Cultivating Democratic Citizenship: Towards Intersubjectivity

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THESIS

Just as painting by the numbers does not make one an artist, following rules and procedures of democratic governance, even if faithfully carried out, does not make a citizenry democratic in character. This is because the idea of democracy "involves much more than political organization and economic opportunity, important as these are." What more is involved? Inspired by John Dewey’s and others’ moral and spiritual visions of democracy, I shall argue in this essay that democracy requires development of an essential moral characteristic, namely, intersubjectivity. To this end, I will enquire first into the meaning of intersubjectivity and then into the method of its cultivation.

DEMOCRACY AS PRACTICE OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY

Democracy literally means people (demos) having power (kratos), the power of self-determination and self-government. Taking a cue from this original meaning of democracy, we may posit that central to democracy is the idea of people governing themselves rather than being governed by an external authority, be it God, Monarch, or Corporation. Seeing how the latter arrangement has dominated human history, and also even today how democracy struggles everywhere to manifest itself properly, I suggest that we should not assume an easy understanding of this notion of mutual governance. On the contrary, we need to inquire closely into just how such an arrangement works. What does it require of people for them to be able to govern themselves mutually? Or, to put it another way, what kind of people do we have to become to be able to practice mutual governance? What abilities and dispositions, what virtues and values, do we have to embody to become democratic citizens? The questions I raise here go to the heart of the inquiry concerning the nature of power peculiar to democratic governance. Power is the ability or capacity to accomplish a given work, in this case, mutual governance. But unlike in the physical understanding of power, in our social understanding of power, we have to talk about different conceptions of power. For instance, autocratic domination as one conception of power, so prevalent in human history, obviously does not go with mutual governance. For mutual governance, we cannot have an autocratic power that an individual unit, be it a person or a corporate body, possesses and exercises over others. What is the conception of power that coheres with mutual governance of democracy? For reasons obvious, the kind of power that makes mutual governance possible is, precisely, one that emerges from the relationality of a mutually functioning body of people. Here, power
does not lie in the individual beings but in their mutual interaction; hence democratic power is found in the relationships themselves.

But we need to be careful here in our understanding of relationships. We may have a group without the kind of relationships that will have the capacity for mutual governance. Think of 200 individual students in a lecture hall who don’t know each other and have no interaction: they are not a democratic body. They don’t govern themselves mutually. A collection of essentially isolated individuals who have little to do with each other and pursue their own separate good cannot have a democracy. Or, even if these 200 individuals act in unison to the command of the instructor, as when a final examination is administered, they are not engaged in a self-governance. They obey the command. It is only when people in the group interact with each other in mutual inquiry, consultation, and deliberation with the aim of arriving at a common good that we have democracy. The power of democracy lies precisely in the collective wisdom that emerges from mutual inquiry, consultation, and deliberation. When ordinary people put their "heads" and "hearts" together, an extraordinary measure of wisdom emerges. Sounds easy? Its enaction is difficult, for, there are entrenched obstacles, as witnessed over and over again in history and current affairs.

The foremost obstacle is the contempt for ordinary folk. Many of us believe in the naturalness of the domination model of governance, arguing that the extraordinary people, few in number, with their superiority in one form or another naturally come to govern the many who are ordinary. In this explanation, what is overlooked is the possibility of a vicious circle involving systemic disempowerment. Through systemic practices of disempowerment (both symbolic and physical) over ordinary folk, the many can be made so degraded and disabled that they accept the domination and exploitation from the controlling few. Against this argument of injustice, some might contend that, all the same, there has to be an initial unequal distribution of capacities, making a small number of individuals superior over a vast majority of inferior folk. In response, I shall argue that superiority and inferiority are not "natural," pre-given categories: they are "after-the-fact" social constructs, offered typically to justify the existing membership of the privileged. What this means is that there is no necessity for us to accept the substantive definition of superiority in terms of domination and exploitation. Moreover, on moral grounds, we must in fact reject and condemn such a definition. Not only that, we should propose that domination and exploitation are not attributes of superiority but of inferiority, on the moral plane. We shall regard those who perpetuate domination and exploitation with contempt, even when they physically control us.

Democracy is a moral vision of life that condemns domination and promotes mutual governance, seeing the latter as a better way to live. Concomitantly, it is a fighting creed that insists that ordinary people be given the opportunity to prove in practice the possibility of mutual governance. The fundamental conviction behind democracy is that when ordinary people are not reduced and disabled, they are capable of governing themselves mutually and cooperatively by the power of good will and collective wisdom. Democracy is a faith in the power of the collectivity of ordinary folk. But the key here is that ordinary folk must not be reduced and disabled, a condition that is increasingly hard to fulfil.
Now, let us inquire into what exactly the democratic process of mutual inquiry, consultation, and deliberation entails. The reason why I propose this inquiry is to dispel the erroneous notion, pervasive nowadays, that the democratic process is essentially a bargaining process. In bargaining, individuals come together to cut the best deals for themselves. Whoever walks away from the bargaining table with most of his or her interests and demands fulfilled is the winner. The game they play is maximise the gain and minimize the loss with respect to self-interest. But how could this be democracy? Where in this is manifest the essence of democracy, namely, the faith in the emergence of collective wisdom (the common good) and the commitment to the process of mutual inquiry, consultation, and deliberation (the good will to the common good)? This essence of democracy is simply missing from the practice of bargaining. Bargaining is what individuals do; it is not what a citizenry does. Nothing can be further from the democratic spirit and practice than the egocentric game of maximizing self-gain and minimizing self-loss.

But how is the democratic spirit of good will and common good to be generated? Such spirit cannot either be assumed to pre-exist, that is, be inherent, in individuals, nor be imposed from without. If it is inherent in the individual, then democracy would be an inevitability, not a labour we have to engage in. Plainly such is not the case. On the other hand, if it has to be imposed from without, then by definition, there will be no democracy. Therefore, the most reasonable conclusion is that it has to be cultivated, most likely under the stringent conditions of care and toil. Where do we start? What may be the foundation of this cultivation? As the phrase, "common good," indicates, common good is a good common to all members of the community. As such, we cannot find out what it is until we actually come together and undertake the process of inquiry, consultation, and deliberation. The common good is something we arrive at, something that emerges, and is not a given. This is most visibly the case for a pluralistic society like ours where we just cannot assume that we all share a common good which is already figured out, handed down or is inherent in each and every one of us. To arrive at a common good, people have to come together in the first place, united in the conviction that this way of life is better than others. In other words, people have to have the will to the common good ("good will"). Unless there is this good will, there will be no impetus or cause to come together and work out the common good. But, again, is good will something to be assumed to pre-exist? If what I see around me is an indication, I don't think we can assume this at all. The good will, too, has to be cultivated. How?

Good will is a function of how much we care about each other, which, in turn, is a function of our relatedness to each other. You have a good will towards those whom you care about deeply. Relatedness, however, comes from sharing our lives and feeling the human bond or solidarity as a result. Sharing of thoughts, perceptions, hopes, fears, desires, as well as the actual sweat of communal labour, is what makes us feel bonded to each other and makes us committed to promoting each other's well-being. Thus, the meaning of, or the reasons for, mutual inquiry, consultation, and deliberation is that we share ourselves, in words and in deeds. Dialogue wherein we share our minds and hearts, therefore, is the most foundational activity of democracy. Understanding that emerges from dialogue is the foundation of sympathy and solidarity.
Understanding bridges differences and draws people together. Such understanding is the source of the power that fuels democracy.

Let us now probe a little deeper and ask just how the power of shared understanding works. What I want to show here is that the nature of power inherent in understanding is such that it does not support domination but solidarity. This is a crucially important point because, as indicated earlier, many of us equate power with domination (and exploitation) and base the latter on knowledge. Recall Francis Bacon's famous (or rather, infamous) dictum that knowledge is power. But not all knowledges are created equal and do the same thing. Understanding that emerges from the practices of good will and achievement of mutual sharing is not at all the same as domination-oriented knowledge. Understanding as a fruit of mutual sharing has altogether a different nature. This is because understanding is born of sympathetic joys and sorrows experienced when people share their subjectivity, that is, their thoughts, feelings, perceptions, desires, and so on. It is not that we become alike each other. We are irrevocably unique individuals and cannot be reduced to sameness. Any attempt to reduce people to sameness aways brings distress and suffering. The most and the best we can do is to hypothetically entertain each other's perspectives and experiences. Through such exercise, regularly repeated, the scope of our perspective enlarges and we become in disposition less dogmatic and self-righteous. We become more open-minded and understanding, that is, able to entertain an other's experiences and views as if our own. "As-ifness" or subjunctivity here is an important moral disposition in that it enable us to stretch understanding and become more receptive and responsive to each other.

At this point, I would like to finally introduce the term, 'intersubjectivity', to name the above process of mutual sharing of thoughts, perceptions, values, in short, the content of consciousness. Subjectivity, as I define it, refers to the fact of having the "inner," psychological world of thoughts, feelings, values, and attitudes, as opposed to the "outer" world of physiological processes of the body and matter in motion. When subjectivity is shared, so that there is a transfusion of thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and desires taking place, this is intersubjectivity. We become intersubjective beings when, through sharing ourselves, we are open to each other's subjectivity and allow its transfusion across our individual differences. Democracy, in the way I have been theorizing, is fundamentally this practise of intersubjectivity. We become democratic in spirit and character when we are able to open up to each other's subjectivity and share our thoughts, perceptions, emotions respectfully in a subject-to-subject relationship.

OBSTACLES TO INTERSUBJECTIVITY

Things have their affording as well as limiting conditions. The practice of intersubjectivity is no exception. In this section, I wish to probe into the conditions for intersubjectivity. This is an indispensible discussion because in education we are concerned with actual implementation and practice. As in planting, seeds have to be given the right conditions to germinate: good soil, sunlight, warmth, and moisture. Likewise for cultivating intersubjectivity. If we
try to practice intersubjectivity under an inimical condition, our efforts will be frustrated. The practice of intersubjectivity, which is difficult at any time, faces an especial challenge in our times. Our times are said to be dominated by instrumentalism: the tendency to view the world merely as objects. I shall argue that instrumentalism makes intersubjectivity difficult, if not impossible. Unless we overcome instrumentalism, it will be difficult to truly practise democracy and become democratic.

When the self sees itself as the subject and the world as the object, it treats the latter instrumentally, as merely a resource and tool for itself. The self that sees the world as an object is an alienated self. The absolute, categorical dichotomy between the subject and the object leaves the subject little room for a warm and receptive feeling of consanguity, of friendship and solidarity, towards the world. Friendship makes us care about each other intrinsically, not instrumentally. Alienation, however, makes us relate to the world only instrumentally: to exploit and consume the other. Exploitation and consumption: this is the nature of the game played in a consumeristic society. Predation becomes the basic ethos of such society. ’Predation’ is a strong word, for sure, evoking visceral reactions. But the word captures, in my opinion, perfectly well the social logic of instrumentalism. The advantaged promote themselves by preying upon and exploiting the disadvantaged. Here, we don't even have to attribute personal nastiness to people who participate in a fundamentally exploitive system. Think of students in schools. The reason why Johnny gets A and eventually becomes socially rewarded is because there are for every Johnny ten "losers" who get Cs, Ds, and Fs. Johnny is a good kid and means no harm to others. He goes about doing a diligent job of learning, for which he is amply rewarded. But the school system is set up so that if Johnny gets A, someone else is not getting an A. The school is, I am afraid, a social "jungle" heavy with the scent of competition. The inhabitants sense instinctively the unsafety of the environment, and many are understandably fearful and careful.

In many of the undergraduate classes I teach, I have repeatedly noticed that the majority of students feel awkward and reluctant to open themselves up to their peers. They do not feel free, comfortable, or even "safe" to express their thoughts and perceptions, let alone to submit themselves to their fellow participants for critical responses. The public space of the classroom that they have entered does not feel safe to them. Being open is a function of the perception of safety. When we perceive that things are not safe to us, we shut down automatically, ready to flee or fight. Why is the public space perceived as not safe? What dangers lurk here? The danger we are dealing with here is primarily of the psychological nature. The psychological danger is prior to the physical danger in that the former precedes the latter. We don’t intentionally hurt others physically without there being first the negative, hostile perception of the other. Such perception can take any degree of intensity, from lack of recognition of the other to murderous intent upon the other. The intensity or degree aside, the basic attitude is the same: lack of fundamental respect for the other as a subject, a person, worthy of being valued intrinsically. When this moral respect is lacking in a relationship, possibilities of harm and damage, including physical harm, exist.
The public space is dangerous to us insofar as there is a danger of our being received by others instrumentally, that is, without fundamental moral respect. We are familiar with such danger: the public space as a predatory "jungle" wherein people compete to rise above each other. They seek advantages over each other. The name of the game we are supposed to play is Survival of the Strongest. To that end, we put down others: we dismiss them or actively reduce them. No one is spared of the merciless process of tearing down. One way of defining privilege is the measure of protection from this process of predation. The privileged can put enough distance between themselves and the destructive reality so as not to get affected. Not only that, the highly privileged can actively and directly participate in the predation with impunity. The way that the disprivileged cope with the situation of unequal power is by being constantly on guard so as not to appear incapable, incompetant, unendowed, unmerited, undesirable, and so on. (Of course, privilege is a phenomenon of relative degrees and operates in the manner of "food chain.") Those with the weakest self-perception hide themselves in silence and invisibility. Better to be unseen than be seen incompetant. I see my students in class enacting this logic. Their silence pains me. I read in their eyes both the desire to be recognized ("I am here; please see me") and the desire to hide ("Please don't make me say things in front of everyone"). How shall we change the ethos of the public space so that we renounce the egocentric game of survival and practice intersubjectivity?

One approach widely advocated and practised has become a modern dogma: self-esteem building. The basic practice behind self-esteem building is that, on balance, we should not weaken or damage another's self-image. If criticisms are called for at all, they are to be "sandwiched" between praises. As well, criticisms are to be constructive, and so on. These are good advice, and observing them will make life more pleasant. But there are inherent problems with the very notion of self-esteem in that self-esteem is dependent upon an evaluation according to certain value criteria. For example, if my self-esteem depends on my making lots of money, likely I will suffer from a fluctuating self-esteem. My self-esteem may parallel the stockmarket index! Or, as a teenager, if my self-esteem depends on my having high grades, becoming popular, getting a boyfriend, wearing fashionable designers' clothes, and so on, I am in for a never-ending frustration and despair, however mild. Given that, in general, more people lose than win in the competitive game of acquisition, be they material goods or non-material goods, most people's self-esteem will suffer. Trying to boost self-esteem becomes a Sisyphean project.

Another approach is privatization of the public space. If the public space is problematic, so goes the reasoning, then make it like a private space. This is a doable proposition, for example, with a classroom that is small and personal and is managed by a caring teacher. We can readily conjure up the image of a kindergarten classroom. It has been suggested that teachers can furnish a classroom like a living room with couches, lamps, plants, and so on. While I am all for making the classroom a pleasant, livable place, I argue that by assimilating the public space to a private space, we lose the sense of the public. The public space is not, and should not be made to be, one's living room or bedroom where one can do and say whatever one wants. The public is a space of contending, conflicting values and practices, personal visions and tastes. It is a space where Otherness is keenly experienced. Therein lie the important challenges and
virtues of the public space. Privatization of the public space is an attempt to colonize and obliterate Otherness. If we succeed in this, we lose the opportunity to practice intersubjectivity. For, without the Other, there is no intersubjectivity: only subjectivity. Intersubjectivity is seeing the Other as a subject, not obliterating the Other. When I encounter a being so different from myself and am keenly aware of its Otherness, I am given an opportunity, a challenge, truly a gift, to practice intersubjectivity. Should I succeed in seeing the other as a subject, despite its alterity, my practice of intersubjectivity has been fruitful. The challenge of the public space is precisely this challenge to practice civic virtues of fundamental respect for and openness to the Otherness of the other. This comment brings me back to the talk of self-esteem above.

What we are called to practice in public is not self-esteem building but respect-giving. Esteem is a conditional thing, subject to evaluation, therefore contingent. For instance, I cannot hold a morally depraved person in good esteem. However, as a person committed to an ethical ideal of intersubjectivity, I must respect him as a subject, not dismissing him as useless and worthless when he does not serve my interest or meets my expectation, or seeing her as useful and valuable when she meets my expectation. To hold another being in fundamental (moral) respect is not to perceive and treat it only instrumentally but, foremostly, to consider its own well-being. Being considerate here does not necessarily mean that we can actually play an active role of helping. The other for whatever reasons may refuse the help and guidance we can give. Or, we may not know how best to help the other. But, at the least, we do not cease to be considerate of others and do not relax our moral posture of attending and listening. These may sound easy and don’t seem like any work on our part. This is not so. We have been conditioned, some of us more acutely than others, to be "social-jungle" animals, insecure and fearful, greedy with an eye on the other as a potential danger or a potential gain. Instrumentalism has become the thick blood that courses through our veins. Our practice of intersubjectivity, wherein we embrace the Otherness of the other and give it fundamental moral respect, is challenging work, requiring tremendous self-discipline and effort-making in resistance against our conditioning. Coming back to my earlier pitch about the practice of intersubjectivity requiring the Otherness and the public space, I would like to elaborate this point further, arguing that the participation in the public, which is the essence of democracy, is the way to overcome our egocentric habits of mind that block intersubjectivity.

CULTIVATING INTERSUBJECTIVITY

To one so worried about his or her survival, any being that he or she encounters poses a potential danger. Preoccupation with her survival and self-interest makes her an easy target for deep insecurity and vulnerability. There is no end, no "enough," to this game of self-survival. At first, survival might mean making 30,000 dollars; soon, it becomes making 60,000 dollars with two cars; later, it may become 100,000 dollars with a yacht and a vacation to Mexico. This is just one scenario: other scenarios, of which there are an infinite variations, may involve accumulating different kinds of merit, be it promotion on the institutional ladder or securing the favours of the people one has to live or work
with. All the same, as long as one is compelled by the necessity of proving one's comparative worth, the hostile and greedy game of egocentric survival continues. When fear and anxiety collectively generated by the insecure and vulnerable participants permeate the public space, it is felt as a unsafe space. No amount of boosting of self-esteem and other ego-strengthening measures will make the space feel safer. As long as there is the fear and anxiety over self-protection and self-promotion, as long as people play the Survival Game, the public space will remain hostile, unsafe.

True, people may talk incessantly about how to make the learning environment safe and how we should be respectful of our differences, and so on. But no amount of talk fundamentally changes anything. In fact, the more people talk about their anxieties and fear of the unsafe public space, the more they entrench the perception and enact it. What needs to be done is to get to the root of the problem which is the alienated sense of self, the ego-self, that gets distressed by the Otherness of the other. Therefore, we need to learn to embrace otherness. But, as in a physical embrace, one cannot embrace the other when one is all tensed up and rigid, ready for fight or flight. One has to relax, let go of the tension caused by anxieties and fear. But typically, psychological problems are not "solved" in any fundamental way by logical reasoning and persuasiv e talk. Telling ourselves not to fear and be anxious doesn't really help. We need to go below the discursive layer, down to the elements of psyche to work directly with them. Here one such suggestion I shall make is what we may term "attentional work." The basic idea behind this work is that when one pays a full and deep attention to something, one forgets one's fears and anxieties. This is actually a well-known phenomenon, especially well known to performers and artists. Tension from anxieties and fear in the egocentric mode vanishes when the work of attention takes over. For, when one focuses one's attention so deeply and completely on the other, there is no room for egocentric murmurs and tremors. Call it a self-transcendence, "not-self," decentering, engrossment, motivational displacement, or by any other name known in various fields of scholarship. To me, they all point to basically the same psychological phenomenon. The phenomenon describes a fundamental shift in the axes of the psyche, from egocentricism and subjectivity to intersubjectivity wherein a subject-to-subject, not subject-to-object, relationship emerges.

The attentional work we spoke of above is not a certain kind of activity. It is a mode of activity. Anywhere where there is the other, one can engage in directing full attention. However, for our work in democratic citizenship, dialogue in public space is a particularly good opportunity to practice attention. Settings of familiarity and intimacy typically do not inspire a disciplined approach to the cultivation of attention-giving, and it is the disciplined approach we need for a serious cultivation. One needs the discipline of paying sustained and impartial attention to the other. With respect to a familiar or intimate other, we have the tendency to gloss over them: to be quick and efficient with them. We tend to interrupt, dismiss, overwhelm, or evade them. Incivility often mars our intimate relationships. Or else, with our intimates, we are already so identified with them or invested in them that we take their presence for granted. We love them so much that they have become part of the self. Otherness of the other has vanished. What is not there demands no attention from us. If I love someone like my own self, then what need is there for me to practice the virtue of
patient and unselfish listening? Indeed, an "enemy" or "alien" would make a far better partner for my cultivation of attention! The public space, fortunately, is full of "aliens" and even "enemies," beings whom we find different, strange, incomprehensible, crazy, even offensive. This is a right place for cultivating patient, impartial, and good-willed attention. It challenges us greatly, and when we rise to the challenge, we grow richly in our capacity for intersubjectivity.

Public school classrooms are a perfect site for our attentional work. Yet its great potential is typically not fulfilled because we tend to see the public as but a stage for egocentric plays. We look upon the public as a resource base, where we compete to maximally gain the goodies with which to enrich and fulfil oneself. In this vein, the school has become a service institution, and schooling, a service industry: it caters to the "clients." Why should we expect the practice of virtues associated with intersubjectivity from the "clients"? Clients demand efficient services and abundant goods for their payment. How different this understanding of the public is from that of the practice of attentional work whereby the self learns to overcome its self-centredness and objectivization of the other. The practice of intersubjectivity, of seeing others as subjects, is really a practice of overcoming the self-centered way, the habits of prioritizing and privileging the self over the other. This practice is the work of attention, which is both the promise and fruit of democracy.

I shall end my essay with a quote from John Ralston Saul whose "definition" of democracy captures, in his usual sharp style of wit and wisdom, some of the essential points I tried to make in this essay:

DEMOCRACY An existential system in which words are more important than actions. Not a judgemental system.

Democracy is not intended to be efficient, linear, logical, cheap, the source of absolute truth, manned by angels, saints or virgins, profitable, the justification for any particular economic system, a simply matter of majority rule or for that matter a simply matter of majorities. Nor is it an administrative procedure, patriotic, a reflection of tribalism, a passive servant of either law or regulation, elegant or particularly charming.

Democracy is the only system capable of reflecting the humanist premise of equilibrium or BALANCE. The key to its secret is the involvement of the citizen.14

3 My critic might ask: Who are these ordinary people? Do they include people who are already disabled and disempowered in good measure? And, when these disempowered folk come together, will there emerge a collective wisdom? This is a difficult and painful question. We need to talk about collective healing through democracy. It is wisdom enough that the wounded retreat to the cave
and nurse each other back to health. We may have to extend the meaning of
democratic governing to include such democratic healing.

4 The force of disabling is not found just in the aggression committed by
conquerors. It is also found in the “progressive” social measures that we identify
with modernity, namely, professionalization of most human social functions,
such as teaching, healing, and craftsmanship, that ordinary people practised as a
matter of basic living in traditional societies. My mother from a peasant
background delivered babies by her own hand, saved many lives with her folk
knowledge of healing, and made a life without the kinds of professional help
that we nowadays take for granted and cannot have enough of. We are disabled
to the extent that we cannot look after ourselves and each other in the way of
basic life functions.

5 How inclusive is our democratic community? Who is included or who is
excluded in the community? If our community does not include all whose lives
are connected to ours in some manner or another, even non-humans and the
distant others whose faces we will never encounter, then can it be a true
democratic community? These are difficult but important questions to ask and
to respond to.

6 This understanding, that our relatedness is the foundation of caring, which in
turn is the ethical basis of good will, is central to the ethic of care or relational
ethics. I refer the interested readers to the works by Nel Noddings and Peta
Bowden. Nel Noddings, Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral
Education (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California, 1984). Peta Bowden,

7 The kind of knowledge that Bacon had in mind is scientific, instrumentalist
knowledge, that is, knowledge of how the natural world works. Acquisition of
this kind of knowledge has the aim of conquering and subjugating Nature for the
purpose of deriving material benefit from "her." See William Leiss, The

8 In the way I use this word, understanding is a kind of knowledge that is not just
propositional but is empathic and based in experience. Understanding is not
information but empathic knowing gained by "standing under" a situation,
whether one's own or someone else's. For the latter, understanding requires an
imaginative projection of the self into another's frame of experience.

9 Some sociobiologists are fond of picturing the world as a predatory jungle.
Everyone competes against everyone else. Mary Midgely is sharply critical of
such view, rightly pointing out how competition, while it exists, is a limited
phenomenon occurring against the immense backdrop of cooperation. See Mary
Midgely, "The origin of ethics," in A Companion to Ethics, ed. Peter Singer
(Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1995), 3 - 13. I also attach a comment that the
word 'jungle' with its Hobbsian connotation of a bloody and nasty place of
predation is more of our own projection. "Jungle" is a metaphor for us.

10 Charles Taylor speaks of the premise that undergirds much of contemporary
sociopolitical thought, including feminism and multiculturalism: "... the
withholding of recognition can be a form of oppression." Charles Taylor,
"Politics of recognition," in Multiculturalism, ed. Amy Gutman (Princeton, NJ:
Here I must distinguish the moral sense of respect from the usual evaluative sense. Moral respect is not conditional and its ascription does not depend on our evaluation of the merits. I must treat another person with moral respect regardless of his or her moral merits. But, in common parlance, we often use the word respect evaluatively as well: someone deserves my respect because he has this and that virtues and moral wisdom. This evaluative sense of moral respect is not what is meant by the notion of respect for person. The latter notion marks the cornerstone of Kant’s ethics. See Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals* (trans. H. J. Paton) (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1785/1948), 96.

I borrow this term from the Buddhist literature. In the Theravadan tradition, the insight (*vipassana*) meditation wherein the practitioner engages in attentful observation of all that arises in the consciousness is often referred to as the work of bare attention.

Nel Noddings’ own work, which was referred to previously, employs these terms "engrossment" and "motivational displacement." Buddhism uses the term "not-self" (*anatta*), and the contemporary psychologist Csikszentmihalyi speaks of "flow" experience. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *The flow experience and its significance for human psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1988). Simon Weil talks about suspending our thought, even emptying it, so as to render it receptive to the object of our attention. Simone Weil, *Waiting for God* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1951).