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EmBody: The Transformation of Intimate Knowledges Through Generations in Liberal Societies

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EMBODY:
THE TRANSFORMATION OF INTIMATE KNOWLEDGES THROUGH GENERATIONS
IN LIBERAL SOCIETIES

By

LISA KRONBERG - CHITAYAT

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

EmBody:

The Transformation of Intimate Knowledges Trough Generations in Liberal Societies

by

Lisa Kronberg - Chitayat

Advisor: Celina Su

This thesis project aims to examine how intimate knowledges¹ are transferred and communicated between generations in Western, liberal societies. By ‘Intimate knowledges’ I mean to encompass diverse knowledge of emotional intelligence, sexual identity, and gender.

Intimate knowledges evolve with human life circle everywhere and at all times, but in Western popular discourse of today, are treated with confusion and repression; they thus emerge as a “loud display of simultaneously silent sexual desire.” (Fine and McClelland, 2006) I explore this tension through a critical, feminist lens that sheds light on the ways in which political economy creates cultural norms that strips parents and educators of their ability to communicate intimate knowledge with their teenage children and students. However, parents are expected to specialize in the latest scientific research on ‘safe’ and ‘healthy’ sexuality.

With the understanding that “individuals makes choices, but institutional patterns shape the alternatives and make one choice more likely than another,” (Epstein, 1988) my analysis assumes that cultural discourse is embedded in our identity in general, and our sexual identity in particular. Furthermore, I argue that, in this political moment in Western societies, capitalism has shaped the ways in which institutions like the family and the education system communicate—or fail to communicate—intimate knowledge.

The main questions I explore in this literature review are:

-How does political economy change the ways we communicate intimate knowledge between the generations?

- How can public policies implement comprehensive sex education programs within an individual based society?

- Can the feminist movement overcome the liberal split between opposing sexual violence and the pursuit of sexual freedom?

This study aims to enhance future study of intimate knowledges, and to promote gendered, marginalized and silenced knowledge. By understanding the value and necessity intimate knowledge holds for social, political and personal healing and progress.

¹ “Intimate knowledges” is a phrase coined by Professor Celina Su, Gittell Chair in Urban Studies and Associate Professor of Political Science at the City University of New York, during our advisory conversations.

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To my soul mate, Alon Chitayat who made me believe again. My partner who makes equality a matter of the heart, and intimate justice literal. Thank you for making this hard journey possible, funny and joyful.

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Virginia Woolf claimed we lack a female heritage; that our mothers didn't leave us much to lean on, physically and intellectually (Woolf, 1929/2015). Today, we should acknowledge the Female heritage transmitted through generations and enhance its possibilities for healing, social

change, innovation and creativity.

I would like to thank the women – educators - who empowered me professionally and as an academic scholar: women who inspired me with their wisdom, shared their knowledge, empowered and developed my political awareness and brought me closer to myself:

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Introduction:

“No community will strive to preserve or transmit what it does not value, and heritage mirrors the values it chooses to transmit. Heritage identification, preservation and transmission are therefore the result of a choice.” (Shaheed, F. et al. UNESCO, 2014).

Many scholars acknowledge the ways in which patriarchal domination and binary thought are passed down through generations. In my thesis, I examine this social practice through a feminist lens that analyses culture, including the actors, institutions and policies that enable a social practice of domination. I examine this to point to the lack of intimate conversations between the generations in North American society. I review these phenomena to further understand their meanings to intimate knowledges, through the work of contemporary feminist scholars such as Arlie Hochschild, Riane Eisler, Jean Halley, Mishuana Goeman, Paula Allen-Gunn and Nell Noddings, who are all US-based and place care and American capitalism at the center of their critique.

In what Riane Eisler (2013) calls a post-industrial era, the necessity of care, emotional intelligence, and the capacity to choose what is close to our heart are critical for surviving and saving our planet and humanity. As parents and community members step out of the role of educator, of passing intimate knowledges, other narratives and values are being passed on to children and youth. These narratives are often created by agents with interests that might run counter to our own needs, and future.

These agents may step into a void that the modern family experienced due to industrial revolution, and utilize it for profit. But public institutions, like schools, colleges, and courthouses, as well as private ones like the family and the community, can operate as bridges or boundaries for intimate intergenerational knowledge flow.

This thesis is built with the logical structure of a reductive thread—from a macro perspective to a micro one; from reviewing current political and public discourse to reviewing critical research about current intimate and personal interactions in western societies. I place these various aspects within a feminist lens that applies the methodology of “the personal is political,” a critical view on current patriarchal social structures and the ways in which cultural and social structures are part of our economic, political, personal, and intimate life all together. In order to illustrate a comprehensive thesis on the matter, I also integrate discussions and information about the ways in which the feminist movement itself has developed historically and conceptually.

These can be viewed as composing of two parts: the first two chapters deal with political economy and culture through a feminist lens, while the second part reflects on gendered power relations and educational policies through feminist epistemological theories and analyses, as well as the transfer and silencing of intimate knowledge in current western liberal societies.

The first chapter is a review of how political economy has shaped contemporary western society so that the social matrix has loosened its connections and isolated nuclear families amidst a sea of scientific expertise and social expectations. I draw on John Dryzek (1997) and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen’s (1984) theories of capitalism’s cultural, social, and ecological consequences, to claim that intimate knowledges in a capitalist economy are pushed into the private realm, and are given less direct social attention as part of the welfare sector. The sub-chapter aims to reveal the ways in which this political economy is constructed within a patriarchal structure. Using feminist critique, the chapter links capitalist structure and patriarchal structure to reveal how they are intertwined. Drawing on feminist theorization of a political reality where women have stepped into the workplace and public realm, the chapter discusses

the aftermath for the private realm in the form of household work, maternal labor, and care work (care for the needed, young children and elderly). Although the private realm is discussed widely in social analysis, public policies propositions and popular discourse (Foucault, 1999), relatively little has changed with modernity and even with the second wave feminist revolution. The private realm has remained very gendered and socially and economically undervalued. Arlie Hochschild's (2003) critical work on the commercialization of intimate life is integrated to show how "just as market conditions ripened the soil for capitalism, so a weakened family prepares the soil for a commercialized spirit of domestic life." (Hochschild, 2003, P. 13). The second chapter discusses aspects of binary thought and individualistic logic. Drawing on the feminist epistemological work of Jean Halley (2007), Reina Eisler (2013) and Markus, et.al. (1991), the chapter argues that mainstream ideology is constructed upon core beliefs of capitalist patriarchy: an ideology of binary thought and individual-based culture, and a valuation of the mind over the body, the independent and original over the interdependent, the strong over the weak, and the masculine over the feminine. These splits are central to western liberal cultures, and the chapter argues that it is another barrier for the flow of intimate knowledge through the generations, as intimate knowledge might run counter to these mainstream ideologies.

The next chapters delve deeper into the private realm, to intimate knowledges and social communications. Intersectional identity is posed by feminist scholars as an alternative perspective to binary thought. While reflecting on concepts of intimate knowledge like sexuality, identity and physical and emotional intelligence – intersectional epistemology constitutes a thread of thought through which alternative possibilities are articulated. Concepts like intersectionality, assemblage theory, cultural relationships, the hierarchy of knowledge and intimate justice are discussed and analyzed through the experiences of adolescents and the lack of intimate conversations between the generations in North American society, especially in

public policies, high school curricula, and popular discourse. Drawing on the first two chapters, this section constructs a feminist theory of the intimate. The personal is reviewed through its social and political aspects. In this way, for example, sexuality “refers to sex acts and sexual identities, but it also encompasses a range of meanings associated with these acts and identities. The meanings that vary by social class, location, and gender identity may be more important than the acts themselves.” (Pascoe, 2011, p.10) The third chapter also deals with sexuality and feminism to address a core tension in the feminist movement—the split between opposing sexual violence as a means of social control over vulnerable subjects (women, minority groups, children, and LGBTQ people), and the pursuit of sexual freedom.

We are now facing a split in feminist thought in the understanding and development of our intergenerational intimate knowledge. How we communicate intimate knowledge to our children while keeping them safe is a critical educational goal. Comprehensive sex education could be one answer to such tension. Contemporary educational curricula could operate as a tool that develops concrete ideas of opposing sexual violence while promoting sexual liberation. Such curricula should address issues of intimate knowledge, as a way to enhance healthy relationships, develop children and youth’s self-esteem, help with decision making, promote and teach reciprocity and accepting differences.

Intimate knowledge is affiliated with the body, which in the binary of patriarchal thought, has long been affiliated with women. As female qualities are undervalued and underpaid, intimate knowledge, in the form of sexual education, is pushed outside core curricula and subjugated as private, ‘extra-curricular’ material.

This paper concludes with the theoretical discussion about the term ‘intimate justice’ coined by Sara McClelland (2010). McClelland’s work touches fundamental issues of gender inequality, economic disparity, violence, bodily integrity, physical and mental health, self

efficiency, and power dynamics in our most personal relationships. These are all issues in which intergenerational conversations and the transfer of intimate knowledge might lead a platform for a real social change through intimate justice.

Through this review of material, I am trying to show that intimate knowledge, and its inquiry through sexual education, is embedded in a political economic ideology and that it can be more than an attempt to reduce and limit rates of adolescent pregnancies, diseases, and sexual activity. Rather, educators, parents, and students, across the gender spectrum, through enhancing intimate knowledge, might confront, suspend and even discard sexism, classism, and heterosexism inside and outside the classroom. The politicizing of these issues holds a democratic and feminist goal to which patriarchal capitalism stands as barrier.

1. The Effect of Political Economy on Women's Welfare

“Through new ways of thinking and new economic inventions we can pave the way for a future where all children have the opportunity to realize their potentials for consciousness, empathy, caring, and creativity—the capacities that make us fully human.” Riane Eisler (2013, p.63)

As societies, especially Western societies, have shifted from traditional to modern structures, the nuclear family is considered to be, more and more, a separate unit that functions on its own private needs, desires, and abilities. Community, state, and tribe/enlarged family have stepped out of the role of guiding and supporting the family at different scales throughout Western societies. Furthermore, the separation from enlarged family structures has created a single-entity form of nuclear family where the mother is expected to be the main and often sole caregiver for young children and the father is expected to be the sole provider i.e. the ‘breadwinner’ for the family (Forcey, 1994). For instance, research shows that even with the entering of women to the work market, women are still expected to be the main responsible figure of child care and household (Stertz et al., 2017, Gerson, 2017).

In this chapter, I would like to discuss the political background to these historical processes, and to trace the ways in which these processes have affected modern societies’ intimate communication. Specifically, I mean the ability of a “modern” family to discuss emotional and sexual issues and employ reciprocal communication of care, sexuality and physical-emotional health, which ought to be as developed and important as the technological and financial realms in our societies.

1.1 Social Justice in State-Organized Capitalist Societies

Using a political lens, I wish to illustrate the connections between social structure, culture, and the material reality of modern families.

As many authors rethink the modern democratic state, we now envision different kinds of democracies on a spectrum of political and economic structures, not as a mere distinction between democracies and non-democracies, but also in historical, cultural, and geographic terms. The wide definition of ‘democracy’ is shaped by local conditions. Thus, it is necessary to halt and explain its context in my thesis. First, I would like to express the differences between democracy and capitalism, as brought by the political philosopher John Dryzek.

In the book “Democracy in Capitalist Times” (1997) John Dryzek discusses the connection between political and economic structures. He also investigates the various reasons capitalist democracy continues to dominate and “defeat” other political economic structures, and reveals the politically flexible structure of capitalism itself. Dryzek claims that capitalism does not need a particular kind of political structure beyond a state to carry out essential functions, and though the combination of capitalist development and liberal democracy are historically linked, capitalism has flourished in authoritarian political structures as well (like in Southern Europe, East Asia, and Latin America).

Dryzek defines the capitalist market as a constraining mechanism and claims that, “any states that exist in a capitalist market are restricted both in terms of what they can **do** in the way of public policies and what they can **be** in terms of political organization.” (Dryzek, 1997, p. 25) This means that the inherent mechanism of capital is the drive for profit, and neither parliament nor public opinion drives the most important political decision-making. Any initiatives that do not profit the existing corporations will have a very hard time raising. Dryzek points to the danger of a structure that automatically punishes institutional innovations that threaten market

confidence. This appeals to the idea that contemporary politics have very little or no public policy orientation, and that social change strategies should mainly focus on the global apparatus of politics and, according to Dryzek (1997), carry on small initiatives that will eventually add up to greater change. Furthermore, institutions like the modern family and modern education system are also effected from market's domination, first as because of the market's cultural and ideological norms and logics, and second, with the aspiration of privatizing all states aspects, capitalism prioritize public policies of welfare initiatives, according to their profit probability, which are mostly not very high. I will expand on that in the coming chapters.

In further theorizing capitalisms' global consequences, Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen (1984) formulates the term "subsistence culture" as a choice of life over death. The belief in economic growth in place of individual and community collapse, Bennholdt-Thomsen claims, is a "civilization crisis" of our era. This ideology, of legitimate greed, is grounded in Adam Smith's thesis of self-interest as common interest, and has spread like one of the strongest religions known to human kind. (Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1984) This has led to massive destruction of our environment along with the destruction of culture and its values. Our ability to care for each other, and for our environment, to enact on reciprocal relationships, to love and to create are core human values that sustain humanity. The commodification on intimate life, has created a culture of divestment where these skills are harder to sustain and enhance.

Choosing capitalist ideology as a form of primary freedom has proven to result in abhorrent side effects within capitalist's societies. In the endeavor to understand why a democratic society will continue choosing this type of destructive socio-economic structure, I have integrated into this chapter theories that offer explanations. However, there is no simple one. I draw on Dryzek (1997) and Bennholdt-Thomsen's (1984) theorizing of capitalism's cultural, social and ecological consequences, to claim that intimate knowledge in the form of

emotional inelegance, body knowledge, and cultural values are part of educational and health care sectors which are pushed aside in lieu of profitable initiatives and organizations.

1.2 Capitalism as Anti-Feminism

By deepening the analysis of gender segregated social structures and their effects on the ways in which intimate knowledge transfer in modern society, I trace the channels through which society communicates its intimate knowledge, its non-profitable affairs—what is nowadays called ‘care’ and ‘maternity labor,’ to examine the different options for citizens in a global capitalist economy to transfer intimate knowledge.

Many feminist thinkers since the 1960s (Friedan, 2010, Fraser, 2013, Bryson 2016) have linked the continuation of male social-economic domination to capitalism.

There are various ways in which the two are connected; however, the most notable is state neglect of responsibility to social welfare, which includes caring duties for the young children (and newborns), the elderly, sick and disabled. These duties are key features of a healthy society, but are debased along gendered lines. Since women are associated with these duties (regardless of essentialism debates) the degradation of women through western history is fundamentally the degradation of these key labor, and vis-a-versa. In a society where social-economic structure is left to market control, caring for the weaker and more vulnerable people

in society is left to the market's "invisible hand." Women are implicitly asked to choose between caring for their relatives, and developing a career. The more limited one government is in market, the narrower state control or responsibility is over welfare, the less possibilities there are for women, who literally carry the burden of the next generation, to choose their future.

This is not to say that women are one hundred percent passive victims and men are always the oppressors. Women, are fundamental agents in patriarchal structure through various relationships with men and children, as main educators; mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, wives, school and nursery teachers etc. and thus many of which carry patriarchic stances and distribute them through these familiar and social roles. Men are often times victims of the same patriarchal - capitalist system that prevents them from spending time with their families and caring for their small children and elderly parents. Getting in touch with their emotions and fulfilling their "capacities that make us fully human." (Eisler, 2013, p.63) Yet, social and financial resources are still immensely in the hands of men. In legal and economic rights, as well as social privileges. Hence, there is a power relation to address; however, it is important not to oversimplify the equation of oppressed females and male oppressors.

Nancy Chodorow (1999) traces an historical line between capitalism and male domination, through the separation of the private from public spheres. With the development of the modern state and industrialization, production outside the home expanded greatly, while production within the home declined, and the home was no longer viewed as a work place. These two spaces, once the same, are now separate. This change in the organization of production had also far-reaching effects on the educational and religious (moral-spiritual) role of the family. In addition to its diminished role in material production, the family became a relational and personal institution.

Women's roles in the family became centered on child care and taking care of men, rather than producing and training the next female generation. This new type of domestic work involved more than physical labor but also mental, personal, and maternal work. Women were expected to embody the role of a moral nurturing figure for their children, as well as moral guides for their husbands as they returned each day from the immoral, competitive world of work (or war). This new role, alongside the home/work separation process, excluded and isolated women from society and wage labor. (Chodorow, 1999)

As this theory might contradict American ethos of equality and even more so the ethos of freedom of choice, feminist scholars have revealed the costs of western women's emancipation. The costs of women leaving the house to seek careers or pay their lives (rent, education, health etc.) is often paid by neglecting their own relatives, with the lack of welfare support net to give proper solution to the needed care.

Arlie Hochschild (2003) brings a global point of view to this process and calls this phenomenon a "global chain of care." She argues that drastic changes to the global market and domestic life as a result of women's entrance into the market sphere in the beginning of the 20th century has changed the social and political structures of the world to the point that feminism needs to rephrase the slogan "the personal is political" with "the personal is global." (Hochschild, 2003, P.197)

This global chain of care is a vicious cycle, which is also an ironic side effect of the feminist movement. As domestic life has been internalized as less important and thus undervalued, low-paid women from the developing world have stepped in to take on this labor, while many western women, in the name of feminism and liberal progress, have left the home and its "duties." This has many problematic effects, the most important of which concerns the caregivers who have to leave their own domestic spheres in order to work in the place of

others. This is especially pronounced in imperialist countries that have made their wealth through exploitation of these women's (and men's) countries' resources and now use their domestic labor.

A more structural point of view is brought by Ann Shula Orloff (1993), who offers a comparative analysis of gender relations in association to the welfare state. We think of the political economic system as a whole piece of controlled system, while in reality, she claims, the systems are very complicated and vary from one geographical place to another. The initial programs of social provision established across the West in the “formative period of the welfare state”—approximately the 1880s to the onset of World War I—were designed to fit and reinforce the family wage system, with men as breadwinners and women as primary caretakers, domestic workers, and secondary wage earners.

Thus, the systems of social provision that emerged from these political struggles can be reasonably referred to as “paternalist” as they bolstered the position of the breadwinning father. The “maternalist” elements of state social provisions were by contrast underdeveloped and did not give women equal standing with men. Orloff argues that,

not enough is known about how and to what extent systems of social provision actually do vary in their gender content, how social provision and other state institutions affect gender relations, and how the state's impact on gender relations is related to its effects on other social relations. (Orloff, 1993, P.304)

However, many institutions and processes constitute gender relations and are directly affected by state social provision: for example, the sexual division of labor (including the treatment of care work and caseworkers), access to paid work, as a central role in our societies and as a means of survival, and marriage/family relations. Adding to that the vast research data on sources of gender power—such as sex segregation of occupations, the division of household work, and the objectification and commodification of women's bodies —illustrate a pretty clear picture of how capitalism operates in contradiction to feminism.

However, in her feminist economic analysis, the historian Reina Eisler (2013) delves into the economic roots of communication and defines the political economy we know today as mostly “domination oriented”—occurring in most places around the globe and in almost all historical periods. This structure consists of occupation, imperialism, destruction, an exploitation of the weaker through regulated structures. She claims that this is not a new phenomenon of capitalism.

Although the rapid destruction of the earth and environment is definitely linked to industrial capitalism, domination communication is rooted in the same exploitation system that claims possession over what should not be in anyone’s hands to use or destroy. Eisler presents the alternative of a “partnership oriented” system, and gives examples from different places, mostly Nordic countries, that have managed to overcome food scarcity and maintain an egalitarian welfare labor where, for example, both parents are granted with a parental leave of eighteen months all together and have a majority of female parliament representatives. This system tends to place an even amount of women in leadership positions and values house and care work as essential to the common wellbeing, to be carried out by all members of society.

Eisler breaks down the fundamental reasons that lead to the marginalization of women’s labor and the exclusion of women from key power positions. Most importantly, she points to the huge proportion of women who are in poverty worldwide. Eisler demonstrates how seventy percent of those who live in absolute poverty—which means starvation or near starvation conditions—are female. She explains:

This is not only due to wage discrimination in the market economy; it is largely due to the fact that these women are, or were for much of their lives, either full or part-time caregivers—work that was neither paid nor later rewarded through social security or pensions. (Eisler, 2013, P.59)

Although Eisler theorizes the core explanation to this phenomenon in domination oriented culture, one could also define it in political economic terminology to describe capitalist fundamental

consequences to family's welfare and women's ability for social mobility. Barbara Alice Mann's work (Mann, 2000) illustrate a domination oriented system by placing the western patriarchal capitalist process within a historical militant trajectory, spanning from ancient Rome to the "modern Sparta" of today. It is a trajectory where men, women, feminists, and youth of all genders sacrifice the earth, human connection to nature, happiness, growth, and even their own lives in the name of whatever ideology that serves the larger patriarch domination system. (Mann, 2000)

In this chapter, I reviewed the political economic trajectory that maintains social inequality through its gender roles. In the process of struggling for emancipation, the feminist movement has attempted to become equal to men. As such, Western society has adopted what is considered "masculine" qualities like competition, achievement, assertiveness, rationality and scientific objectification etc. Through great effort, protest and legal challenges, women have entered the public sphere and tried to achieve the goal of an egalitarian market place.

However, many contemporary scholars (Arlie Hochschild, 2003, Riane Eisler, 2013 and Nell Noddings, 2013) have placed **care** at the center of envisioning a new alternative to the current political economy, which ignores the realms of household, care, and voluntary actions in the market place. economic conditions, as theorized through this chapter in the work of Eisler (2013), Orloff (1993), Chodorow (1999), Bennholdt-Thomsen (1984) and Dryzek (1997) reveal the ways in which social struggles are connected and how political economy is bonded with the emancipation of any group. Especially when women are not a minority group, but a suppressed majority in various classes and ethnicities of society, women (and men) in modern western societies, are suppressed into heteronormative structures that impose unequal gender relations for men's benefit. When welfare state policies assume heterosexual couple-hood that maintain unequal power relations, this has a real effect on our everyday life in terms of women's freedom of choice, freedom of movement and

women's civil rights. Along with globalization processes, as the work of Arlie Hochschild (2003) contributes – the globalization of capitalist economy further produces inequality.

By acknowledging the importance of political economy to power relations and its existence in various life aspects, we might have better understandings with which choices are made. In the next chapter I review the cultural aspect of domination, as I believe it to be a main aspect through which social inequality maintains itself.

3. Culture and Binary Thought

“Individuals make choices, but institutional patterns shape the alternatives and make one choice more likely than another.” (Epstein, 1988, P.88)

Drawing on the feminist critique of cultural materialism (Ewen, 1988, Halley et.al, 2011, Bordo, 2004), I link political economy to ideology and culture, in contemplation of the ways in which different aspects might explain the modern family’s challenges. As reviewed through the previous chapter, capitalist industrial economies have separated work and private spheres. The Ideology that deprives women from equal social, economic, as well as cultural rights is leaning on a political- economic structure. Culture is a very wide term, which contains aspects of traditions, collective believes, social practices and norms, religion etc. (Shaheed, F. et al., 2014). In order not to over simplify the term I chose to construct this paper so that the critical view of gendered political economy will anchor the following cultural analysis in its political roots that evolves to ideologies and culture.

Cultural research holds by definition an interdisciplinary perspective. One of which is the socio-psychological research. The understanding that our self and emotions develop in relation to others is a fairly new feminist stance that will hopefully push contemporary research to further integrate an interdisciplinary and multidimensional perspective into socio-psychological research. In her critical work *Cold intimacies: The making of emotional capitalism*, Eva Illouz defines this integration:

Emotions are cultural meanings and social relationships. When you tell me ‘you are late again,’ whether I feel shame, anger or guilt will depend almost exclusively on my relationship to you [...] emotion is certainly a psychological entity, but it is no less and perhaps more so cultural and social one: through emotion we enact cultural definitions of personhood as they are expressed in concrete and immediate but always culturally. (Illouz, 2007)

When Illouz refers to “cultural meanings,” she means relationships defined by culture. However, to fully understand the deep concept of “culture,” it is useful to follow Jean Halley’s

(2007) conceptualization of “mainstream ideologies” as a frame of the ideology of heteronormative, middle-class white Americans who dominates many current thoughts and beliefs into social communication (Halley, 2007). The family, the school and even the body are few of the entities in which mainstream ideology may accrue in social practices and beliefs, as Halley explains: “The body, like everything in culture, is always in the grip of cultural practices, as Michel Foucault argues. Indeed, the problem is not cultural repression of the natural instinctual body; there is no “natural” body. Our bodies, and all that is human, are largely made by our culture.” (Halley, 2007, p.151)

The framing of the body as a cultural entity is a key analysis that relates to my thesis, as touch is by all means, essential to intimate knowledges. Touch is required to human survival and development, while simultaneously; it utilizes a threat of becoming violence and unwanted touch. By this sense, touch might be perceived as counterpoint to feminist thought. Jean Halley (2007) analyses social patterns, power relations, and their flows through western “un-touch” ideology as presented in “scientific literature” one that, according to Halley, has replaced biblical script, as modern science replaced religious authority. Through historical lens, the cultural practices that reinforce domination in our relationships might be traced to their roots and thus, better understood for future change.

One leading thread of cultural domination is the ancient binary thought, which I will expand on shortly, however, mentioning its fundamental impact on Western culture can be understood through the philosophic work of Susan Bordo (Bordo, 2004), who illustrates an historical line of domination-culture described in Western philosophic literature from Plato to Descartes, and through other Western thinkers who praise mind over body. This lineage of theory describes the body as a prison, the chain through which the mind is striving to break free from, the burden of the physical, free from desire, hunger, and drives. In the analogy to modern eating disorders—which affects mostly women, as ninety percent of all anorexics are women (Bordo, 2004, p.154). Bordo relates to control as the core imbalance and illness of Western ideology and culture. She observes

thus: “In many ways contemporary culture appears more obsessed than previous eras with the control of the unruly body.” (Ibid., P.149). Through the theorizing of cultural practices in this chapter, I illustrate a line of thought through which our daily reality is effected by, and domination-culture follow as a constant shadow of our common believes.

2.1. Binary Thought:

All this pitting of sex against sex, of quality against quality; all this claiming of superiority and imputing of inferiority, belong to the private-school stage of human existence where there are 'sides,' and it is necessary for one side to beat another side, and of the utmost importance to walk up to a platform and receive from the hands of the Headmaster himself a highly ornamental pot. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929/2015, P.292)

Many Feminist scholars have placed binary thought ideology at the foundation of male domination and exploitation over our social structures and relationships. Reina Eisler (2013) claims that there is an epistemological conception that divides humanity from its onset, into those to be served and those that serve, which children in most families internalize early on. This is also a male superior / female inferior model of our species, a template for relations that can then be applied to valuing one race, religion, or ethnic group over others.

In addition, with accepting males as superior to females, comes the devaluation of anything stereotypically associated with the “feminine.” Thus it is not realistic to expect more caring policies and practices as long as care and caregiving are systemically devalued as “weak”, “soft” or “feminine.” This gender-based discrimination robs children, male and female, of their potential for optimal development. Eisler connects this gender-based neglect to chronic hunger, poverty, and armed conflict due to the internalization of this diminishing, and how it affects children and, later,

adults' abilities to adapt to new conditions, tolerate frustration, and react towards violence. (Eisler, 2013)

In tracing the origins of the cultural control system, many scholars (Foucault, 1990, Puar, 2012, Dryzek, 1997, Tanenbaum, 2015, Harraway, 1985, Halley 2007 and many others) have found that the need for a simple explanation to social practices, has led to self-definition through the invalidation of the 'other', an equation of positive and its negative imposed onto almost every explanation of social phenomena. These scholars have questioned the binary thinking that divides men and women, the natural and unnatural, rational and emotional, spirit and body.

They have especially shown how this binary ideology has served the continuation of unequal power relations between men and women and, as Eisler explained earlier, between a small powerful minority (at the moment: Western European and North American white, straight men) and the rest of humanity. Eisler shows how this divides groups that are "serving" and ones that are "being served," giving the served minority an unequal share of common wealth and resources. On top of the strategy of divide and control, these models of superiority and inferiority have been internalized to a degree where change is difficult technically to achieve and psychologically to imagine.

Through her work on touch/non-touch western ideologies, Jean Halley (2007) reveals how binary thought is ingrained in our social matrix, specifically the mind-body split that dominates many of the current forms of human communication in western society. The mind-body split is central to western ideology and is visible throughout different western cultures. "The mind-body dualism informs all the binary patterns apparent in mainstream ideologies of touch. The Western medical model is one important place where such dualistic thinking is both articulated and reproduced." (Halley, 2007, P.4).

One of Halley's theorizing in the matter, concludes that touch is part of the body (feminine) is less appreciated than the mind (masculine), and that body and touch are affiliated with the women,

while the mind, science, and spirituality are affiliated with men. Touch in Western culture is considered wrong/dangerous/dirty.

Halley elaborates on how this social practice holds an ideology of domination: “in connecting with the animalistic body, one risks awakening its ostensibly out-of-control passions and thus, for a period of time, in middle class Anglo-American ideology, touching, including mothers touching their children, became taboo.” (Halley, 2007, P.28) This taboo was widely implemented in western societies through institutions. Halley reveals the huge cultural gap gathered in research where “Cross-cultural studies have revealed that the United States has one of the lowest rates of casual touch in the world— about two times an hour (although this does not hold for Puerto Ricans, who claim one of the highest rates of casual touch— about 180 times an hour). French parents touch their children three times more often than American parents.” (Ibid, 4)

It might be that differences in cultural practices have always existed. This paper would like to track the ways in which western culture is practicing a growing “un-touch” ideology and divestment through its democratic institutions. The mind-body split, as other binary thought separations, is an ideology. Ideology is not a phenomenon that just exists, one that we have nothing to do about. Ideology is rooted in the political conditions that enables these practices, Ideologies should not be taken for granted, the fact that they are changing with changing political conditions are the main proof of that. This paper follows thinkers like Foucault (1990), Ewen (1988), Halley et.al (2011) and Bordo (2004), who have conceptualized the socialist term “cultural materialism” to reveal the ways in which our reality is a product of cultural beliefs that are guided by powerful parties and institutions.

Relating to our bodies solely as the carrier of our mind; as a burden on our spirit, is an ideology that had served western society for many centuries. However, far-east wisdom has now begun to be integrated into mainstream western ideology in the form of ‘new age’ philosophy and

medicine. This transformative phenomenon of cultural integration, may it be new or ancient, is mirroring a crack in binary thought as dominating mainstream Western culture, and it is a growing movement of people promoting their wellbeing and social agency, alongside feminist, antiracist, environment activism and other social movements asserting legal rights, and questioning the very logic of domination and inequality. Critical thought and theory has proven binary thought to maintain gender (as well as race, class, age, and religion) inequality by determining what is good and what is bad, what is smart, socially, and economically appreciated, and what is primitive, benighted, and unworthy. By tracing inequalities roots in ideology, we can reveal “larger patterns of social “power” that reveal and reproduce mainstream conceptions of gender, sexuality, race, and class. In other words, these ways of thinking are normative; they expose social power “in action.” And social power happens through them.” (Jean Halley, 2007, p.2). In today’s modern reality, Social power is enforcing itself through our own politicizing of ourselves and our surrounding by embedding and following ideology’s rules of what is normative (good) and what is abnormal (bad). By transgressing normative boundaries, one risks real sanctions of exclusion, humiliation and even legal actions.

Foucault writes,

“The judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in a society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator judge, the ‘social worker’-judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects it to his body, his gestures, his behavior, his aptitudes, his achievements.” (as cited in Bordo, 2004, p.146).

2.2 Individual-Based Society

As demonstrated in the first two chapters, political economy has major effects on culture and the socio-psychological process of individual and social development. The belief in the self as an independent and unique entity that is entitled and capable of making its own decisions is deeply ingrained in modern Western culture. This liberal notion was historically essential, especially in the context of the end of the nineteenth century, as a means to break free from oppressive governments. However, we see today that the extreme manifestation of this belief in cultural ideology and market place has had negative effects on majority of the population. Public issues are considered more and more private choices and thus private responsibilities.

This is a cultural matter, as we gradually understand. In their comparative study, Hazel R. Markus and Shinobu Kitayama (1991) compare Western and Asian concepts of individuality. By studying past socio-psychological researches, the authors have begun to question the “culture-free” aspects of investigations into cognition, emotion, and motivation. Markus and his collaborators have found many inconsistent empirical evidence that yet needs to be reconciled, and illustrates the huge difference in understanding and experiencing individuality, based on the culture one is coming from, while addressing issues of identity. The authors conceptualize these differences in terms of independence and interdependence. Through their comparative study of Western and Asian cultures, they display the distinct conceptions of individuality that consist many Asian cultures such as:

conceptions of individuality that insist on the fundamental relatedness of individuals to each other. The emphasis is on attending to others, fitting in, and harmonious interdependence with them. American culture neither assumes nor values such an overt connectedness among individuals. In contrast, individuals seek to maintain their independence from others by attending to the self and by discovering and expressing their unique inner attributes. (Markus, et.al, 1991 p.224).

This is also a gendered matter. As more women have entered the market and public

spheres, the socio economic structure has started changing. Women in many fields dominated exclusively by men are gradually opening a Pandora box of information and knowledge that has so far only been tested through research on men (by men). This has led to an abundance of social scientific conclusions about human behavior based on male respondents and subjects. It is only now that different points of view, emotions, needs and even anatomy are rising as counterpoints in social and medical research. (McGregor, 2016)

For example, in her important work, released in the book *In a Different Voice*, the psychoanalytic scholar Carol Gilligan (1982) argues that the male dominated field of psychology had both ignored and undervalued the psychological development of women. Psychoanalysts that have researched the development of teenagers (Kohlberg, 1971), have concluded that individuation and separation is the highest moral achievement of a healthy youth in becoming adults. Gilligan contradicts that with a stance that is assembled from a caring perspective. This stance values interpersonal relationship and taking responsibility for the wellbeing of oneself *and* others. She reviewed the different kinds of developmental paths young women go through and realized there is a “different voice” (Ibid.) not being recorded within the mainstream psychological conclusions. A voice that much like the cultural findings of Markus et.al, is composed of interdependent structure of the self that might choose to help others over social regulations of right and wrong (stealing a medicine in order to save a child), and thus should not be analyzed as morally underdeveloped, based on a homogenized group of youth.

Although women have been excluded and marginalized for many years, they are intertwined with men and comprise a bit more than half of the population². I believe it is becoming harder and harder to diminish our voices. The changing research exhibited in the work of Caroll Giligan (1982) as well as Hazel R. Markus and Shinobu Kitayama (1991) and Eva Illouz (2007) integrated in this

² <https://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/gender-statistics>

chapter, are emphasizing the importance of relativity. Not for denying any truth, but on the contrary, applying critical thinking to cultural practices and believes that are being posed as ultimate truths like the “nature” and apriciated charctoristic of indeividuality, or just taken for granted as norms. The feminist work of Foucault (1999) Jean Halley (2007), Reina Eisler (2013) and UNESCO’s report on global gender inequality (Shaheed, F. et al., 2014) reveal a gendered cultural aspect through binary thought that inferiors one sex over the other and construct an unequal power relation that manifests itself through daily practices and even disorders, but is hard to trace once lacking this critical view. Enhancing critical thought on cultural practices helps mobilizing marginalized and suppressed voices into central consciousness and the healing process of cultural destruction.

3. Intimate Knowledges

Intimate knowledge is comprised of the knowledge of emotions (relationships) and the knowledge of feelings (body and mind). In today's visual western culture, self-image and body images plays a significant role in the construction of identity. (Ewen, 1988) In this chapter, I would like to explore feminist theories and research, that investigated the idea of political identity as a multiple and dynamic one. As explained through the work of Eva Illous (2007) on cultural meanings, relationships are a core aspect of our being. Whether they are raised to nurture us as a community and guests in this planet, or used to instill fear and obedience in order to control, is a question for us as humanity. It is in our hands, and primarily in our minds. With faith of human ability; to connect, to feel and to imagine a different reality, feminist scholars have set to investigate other options for conciseness and social matrix.

3.1 Intimate Knowledge: Multi-Dimensional Identity

In their research on sexism in secondary school classrooms, Valerie A. Lee, Helen M. Marks, and Tina Byrd, (1994) describe the origins of sexism in the 1970s as an analogue to racism. Feminist thinkers have established the term "gender" rather than "sex" to emphasize the socio-cultural constructions of non-biological sex distinctions used to oppress women for centuries (Lee et

al.1994). Many feminists believe that distinct gender roles and bias are rooted in many institutional foundations, and so the struggle is spread across all aspects of society.

There is a wide range of feminist thought that gives alternative voices to binary thought based philosophies. The feminist heuristic term ‘intersectionality’, is an extensively used term that frames the understanding of the ways that multiple aspects of our identities intersect and influence one another. Intersectionality was a term coined by the American feminist legal scholar and critical race theorist, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, in the late 1980’s, to highlight women of color’s distinct circumstances as doubly, and sometimes triply, oppressed minorities. Intersectionality exposed how

single-axis thinking undermines legal thinking, disciplinary knowledge production, and struggles for social justice. Over the intervening decades, intersectionality has proved to be a productive concept that has been deployed in disciplines such as history, sociology, literature, philosophy, and anthropology as well as in feminist studies, ethnic studies, queer studies, and legal studies (Cho, et al., 2013, p.787).

In an interview for the “NewStatesman” online magazine from 2014, Crenshaw clear up what may have been forgotten: “It’s important to clarify that the term was used to capture the applicability of black feminism to anti-discrimination law,”(Adewonmi, 2014)

Another concept that challenges fundamental single-axis philosophy is called assemblage theory. The theory was presented in the late 1970’s by scholars of Science, Technology and Society (STS), and rendered to philosophers, artists, and social scientists by Gilles Deleuze and Fèlix Guattari. (1988) the theory is one of a series of theoretical responses to binary thought. It enables a framework to analyze social complexity by emphasizing fluidity, exchangeability, and multiple functionalities in order to break down beliefs in objective science, neutral judgment and the linear progress theories that have dominated the general discourses for several decades. The scientific construct in which nature reveals itself in its objective form is thus challenged to review the medium in which this “revealing” takes place—the subjective eye and hand that operates these researches and often also reflects elite domination, human desires, fashions, cultural translations, and categories.

The feminist scientist Donna Haraway (1985), in her highly influential article *'A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s'*, explains the complexity of identity and the fractured way in which we identify ourselves. She also suggests that we should identify ourselves and others through endless possibilities of assembled and disassembled biological, social, and fictional parts of our identity. This would dismiss the idea that identity is a whole entity.

I would like to draw on assemblage theory as it is used by Donna Haraway (1985) to elaborate on its theoretical possibilities and educational value. By using the cyborg image—which is a hybrid of fiction, reality, machine, and an animal—Haraway is able to blend conventional categories and point to the ways in which we give fictional logic to oppression. Furthermore, this fictional logic is used by political agents to construct a specific epistemology, a domination narrative that is constantly implemented in education systems to maintain elites' domination. Stories about the endless destruction, plundering and mass killing of the innocence are glorified and illustrated in an imaginary thread from “the ancient world” to today’s modern Sparta. These stories are highlighted through cinematic apocalyptic narratives in which one moral hero (mostly white, heterosexual man) enters a brutal world and his violent contact there is what considered to be the ultimate entertainment, or catharsis for the Western viewers.

This usage of bravery narratives by political agents is what Alice Mann (2015) sees as a distorted and extreme male dominance culture and its reproduction, through “the feeding of young naïve boys in reverence to warriors narratives in the disguise of Humanities studies“ (as cited in Shadmi, 2015, P.124)

We should not only deny the fictional logic of oppression but also understand its role in shaping human experience and the understanding of “claims of epistemic privilege and to develop new understandings of engaged and accountable knowledge.” (Hartsock, 1998, P.94) Through Haraway’s work, fiction can also become a way to constantly recreate and reclaim our identity.

Assemblage theory suggest that self-image is constructed within relationships. We experience ourselves through the outer eye, inner eye, and reflection. We do not like to feel different but how do we know and understand the limits of difference is an important question. An article by Jaspir K. Puar, “I Would Rather Be a Cyborg than a Goddess; Becoming Intersectional in Assemblage Theory” (Puar, 2012) would argue that self-image is part of the constructed social “grid” and thus is part of patriarchal epistemology, just like a computer’s grid is constructed along binary thought.

However, it is not the grid that matters. Alternative self-images might also be constructed through different political and economic modes. Since this paper inspires to have operative understandings, it is also important to consider critiques of de-constructive and post-modernist feminist ideas that might cover in words and thought what really matters. Susan Bordo critiques: “I consider postmodern culture, poststructuralist thought and some aspects of contemporary feminism as embodying fantasies of transcendence of the materiality and historicity of the body, its situatedness in space and time, and its gender.” (Bordo, 2015, p.15) In insisting on articulating relationships, possibilities and that which happens between them: responsibility, we need to resist oppression, but always be reminded of what matters. As we live in a world of images and words, these are the tools we have for expressing our feelings. However, these tools may lack a full and comprehensive expression. In this way we are in a constant change and inquiry. Posing new possibilities is not replacing one truth with another, but allowing a better understanding of variety of feelings, needs and human conditions.

In her comprehensive critique of advice books in capitalist culture, Arlie Hochschild’s (2003) reflects on a “culture of psychic divestment” (Hochschild, 2003, P.40) that advances “successful” gender qualities as methods of capitalist rationality. By noticing this divestment and insecurity created by capitalist culture, advice books recode the self to accommodate to changes in modern

time. This process is part of what Hochschild refers to as “the commercialization process of our intimate lives and emotional needs”. (Ibid, Ibid) It is a culture we accept, Hochschild claims, due to our strong need for answers and support in a competitive, anxious, and demanding modern life. This creates anxiety on the one hand and answers it at the same time. In bestselling advice books, “semi-psychological” advice creates a discourse of middle-class Christian women as a mirror image to the women’s movement, in the image of the strong, lonesome and independent cowboy. (Ibid, P.23)

Advice books could be very useful especially within the void created by the capitalist industrial era, but Hochschild points to its dangers in taking over human knowledge and the commercialization of emotions her historical analysis critiques the process of admiring the loner (isolated) women as a backlash of the feminist movement by adapting capitalist masculine qualities. Her analysis of advice books reveals two main contrasting points of view that dominates contemporary American society: the traditional and the egalitarian. Through these two perspectives, mixed gender codes are delivered as a life goal, in what Hochschild claims to be” the commodification of intimate life.” (Ibid. P.23) The examples are many, and Hochschild draws a table of detailed codes, from female appearance (short skirt, long skirt, high heels, no heels, firm hand shake, soft one etc.) to feelings and the “right way” to show them (gender asymmetry in love, passiveness, aggressiveness femininity, masculinity etc.). These mixed codes reveal a true reflection of societies’ expectations and creates a situation where it is harder to communicate our feelings and needs. The lack of emotional communication is passed on through generations instead of having intimate communications about our challenges with our family and community.

3.2 Intimate Knowledges: Sexuality

“We did not know, growing up, that our prevailing notion – that the male gender is the one more driven by lust – is a fairly recent historical invention.” (Naomi Wolf, *Promiscuities*, 1997, P. xxvi)

Sexuality is part of human life and interaction from the day we are born. It is not solely physical, nor solely private. Thus former chapters analyzing culture from a feminist point of view, applies to the sexual realm of life as well, I will further explore its meanings in the following chapters.

Queer and feminist studies have revealed the connections between the private and social realms while exposing, amongst other things, the relationship between social oppression and sexual violence as a means of control. Many studies of sexuality demonstrate that sexuality is an organizing principle of social life (Carrigan, 1987). Thus, sexuality is not simply one’s subjective possession or a set of private practices, but rather a form of power that exists regardless of an individual’s sexual identity. In this way sexuality “refers to sex acts and sexual identities, but it also encompasses a range of meanings associated with these acts and identities. The meanings that vary by social class, location, and gender identity may be more important than the acts themselves.” (Pascoe, 2011, p.10)

Sexuality is, purportedly, the point where mind and body are inevitably joined, but its social facet is usually invisible or overlooked. Moreover, since children are not conceived of as sexual beings but rather as in need of protection from adult’s unhealthy sexual desires—and often times, from their own desires and sexuality—the subject of sexuality is not dealt with explicitly at home or education system. Schools should be investing in enhancing intimate knowledge through curricula on the subject that integrates complex information with young people’s skills and agency to deal with intimate life while growing up and encountering new forms of relationships. Instead, sexuality

is kept in a state of obscurity, while simultaneously commercialized and fictionalized violently through the mass media.

3 .2.1 Sexuality and Feminism

As I wrote in the second chapter, women's social mobility in the West has progressed much due to modern changes and feminist struggles. However, relatively little has changed in the private realm, which includes intimate knowledges such as: care, interdependent relationships, and sexuality. In this matter, it makes me wonder if women are not going backwards in terms of what happens in the private realm. Peggy Orenstein (2016) helps by posing some essential questions on the matter: Do we really have more freedom (and knowledge) to shape our sexual encounters? Do we have more influence and more control within them? Are we better able to resist stigma? Are we better equipped to explore joy? Orenstein's in-depth investigation of girls' transformation into womanhood in contemporary society, raises the most critical question, a question that is also at the core of my thesis: "Can there be true equality in the classroom and the boardroom if there isn't in the bedroom?" (Orenstein, 2016, P.5)

Considering the feminist historical review in the beginning of this paper, I would like to address a tension that has emerged with the implementation of liberalism, and feminism throughout the Western world: the tension between opposing sexual violence as a means of social control over vulnerable subjects (women, minority groups, children, and LGBT people), and the pursuit of sexual freedom. The two seems to clash in what Lynn Chancer calls "Third wave feminism and beyond." In her book *Reconcilable Differences* (Chancer, 1998), Chancer argues that this ideological split can be

found in almost every aspect of feminist thought on issues such as heterosexual control, marriage, prostitution, paid labor, motherhood, gender essentialism etc. Chancer also argues, however, that this split might open the possibility to merge different standpoints into a joint cause and launch solidarity actions between different ideological categories and identities.

As Chakravorty Spivak states: “Feminism, unlike Marxism, does not rely on a single text as a guideline for revolution.” (Chakravorty Spivak, 1988) Hence, different voices, opinions, and points of view can weave into a dynamic feminist movement that promotes all women’s, and men’s, rights. I would like to discuss the possibility of this “split” as different angles to the same political reality. Women have broken many barriers with the feminist movement. This includes the sexual revolution of the 1960s, the introduction of birth-control pill in 1960 and followed, one decade later, by women’s right to an abortion, (Orenstein, 2016) which marked the legitimization of the separation between sex and reproduction. This was not the reality for the generations to come, though. The sexual revolution of the 1960’s paralleled the second wave of feminism when women also started reacting to the gendered aspect of violence in society, specifically the widespread phenomena of sexual violence within relationships. Sexual violence in the family, workplace or school system were all understood within a context of patriarchal power relations and analyzed as a means of male control over women, LGBTQ persons and children. The second wave movement, and the subset of radical feminism within it, also sought to expose the ways in which this violence was normalized into a social structure of domination. This is illustrated in Jean Halley’s book *The Parallel Lives of Women and Cow* (2012), which investigates male domination through the lens of this part of feminist history. She writes: “Radical feminists, a prominent faction of the second wave feminist movement, argued that girls become girls, in part, through violence and its effects, trauma [...] The radical feminists brought the reality of gendered violence into mainstream consciousness.” (Halley, 2012, p.88) This struggle had tremendous effects on women’s lives and continues to be a main arena of feminist

struggle, which proliferate due to social media's power to expose personal-political stories. As the periodical categories of sexual revolution and waves of feminism are artificial, and have been named in retrospective, growing up in the 1990's contains the notion that those were handed to my generation by our mothers. However, the silence while simultaneously loud display of sexuality felt strongly and created a confusion and frustration in the better case and brutal traumas in the worst. We are now facing the split in feminist thought as a major part of understanding and enhancing the development of our intergenerational transfer of intimate knowledges. How do we transfer intimate knowledge to our children while keeping them safe? This is the main question of the next chapters.

3.2.2 Sexuality and Education

“Educated as neither desiring subjects seeking pleasure nor potentially abused subjects who could fight back, young women are denied knowledge and skills, and left to their own (and others’) devices in a sea of pleasures and dangers.” (Michael Fine and Sara McClelland 2006, p.298)

I would like to look at both sexuality and education through a political lens, and to connect the two as an answer, or a discussion about the tension between advocating for sexual freedom while struggling against sexual violence.

Education in its wider definition can be thought of as communication between the generations *i.e.*, what one generation leaves the next in words and attitudes, in values and expectations. It also deals with the question of how children become adults in different societies. Sexuality in its wider definition encompasses intimate relationships, emotions, desires, orientations, body images, boundaries, touch, sex, and reproduction. These are all cultural facets, and as explained in earlier chapters, are prone to political agendas, as those shifts through history.

How children become adults is a fundamental educational, philosophical, and political question. It comprises ideas about how we see ourselves as humans, how we learn from the past, and how we would like to see the future. There is a growing understanding amongst educators about the concept of “multiple intelligences,” a concept theorized by the developmental psychologist Howard Gardner in his book “Frames of Mind” (Gardner 2011/1983).

His concept challenges the deeply-held notion, maintained until that point (and still is the dominating educational theory and practice), that intelligence is a single entity, that it results from one factor (genetics) and that it can be measured by a single test (IQ test). Using observational research, Gardner has come to formulate seven intelligences through which our senses are capable of: linguistic, logical mathematical, musical, bodily kinesthetic, spatial, and interpersonal intelligence, which he divides into two. One concerns the capacity to understand oneself and the other concerns the capacity of understanding others. Gardner has found that the seven intelligences rarely operate independently. People have a unique blend of intelligences, and they are used simultaneously and tend to complement each other as people develop skills or solve problems. Gardner argues that the big challenge facing the deployment of human resources “is how to best take advantage of the uniqueness conferred on us as a species exhibiting several intelligences.” (Gardner,1993, P.45) These intelligences, according to Gardner, are a-moral in that they can be put to constructive or destructive uses.

Gardner’s concept was highly influential in the realm of education. It affirmed educators’ critiques of modern education systems, that were established in western Europe to accommodate industrialization and have since spread to create, what the educator Ken Robinson describes as, a “similar oppressive model of education systems worldwide.” (Robinson, 2006). In his book *Out of our minds: Learning to be creative* (2011), Robinson uses the notion of multiple intelligence to advocate for a radical change to our education systems. Systems that prioritize knowledge by its functionality,

which is an agenda that is not relevant for today's world he claims, where academic degrees are in inflation and "there is a further issue for graduates. Too little have what business needs. More complex economies demand more sophisticated talent." (Robinson, 2011, P.69)

There *is* a hierarchy to knowledge. This understanding is important to my thesis, as I link it to my earlier claim that capitalism prevents the intergenerational flow of intimate knowledge.

Drawing on Dryzek's analysis of capitalism's inherent mechanism of the drive for profit, and the link between capitalism and industrialization, one can claim that the hierarchy of knowledge aligns with the goals of profitability. Robinson questions this inherent logic by showing the inflation in academic degrees and pointing to the fact that the future is unpredictable, and children's capacity for innovation is tremendous. Holding on to nineteenth century's ideologies, he claims, might be really harmful in the near future. (Robinson, 2011)

Another important way to look at multiple intelligences and Robinson's suggestion of its implementation in school reform is linked to binary thought ideology as elucidated in the second chapter. Robinson reveals how the hierarchy of knowledge (and intelligence) are organized so that the top end of the ladder are the subjects (knowledges) and intelligence related to the brain—or rather the left side of the brain, which controls logic and the analytics—and on the lower end of the ladder lies the arts in its various forms: writing, music visual arts. At the bottom of that imaginary ladder lies the knowledges affiliated with the body, such as movement and dance. As a result, the support, funding, and attention given to these subjects in school systems across the globe are much less than "left brain" subjects like math, linguistics and science. This too relates to my primary analysis about qualities affiliated with European men, like the mind, logic, and sciences, are overvalued in modern society, and thus rewarded in capitalist economy. The philosophic and scientific affirmation the west has established to back this hierarchy of knowledge is rooted in binary thought.

Binary thought places mind over the body, logic over emotions, “enlightenment” values over “primitive” belief systems, men over women, etc. The academic establishment was built on this structural logic and academia has, as Robinson claims, created school systems in its own image and spread this structural logic worldwide. Binary thought that can measure with scientific tools what is more effective, has coupled with capitalist economy to create a bearing where not only is the dominant viewpoint strong enough to eliminate all alternative initiatives (Dryzek, 1997) but also, the school systems are used to perpetuate and reproduce this order.

Bennholdt-Thomsen and other thinkers I mention in the first chapter, describe the social and ecological devastations of the earth today as a “civilization crisis” (Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1984) and offer various alternative solutions that eliminate patriarchal domination. From an educational perspective, Ken Robinson offers

a new conception of human ecology—one in which we start to reconstitute our conceptions of the richness of human capacity. Our education system has mined intelligence in the way that we strip mine the earth searching for a particular commodity. It wont serve us for the future. We have to rethink the fundamental principles of how we are educating our children. Our task is to educate their whole being so they can reverse some of the destructive processes humans have rendered on the planet. (Robinson, 2004)

Intimate knowledge, just like movement and dance, is affiliated with the body, which since ancient patriarchal binary thought has affiliated with women. As female qualities are undervalued and underpaid, intimate knowledge in the form of sexual education that centers care and interdependent values, is pushed outside core curricula and subjugated to private, ‘extra-curricular’ material.

4. Inter-generational conversation

While working with female youth on the subject of “healthy sexuality” in boarding schools throughout Israel, I came across hundreds of young women who were eager to learn more, eager for a grownup to share their knowledge and experiences, to ask them about theirs. What do they want? What do they regret? What felt good? And to offer non-judgmental help with contraceptives and advice about handling various challenges relating to sexuality.

The journalist Peggy Orenstein, who researched the subject of girls’ sexuality, tackled these subjects exactly- the eagerness of young women to know more and the silenced kept around it from older generations. Orenstein have published a highly influential book titled *Girls and Sex* (Orenstein, 2016). Orenstein’s main quest is to openly discuss “what happens *after yes?*” (Ibid, P.3). Current social and political discourse in the US (as in many other countries) focuses on abstinence until marriage, informing youth about sexually transmitted infections, and unwanted pregnancies only. From her interviews, Orenstein found that girls have a huge interest in sexuality and a great desire to be asked about their sexual experiences and to talk about them openly. She quotes various girls who indicate how open-minded their parents are until it comes to the subject of the girl’s sexuality. One college girl, Sam answers: “My parents are liberal, she said. And they’ll talk about sex generally, or joke about it. We’ll watch South Park or talk about the disfigurement of girls in the Middle East. But when it comes to *me*, it’s a little more iffy. Then it’s more like a conservative household, where we don’t talk directly.” (Ibid. p. 46)

Overall, research evidence (in Jerman and Norman, 2010) suggests that parents’ knowledge and comfort and their own childhood experiences with sexual education and communication are strongly linked with whether, how often, and how much they talk with their children about sexual topics. Their results show:

Hierarchical regression results indicated that psychology and self-reported comfort, knowledge, and sexual communication difficulties strongly predicted the number of topics discussed, beyond the effect of demographic variables. These findings reinforce the notion that sexual communication between parents and adolescents can be universally challenging. (Jerman et al., 2010, P.1164)

These research findings reinforce my initial claim that cultural norms of silencing intimate knowledge between the generation are part of mainstream ideology that although identify itself liberal, when it comes to intimate knowledge it is left to a voluntary choice, in which mostly end up ignored and silenced. Additionally, these findings are a key feature of why this phenomenon persists. The subject of “what happens after yes” (Orenstein, 2016), intimate knowledge, is left out of public discourse, leaving it to intergenerational ambiguity, private choices and parental responsibility.

In one of the chapters in the book *Girls and Sex* (2016), Orenstein covers US public investment in sexual education from the middle of the 20th century until recently. Beginning at what would later be named the “sexual revolution” with the introduction of birth control pill in 1960, when the connection between sex and reproduction have gotten looser and created a new reality in which teenagers are more exposed to sex. Public anxiety over teen sex has produced the absolutist stance that teens should “wait until marriage” or “until adulthood.” Right after, at the late 1960’ U.S congress defined a “crisis” and “epidemic” of teen motherhood, supposedly triggered by new sexual freedom—a fact Orenstein contradicts by noting that “overall teen birth rates dropped steadily through the 1960s and 1970s” (Orenstien, 2016, p. 209). Thus, government went about solving the problem of teen pregnancy by teaching kids to protect themselves. A federal sex education program introduced in 1978, focused mainly on risk management, contraception, abortion education, counseling, and “values clarification”. In addition, the program established an ambiguous concept of “readiness” rather than marriage, as the expected standard for sexual behavior. This, “infuriated conservatives,” (Ibid, P.209) and sex education became a political battleground with different political agents from a range of liberal – conservative parties, trying to influence the political agenda,

from a growing women's right perspective, a growing acceptance of homosexuality, and the growing conservative concerns about "declining moral family standards and gender roles." (Ibid, P.209)

Orenstein reveals the political agendas that do influence intergenerational sexual conversations, intimate knowledge – defined a private issue, does hold a public stance. An abstinent only stance, that contradicts liberal, hypersexual culture that children and youth grow in, in Western societies. Although many research shows that participants in abstinence education neither abstain entirely from sex nor delay intercourse. (Wilson et al., 2010) They also do not have fewer sexual partners. They are, however, more likely to become unintentionally pregnant - "as much as 60 percent more likely". (Orenstein, 2016, p.211) It was only until recently, with the Obama administration that, for the first time, abstinence education was replaced with "comprehensive sex education," although Orenstein says its focus remained on reducing negative consequences such as STIs and pregnancies. As this paper is written, how the Trump administration will approach the issue is mere assumption. However, already we have seen the administration attempt to withdraw from Obama's Affordable Care Act, which allows free of charge birth control, and approve legislation allowing states to withhold federal family planning dollars from clinics that provide abortion services.

The current political changes, after Donald Trump won the last presidential election, signify a new regression in the integration of intimate knowledge in school system. They constitute a fundamental step back for women's rights to a point where it is almost hopeless to discuss enhancing comprehensive sex education, but we must instead go back and refight the struggle for a women's right to an abortion and agency over her own body. Nevertheless, it is also essential to simultaneously speak loud and clear about comprehensive sex education and the importance of healthier public policy.

Sex education is not simply biological knowledge that society needs to find common political ground about, rather it is a greater conversation about gendered power relations and domination culture that also includes much of the care knowledge described in the beginning of this paper. Just as Riane Eisler (2013) theorizes an alternative to domination oriented culture as one of “partnership oriented” systems, and gives examples from Nordic countries. Orenstein (2016) also present a different model of youth development in Holland, where teen pregnancy, teen birth and teen abortion rates are the lowest in the industrialized world. (The United States has the highest.) More importantly, Dutch youth reported to be more comfortable with their bodies and their desires than their comparative (similar religious, ethnic and socio-economic background) American peers.

Orenstein attributes this difference to the response of parents to adolescence and the educational programs offered in Europe and in Holland specifically, that grapple with teens’ sexuality in post-sexual revolution society. “Whereas American parents and policy makers responded by treating teen sex as a health crisis,” Orenstein elaborates, “the Dutch consciously embraced it as natural, though requiring proper guidance.” (Ibid. p.221). The overall conclusion is that prevention does not prevent and even in most open and liberal American families, teenagers have to lie to their parents about their sexuality. This doesn’t change their behavior but only leaves them unsupported and vulnerable. I argue a certain political economy creates a certain culture, which in turn, affects reality and choices. The cultural differences between Europe and the U.S are mirroring a political economy which allows these belief systems to perpetuate.

5. Intimate Justice:

In 1995 the US National Commission on Adolescent Sexual Health declared healthy sexual development a basic human right. Teen intimacy, it said, ought to be “consensual, non-exploitative, honest, pleasurable, and protected against unintended pregnancy and STDs” (Haffner, 1995).

However, the ways to achieve such goals were not detailed in the report.

In her investigation of the field of “satisfaction,” Sara McClelland (2010) examines various psychological texts from the past century and links them to contemporary social justice and gender relations theories. She finds that entitlement play a big role in measuring satisfaction, and points to the ways in which expectations are a critical factor in measuring satisfaction in life. What you expect will determine how much you are satisfied. In other words, if you have little expectations and not much self-confidence and feeling of entitlement, you can be satisfied with little. She argues that the political and social aspects of this matter are under-theorized and she goes on to highlight their importance. Sara McClelland frames sexuality as “intimate justice” touching fundamental issues of gender inequality, economic disparity, violence, bodily integrity, physical, and mental health, self-efficiency, and power-dynamics in our most personal relationships. (Sara McClelland, 2010) These are all issues in which healthy sexuality might be a platform for a real change in power relations.

Sexuality, as anything else in life, is not gender neutral. Both genders suffer from the lack of comprehensive conversation about sexuality. In a patriarchal social structure, however, women and girls are subjugated to physical and mental violence and to a greater silencing of their own sexuality. Hence, the body of knowledge and literature on sexuality and teen sexuality today is mostly focused on female sexuality and the process of becoming a woman. This might be a response to the long history of silencing and reducing female voices as described through this paper. It is very important that thinkers and research today are bringing girl’s and women’s voices on sexuality into the public sphere. Naomi Wolf explains through her introduction on why writing a book about becoming a

woman. Amongst many important reasons, she would like to enhance women's ability to discuss, express, and celebrate their own sexuality. She explains: "Women- weather they are writing, fighting a custody battle, bringing a harassment charge, or just trying to do their jobs- rightly fear that they, in many more ways than men, will be defined by their sexual experience, and defined negatively" (Wolf, 1997, P.xxi)

However, I think that by focusing solely on girls and women sexuality, failing to launch a deeper inquiry into male sexuality, feminist scholars (Orenstein, 2016, Tanenbaum, 2015, Wolf, 2013) . Just as it is not enough to have women enter the public realm for a real revolution to occur, a private realm that embodies more comprehensive understanding of sexuality, emotions, relationship and care needs to include all genders.

J.C. Pascoe published his research on masculinity and sexuality in high schools across the US in a paper titled: "Dude You're a Fag." (2007) His research elaborates on masculinity's role in heteronormative behavior and homophobic harassment. His findings illustrate how masculinity operates not as a homogenous category that boys possess by virtue of being male. Rather, "masculinity—as constituted and understood in the social world I studied—is a configuration of practices and discourses that different youths (boys and girls) may embody in different ways and to different degrees." (Pascoe, 2007, p.5) The students and administrators both describe masculinity in terms of dominance and control. Pascoe highlights this phenomenon in terms of Foucault's theories of the social and political discourse on sexuality has revealed how much the discourse itself is perpetuating domination. Foucault urges readers in his book *The History of Sexuality* (1990) to "account for the fact that it is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak, the institutions prompt people to speak about it and which store and distribute the things that are said." (Foucault, 1990, P.11) Pascoe's research gives good examples of Foucault's theory in everyday life, examples that every educator knows well such as:

"Administrators strove to protect students from exposure to sexualized topics and at the same time were exceedingly interested in students' sexual practices, expressions, and identities." (Pascoe, 2007, p.28) Orenstein (2016), for her part, in her book *Girls and Sex*, wishes to expand the conversation beyond consent, and discuss sexuality in its whole—social, cultural and gendered. To do so, she also wishes to accurately articulate “rape culture” through girls’ voices, and gives the statistics found in Koss’s research which surveyed six thousand students at thirty-two universities to have found that “27.5 percent—more than one in four—of girls had, since the age of fourteen, experienced a sexual encounter fitting the legal definition of rape.” (Orenstein, 2016 P.171.) Eighty-four percent of those attacks were committed by someone the girl knew; 57 percent took place on dates. That led Koss to coin the term **date rape**. When she factored in other forms of unwanted sexual activity (“fondling, kissing, or petting but not intercourse”), the victimization rate shot up to nearly 54 percent. Only a quarter of the boys surveyed admitted involvement in some form of sexual aggression” (ibid., ibid.)

Tackling the quoted statistics, one would want to dig into the roots of this phenomenon. Orenstein speaks of social expectations that create a dynamic where boys’ sex drives are considered natural, and their pleasure given. “They are supposed to be sexually confident, secure and knowledgeable. Young women, as I’ve said, remain the gatekeepers of sex, the inertia that stops the velocity of the male libido.” (Ibid. p.195) This dynamic prevents both genders from exploring and acknowledging their complex sexuality, which consists of many highly curious and pleasurable young women and many gentle young men who also wish to listen and satisfy women.

Today, rape culture has been magnified through its display on social media. Orenstein traces a brutal online bullying phenomena wherein “selfies,” “sexting,” and “revenge porn” replace the old double standard of youth culture. Whereas once the sexually active girl was labeled as a “slut” while a boy was called a “player,” the new forms obscure those expectations in today’s hypersexual world where a “virgin” is not a desirable stigma for young women either. “Selfie culture” and social media

have magnified the already destructive effects of capitalism's objectification of the females' body, to the point where body image is related and measured as a product. Self-objectification, Orenstein warns us, is associated with depression, reduced cognitive function, lower GPA, distorted body image, body monitoring, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, and reduced sexual pleasure. Orenstein explains: "despite those risks, hypersexualization is ubiquitous, so visible as to be nearly invisible: it is the water in which girl swim, the air they breathe. Whatever else they might be: athletes, artists, scientists, musicians, newscasters, politicians—they learn that they must, as a female, first and foremost project sex appeal." (Orenstein, 2016, P.13) The Internet and social media are not the actual product of rape culture, but just another channel through which existing culture manifests itself, and, as we can see, magnifies the situation.

Social media, however, can also be a means for change, for marginalized voices to come to light. As Pascoe (2011) points out, the LGBT communities were actually empowered and able to meet through social media. Moreover, the phenomena of exposing sexual harassment and abuses through social media with the #Metoo campaign, has, in the days I am writing this paper, brought mainstream acknowledgment of rape culture and powerful men's abuse of their positions to perpetrate harassment and assault.

Dana Edell, Lyn Mikel Brown and Deborah Tolman (2013), have joined to research the intergenerational joint action of feminist women with girls between the ages thirteen and twenty-two. Through the actions of the ground roots organization SPARK (Sexualization Protest: Action, Resistance, Knowledge) the authors explore the complexity in understanding and resisting sexualisation **with** teen girls. They inform us how "It is much easier to theorize the intent, meaning, and implications of girls' choices to self-sexualize without girls than to develop a theoretically informed practice with girls. "(Edell, D. et al., 2013, P.276). As a feminist intergenerational movement, SPARK invites girls to join feminist women in sustained conversation, reflection, and

action about the discourses, experiences, choices, and dilemmas we confront as we work together in the service of liberation (Freire, 1970; hooks, 2003).

Going back to the critique of institutional accountability and intersectionality of oppression, a critical political analysis of young women's material reality, is brought in an essay by Michael Fine and Sara McClelland (2006), rewriting their report on the missing sexual desire from sex education curricula in 1988 to show how it is "*Still Missing after All These Years?*" (the essay's title), through public institutions prioritizing "private" choices as a means to walk away from their social responsibilities, preserve power relations and maintain social stratification. Adolescent desires, the researchers claim, develop within the context of global and national politics, ideologies, community life, religious practices, and popular culture.

Fine and McClelland go on to highlight that while all young people, by virtue of age, depend on state policies; education and health are not equally distributed. "In fact, national policies concerning sexuality fall unevenly on girls, poor and working class youth, teens with disabilities, black and Latino adolescents, and lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgender youth." (Fine et al., 2006, P.299). At the same time that the state abdicates responsibility, it leaves behind a moralizing ideology about bad "personal choices" enacted by those who transgress and drop out. "Across diverse groups of teens, every year of education has economic, health, and reproductive benefits." (Ibid, p.303)

Fine and McClelland conceive the term "thick desire" to describe a broad range of desires including those for meaningful intellectual, political, and social engagements within the public policies and institutions designed to facilitate the healthy development of young people—particularly black, Latino, and Native American youth, those living in poverty, and/or recently immigrated to the United States. They argue that young people are entitled to this range of desires. They also argue that they deserve the possibility of financial independence, sexual and reproductive freedom, protection from racialized and sexualized violence, and a way to imagine living in the future tense.

This would include being able to imagine themselves as sexual beings capable of pleasure and cautious about social, medical, and reproductive consequences. However, youth all over the world and in any economic class, experience the contradiction of a “loud display of sexuality while simultaneously silent sexual desire” (Fine and McClelland, 2006, P.300) through teenage discourse, mass media and social media.

5.1 Intimate Justice Between Cultural Borders

“By centering us in a network of relationships, stories assure the survival of our spirits. Stories keep us migrating home.” (Kimberly M. Blaeser, 1999 p.3)

While typing the phrase ‘intimate knowledges’ onto the computer, the auto-correct has corrected the plural to a singular several times, but I would like to insist, as demonstrated through this paper, that there are multiple intimate knowledges. Different circumstances, may they be political, cultural and geographic, affects these knowledges. But their existence should first be acknowledged and later enhanced through a sincere conversation between generations. In her lecture about feminine capital, the feminist scholar Kaouthar Darmoni (2014) tells the story of her family gatherings in Morocco where she grew up. She describes it as a great feminine experience where all the strong women in her family would gather in a private place, away from male gaze, to dance a sensual ancient Mesopotamian dance, where their body and spirit would rise to new dimensions.

Darmoni describes her anger towards a society that hides this great power and literally covers it outside of the house. As a young girl, she knew she would break free from such an oppressive and hypocritical culture when she grows up. Upon becoming a grown woman and moving to Europe, Darmoni was deeply disappointed with women's status in the west, and more so of the status of femininity and its expression through the body.

Her story resonated with my own experience growing up in a Jewish-Iraqi family of mostly strong women. I was eager as a young woman, to find out more about female sexuality. The open and "dirty" sexual conversation the women in my expanded family had away from men's ears, crossed generations, but not patriarchal borders. Female sexuality was always explained through males' desires—what men want and how to provide it. When I asked about female desires, I was met with embarrassment and silence. This became a great journey of inquiry outside of traditional family and cultural structures. The west provided vast anatomic and feminist knowledge, but the barriers of individual based society and the centrality of the mind-body split within gendered power relations in western culture still functions as barriers through which intimate knowledge is blocked.

The intersectionality of sexuality is very important to change this reality. Women experience sexuality and patriarchic structures in different ways, depending on their political and cultural circumstances and standpoint. Thus, western feminists might also learn from women of other cultures, especially in the realm of intimate knowledges.

Indigenous studies have opened a door through which the possibility to imagine different structures has developed an awareness of different social structures and beliefs that have existed in the past. Indigenous oral history is reclaiming what was lost through colonialism. Through the memoirs of native and first nation people, as well as people like the American artist, George Catlin (Catlin, 2004) who traveled extensively from 1831 to 1837 among the native peoples of North America, we have some sense of the lives native people had. One of his major

documentations, that have come into new light with indigenous studies, revealed the existence of matriarchal societies and the distinction between five genders—what is called “the Two Spirit Tradition” to acknowledge more than one gender in a person and the belief that some people are born with both genders and are able to express them perfectly in different Native Americans tribes. It was only with the encounter of Spanish monks and puritans that these traditions were forcibly nearly eradicated (Meyer-Cook, 2008), and the absolute two genders was imposed on the tribes, with the corresponding notion of gender roles and the ideas of how and who a person should love.

Intimate knowledges are intimidating to structures of domination as they undermine the basic logic of domination. Women, and more so native women, are marginalized in western culture as passive victims. However, women have used their power in many ways in the context of anti-colonial struggles, not all of them involving weapons or guerilla warfare. African women's homes, as their legitimate private space, were used to keep tradition and native language alive. Palestinian women kept the history of the family alive within the house, as there were less and less legitimate public spheres (Españoli, as cited in Abdo & Lentin, 2002). This practice politicizes the private and casts maternity as a powerful tool in the political context.

As I quoted above, the Native American writer Kimberly M. Blaeser (1999) described stories migrating home, the connection of feminist thought to different cultures, the connection of history to intimate knowledge kept through the generation, is a way of surviving in this brutal times. The understanding that the personal is political is one of the most powerful tools we have for a social change.

In addition to interviewing teen girls, Peggy Orenstein (2016) has interviewed sex education instructors in high schools in the US. One sex education instructor is working on changing American discourse by consciously avoiding labels such as “good” and “bad,” “responsible” and “irresponsible,” and even “healthy” and “unhealthy” in her class. “Those are matter of personal

belief,” she says. “The idea of regret works regardless.” (Orenstein, 2016, P. 210) That is important because she teaches in communities that encompass a broad range of backgrounds and values.

“There’s no point of having a discussion about what is right. But reflecting on our feelings and actions, processing them, learning and moving on.” (Ibid. Ibid.) The instructor explains that this is a matter of choice as much as any other subject matter in life and in school, and as such - we need to practice it. Just like we practice mathematics, linguistics and the many other learning skills.

With this chapter I wish to acknowledge the different realities that exist in different political environment, as well as the effort done within a capitalist political economy to choose differently and to fight against offensive norms. It exhibits intimate justice as a real and possible decision, through first acknowledging, then imagining and follows in actions.

Conclusions

Intimate knowledge, not only in school curricula but also as a conversation between the generations, should enhance communication skills, reciprocity and connection. Intimate knowledge holds the possibility of promoting social justice. This might be perceived as utopian, since the public sphere of society is still extremely sexist and oppressive towards female and LGBTQ persons. However, I would like to offer this utopian possibility to imagine, feel and embrace different forms of sexual communication.

Intergenerational sexual communication has created a line of thought in which the understanding of differences and appreciating them might bridge different communities. From a feminist perspective and drawing on Foucault's critique of sexual discourse, we understand sexuality within the stratification of racialized and sexualized subjects. This does not mean that there is one invisible hand that directs our behaviors, but that ideologies, as explained in Jean Halley's work (2007), may embed themselves in taken-for-granted practices and normalizing belief systems, even when its aftermath harms.

Through this thesis, I have illustrated the ways in which the western belief system is built upon a dualistic logic that prevents complex identities to reveal them-selves and be empowered. The hegemonic political and economic structures in place, rewards the profitable and punishes initiatives that benefit all members of society. Political economy is a real and felt barrier for different cultures and genders in their quest to articulate their passions, desires, and belief systems.

In order for us to cross these invisible lines of division and stratification we must be aware of them first. Foucault claims: "Power must be analyzed as something which circulates [...] It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a

commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power.” (as cited in Halley, 2007, P. 7)

In her critical psychological work, Nirit Gordon (2015) uses the term “dissociation bind” to refer to the agreed silence women undertake in order to protect ourselves from directly communicating our collective trauma. Gordon reviews the work of grassroots women’s organization to break this bind and promote intergenerational communication and support. This is one way of visualizing borders in order to transgress and oppose them in pursuit of social, individual, and cultural healing and the beginning of a deep communication. Sex education policies can rise to this aim. They need not to be limited to reducing rates of adolescent pregnancies, diseases, and sexual activity, rather the goal should be to create a classroom environment that recognizes and contends with sexual desires, multiple knowledges, intimate justice, intersectionality, and the gender spectrum. In a feminist application of intimate knowledge, educators, parents, and students, across the gender spectrum, would confront and strive to suspend and even discard sexism, classism, and heterosexism inside and outside the classroom. Together, we can raise intimate knowledge to its deserving place in history as a tool for justice and healing.

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