews Don't Count*.⁴⁰ By this, Baddiel means that as a minority, the cultural modes of respect and consideration, which seem to apply to other minority groups, do not apply to Jews, which he traces to the embedded nature of antisemitism in society. There is a (albeit not overly extensive) contemporary body of scholars worldwide interested in antisemitism, who write about how to account specifically for modern forms of antisemitism.^{41,42} These have partly focused on what has been termed the new left antisemitism,⁴³ and the points of connection between antizionism and antisemitism. Broadly theorists advocating this perspective note several points:

- 1 Modern antisemitism operates as a form of fetishized anti-capitalism, with Jews being scapegoated for the perceived ills of capitalism,⁴⁴ intertwined with conspiracy fetishism, where Jews are seen as the “Other” and blamed for a world conspiracy.⁴⁵ Fetish as used in this sense has an originally Marxist derivation, i.e. that it represents a reification of an element of social relations, investing them with mystical or magic properties.
- 2 Influenced at least in part by antizionism and masked antisemitism, promoted to a significant degree by the Soviet Union, from the 1950s onwards,⁴³ the Western academy adopted a position on Zionism which incorporated many earlier tropes of classical religious and economic antisemitism, applying these to now not only the Jews, but the nation state of the Jews.
- 3 This “left mindset” on Zionism^{46,47} and Jews filtered out of the universities, over time, being incorporated more widely across society, bolstering latent reservoirs¹ of antisemitic thinking.^{27,41}

For some time there has been concern about how, if at all, DEI programmes and the DEI culture within universities can account for the new left antisemitism, most notably because either the antizionist / antisemitic conspiracy theories underpinning them have come from, and are often promoted, by faculty directly or indirectly involved in DEI programmes, and/or because they

have simply downplayed the importance of antisemitism.^{46–48} This reflects the marginalization of considerations of antisemitism and Jews in postcolonialism as a field more broadly.^{49,50} As Hirsh presciently noted, in some of its instantiations on campus, decolonization can seem tinged with antisemitism.⁵¹ So, how can this be the case in institutions on the face of it committed so strongly to antiracism and inclusion, and what implications does it have for education and inclusion more widely? The awful events of October 7th and their aftermath in terms of the explosion of on campus antisemitism, have given this question much greater impetus.

Decolonization, Nation and the Jew

“It is necessary to refuse everything to the Jew as a nation and to grant everything to Jews as individuals”. This somewhat infamous quote from the Count Claremont-Tonnerre at French National Assembly in 1789,⁵² in the wake of the revolution, reflects the deep ambivalence about tensions between equality and liberty in relation to minorities at the heart of debates about cultural and religious identity in modern Western liberal democracy. Claremont-Tonnerre’s statement implied a thick view of public policy on difference, i.e. that the benefits of equality come with the proviso of a significant expectation of giving up local attachments (and prejudices, customs, traditions etc.) and replacing these with what the state deems to be the mores and customs, and outlook which will promote egalitarianism across society. You can be equal but you cannot be free to just choose your own culture. Such tensions are very much present in the modern day and call into question how we then understand the society of the nation state. Liberalism primarily focuses on the freedom of the individual, and the idea of citizenship is about that individual, not sub-groups. As we have seen, much of the debate about classical liberalism, in response to communitarian and other critiques, has focused on how sub-groups and sub-group attachments and their differences should or can be accommodated, and thus on what the parameters of multicultural societies should be. This question was particularly pertinent in modern (i.e. post 1789) Western states, as the Jews were perhaps, as they had always been, particularly stubborn in clinging to their “medieval” ways.⁵³ Such concerns, though, had an ancient pedigree. Concerns about Jewish practices and their differences from wider culture were common in the ancient world.⁵⁴ As Berlin⁵⁵ noted, the Enlightenment, and Enlightenment rationality in particular, incorporated notions of both negative and positive liberty, and of associated tensions between the universal and the particular. The notion of the nation state as the mechanism for the operationalization of Enlightenment rationality, which involved bringing disparate groups together in the service of the idea of the liberal, democratic nation, implied positively changing sub-groups to join together in this idea of the liberal nation. As Berlin⁵⁵ argued, revolutions based on this positive idealism, whether egalitarian or Marxist in nature, carry the risk and, as the historical record shows, the actuality of oppression. The Dreyfus affair, perhaps

a logical consequence of sentiment of Claremont-Tonnerre with which the revolution was imbued, some hundred years later, is just one of many prominent examples in history.

The idea of multiculturalism, i.e. a cultural pluralism, challenges the idea of a monolithic national identity and re-inserts the question of how sub-groups relate to each other, as well as how they compete for recognition, status and resources. In the US in particular, the demonstrable failure of the Enlightenment idea of equality to encompass all groups, specifically the experience of African Americans with slavery, the Civil War, then Jim Crow and the necessity of a civil rights movement, suggested that the equality promoted by liberalism was not in fact based on universalism, but rather just masked the privileging of those who already held privilege – the white Christian male. Thus, the sociological critique offered a different view that the road to freedom was not through trying to treat everyone the same (as they were and are not), but rather to recognize, understand and act on their differences. Where, though, does this leave the Jew? In America, Jews could pass as white and enjoyed, over time since the Second World War, increasing success at integrating into wider society. They were not viewed as marginalized in the same sense as African Americans. It is important to note, as Ben Freeman⁵⁶ has, that in order to be accepted in this way, as part of a homogenous national culture, Jews had to give many things up. Passing as white, an experience also common with some African Americans, was not in any way cost free. This can be seen in countless ways. Some Jews who arrived from Europe as refugees early in the 20th century would start a job on a Monday and would be fired when, due to their observance of the Sabbath, they said that they could not work on a Saturday. This cycle might go on for weeks and weeks until many would just stop observing the Sabbath so that they could live.⁵⁷ Similarly, many Jews in the US post October 7th (such as myself) have stopped wearing visible signs of Judaism in public – perhaps choosing to wear a baseball cap instead.⁵⁸ This is nothing new in Jewish experience in the US, the UK or more widely, but as Freeman⁵⁶ notes, it comes with an enormous cost – the cost of denying one's own identity.

In America, fetishistic economic and conspiracy-driven antisemitism has positioned Jews, partly because of their perceived success at integration, as “hyper-white” or “white adjacent”. Thus, Jews inhabit, as Biale et al.⁵⁹ note, a boundary position – both insider and outsider, their precise place in the nation state unclear, just as it was for the French after the revolution. Jews simultaneously benefitted from the emancipation offered from the Enlightenment, and rationality, yet suffered from as critical theory has posited,⁴² its internal contradictions, from which a path can be traced both to the Shoah, the virulent antisemitism of the Soviet Union, and modern-day campus antisemitism.

Decolonization and Nation – Implications for Education and Inclusion

What then of decolonization? One of the issues that has increasingly come to be recognized in postcolonial theory, as Dirlik²⁴ notes, is, as Fanon's writing had always hinted at, the structural dialectic between the colonizer and the colonized. This dialectic in postcolonial theory has, in common with critical theory,⁶⁰ Marxist and Hegelian underpinnings, although in contrast to critical theory, there is more of a focus on Marxist-Leninist perspectives on the role of the state in bringing about revolutionary change. This emphasis on the role of the state, and thus the nation, in Marxism-Leninism is key, as how the nation comes into being and what it then represents is what remains unresolved in post-colonial thinking.²⁴ Memmi, an influential 20th century Jewish postcolonial theorist, notes the mutual interactions, which create new sets of identities and relationships between colonizer and colonized.⁶¹ Memmi⁶¹ notes how, in dialectical terms, those who are colonized regain and exercise that authority (such as those who are privileged both during and post colonialization), yet retain an identity of domination from their prior oppression. Thus, the simple Manichean division in some postcolonial discourse, between colonizer and colonized, is critiqued, such critique being prompted, as Dirlik²⁴ notes, by some of the failures of many postcolonial regimes, i.e. their authoritarianism, corruption and oppression. Thus, the suspicions of violence that Fanon had, even in his possible promotion of it, when borne out in the reality of the decidedly non-liberal and non-democratic oppression of their own people by such regimes, cast doubt on the simplicity, if not the surface reality, of the colonizer-colonized binary.

One key element this critique uncovers is how the nation (and the nation-state) is conceived of within postcolonial theory. Dirlik²⁴ argues that the creation of a nation comes out of the imposition of a national set of ideas and customs on top of more local tribal customs and affiliations (i.e. in place of the culture and norms that arise from extended kin networks). Such imposition, and the erasure of what came before, is as an essential element of the colonial project, but what then if it is also through a dialectic of both opposition to and adoption of the culture of the colonizer that the very idea of a nation for the colonized emerges. The colonizer and indeed colonized nations themselves also, it can be argued, emerged out of similar earlier processes of migration and colonization, albeit over longer time frames. Putting this another way, if there was no nation to begin with, and the nation only arises through colonization, colonialism takes on a more complex meaning. This paradox of the nation continues to be a matter of debate within postcolonialism, with nationalism being both its source but also the cause of its postcolonial dissatisfaction.^{25,62,63}

Nation and Jew

Emmanuel Levinas⁶⁴ proposed a privileged singularity of medieval and modern Jewish experience in terms of oppression and suffering, for which he has been criticized.⁶⁵ I would argue that his meaning was precisely in the terms that Dirlik puts it – i.e. that the nation dialectically comes into being, but at least at that point of coming into being there is a certain realization of identity and release from suffering. It is this realization and release that comes with it that Levinas notes is absent for the wandering Jew. Further, in continuing with their wandering, so to speak, i.e. their resistance to adopting any alternative national identity, and in modern terms staying outside of the colonizer-colonized dialectic, they, as Memmi also notes, highlighted the uncomfortable tensions about the very idea of nationhood which remain within modern societies and nation state. Writing about his experience as a Jew during decolonization in Tunisia, Memmi^{66(p.246)} says:

It is in the very way in which new nations were born that differences became clear...It is in the way that Tunisia became a nation like other nations that we [Jews] became, as we were everywhere else, a civic and national negativity.

Thus, colonialism and anticolonialism can both be seen as being part of the same Enlightenment-driven notion of the nation and the classical liberal assumptions underpinning the idea of nation. Yet, at the same time, anticolonial liberation movements usually conceived of themselves as anti-liberal and anti-capitalist. It was at the fault line of this contradiction that the liminal Jew was located, as the outside, ripe for the imposition of the fetishistic economic and conspiratorial fantasy that, as Memmi⁶⁷ noted, could act as a salve, if not, of course, as a resolution, to these conflicts. When the Jews had the audacity to aim, for themselves, to solve the conundrum of their own continued oppression as the “Other” by creating their own nation state, particularly one which strived for liberal democracy, it was not surprising that this too became the locus for these virulent fetishistic attacks.⁴² It is much easier to retreat into Manichean binary divisions and to attack the Jews and their state than to try and solve the unresolved dialectic tension of nationality and identity in postcolonial society.

It is the failure to address these tensions at the heart of postcolonial theory that poses problems for decolonization and antisemitism in the universities. For example, it seems that very few, if any, of those working in DEI have even stopped to consider how many of the dead white males that they might want to decolonize are not white, but Jews. I think of the Jews cited and providing a theoretical foundation for this book – a long list from Arendt and Bernstein, through Milton Friedman, Nozick and Popper, to Vygotsky and Wittgenstein, and of course including Berlin.

Many, such as Bernstein, took refuge from fascism and totalitarianism. Are they white? Hyperwhite? Privileged? Should they be deleted from our

textbooks and silenced, just as Jewish students have silenced themselves to pass as white in the wake of the antisemitism that has followed October 7th?

Value Tensions

This is a question of values. Although postcolonial theorists who have been critical of the tensions inherent in postcolonial theory, such as Dirlik and Memmi, might not wish to admit it, but the logic of their critique, and the way these tensions can be resolved, is by recognizing that as well as the sociological critique, other value systems including liberalism and conservatism have a point to make here and that value tensions need to be recognized and explored. Thus, Memmi⁶¹ and many others including Fanon argue for postcolonial societies that value individual liberty and democracy – that follow the intentions of the classical liberal thinkers and the Enlightenment, and to varying extent ideas of strict justice, including those of private property, and the associated respect for the rule of law that a notion of such justice requires. They also thus inescapably have to recognize that these values came from the West and from the Enlightenment, and that a Manichean binary between North and South or between Orient and Occident, or between oppressor and oppressed, is not, particularly as Dirlik²⁴ notes, in the context of globalization, either possible or meaningful. I also contend that these perspectives need to give much more value to a political settlement that balances liberal and communitarian perspectives on minority and majority, whilst fundamentally recognizing that the limits of such a settlement are set by the bounds of liberal democratic principles which grant minorities the negative liberty to maintain their local culture, their faith and their languages, at the same time as trying to solve the conflicts of the nation state inherent in colonialism's complex legacy. As Berlin has noted, there are no idealist solutions to such conflicts and tensions that will not involve greater oppression than that which they supposedly seek to solve. I would contend that DEI and inclusion in education on campus have been examples of just such an attempted idealist solution. What history has shown us is that it is the Jews who most often tend to end up as the targets of that oppression, particularly when such idealist solutions try to paper over the conflicts inherent in human activity. It is not by accident that the idealism of Marx, when put into practice, led to the persecution of the Jews, and then led the crusade to extend that persecution to the nation state of the Jews. None of this is to say that postcolonial theory does not have anything to teach us in terms of education and inclusion. However, if it is to avoid these dangers, as before, it may be necessary to distinguish, as per a Durkheimian social realist position, between internal and external aspects.⁶⁸

Internal, External and Edward Said

There has been considerable debate in postcolonialism about whether Said proposed a simple realist representational account of colonialism.¹⁸ Ashcroft

and Ahluwalia,⁶⁹ in their analysis of Said's thought, argue that Said was negotiating between a classical realist view that sees the text as simply representing the outside world and a structuralist position in which language mediates both what is said and the way it is talked about. Said adopts an intermediate position, rejecting the endlessness of the chains of signification of Derrida, and rather positing that the text simultaneously reflects the world of which it speaks at the same time as being inextricably influenced by the contingencies of the world in its formation.^{69(p.22)} Dirlik goes further and proposes that we can look at colonialism as a whole as a distorted representation, which has accretions of bias, and that there is scope in postcolonialism for these can be illuminated and corrected through critique, thus adding to the accuracy and the quality of the "hybrid"²⁴ engagement between cultures. Such a stance implies at least to some extent a realist position on the knowledge, and associated values, of the West, deriving from both rational and empirical enquiry. At the same time, there is a recognition that knowledge can come from multiple sources, not just from the Western canon, and that there can be bias about the relative positioning of sources of knowledge as well, which also needs to be recognized. When associated with the idea of negotiation – i.e. an understanding that there are multiple perspectives and multiple values and value conflicts between perspectives, and between nations and faiths, and that talking about and understanding these conflicts is necessary for us to understand them – it can lead us to a space that avoids the binary thinking into which postcolonial thinking has fallen. Such a space also recognizes, through negotiation, that value pluralism still places boundaries and recognizes a common human horizon. It also recognizes the limitations and dangers of oppositional binaries, and their particular risks for how Jews might be conceived of in such contexts.

Inclusion on Campus and Beyond

The current decolonization programme in universities and associated DEI initiatives are very far from the above. The complex contradictions within postcolonial theory, and in particular critiques of oppositional Manichean binaries, and the calls for violence sometimes associated with them, are absent from the implementation of DEI. In fact, ironically, they are presented, as in Dirlik's²⁴ description of the colonial erasure of history, in similarly deracinated terms. Similarly to inclusion, they are presented as over-simplified truths, without history or derivation, and thus ultimately largely denuded of content, except in their simplistic assertion of one side good, other side bad. Is it any wonder then that so many students, when presented with such simplistic analyses that position Jews on the side of the bad, have in recent times risen up in Jew hatred on campus? I think this illustrates the point of this book. Berlin⁵⁵ cautioned that the unrestrained idealism of positive liberty had great dangers, great dangers in terms of the oppression of minorities and minority views. The only alternative was to recognize that the world was full of value

tensions and, through exploring these, come to a recognition – in my terms, through a process of negotiation which recognizes localized context – as to how these could be approached. In the final chapter, I will consider further the implications of the discussion on antisemitism for inclusion and education more widely, and how an approach based on negotiation could offer a path forward.

Note

1 For a more detailed account of (2) and (3) see Hirsh.⁴³

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7 Conclusions

Inclusion and the Public versus Private Debate

Universities are not ahistorical monoliths. They were, in the Western context, European creations reflecting societal trends and preoccupations, most notably changes in perspectives on faith, knowledge and society, including the Restoration, Reformation and Counter-Reformation,¹ and in England, Wales and Ireland in particular the dissolution of the monasteries. At the same time, they played a key role in the development of a notion of secular as opposed to clerical knowledge following the Reformation and this scientific revolution and the accompanying rise of the Enlightenment in the late 17th century was centred on and fanned out from European universities. In particular, the idea that the pursuit of knowledge needed to be systematic, cooperative and useful underpinned the development and *raison d'être* of the universities.^{2,3} In the 19th century, the growing realization that economic development and success might be dependent on education more widely, and scientific discovery and development more specifically, led, often through governmental pressure, to the first iterations of the modern research university, with specific disciplines. Although the picture is of course highly complex and local, in particular in terms of the relative emphasis between humanities and science disciplines, nevertheless a line can be traced to the modern focus and debates of the roles of universities today. What cannot be denied is that universities have always been there to serve a function in relation to knowledge, the economy and government³⁻⁵ in terms of what was valued and not valued, which, although always a two-way conversation, was never just set by university leaders, staff or students in isolation.⁶ Putting this another way, an emphasis either purely on activism or purely on individual student agency and autonomy, in thinking about values, education and inclusion, is as misguided as a sole or primary basis for decision making in universities as it would be in schools.

This is why the question of antisemitism in higher education is relevant because in liberal democracies, certain values are regarded as important, the most important of which, as Berlin has highlighted, in contrast to authoritarian regimes, is freedom from oppression, within a broad agreed human horizon. This is a liberal democratic value. It is not a value in all societies – the

ISIS caliphate did not extend it to the Yazidis and the Chinese Communist Party did and does not extend it to the Uighurs, to Tibet, or to Hong Kong. If the decolonization and DEI movements cannot identify that antisemitism and the justification of the burning Jewish families together by Hamas as resistance are similarly not liberal values or part of a common human horizon, then they cannot fall back vacuously on a mixture of activism and free speech as a justification. Particularly not at the same time as promoting notions of diversity, equity and inclusion that exclude Jews. This is an incoherent position that implies that there is no link between wider societal values and education. If that is so, then there is no possibility of any meaningful content for the term inclusion in relation to education, in universities or elsewhere.

Further, universities and the school system are also embedded within a liberal perspective on what knowledge is and what its function should be. Value pluralism is also a liberal value and as we have seen, there is significant debate as to the extent to which and how the state should impose values via the education system. This question, sitting squarely in the middle between Berlin's⁷ positive and negative liberty, is not one that it can be suggested, in a liberal democratic society, is not up for debate. Even if we take a (in my view wrongheaded) view of democracy, as say Olssen⁸ or Marion Young⁹ does, as primarily about being deliberative (i.e. about coming to consensus on such matters), that would put the locus for such decision-making in the hands of the democratic apparatus of the state, not of universities themselves. Yet if we take DEI and decolonization, there is manifestly no or at most very limited debate. There is no recognition that the state and wider society in creating and funding universities still expect them to adhere in some sense to the idea of knowledge production that is both systematic and useful.⁵ Rather, there is just a one-dimensional deracinated view of post-colonial theory, which replaces a complex contested field of study with a Manichean binary of some groups good, other groups bad. There is no recognition of viewpoint diversity such that liberal, conservative, traditional or even communitarian political perspectives and values, and their implications for public policy, are considered. This is the case even when certain key classical and neoliberal values are to a greater or lesser extent at the heart of the societies who pay for them through their taxes or through fees. There is no recognition that there are debates possible in liberal societies about the extent to which the state, and thus universities, should direct particular value sets in education. There is no longer any sense that the teacher as activist is an idea open to critique. An idea of inclusion in education that is based on the debate-free thinking presented in decolonization and DEI programmes in universities opens up all the risks of idealist overreach that Berlin warns us about. As he wrote:^{10(p.i)} ¹

...So what is to be done to restrain the champions, sometimes very fanatical, of one or other of these values, each of whom tends to trample upon the rest, as the great tyrants of the twentieth century have trampled on the

life, liberty, and human rights of millions because their eyes were fixed upon some ultimate golden future?

I am afraid I have no dramatic answer to offer: only that if these ultimate human values by which we live are to be pursued, then compromises, trade-offs, [and] arrangements have to be made if the worst is not to happen. So much liberty for so much equality, so much individual self-expression for so much security, so much justice for so much compassion. My point is that some values clash: the ends pursued by human beings are all generated by our common nature, but their pursuit has to be to some degree controlled—liberty and the pursuit of happiness, I repeat, may not be fully compatible with each other, nor are liberty, equality, and fraternity.

So we must weigh and measure, bargain, compromise, and prevent the crushing of one form of life by its rivals. I know only too well that this is not a flag under which idealistic and enthusiastic young men and women may wish to march—it seems too tame, too reasonable, too bourgeois, it does not engage the generous emotions. But you must believe me, one cannot have everything one wants—not only in practice, but even in theory. The denial of this, the search for a single, overarching ideal because it is the one and only true one for humanity, invariably leads to coercion. And then to destruction [and] blood...

It leads to crowds who cannot reconcile how equality for all can encompass the individual liberty of the Jews to always, always be different. Crowds who cannot abide the tension between universalism and particularism inherent in the idea of the nation, and can abide it even less when it comes to the idea of the nation state of the Jews, chanting “Death to the Jew” in Paris in 1894,¹¹ and awful chants about Jews outside the Sydney Opera House in 2023.¹² It leads to Jewish students being abused by their teachers in England¹³ and hiding in fear in libraries from marauding crowds of their fellow students in New York.¹⁴ This is the ultimate risk of treating inclusion as any empty concept. Promoting antisemitism is not the function of universities in society. In particular, there is no possible sense of justice in spending our tax dollars on it.

The Attractions of Binary Thinking

Fanon, whatever his faults, cannot be simply regarded as a binary thinker. He was too aware of the complexities of the relationship between colonizer and colonized, and his Marxist/Freudian perspectives added considerable depth to his analysis. Yet, any perusal of discourse in the academy makes it clear that DEI and decolonization in their implementation tend towards undertheorization and a risk of simplistic binary thinking.^{5,15} Scruton,¹⁶ writing on Hayek, asks why progressive critiques tend to promote simplistic binaries and why such thinking persists. Hayek, discusses Scruton, notes that “no socialist ever loses credibility due to the extravagance of his ideas”.^{16(p.222)} Discounting resource limitations makes it easy to come up with simplistic solutions, and then to

position those who promote these as good, and those who oppose them, or dare to point out their impracticality, or the tensions inherent between different values when making decisions based on limitations, as bad. Good versus bad, in which all the bother of having to deal with tensions, and hard decisions, and compromise and complexity is deposited in the bad, is a heady political vision. It always has been, and as Berlin noted, it has a particular attraction to the young. In one sense this may be not altogether a bad idea, as the idealism of youth is a potent thing. However, youth's idealism does not rob those of us who have been around a while longer of our responsibilities for discernment. I am reminded, in thinking about Scruton and Hayek's question, of Melanie Klein's ideas on splitting in object relations theory.¹⁷ In Kleinian theory, splitting refers to a defence mechanism in which a person unconsciously separates aspects of the self or others into polarized, extreme categories of good or bad. This splitting often originates in infancy and early childhood as a way to manage overwhelming emotions and experiences. According to Klein, the process of splitting serves to protect the ego from anxiety and conflict by simplifying complex emotional experiences into more manageable components.¹⁸ Maturity comes when as the infant develops, they come to understand that the hate and envy that through splitting they have projected onto others is just that, and they develop the capacity for reparation and gratitude, a process which inevitably involves recognizing the good and bad that resides both in ourselves and others. There is no zero sum game, as Marx might have us believe, in human relations and human activity. As I have traced, postcolonial theory in potential and actuality can move past simplistic oppressor-oppressed binaries to a more complex view of the development of nation and identity. Yet as it is instantiated in DEI, as an element of education and inclusion, it has become denuded of this complexity.

In a sense, we could characterize inclusion as a concept within education, as too early on in the process of redemption that Klein outlines, as too prone to the simplistic solutions that come from splitting the world into good and bad. This is not something that we can easily lay at the door of Fanon or Said. It is the responsibility of the faculty and leaders of today. That in universities, and schools, antisemitism has so easily have reared its ugly head since October 7th is, I think, all the proof that is needed for this contention.

What about the Schools?

In *La trahison des clercs*, Julien Benda accused the academics and universities of the 1920s, in the context of the rise of fascism in Europe, of dabbling in "the racial passions, class passions, and national passions..." of their day.^{19(p.1)} As Arendt²⁰ noted, the totalitarian instincts of the right are not much different from those of the left, and it was the latter that had such an impact on Berlin in his childhood. Niall Ferguson²¹ has carefully traced the ways in which the German and Austrian academy both contributed to and acquiesced to the rise of the idealism of fascism. To be clear, I am not drawing a direct parallel to

today, simply noting that the academy has some form on this. As Benda notes, the distinction between critical scholarship and activism is crucial if the space for the critical exchange of liberal ideas is to be maintained. Of course, there is a tension here that Berlin was too well aware of – as Popper put it – the paradox of toleration,²² but it is our responsibility in liberal democratic states to navigate between pluralism and liberty. The core of the idea of liberal democracy is that we need to have both; the lesson of totalitarianism, so lost on the academy of today, is both that there are no idealist solutions and that we need to have the courage to accept that. Popper argued that free expression in free societies crucially allow bad and simplistic ideas to be exposed to critique; however, this puts a responsibility on people to speak up, a responsibility so often avoided by the academy. Yet the academy cannot easily ignore its responsibilities given its huge influence on wider society.

Both during World War II and during the rise of fascism in Europe, the failures of the academy were closely intertwined with what went on in the schools.²³ In modern times, particularly with the growth of the influence of the universities internationally on professional training, both pre- and in-service teacher education and teacher leadership,^{24,25} it is perhaps not surprising that confusion about the role of schools and teachers in promoting a thin as opposed to thick perspective on civics and a conception of the good life has arisen.^{26–28} Thus, for example, in England, even where legislative guidance has been explicit about limiting the role of teachers in promoting partisan political perspectives,²⁹ frequently teachers and school leaders are positioned as agents of change in respect of social justice.^{30,31} The debates on the role of the state and education based on debates between liberal, communitarian and postmodernist perspectives are, for much of the teaching profession lost, particularly given how heavily influenced they are in their training by the mindset of the academy. The idea of the activist teacher committed to social justice has become something like a given in teacher education,^{32,33} with much of the complexity and value tensions inherent in such a stance unaddressed. At my workplace, The Institute of Education (the name it is best known by), since 2014 a faculty of University College, in London, has led the field of education internationally on the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings for years at the time of writing.³⁴ It says in its mission statement:

We embrace cross-pollination, collaboration and excellence to create a future that is inclusive and just.³⁵

This is of course very well intentioned and mirrors similar statements in mission statements across the sector. But the idea that inclusion and justice in the context of education are such easy bedfellows, or that it is the role of university institutions, which have such an influence on teachers in the UK and internationally, to prescribe the future of policy rather than be a forum in which it is debated, is I think open to argument.

Since October 7th, we have seen not just in England, the UK and the US, but across the world, an explosion in antisemitism in the common school, just as we have in academia.^{36(p.24),37,38} This raises the same question as before – how can those committed to creating a future that is inclusive and just, who have been trained in just this, have somehow allowed antisemitism to rear its ugly head, so often without restraint? What meaning then can inclusion in the context of education have?

Towards Inclusion as Negotiation

Berlin wrote, in the conclusion of *Two Concepts of Liberty*:^{7(p.168)}

But if we are not armed with an a priori guarantee of the proposition that a total harmony of true values is somewhere to be found – perhaps in some ideal realm the characteristics of which we can, in our finite state, not so much as conceive – we must fall back on the ordinary resources of empirical observation and ordinary human knowledge...The world that we encounter in ordinary experience is one in which we are faced with choices between ends equally ultimate, and claims equally absolute, the realisation of some of which must inevitably involve the sacrifice of others. Indeed, it is because this is their situation that men place such immense value upon the freedom to choose; for if they had assurance that in some perfect state, realisable by men on earth, no ends pursued by them would ever be in conflict, the necessity and agony of choice would disappear, and with it the central importance of the freedom to choose. Any method of bringing this final state nearer would then seem fully justified, no matter how much freedom were sacrificed to forward its advance...The necessity of choosing between absolute claims is then an inescapable characteristic of the human condition.

Inclusion in the context of education, as I have tried to trace, cannot escape from these conclusions. Any idealism, whether rational or empirical, whether Marxist, or critical, or postcolonial, or indeed conservative and traditional, can produce the reconciliation of all good things into one space and all bad things into another. The risks, just to take one example, of conservative perspectives descending into blood and soil nationalism and fascism are well trodden.³⁹ Inclusion in the context of education is too often considered as a deracinated idea, where all the inherent tensions between, as I have considered: equality versus liberty; autonomy / agency versus protection; equality of opportunity versus equality of outcome; justice versus mercy or compassion; freedom versus solidarity; diversity versus community; debate versus agreement; experiment versus tradition; and negative versus positive liberty, are thought to either not exist or not matter. Classical and neoliberal perspectives cannot bring solutions to these tensions. It is not my view that there is a left or right solution to these tensions inherent in inclusion and education. Values are both plural and

incommensurable, and that all we can do is grapple with them using our critical faculties and our understanding of local contexts. Liberalism also highlights for us the crucial role of resource constraints. Many of these tensions could be dissolved, if resources were unlimited. But as Scruton¹⁶ notes, for idealism in its progressivist versions, this point is often not recognized, and perhaps this is partly why progressive idealism is so attractive. I am not, though, proposing that in relation to education and inclusion, it is not legitimate to call for more allocation of resources. It very much is, and often allocating more resources to marginalized groups is very much what we should do. But at the same time, resources have limits, and the value tensions that flow from those limits need to be recognized. In particular, the limits of time and energy that teachers have need to be given more weight in debates on education and inclusion.

Liberalism at the Extreme

Liberal ideas, such as those of Hayek and West, have of course their limitations. Often, it is hard to see how their perhaps extreme commitments to strict justice, for all that they might have a logical force on their side, can make sense in the modern, complex technological societies within which we live. I don't claim that these liberal perspectives do necessarily make sense. However, I think they do serve a purpose – a purpose similar to radical calls that come from the other side. The sociological critique of education is in the end deeply radical. In the context of education and inclusion, its call is for revolution, for society to be radically different from the way it is now, even in the face of the evidence that such revolutions always end in failure. It cries out against the injustice of oppression. It is both an important call and a seductive one. Bias and oppression need to be challenged. Yet what comes after that is more difficult. The tensions do not go away. Similarly, Hayek and West, as with Nozick, also call for a radically different society – where the weight of the state and its dead hand of oppression are also removed from our lives. This would be a different way of living entirely, and as with the radicalism of the other side it would involve heavy losses, losses it would be impracticable for us to bear. To take just one example, it is not really clear how say Hayek or Nozick think that the coordinated international research response to the HIV virus in the 1990s would have happened in their proposed societies. How would all the communitarian and state-directed pooling of resources and knowledge to build the health and research infrastructure that facilitated the wondrous scientific miracle of creating anti-retroviral drugs and reversing the death sentences faced by so many have occurred? I worked as a medical researcher on an HIV/AIDS Unit in London in the 1990s and watched people die from AIDS, so I know a small something of what a miracle this was. Yet, at the same time, liberal thinkers remind us also of other injustices, particularly, the multiple risks of the injustices of the state against the individual, and the absoluteness of losses that individuals suffer in aiming to achieve equality of outcome, at all levels of society, including within the classroom when dealing

with difference. In particular, in relation to teachers, Nozick and Hayek and West, and Rawls, would all raise what I think is the necessary question against the idea that teachers can “magically” achieve inclusion with limited resources. They would bring the “radical” notion of questioning where the additional time and energy might come from to be those teachers. They would ask: how is it possible for all the complex issues raised in terms of value tensions when dealing with difference in the modern-day classroom to not have any resource implications? I ask that question on behalf of teachers, particularly in terms of newly qualified teachers, as some of my empirical work has focused on how the transition from the pre-service phase is already inherently very challenging, without having the added burden of being an active “change agent” for inclusive education.⁴⁰ As Berlin says, there are no perfect solutions, only problems to be addressed.

The lesson of liberal perspectives on inclusion is that resources matter and resources are limited. The tensions that arise from this lead not to easy solutions, but, most importantly in the classroom, to a series of questions for teachers about the best way to resolve these tensions. I have argued that if we truly want to help teachers to enact inclusion in educational contexts, then what they need is for these questions to be brought out into the open. They need the oxygen of discussion. I have posited that there are some trends within culturally responsive pedagogy, particularly the Funds of Knowledge approach, which point towards how teachers could go about this in ways which allow for an understanding of the local and the specific. In particular, if they can come, with open minds, to understand the lives of the children in their classes, and their communities and traditions and ideas, they can begin to consider how to put those into the context of the multiple aims that they, their schools, parents and families, and the state have for education. This points towards a way in which difference can be considered in the classroom, as process of negotiation leading to shared understanding, particularly between teachers and children. Such an approach also has application at university level. A university, based on an idea of inclusion as negotiation, would involve an open engagement with the cultural and knowledge backgrounds of all students and of all faculty. It would also involve recognizing diverse viewpoints, and would give primacy to critical and rigorous debate, which recognizes the complexities involved in thinking about culture, nation and identity, within the bounds of a common human horizon. The role of the university would be to serve as a crucible for such debate, not itself to adopt a platform for activism. Just as in schools, this model positions the role of the teacher and the school as being to understand diversity in support of learning, not to impose a particular view of the good life.

Inclusion as Negotiation in the Classroom

There has to be a recognition that simplistic binary solutions are just that, simplistic. Putting it bluntly, my contention is that Berlin’s warning about the

risks of positive liberty leading to blood applies directly to inclusion in the way it is currently employed in educational settings. A deracinated content-free concept of inclusion, i.e. the one we sometimes have now, from which all tensions have been removed, provides fertile ground for the kind of split binary thinking that can lead to the glorification of murdering Jewish children. Rather what we need is to reframe inclusion as a series of questions to be negotiated between teachers, children and families, or at one remove, between the state, teachers and families in terms of public policy development. This might well involve pointing out that more resources are needed, for example, to support the transition of children with disabilities into employment⁴¹ so that they have the possibility of equal participation in society. Such an approach to inclusion would also entail a different approach to teacher education. The academy needs to be refocused away from the idea that it can be both a political activist organization and an organization involved in the open critical pursuit of knowledge that supports the wider aims of society. This also needs to apply to teacher education. The immense failure of teacher education for inclusion has been the international explosion in antisemitism in schools and universities in Western liberal democracies in the wake of October 7th. Teacher education for inclusion needs to recognize the complex debates about the place of the state in both fostering elements such as autonomy and agency, but also the limits that are implied in liberal democracies as to the extent to which the state can go in promoting one simple idea of what the good life entails. It also needs to develop an understanding that in liberal democracies there is a plurality of values across individuals, families and cultures, and that different values come into tension with each other, particularly in terms of dealing with difference in the classroom. There has been a growing realization in teacher education for inclusion as a field that teachers need to develop the capacity to deal with difference not through being taught about it directly, but more as a type of enquiry or problem-based approach. So, for example, Hick et al.⁴² proposed that posing problem scenarios about issues for inclusion, as preparation for practicum, and then reflecting on scenarios experienced on practicum and considering decisions and options, with fellow students, is one way of approaching this in teacher education. Norwich and Jones⁴³ and Seleznyov et al.⁴⁴ explored the use of lesson study to similarly promote joint enquiry and reflection by pre-service teachers, focused on particular examples of complexity in dealing with difference in the classroom. I would suggest that such an enquiry-based approach can be positioned to include the notion of inclusion as negotiation, encompassing a consideration of the value tensions that underlie the many questions that are raised by dealing with difference in the classroom. This could also include the probing, as in the FoK approach, of the cultural and individual reservoirs of knowledge, as well as the differences in value perspectives, of children and families, so that through open enquiry teachers and their classes can have the necessary information to help them navigate towards answers. Such an approach would reframe inclusion not as some sort of idealized good in and of itself, but as a series of questions to be

answered. At the very least, by bringing these questions out into the open, it will give teachers the space to explore them, and as Berlin argues,⁷ these questions cannot be glossed over however much we might wish for that, but can only be resolved by the hard work of weighing up what will be gained and what will be lost. Much of the impetus for my academic interest in education and inclusion stems from my experiences as a class teacher. I was often preoccupied with the question of how to deal with difference in the classroom, and the feeling that I was failing at it. I guess looking back at my younger teaching self, the realization I have come to, which I think is an important one, is that there is no easy answer to what we should do in any given classroom with any given child. There is only the moral responsibility to respond to the question, and to respond to it as best we can for all the children that we work with as teachers.

Note

- 1 From a speech composed for a ceremony commemorating his acceptance of an honorary degree at the University of Toronto in 1994. This was presented on Berlin's behalf and then published under the title "A Message to the 21st Century".

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