

Reflection 1
A.Vazirov

Today, there are efforts made by disability advocates that aim to move the limits of awareness further, so that we no longer view impairment as something that renders individuals special, but instead stresses the value of putting the individual first. In the chapter Davis (2017) begins by focusing on the fundamental issue of lack of access, which still prevents people with disabilities from being equal members of society. The latest area I had not previously known, and that could also be valid for many, was the background, history and identification of people with disabilities. Disability awareness promotes human centeredness, equality and inclusion, which is a welcome reminder that we still have a long way to go before people with disabilities become equitable citizens.

Sensoy & DiAngelo (2017) focus more on issues related to privilege and domination groups through the lens of disability. They argue that ‘because dominant groups occupy the positions of power, their members receive social and institutional advantages; thus one automatically receives privilege by being a member of a dominant group (e.g., cis-men, Whites, heterosexuals, the able-bodied, Christians, upper classes)’ (Sensoy & DiAngelo 2017, p. 81). In other words, Privilege is socially designed to benefit members of the dominant group of people. Obviously as a consequence of creating a society that characterizes some bodies as normal and some as unusual, and then devalues the abnormal, (those defined as normal privileged class) gain unwarranted benefits. Labels such as "regular," "normal," "gifted" and "special" shape the policies of social institutions (e.g. schools and medicine) built up to perpetuate this inequality, discrimination, and oppression. While reading these articles there were three thinking concepts that I started to think about in relation to disable people vs society relationship processes. Those are: Privilege and decolonization (Bradley, 2012); The authentic consciousness and oppressed/oppression relationship (Freire, 2000); And the power of normalization (Foucault, 1980).

First, beginning with the issue of oppressed/oppressing relationships. In terms of disability, we are not learning about the experiences of minority groups in schools and mainstream culture. This makes it difficult for the dominant members of the group to recognize oppression, further, or I trust the reports of this occurring to others. Thus, there is no such thing as a neutral educational process. “And it became clear to one that the whole educational system was one of the major instruments for the maintenance of this culture of silence” (Freire, 2000, p. 30). Consequently, the whole education system is built on privileged socio-political structures which help to keep people in privilege above those who are not. In this case the disabled people suffer injustice and un-understanding in their lives.

Second, through the historical perspective, the idea of ‘who had access to what’ (Bradley, 2012). The main understanding that occurs is who had the privilege and free and easy access to what in terms of socio-political-economic instances. In this light, the disabled people are lacking many access in social and educational practices which prevent them from having an equal success leading opportunities. Another parallel idea of disability is argued by Christine Sleeter (2000) in an interview about culturally diverse kids: ‘when I see the kid, I see a kid’, pretending that one should treat all kids equally’. Which is a wrong idea, because

it is the act of privilege, dominance and oppression towards their cultural heritage. She suggests teachers learn the history and values of the culturally diverse people in order to communicate with them in a more appreciative way that the kids will feel the connection through their culture and will be more open and not oppressed. Consequently, “as long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically "accept" their exploitation” (Freire, 2000, p. 64).

Since birth, we have been socialized into our dominant position and internalized this status as normal. We communicate with disabled people automatically from the point of view of unconscious dominance. We are rarely aware of this, because messages of superiority have been planted and reinforced since birth, for instance, the concepts such as ‘Third World versus First World’ and Orientalism (Said, 1978). Further, because we've perceived the knowledge and understanding as it has been learned that it is immoral to view someone unfairly, so we are prone to reject our sense of dominance. (Foucault, 1980) reminds us that the social and cultural influence and rights of ruling classes are so entrenched that people in dominance are not consciously aware. “What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it does not only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it includes pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (p. 119). Therefore, deep-level political, structural and cultural changes will have to take effect to threaten the rights of leaders which are in power. This encourages individual centrality, dignity and tolerance, and is a good sign that we also have a long way to go before those with disabilities become fully disadvantaged and decent ‘equal citizens’ (Dewey, 1916).

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