Against Ideology: Democracy and the human interaction sphere

Philip A. Woods

Chapter 2, in Ideologies in Educational Administration and Leadership, edited by Eugenie Samier, London: Routledge, 2016

In the 1940s, Karl Mannheim (1943) advocated what he called militant democracy: 'Our democracy has to become militant if it is to survive . . . [Democracy] becomes militant only in the defence of the agreed right procedure of social change and those basic virtues and values – such as brotherly love, mutual help, decency, social justice, freedom, respect for the person, etc. – which are the basis of the peaceful functioning of a social order' (7). Mannheim wrote this in the shadow of aggressive totalitarian regimes. He offered an argument grounded in the proposition that there is a set of values (democratic values) that can be agreed upon and that have some fundamental, transcendent validity as guides to governance. There is an echo of this line of reasoning in calls to promote more explicitly and forcefully democracy, mutual respect and tolerance in response to concerns about contemporary terrorism.[1]

This chapter argues that democracy should not be seen as an ideology and that it is important to be explicit about why this is the case. The chapter sets out a justification for the proposition that there is a democratic ideal that has a transcendent epistemological foundation, and draws a distinction between a rich

conception of democracy and ideologies. It seeks to position the democratic ideal, and democratic leadership that aspires to advance this ideal, within, or in relation to, modernism and the deconstructive, anti--foundationalist assumptions that are often associated with modernism (Lash 1999). It is argued that understanding democracy as having some degree of transcendent validity gives it greater warrant and power than seeing democracy as a counter--ideology in educational administration.

The specific focus of the chapter is the notion of holistic democracy set out in prior work (Woods 2005, 2011; Woods and Woods 2013). Previously I have explored the affective roots of democratic leadership and suggested that these roots include a capacity for human ethical and spiritual awareness which tends to be less appreciated and understood in the dominant literature on leadership and education (Woods 2006). The argument for this human capacity draws from literature in psychology and spiritual studies (such as Cottingham 2005; Donaldson 1993; Hay 1982; Hay and Hunt 2000; G. Woods 2007; Woods and Woods 2010). The recognition of the capacity for ethical and spiritual awareness addresses in part what Joas (2000: 120) sees as an insufficiency of substance in Dewey's (1929) notion of 'sacralized democracy' (120). According to Dewey, where communicating is simultaneously a means to an end and an end in itself, the person is 'lifted from his immediate isolation and shares in a communion of meanings . . . there exists an intelligence which is the method and reward of the

common life, and a society to command affection, admiration, and loyalty' (Dewey 1929, in Joas 2000: 119). For Joas, however, Dewey failed to address strongly enough the issue of 'where the deep affective roots of democracy could lie in individuals and societies' (122).

Highlighting the capacity for ethical and spiritual awareness recognises an aspect of these roots that lies in *individuals*. This chapter explores an aspect of *intersubjective interaction* that is also able to feed into these affective roots. The chapter proceeds by setting out briefly a broad overview of contemporary struggles in education. The sections which follow conceptualise the distinction between ideology and non--ideology, and the notion of holistic democracy. Arguments for a grounding - a capacity for existential meaning (Lash 1999) - in modernity are then put forward, with particular attention being given to a modern capacity for intrinsic (non--instrumental) relationships examined through the notions of the social and human interaction spheres.

STRUGGLES IN EDUCATION

Whether or not we consider the policy trends in education today as threatening as the totalitarianism that Mannheim experienced and challenged, there is a struggle occurring in contemporary education. One way to characterise this is as a struggle

between instrumentalising trends and drivers to democracy (Woods 2013). Instrumentalising trends comprise a culture shift around an instrumentally driven business model of entrepreneurialism and innovation, structural changes institutionalising private, competitive values and managerialist priorities, growing reliance on network governance which can mitigate against democracy and participation, and exacerbation or reinforcement of power inequalities by aspects of post--bureaucratic changes. The promotion and justification of these trends form an ideology in the sense described below in the next section - specifically, a performative and neo--liberal ideology that appears so dominant in many countries (Ball 2008; Gunter and Fitzgerald 2015).

Against these, there are trends and forces for change which include drivers to democracy (Woods 2011, 2013), comprising: instrumental drivers towards greater participation (the incentive to use democratic change in order to make organisations work more effectively); participative drivers (arising from the intrinsic conviction that people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them, to have their voices heard and their rights to freedom respected); and expressive drivers (fueled by impulses to extend opportunities to express spiritual, artistic and creative drives, enjoy the warmth of caring human bonds, live ethically and to learn and grow as full human beings).

I have argued that examples of progressive change are a growing phenomenon in the creative spaces within performative culture and that these can be described as instances of democratic emergence which display elements of holistic democracy (Woods 2011; Woods et al forthcoming). They include diverse instances of progressive change - at the micro and meso levels - from classrooms to schools to larger networks promoting democratic, holistic and social justice values. These examples can be understood in the context of challenges to performative culture and managerialism expressed in discourses on new approaches to public governance and public service (Osborne 2010; Pierre and Eymeri--Douzans 2011; Wilkins 2014).

The ideas that promote and justify the counter trends (the drivers to democracy) might be described as an ideology, or as a counter--ideology to the performative and neo--liberal ideology. However, I want to problematise this idea of a democratic alternative being an ideology, albeit a counter--ideology. Characterising the countering set of ideas as ideological presents them as being rooted in partial interests with its superiority dependent on enabling its power and interests to become dominant. The validity of the countering set of ideas becomes dependent on how the balances of power shift. If the performative and neo--liberal ideology dominates what is taken--for--granted truth, this is because its interests are able to dominate the discourse. The implication for a counter--ideology is that its principal focus must be shifting the balances of power so that they favour its

interests: breaking the discursive and institutional domination of the commanding ideology so that the counter version can be accepted. The problem with characterising change as a battle of ideologies, and not distinguishing a different kind of ideas set, is that validity becomes a function of power. This does not set a direction for progress. Rather, it confirms that all that matters is power. My argument is that the idea of holistic democracy as an alternative framework challenges the dominance of ideology by subverting the interests--bound epistemological basis of ideology.

The next section distinguishes between ideological and non--ideological sets of ideas, and does this by engaging principally with Zizek's (1994) discussion of ideology.

IDEOLOGY AND NON--IDEOLOGY

Giddens' (2006: 1020) succinct definition of ideology pinpoints its purpose: 'shared ideas or beliefs which serve to justify the interests of dominant groups'. Ideology, from whatever political perspective, implies a system of ideas and values that purports to make sense of the context and choices facing people as organisational actors. Ideologies act to construct and shape knowledge, and its presentations, in the interests of a particular power grouping. This does not mean

that everything the ideology asserts is invalid. A powerful feature of an ideology, as Zizek (1994: 6) argues, is its ability to disguise the interests it promotes within ideas that have some truth. The essential purpose of ideology, however, is to shape and present ideas in ways that favour certain relationships of power. Its function is to protect and promote 'some relation of social domination ("power", "exploitation") in an inherently non-transparent way' (6). Its fundamental aspiration is not the enlargement of truth and understanding.

Where the *essential* aim is to constitute a framework of ideas which offers a guide to social action with greater validity and more robust understanding than an existing ideology, that framework is non--ideological. Positing such a framework as non--ideological can be criticised as an illusion, indeed a dangerous mistake that overlooks the power relations and assumptions about social reality that the posited alternative carries within it. Zizek (1994: 5) argues that 'the stepping out of (what we experience as) ideology is the very form of our enslavement to it', and cites the *Neues Forum* movement in the former East Germany which sought a utopian third way beyond capitalism and the socialism that then existed, but whose 'sincere belief and insistence that they were not working for the restoration of Western capitalism', argues Zizek,'proved to be nothing but an insubstantial illusion'. Avowedly non--ideological forms of thought produce only 'the effect of depth', but when subjected to critical examination they are mired in a (hidden) ideology (1994: 11). What is needed, according to this line of argument, is not a

true or truer conception of social reality, but a grasp of the conflicts and antagonisms that get in the way of understanding the whole (the latter always being only partially attained): 'the ultimate support of the critique of ideology - the extra--ideological point of reference that authorises us to denounce the content of our immediate experience as "ideological" - is not "reality" but the "repressed" real of antagonism' (16). An example from Marx's work would be the understanding and appreciation of class struggle, which is masked by capitalist ideology.

This reluctance to acknowledge the possibility of some conception of greater validity leaves the critique of ideology weakened, however, I would argue that some kind of more valid grounding, transcending particular interests, is necessary to enable those antagonisms to be recognised and described as such, and for suffering, inequalities and aspirations to social justice to be articulated as parts of the critique of ideological representations. The extra--ideological, critical viewpoint comes in my view from two directions (Woods 2005: 17-18). One - *critical illumination* - is from a concern with interests and the antagonisms that these underpin. These include inequities of distribution and access to material resources, social capital, cultural acceptance, status, and so on. This illuminates the portion of real experience that is repressed by a necessarily distorting ideology. This first direction of critique gives a voice to marginalised and disempowered interests.

The second direction - *positive illumination* - is from the positive view of humanity, centring on humanistic potential, and the recognition of the communicative capabilities and the spark of goodness and wisdom that enable and entitle everyone to have their say in the conduct of social life. This direction is grounded in some sense of transcendent validity. That is, it is supported by a basis for judging experience that is not simply personally subjective or the arbitrary product of a particular community, group or culture. This second direction of critique is integral to a rich conception of democracy (holistic democracy) which provides a framework within which to critically and positively illuminate that which ideology systematically overlooks.

HOLISTIC DEMOCRACY

The concept of holistic democracy has been built up through a critical appreciation of the notion of distributed leadership (DL). The latter understands leadership, not as a preserve of those in the topmost senior authority positions in an organisation, but as a phenomenon that is emergent from ongoing, diverse and complex interactions across the organisation and hierarchy. DL promises to recognise and harness the expertise and insights of diverse organisational actors, to the benefit of the organisation's aims. However, whilst sounding more

democratic, it is capable of being subjected to and instrumentalised by the performative and competitive agendas of organisations (Woods and Woods 2013). The notion of DL requires deepening in a critical way. The concept of holistic democracy is intended to do this.

Holistic democracy has its foundations in three strands of thought. First is the appreciation of social phenomena as emergent and complex. This reflects the sociological theory of analytical dualism (Archer 2003) and the representation of this as a trialectic process - an ongoing interaction between structure, person and practice (or action) (Woods 2005). The perspective of complexity theory (Stacey 2012) feeds into this strand too, as well work that conceives leadership as emerging from various actors in a group or organisation (Gibb 1968; Gronn 2002). This first strand is fundamental to DL as well as holistic democracy. The second and third key strands are crucial to the deepening of DL. The second strand is the recognition of an innate human capacity for ethical agency and the aspiration to, or a feeling for, an idea of human perfection - however difficult this may be to articulate or practice. This is the capacity for ethical and spiritual awareness referred to above. British Idealism (Boucher and Vincent 2000; Green 1886) is one of the traditions of thought that has highlighted this. An essential point in this line of thinking is the view that there is something in the nature of 'ordinary consciousness' that lays the basis for ethical and spiritual progress (Vincent and Plant 1984: 17). A third key strand is an appreciation of conceptions

of democracy that see the democratic process as more than clashes of narrow interest - in particular the idea of deliberative democracy, which seeks ways of transcending difference and enhancing mutual understanding (Saward 2003), and developmental democracy, which highlights both the ability of people to discover and bring to fruition 'innate potential excellence' and the policy imperative to provide the necessary conditions for self--development (Norton 1996: 62).

Reflecting these strands of thought, the concept of holistic democracy is about both meaning and participation (Woods 2005, 2011; Woods and Woods 2013). Holistic democracy describes a way of working together which facilitates the growth and learning of individuals as whole people (meaning), as well as co--responsibility, mutual empowerment and fair participation of all in co--creating their social and organisational environment (participation). These two aspects are further broken down analytically, creating four dimensions that provide a way of reflecting on how to deepen DL. The meaning dimensions of holistic democracy are *holistic meaning* (learning collaboratively, by integrating all our human capabilities - spiritual, intuitive and ethical, as well as intellectual and emotional - and seeking purpose guided by that aspect of ordinary consciousness that lays the basis for ethical and spiritual progress) and *holistic well--being* (experiencing an environment where there is a sense of belonging and connectedness - spiritually and ecologically, with nature - and both community and individuality, and where confidence and the capacity to think and feel for oneself are promoted). The

participative dimensions of holistic democracy are *power sharing* (inclusive involvement and shared responsibility for decision--making, providing opportunities for co--leadership) and *transforming dialogue* (respect, freedom to share views, increasing mutual understanding through people reaching beyond and working to overcome individual narrow perspectives and interests).

GROUNDING: THE SOCIAL AND HUMAN INTERACTION SPHERES

A ket feature of the concept of holistic democracy is a foundational philosophical anthropology that views people as capable of creating more authentic accounts, values and understandings, and the claim that it is this capability that gives ethical validity to challenges to unjust power inequalities. My case for this foundational philosophical anthropology is three--fold - the philosophical recognition of being; the capacity for ethical and spiritual awareness and existential meaning, which is both individual and intersubjective and involves a modern capacity for intrinsic (non--instrumental) relationships; the existence in the micro--interactions in which these relationships are lived of a human interaction sphere which is able to generate compelling affective charges and ethical impulses that feed into the affective roots of democracy. These three aspects are addressed in turn, with most attention being given to the last.

Grounding in Being

Firstly, at a deep philosophical level, there are profound implications in recognising our grounding in being. I find Dallmayr's (2007: 49-50, 63, 73) highlighting of being in his discussion of the 'good life' helpful here. Dallmayr draws on the work of Jnanadev, the mediaeval Indian poet--saint and thinker. Jnanadev is against simplistic foundationalism (the view that enduring reality is grasped through certain concepts and theories, as expounded in holy scriptures or, we might say, certain philosophies of science), but explains how life and experience inherently negate the view that there is only 'emptiness'. Being is what enables thought to happen; it is there before thought and epistemologies. I would say, following this, that the nature of one's being - what kind of being one experiences - is of profound importance for what one learns and does. Being in a way that draws upon and develops the whole person (holistic well-being dimension of holistic democracy) grounds the active, developmental process of learning that enables progress towards holistic meaning.

Grounding in Capacities for Existential Meaning

Secondly, people possess a capacity for ethical and spiritual awareness and existential meaning, which is both individual and intersubjective. The individual capacity was referred to near the start of this chapter and has been discussed in previous work (Woods 2006, 2011; Woods and Woods 2010). It is an influencing factor in people's intersubjective activity and experience, fostering a sense of deep connection or 'relational consciousness' (Hay with Nye 1998). The focus here is not principally upon this individual awareness. It is on how intersubjective activity and experience, or interaction, can constitute a grounding, and I concentrate on this in the remainder of this sub--section and the following sub-section.

Lash's (1999) argument for an alternative rationality in modernity sets out the case for a grounding that cannot be deconstructed or swept aside by modernist assumptions that no kind of valid and enduring understandings are identifiable or sustainable. Lash rejects the binary opposition between the cognitive certainty of positivism and the abandonment of enduring meaningful knowledge consequent upon an absolute constructivist epistemology. The modern actor is a reflexive subject who is called upon to make judgements because the rules of pre--modern thinking are not available in the taken--for--granted way they were before the onset of modernity. But, does this mean such judgements are necessarily and always arbitrary and reducible to personal subjectivity? Lash's answer is that this is not so. People as sensate beings are able to relate to others (both human others

and objects), not inevitably and always as instruments to other ends, but as ends in

themselves. They are capable of intrinsic relations which entail the experiencing

of value and meanings that are qualitatively different from the arguments of logic.

Existential meaning has not been lost to previous ages. What we need to recognise

is where we can discover such meanings. They are not the product of logical or

market place calculation. Lash (1999: 235) argues:

> We cannot understand the deaths of those close to us, births, long striven
>
> for life goals, falling in love, our children's joys and crises through the
>
> determinate meaning of logical statements. At issue instead is
>
> transcendental or existential meaning. What reflective judgement
>
> presupposes is simply that the path to these meanings is through the
>
> particular, through the eminently trivial, through everyday cultural
>
> artefacts and habitual forms of life.

In terms of holistic democracy, Lash's focus on interactions with the particular

emphasises the character of connectedness that permeates holistic learning and

well--being and how our sensitivity to the ways in which we experience the

people and environment we inhabit can have profound implications for generating

a sense of existential meaning. Understanding what values and ideas have an

enduring validity is not the outcome of cognitive logic or discursive argument

alone. Relationships in which the other is intrinsically valued is an essential

characteristic which, together with transforming dialogue and diminishing of power difference (the power sharing dimension of holistic democracy), facilitates movement towards more valid, transcendent understandings. Most importantly, such grounding in intrinsic relationships is not an illusory goal, but is a possibility and reality in modernity, argues Lash (1999: 9), particularly in the second, 'reflexive' phase of modernity.

Micro--interactions

Thirdly, digging deeper into the nature of social interaction, it is possible to discern what contributes to this intersubjective grounding in the micro--interactions that characterise social life. Understanding the nature of micro--interactions has a crucial part to play in counteracting the argument that any notion of truth or larger validity is impossible at any level of interaction. The latter claim is that no exchange between people can achieve 'access to reality unbiased by any discursive devices or conjunctions with power' (Zizek 1994: 7), reinforcing the view that ideological thinking pervades all human encounters and discourses. However, this constructs an absolute claim that overlooks the individual and intersubjective capacities highlighted in this chapter.

The focus here is intersubjective activity and, in particular, the micro--interaction environment - that is, the sphere of micro (human and social) interaction and micro--structure. A strand of work in sociology has explored, on the basis of earlier sociological studies (Goffman 1969), the notion of 'interaction order'. This refers to 'the domain of face—to--face relations . . . And includes within its scope corporeal and emotional features of interaction' (Shilling 1999: 546). In this people

> . . . are confronted with the necessity of establishing [and maintaining] relations with others, in order to construct a social self, and remain vulnerable within this domain: interaction occurs with arenas which expose people, physically and mentally, to others.
>
> (546)

The 'interaction order' of personal contact is an arena in which meanings are exchanged and constructed, involves its own rules (such as turn--taking), and is a necessary characteristic of human life. Because of its own internal dynamics – the engagement of emotions for example, the generation and following of rules or protocols that may be specific to the people involved, and its distinction from larger (meso-- and macro--) structures – it has a degree of autonomy from the wider society in which it takes place.

Shilling – following Goffman and Rawls – highlights the moral demands that involvement in 'interaction orders' makes, consequent on coming up against other people. The moral perception of others in these exchanges has potential consequences for feelings such as guilt, status and self--esteem: '. . . this order makes moral not structurally coercive, demands on people' (Shilling 1999: 546). The self as a 'sacred object' is, for example, open to 'slights and profanations' which require to be put right and forgiven (Goffman 1969: 25). The capacity to interact in a skilled and subtly responsive way is fundamental to society. Hence, people need to be socialised so that they become 'self--regulating participants in social encounters'. But the substance of those interactions, according to Goffman, is socially constructed: by acquiring the abilities for interaction 'the person becomes a kind of construct, built up not from inner psychic propensities but from moral rules that are impressed upon him from without' (Goffman 1969: 35, 36).

This claim is at odds with the perspective of analytical dualism in sociology and the significance accorded to the inner work of social agents through their internal conversations and orderings of ultimate concerns (Archer 2003) and their capacity for ethical and spiritual awareness. Goffman's assertion also overlooks certain aspects of the dynamics of the interaction process – in particular, an aspect to which Bauman draws attention in his work on ethics and the sociology of morality. Bauman draws a distinction between the 'societal sphere', by which he means the structural relationships and institutions that comprise the usual focus

for sociology, and the 'social sphere', which has attracted much less sociological attention. This latter sphere – which I refer to as the *human interaction sphere* – is in essence the experience of 'being with others', the basic fact of life that each person is involved in interaction with the '*human other'* (Bauman 1989: 179). This has consequences according to Bauman, which are qualitatively different from interaction with the natural environment. (Arguably, there are equally important and compelling experiences in relating to objects and the natural environment as intrinsically valued 'others', as Lash (1999) amongst others would argue, but this discussion will not be pursued here.) The human other is not experienced simply as a technical factor or representative of social structures (erratic, difficult to understand, a carrier of societal symbols of status, and so on), but as a subject which shares human--ness. From this there are, Bauman argues, fundamental ethical impulses.

The human interaction sphere is a dimension of everyday micro--interaction. Some light can be thrown on the significance of this sphere by considering two of its features:

- its capacity to generate ethical responses, evoked by the human other
- its capacity to generate tacit knowledge about our own human-ness and our shared common human likenesses

The first feature involves responses that are evoked by the human other, which occur where there is *proximity.* Taking the term from Levinas, Bauman describes proximity as being neither special nor social, but as standing for 'the unique quality of the ethical situation': a 'suppression of distance' which presupposes 'humanity' and is beyond intentionality (Bauman 1993: 87). In whatever way, which may not be spatial closeness, proximity is the immediacy of being with another human being and feeling that person to be human like one's self. I would put it like this, abstracting from Levinas and Bauman. Proximity possesses or has the capacity to generate an *affective charge* which is unlike that of other interactions. Thus Bauman's focus – the ethical impulse that is evoked by proximity, namely the 'moral command to be responsible' to that human other (1993: 86) – is, I am suggesting, an example of that affective charge.

Bauman emphasises that that responsibility is an unconditional, inexhaustible command on the person, which requires them to be permanently ready to rise to its requirements and, however often they may do this, is never diminished. It simply *is*, and if we try to talk to and reason about it, it is disarmed by the 'reason-mediated distance' so created (1993: 86).[2]

The second feature of the human interaction sphere is the creation of a certain kind of knowledge or understanding. This tends to be a form of tacit knowledge that consists of unarticulated insights and understandings generated by the

experience of proximity (which, like other forms of tacit knowledge, may be later theorised and translated into propositional knowledge). It is the outcome of the affective charge which characterises proximity and conjoins the ethical and affective. Moreover, at this level of the interaction order, the moral element is not socially constructed. Bauman's unconditional ethical demand comes to be known through proximity. The human interaction sphere is also where, in recognising the other, one also recognises the other's sense of self. This is learnt as tacit knowledge. That tacit learning is about the other as a human likeness of ourselves. We glimpse through this interaction, in which each person engages the other through their human senses, something of the reality we share as human beings (Simmel 1997).

The human interaction sphere is embedded in other interactions. What I am suggesting is that the learning from the human interaction sphere can be analytically distinguished from the *social interaction sphere* as discussed by Shilling and Goffman. I am suggesting that as well as interaction and tacit learning through the interactive application of social rules, norms, and so on (in the social interaction sphere), there is also interaction with the other as a human being (the human interaction sphere) in which tacit learning takes place.[3] At the same time as people are, in interaction, engaging their social identity with that of others, they are also engaging their human self with those same others as human selves. An example of the former (social interaction) is classroom interaction in

which a particular role (that of a teacher, say) is conducted, framed by a broader

identity such as, *inter alia*, a working class background.[4] As well as this kind of

social interaction, there is a mutual recognition of the senses and the sense of self

that make us each human (human interaction). This mutual recognition and the

affective charge of proximity give a more profound and enduring meaning to the

processes of the interaction order than changeable social rules and statuses. This

renders the human being and relations 'sacred' in a different, more compelling

sense than Goffman's earlier reference to the self as a 'sacred object'.

These human interactions are a crucial dimension of the idea of sacralised

democracy referred to above in relation to Dewey. They are integral to the

possibilities for non--ideological practice, which include what Zizek (1994: 10)

refers to as 'the elusive network of implicit, quasi—"spontaneous"

presuppositions and attitudes that form an irreducible moment of the reproduction

of "non—ideological" (economic, legal, political, sexual . . .) practices'.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has argued that a radical challenge to ideology requires an opposition

from a framework of thought that offers some degree of transcendent validity.

Specifically, it has suggested that performative and neo--liberal ideology need to

be challenged by a rich conception of democracy, such as holistic democracy, which has a grounding in the individual and intersubjective capacities of people. Democracy is better seen, therefore, as a critique of ideology (Zizek 1994) and as utopian in the sense of an expression of the desire for a better way of being (Levitas 2010).

The grounding - which can also be described as the affective roots of democracy - is individual and intersubjective. It includes the individual human capacity for ethical and spiritual awareness, which has been addressed in other work (Woods 2006; Woods and Woods 2010). The focus in this chapter has been on intersubjective activity, particularly the arena of micro--interactions. In an examination of the latter, it has been suggested that an analytical distinction can be made between the social and human interaction spheres. The human interaction sphere consists of the interactions of the human self with others, interactions that are able to generate an intrinsically compelling affective charge that calls for a human, ethical response to the other. The human interaction sphere and its propensity to create such an ethical charge is an aspect of the grounding that is possible in the reflexive stage of modernity (Lash 1999). The sense of necessary response that the affective charge creates contributes to the navigational feelings (Woods 2005) that are valuable in understanding what it is ethically right to do.

The affective charge is intrinsically compelling, rather than being the product of a reasoned construction of moral responsibility. This is not to say that critical discourse and analytical thinking are not important. They are necessary in testing actions that are impelled by the ethical charge of the human interaction sphere. The transforming dialogue of holistic democracy requires both navigational feelings and analytical rationality (Woods 2005: 41). The intersubjective character of the human interaction sphere is also an important corrective to focusing solely on individual awareness and change. Theories of change that emphasise a belief that people's 'quality of awareness' will dissolve systems (Scharmer and Kaufer 2013) run the danger of overlooking the importance of context, including the effects of social inequalities and the distorting influence of ideologically driven discourses. The social interaction order (the interactive construction and application of social rules, norms, and so on, at the level of micro--interaction) can be a conduit for the formation and exercise of power differences and the shaping of identities that are not consciously chosen but imposed. We can make an analytical distinction between the social interaction order and the human interaction sphere, but in practice the flow of social life involves both occurring simultaneously. We are constantly processing both social and human interactions, and the influences of instrumentalising trends are strong and often insidious. Hence, the human interaction sphere is not a pure and unsullied part of daily life: the ability to discern and value it is something that has more often than not to be consciously struggled for.

The epistemology of democracy - how values and ideas with enduring validity that transcend narrow interests evolve - is fed at least in part by the capacity to recognise and nurture the affective and ethical value of the human interaction sphere within the context of other pressures and influences. The capacity for ethically charged human interaction and for responding to its fundamental ethical impulse underpins the possibility of basing education on something more worthwhile than an exclusive focus on measurability for testing and for ordering educational institutions and learners on hierarchical measures of worth. It underpins the validity and real--life applicability of Duncan--Andrade's (2009: 10) observation that at the end of the day 'effective teaching depends most heavily on one thing: deep and caring relationships'. It underpins the growth of the 'ethical Self' (Weber 2012: 181) that is integral to the idea of the creative university advancing knowledge through 'collective human creativity' (p173).

The epistemology of democracy also involves co--creation through transforming dialogue and holistic learning. Evolving values and ideas that may have some degree of transcendent validity is an intersubjective and collaborative process. From a viewpoint such as that of Max Weber, shared existential meaning in plural and diverse modern societies may only be possible in occasional, contingent moments of commonality (Maley 2011: 26). This is not the conclusion to which recognition of the human interaction sphere and the individual capacities for

ethical and spiritual awareness leads. There are interests and groups who are

marginalised and systemically disadvantaged in contemporary education systems.

A rich democracy addresses systematic social injustices. The full power of

democracy, however, is not only as a vehicle for championing the weaker interests

and aspiring to inclusive participation. Democracy in a form such as holistic

democracy has, as a foundational principle, the aim of helping to nurture the

individual and intersubjective capacities that people have to transcend interests

and foster their human capabilities. Holistic democracy seeks more than

contingent moments of commonality; rather, it aspires to the co--creation of daily

lives that draw from and express the full human powers of people as connected

beings. This grounding in transcendent human capacities is the fundamental

power and credibility of democracy.

REFERENCES

Archer, M.S. (2000) *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*, Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.

---, (2003) *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*, Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.

Bauman, Z. (1989) *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

---, (1993) *Postmodern Ethics*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Ball S. J. (2008) *The Education Debate*, Bristol: Policy Press.

Boucher, D. and Vincent, A. (2000) *British Idealism and Political Theory*,
Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Cottingham, J. (2005) *The Spiritual Dimension: Religion, Philosophy and Human
Value*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Dallmayr, F. (2007) *In Search of the Good Life*, Lexington, KY: University Press
of Kentucky, 2007.

Dewey, J. (1929) *Experience and Nature*, New York: Dover Publications.

Donaldson, M. (1993) *Human minds*, London: Penguin.

Duncan--Andrade, J.M.R (2009) 'Note to educators: Hope required when growing
roses in concrete', *Harvard Educational Review*, 79, 2: 1-13.

Goffman, E. (1969) *Where the Action Is*, London: Allen Lane.

Gibb, C.A. (1968) 'Leadership', in G. Lindzey and E. Aronson (eds) *The
Handbook of Social Psychology*, Vol. IV (205-82), Reading, MA:
Addison--Wesley.

Green, T.H. (1886) 'The sense of "freedom" in morality', in R.L. Nettleship (ed.)
Works of Thomas Hill Green (Volume II), London: Longmans, Green &
Co.

Gronn, P. (2002) 'DL as a unit of analysis', *Leadership Quarterly*, 13, 4: 423-51.

Giddens, T. (2006) *Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gunter, H.M. and Fitzgerald, T. (2015) 'Educational administration and

    neoliberalism: Historical and contemporary perspectives', *Journal of*

    Educational Administration and History, 47, 2: 101-04.

Hay, D. (1982) *Exploring Inner Space*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

---, and Hunt, K. (2000) *Understanding the Spirituality of People Who Don't Go*

    to Church, Nottingham: University of Nottingham.

---, with Nye, R. (1998) *The Spirit of the Child*, London: Fount

Joas, H. (2000) *The Genesis of Values*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Lash, S. (1999) *Another Modernity: A Different Rationality*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Levitas, R. (2010) 'Back to the future: Wells, sociology, utopia and method', *The*

    Sociological Review, 58, 4: 530-47.

Maguire, M. (2005) 'Textures of class in the context of schooling: The

    perceptions of a "class--crossing" teacher', *Sociology*, 39, 3: 427-43.

Mannheim, K. (1943) *Diagnosis of Our Time*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench,

    Trubner & Co.

Maley, T. (2011) *Democracy and the Political in Max Weber's Thought*, Toronto:

    University of Toronto Press.

Norton, D.L. (1996) *Democracy and Moral Development: A Politics of Virtue*,

    Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Osborne, S.P. (ed.) (2010) *The New Public Governance?* London: Routledge.

Pierre, J. and Eymeri--Douzans, J.--M. (2011) 'Conclusion', in J.--M. Eymeri--Douzans and J. Pierre (eds) *Administrative Reforms and Democratic Governance* (202-7). London: Routledge.

Saward, M. (2003) *Democracy*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Scharmer, O. and Kaufer, K. (2013) *Leading from the Emerging Future*, San Francisco: Berrett--Koehler.

Shilling, C. (1999) 'Towards an embodied understanding of the structure/agency relationship', *British Journal of Sociology,* 50, 4: 543–62.

Simmel, G. (1997) 'Sociology of the Senses' and 'The Sociology of Sociability', in D. Frisby and M. Featherstone (eds) *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings* (109-29), London: Sage.

Stacey, R. (2012) *Tools and Techniques of Leadership and Management: Meeting the Challenge of Complexity,* London: Routledge.

Vincent, A. and Plant, R. (1984) *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Weber, S. M. (2013) Imagining the Creative University: Dispositives of Creation, Strategies of Innovation, Politics of Reality, in M. A. Peters and A. C. Besley (eds) *The Creative University*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Wilkins, J. (2014) Stewardship of public service renewal and reform, *International Journal of Leadership in Public Services*, 10, 4: 188-99.

Woods, G.J. (2007) 'The "bigger feeling": The importance of spiritual experience in educational leadership', *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 35, 1: 135–55.

Woods, P.A. (2005) *Democratic Leadership in Education*, London: Sage.

---, (2006) 'A democracy of all learners: Ethical rationality and the affective roots of democratic leadership', *School Leadership and Management*, 26, 4: 321–37.

---, (2011) *Transforming Education Policy: Shaping a Democratic Future*, Bristol: Policy Press.

---, (2013) 'Drivers to holistic democracy: Signs and signals of emergent, democratic self--organising systems', in S.M. Weber, M. Göhlich, A. Schröer, H. Macha and C. Fahrenwald (eds) *Organisation und Partizipation: Beiträge der Kommission Organisationspädagogik*, Wiesbaden: Springer.

---, and Woods, G.J. (2010) 'The Geography of Reflective Leadership: The inner life of democratic learning communities'. *Philosophy of Management* 9 (2): 81-97.

---, and Woods, G.J. (2013) 'Deepening distributed leadership: A democratic perspective on power, purpose and the concept of the self', *Vodenje v vzgoji in izobraževanju* (Leadership in Education), 2: 17-40. English language version Online. Available HTTP: <https://herts.academia.edu/ PhilipWoods>.

---, Roberts, A. and Woods, G.J. (forthcoming) 'Newness against the grain:

Democratic emergence in organisational and professional practice', in S.

Weber (ed.) *Organization and the New: Discourses, Agents, Ecologies of

Innovation*, Rotterdam: Sense.

Zizek, S. (1994) *Mapping Ideologies*, London: Verso.

[1] See for example the BBC report 'Trojan Horse row: British values appeal

overwhelming, says PM', 10th June 2014. Available HTTP: <http://

www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-27778272> (accessed 4 August 2015).

[2] Whilst I would share much of Bauman's concern about the effects of the ethics

of a rationalised world, there may be a loss of perspective in concentrating

exclusively on the ethical responsibility that springs from the proximity of the

human other. It precludes the person responding to the other as a human being,

and vice versa, in ways that are not simply verbal, cognitive and distance creating.

There is, in my view, an interactive element – hence the term human *interaction*

sphere – which is apparent in the second feature.

[3] These can also be distinguished from the 'practical order', concerned with

interaction with material culture (artefacts) (Archer 2000: 166, 173), and the tacit

learning that occurs through manipulation of artefacts.

[4] See, for example, Maguire (2005) who discusses class consciousness and

teachers.