

CONCLUSION

The question of language and education remains entangled in postcolonial India. The relationship between English and the vernacular, especially in the context of a national education, continues to be caught in a reductive and formulaic binary which stands in the way of a radical reconceptualization of education in the interest of social justice. My thesis is an endeavour to think through the relationship of English and the vernacular with education, the conditions which made these linkages possible, the forms these relationships have taken and the implications they have had for mass education in India. Caste critiques of education have attempted to reintroduce the differential access of various groups to education as a central concern. Drawing upon these critiques this thesis makes an effort towards finding a conceptual way out of the English/vernacular binary.

There is such a heavy investment in the vernacular issue in terms of tradition, culture, civilization and literature that a rethinking of the issue has become very difficult. This thesis is a part of an effort to reconceptualize the vernacular in ways which recognize that vernacularism, much like orientalism and anglicism, is a part of colonialism and is a site for the production of knowledge and power. Such an understanding would enable the dismantling of a reductive conflation of the vernacular with the popular. Working across the binary of English and the vernacular has also allowed the development of frames through which one might analyse the historical processes which

shaped the modernized national forms of the vernacular. It has also enabled the mapping of the manner of its collaboration and negotiation with English. Equally, such frames contribute to an analysis of the complicity between the vernacular and the national elite.

The crisis of English Studies debates have opened up the discipline for fresh inquiry and intervention with the recognition that a discipline establishes a certain form of knowledge through material practices such as reading, teaching and evaluation and that such a disciplinary 'form' of knowledge is political-historical and not merely literary-aesthetic. This thesis, in its analysis of the Compulsory English course has sought to extend the insights of the 'crisis' debates to English language teaching in the interest of a critical pedagogy. It is hoped that 'crisis' insights would in future research be extended to the vernacular also.

In this thesis there has been an endeavour to intervene in debates about the constitution of "merit." The easy equation of higher education with "merit" and "competence" in mainstream India has decentred the more crucial issue of access to education and the constitution of educational monopoly. I hope that my effort to track the constitution of "merit" would be part of a larger project to show how "merit" is neither a skill to be acquired nor a genetic predisposition, but a site where struggles of class, caste, community and gender are staged.