

Challenges for the New Century

Schools for All and Narrowing Gaps through Transformation Pedagogies

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Abstract

Have Pedagogy Studies addressed the concerns of Gender and Education? If so, how? What are the outcomes? At the turn of the twentieth century, both gender and educational values were questioned and revised. The consequences of those reflections and of the battles fought to improve conditions are beginning to be felt a hundred years later. This paper will first include an overview of the situation of women in education worldwide. Second, it will focus on the transformational pedagogical approaches that are gradually making their way into mainstream educational systems and are underpinned by the principles of democracy, dialogue, carnival, experimentation and (socio)construction, on the one hand, and by neuroscience and psychology on the other, in as much as these approaches challenge discrimination and favour bridge building, not only across genders, but also across ethnicities and social classes.

Key words: schools, gender, transformation, pedagogy, psychology, neuroscience.

Resum

La pedagogia ha tractat la qüestió de gènere i d'educació? I si és el cas, de quina manera? Quins han estat els resultats? Tant el valor de l'educació com el de gènere foren qüestionats i revisats al començament del segle xx. Els resultats d'aquelles reflexions i les batalles lluitades per millorar les condicions, comencen a sentir-se cent anys més tard. Aquest article inclourà primerament una visió general de la situació de la dona en l'educació en l'àmbit mundial. En segon lloc, se centrarà en els enfocaments pedagògics transformacionals que de manera gradual comencen a introduir-se en els sistemes educatius convencionals —també en algunes universitats i programes de traducció—, secundats d'una banda pels principis de democràcia, diàleg, carnaval, experimentació i (socio) constructivisme, i per la neurociència i la psicologia de l'altra. És evident que aquests enfocaments desafien la discriminació i afavoreixen la creació de ponts, no tan sols entre gèneres, sinó també entre etnicitats i classes socials.

Paraules clau: escoles, gènere, transformació, pedagogia, psicologia, neurociència.

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Summary

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We must not believe the many, who say that only free people ought to be educated, but we should rather believe the philosophers who say that only the educated are free.

Epictetus, AD 55-c.135

One hundred years ago, the challenge of educational authorities was to take all children off the streets, girls and boys. Priority was given, however, to boys' education. This is still the case in many parts of the world. Not so in Western countries where, at the turn of the 21st century, the levels of Primary School enrolment for both are high, reaching 100% in most areas. There remains, however, much to be done so that the focus on access does not leave quality aside. For instance, discrimination, subtle and blatant, still remains in teaching methods that are mainly transmissionist and power-based —also, or perhaps, especially, at some universities—; many pupils leave school without mastering a minimum set of cognitive and non-cognitive skills, and, intriguingly enough, many recent reports indicate a worrying level of underachievement for boys.

Schools for All. Girls, Women and Education in the World Today

If children are excluded from access to education, they are denied their human rights and prevented from developing their talents and interests in the most basic of ways.

UNESCO Report, 2003

At the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, the international community made the commitment that, by 2005, gender disparities in primary and secondary education should have disappeared and that, by 2015, complete gender equality should have been achieved. This is still an issue over 60 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) acknowledged the right to education for all and free access to elementary schools. Nowadays, 57% of the 104 million out-of-school

children are girls, and two-thirds of illiterate adults are women. The largest gaps remain in the Arab States, Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia.

The UNESCO Education for All Programme (EFA) establishes six goals of which the Education for All Development Index (EDI) measures four because of the difficulty to measure the last two quantitatively (UNESCO 2003: 11):

1. UPE (Universal Primary Education),
2. gender parity,
3. adult literacy,
4. quality of education.
5. increasing life-skills, and
6. early childhood education programmes.

Education quality is mainly assessed by establishing four indicators:

1. The number of students per teacher: in some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the ratio can be above 70, and in most parts of the world it is between 40-46. The ideal number according to Pedagogy Studies is 20-25.
2. Teacher training: in many countries teachers are not trained at all, whereas countries that have invested in training their teachers have high learning standards. I would like to add that the *kind* of training should also be considered here.
3. Public expenditures: half the countries for which data was available in the 2003 UNESCO Report allocated between 3.4% and 5.7% of the national income to education. This percentage could raise to 8% in OECD countries and Central and Eastern Europe.
4. Learning achievement: the benchmark for learning time is broadly agreed to be 800-1,000 hours per year, a ratio that is not reached in many countries. Moreover, pedagogical methods are generally too transmissionist, androcentric and power-based: steps are being taken to extend a more transformationist approach to teaching (see below) worldwide, mixing direct instruction, discovery and autonomous learning (UNESCO 2005: 23-29). Also, the importance of delivering initial instruction in the child's native tongue has been proved to correlate with lower dropout rates and the improvement of learning outcomes.

Several countries had improved their index by 2001, mainly those in North America and Western Europe, as well as Central and Eastern Europe. Most of Latin America is close to achieving the EDI, but values are very low in the Arab States, sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia (except the Maldives).

As to gender parity, it is measured with the Gender Parity Index (GPI), that is, the ratio between the female and male values for any given indicator. However, as gender equality is a more complex notion, this indicator can only give a partial view of developments. More qualitative indicators are needed to gather perceptions and expectations. It is a fact, though, that many girls are forced to abandon their studies—or cannot even start them—owing to several factors, mainly,

- traditional and stereotyped values that support the notion of girls staying at home and marrying at an early age, or of enslaving them to pay off debts or procure security for the family;
- hidden domestic labour: it is estimated that about 18% of children (211 million) between 5-14 are economically active;
- vulnerability to HIV/AIDS after sexual attacks in armed conflicts, exploitation, or sexual abuse in and outside schools: it has been shown that higher literacy rates lead to a decline in HIV/AIDS prevalence.

On the other hand, investing in girls' education improves overall labour outcomes, increases women's possibilities of acquiring employment, favours economic growth, better health and nutrition, reduced fertility and general advancement. According to the 2005 UNESCO Report (10, 41), gender parity is lowest in countries with a low number of female teachers, whereas gender-sensitive policies improve the quality of education. When women follow tertiary studies, they usually choose the field of education in the first place, followed by health and welfare, and then by humanities and the arts. Women generally account for 20% in engineering, business or economy studies.

So, what is the outlook for issues of gender and education worldwide after the effort to implement parity policies? Although many states will not meet adequate gender parity rates in 2005, or even in 2015, it is true that appropriate policies and strategies have been discovered on the way and can be applied to change circumstances. Governments have a fundamental role to play by enabling gender equality in education through legislative and policy reform, not least related to issues of child labour. It also appears that NGOs and most faith-based organisations are major contributors to education. School fees must disappear and infrastructures improved. Teachers should put into practice new pedagogical approaches, at all educational levels, that promote equality, democracy, and dialogue, as well as student-centred, gender-aware and fun learning classes. Finally, support from the international community is required. This may take the shape of programmes such as the Fast Track Initiative, an international partnership designed to speed up the UPE goal by 2015, launched by the World Bank/International Monetary Fund in 2002 and that now includes other regional banks and agencies, or it can introduce new ones to cover the expenses which need to be, at least, quadrupled to cover basic education in countries far from reaching the EDI.

Awareness of the problem exists, strategies have been tried out and new ones learnt on the way, backing from international communities and institutions has helped put into practice different projects worldwide... However, School for All is still very far away and, moreover, specific aspects of gender-awareness and, so, gender parity and education quality, can only be forefronted with the implementation of a pedagogy that does not draw from essentialist and androcentric principles, but that is sufficiently open to adapt to new circumstances in different parts of the world to students with divergent backgrounds and motivations.

Narrowing Gaps through Pedagogy: from Transmission to Transformation

I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.

Mark Twain (1835-1910)

I would now like to explore a transformationist approach to education that can also be adopted by Translation Studies, and that draws from a legacy that goes back a century, when both gender and educational values were questioned and revised. At the turn of the twentieth century, Industrialisation was seen by many as a means of hope for the poor. Reality, however, soon showed that more wounds were to be opened —and are often still kept so— by the prevalent discourse that emphasised the *breadwinner-homekeeper* dichotomy. Whilst middle and high class boys benefited from a wider access (quality is a different question) to education than girls, children from the lower classes lived in and off the streets, with high levels of mendacity, prostitution and delinquency. Means were sought to take the children off the streets and provide them with education at the same time as (questionable) laws were promulgated to enforce parents' obligations and reduce delinquency.

Also worryingly, existing educational trends were based on instrumental characteristics, usually considered to be «masculine», following mercantilist and hierarchical ethics: rationality, achievement, a highly power-based relationship between teachers and children, no interest whatsoever in learning styles or diversity, and the repression of emotions and instincts, considered «girlish» and weak. The transmission of «stable» meanings and facts from generation to generation was deemed the best teaching method, with the teacher as a figure of authority, unquestioned and unquestionable. Students were passive receptors, *objects*, of the teacher's «infallible» knowledge. Discussion and dialogue were absent: no space was procured for the children to become active critical *subjects*. At the same time, girls were forbidden to attend universities. School, certainly, as Mark Twain suggested, had little to do with Education.

Fortunately, at the same time, strong reactions appeared against this Transmissionist Approach, pointing towards ground-breaking concepts based on more expressive characteristics, traditionally considered as «feminine», such as coeducation, democracy, dialogue, carnival, constructivism, experimentation, group work and socialization. These have been making their way into mainstream educational systems in the last 30 years —by both women and men teachers— and are now complemented by discoveries in neuroscience and psychology. The foundations were laid by philosophers and educators a century ago. Prominent amongst them were

- a. John Dewey (1859-1952): His ideas on the connections between experience and reflection, on democracy so that all could «share in a common life», and the importance he attached to environments for learning influenced the development of informal education (1916, 1938).
- b. Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934): His ideas on the importance of play, of previous experiences, of socialisation and of emotion in development gave way to what

- we know as the socioconstructivist approach to learning: we construct meanings in society (1930, 1931, 1933).
- c. Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975): Though not a pedagogue, his emphasis on dialogue to do away with hierarchical power-based relationships, on carnival and the importance of the ludic paved the way for pedagogical approaches that include, for instance, Humanistic Principles, Neurolinguistic Programming and fun-learning (1981).
 - d. Maria Montessori (1870-1952): Her «multisensory teaching» was a prelude to current studies on Multiple Intelligences (Gardner 1996, Goleman 1996). As a physician, she developed an interest in so-called «non-educable» children and set up the *Casa dei Bambini* where she managed to raise questions related to traditional teaching and the many restrictions it forces upon the learner, with teaching methods based on respect, on exploring the senses and experimenting («looking becomes reading; touching becomes writing»), with as much open air activity as possible, by including families in school activities, finance-ment and organization, and by reorienting the teacher's role to that of an observer of the children's learning activities and processes from the periphery (1916, 1949).
 - e. Jean Piaget (1896-1980): He established the foundations of «constructivism» and of stages of development, based on his observation that we learn and think in different ways according to our age, and that knowledge is not a stable, objective truth, but can have different meanings for different people. Thus, we each construct it according to our own experiences and motivations. This led the way to approaches where respecting diversity, catering for students' needs, negotiating contents with the students and so on are central issues (1945, 1949, 1954).

There were many others who also played a vital role in advancement in the educational field and it is fair that their names are also mentioned here: Ellen Key, Paulo Freire, Ovide Decroly, Helene Pankhurst, Alexander Neill, Carl Rogers, Anna Freud, Célestin Freinet, Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia, Rosa Sensat, Ivan Illich, Frederic Skinner, David Ausubel, Pierre Bourdieu, or Michael W. Apple. We are greatly indebted to all of them.

This Transformative or Empowering Approach encompasses several others, all of which challenge discrimination and favour bridge building, not only across genders and learner styles, but also across ethnicities and social classes. They hold quite a few principles in common owing to their relatively shared origins, for they aim at *transforming* students —and the teacher— by *empowering* them. They react both against contents that are not meaningful —*what* is learnt— and against *how* these contents are taught enabling positive emotions and dialogue to surface. Thus, democracy in schools opened the way to dynamic, student-centred classes where meaning is negotiated and the teacher becomes a guide. The needs of the learners are taken into account while materials and techniques are devised to individualize work, that is, to allow all students in a class to work in different ways (route) and in their own time (rate) (Brumfit and Johnson (eds.) 1979, Gardner and Lambert

1972, Gardner *et al.* 1996, Holec 1979, Richards and Rodgers 1986/2001). Also, approaches that establish a correlation between a positive emotional environment and effective learning (Arnold 1999, Goleman 1996, González Davies 2004) brought about the development of classroom procedures such as Affective Programming with which students improve their self-image by means of several techniques which include visual, auditory and kinesthetic imagery, thus activating the right side of the brain.

Main amongst these —now not so new— pedagogical approaches that can be applied to translator training, either in an eclectic or in a narrow way, are the following:

1. the Communicative Approach
2. Collaborative and Cooperative learning
3. the Humanistic Approach
4. Neurolinguistic Programming
5. Multiple Intelligences Access
6. Emotional Intelligence Access
7. Neuroscience
8. Critical Pedagogy

Douglas Kellner's (2000) exposition of the aims of Critical Pedagogy may be read as the updated framework of the initial proposals presented over 100 years ago: «Critical pedagogy considers how education can provide individuals with the tools to better themselves and strengthen democracy, to create a more egalitarian and just society, and thus to deploy education in a progressive social change». For all Transformative pedagogies, education is considered to be linked with power, politics, history and culture as well as with questions about whose future, story, and interests the school represents. Here follow some points in common presented in alphabetical order for they are all deemed to be equally influential:

- | | |
|---|---|
| — Affectivity and the relevance of emotional intelligence | — Relating the world outside school with lesson contents |
| — Catering for the students' needs | — Research skills or learning to learn |
| — Cooperative and collaborative learning: Team work and interaction | — Respecting learning styles and diversity |
| — Fun learning | — Respecting multiculturalism and ethnicity |
| — Holistic learning | — Respecting multiple intelligences |
| — Interdisciplinarity | — Student-centred classes and democracy |
| — Learner autonomy | — The construction of knowledge according to individual backgrounds |
| — Lifetime formation | — The teacher as a guide and counsellor |
| — Motivation | |
| — Multisensory teaching | |
| — Problem-solving and cognitive development besides memorisation | |
| — Project work | |

Gender, education and (social) neuroscience

Walk through a contemporary toy store... what you find on the boys' side are the tanks and what you find on the girls' sides are the dolls. And separating out how much of that is an innate preference and how much of that is socially conditioned by the images and the expectations that children pick up on is a very difficult task.

Deborah Rhode (2004)

Have we now reached a point when a balance between transmissionist and transformative pedagogies has to be addressed? A further question arises when confronted by the fact of boys' underachievement in many western communities. Does it mean that we are now leaning towards more «feminine-oriented» pedagogies in such a way that, as Harry Daniels *et al.* suggest (2001: 112), «boys experience a contradiction between the cultural messages and practices associated with masculinity (competition and individuality) and the teaching practices typical of successful primary schooling (collaboration and codependency)»? To return to an old debate: could it be that, after all, biology is somehow influencing these negative results for boys?

Nowadays, most feminist theorists agree that whereas sex is based on relatively distinct biological factors, gender is a social construction. Until not so long ago, however, gender was believed to derive naturally from one's biological sex. In fact, there seems to be some truth in this as scientific discoveries, aided by fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging), confirm that brain structure, hormonal chemicals, etc. can be different in women and men. According to quite a few studies, differences exist in some areas whereas similarities are reported in others. For instance, research carried out in Canada has found that boys will compete for the sake of competition, but girls will not compete unless there is a potential reward (Motluk, 2002); Garland and Martin (2004) found that there was a difference in the learning style of online students and the students in face-to-face courses, and that gender was a factor in the relationship between learning style and student engagement; research still finds that boys do better at maths and girls do better at reading and writing (Helmstader *et al.* 2004, Kimura 2002, UNESCO 2003, 2005); also, the different reactions to emotional cues are being confirmed (Lee 2002, Dmitrieva 2003, Klein 2003). A relatively new area of research is *social* neuroscience, a field that explores how gender, kin, and social status —essential for reproduction and survival—, may have evolved specialized neural mechanisms to process social information (Insel *et al.* 2004). A cautionary note here: the fact that education may have incided on biological development cannot be left aside, as both are inextricably bound. And a question: is gender, then, a mixture of biological and social/cultural parameters? Is it possible to minimise biological differences and, instead, nourish the social traits that help narrow the gaps? Can both be reconciled in Pedagogy Studies? Can classroom procedures be designed to address these issues in translator training programmes?

Transformation procedures in Translation Training

I would like to suggest that it is certainly possible to design classroom procedures to address these issues in translator training programmes. What is more, I argue that, owing to its intercultural and interdisciplinary nature, the field of Translation Studies is especially well-suited to explore the subject of gender and education in different cultures as rendered through the different texts that students and full-fledged translators alike have to translate. Moreover, Gender Studies in translation rebel against patriarchal metaphors of the type *les belles infidèles* which imply that the original text is masculine and the translation is feminine, man and wife, domineering and dominated. Correspondingly, the domination images are similar in postcolonial writings and can be traced back to Derrida's (1979, 1985) subversion of the autonomy of the original text, questioning the need for fidelity and underlining instead the equal relation established between writer and translator. From a practical point of view, reflections such as these help raise awareness regarding the translator's status and move away from considerations that his or her work is derivative or secondary (González Davies 2004: 105).

Here follows a task that I develop in my classes to trigger discussions on both the issue at hand and translation. While carrying it out, students explore the characteristics of thrillers and romances, become aware of stereotypes in popular fiction, explore different points of view through translation, practise translation of popular fiction after analysing its main characteristics, peer edit and practise resourcing skills, especially with parallel texts (González Davies 2004: 106-109):

Who's Who: Literature for Men or for Women?

- a) A week before starting to work on the topic, the students are asked to look for original texts and translations of so-called *thrillers* (supposedly for men) and of *romances* (supposedly for women).
- b) In pairs, the students read the title, and the first and last page of the books they have found and discuss style and content. Are there any differences?
- c) The students then receive a copy of a worksheet similar to the one below and work on the answers.

The following explanations and samples may serve as a starting point for a small group and/or class discussion (see also Lakoff and Scherr 1975, 2000; Nash 1990; Mills 1997; Tannen 1990):

- *Thrillers*: in thrillers, the protagonist becomes a technological and scientific «expert» who can solve desperately complicated problems. This he does *alone*. The style is journalistic and events are expressed in such a way that the reader becomes an «insider». The problems are big, and situations and solutions are described in *every* detail, like inventories.
- *Sample*: opening paragraph from *Red Alert* written by Alastair MacNeill (1991).

Neo-Chem Industries Italian plant was situated near the A24 motorway, halfway between Rome and Tivoli. The complex, hidden from the road by a pine grove planted in the 1950s when the land belonged to the army, was surrounded by a 15-foot perimeter fence and patrolled by armed guards, most of whom were ex-police-men lured away from the Carabinieri by the company's lucrative wage prospects.

- *Romances*: emotions and relationships are at the core of women's romances. They are conveyed basically through descriptions of *appearance*: dress, mirrors and, especially, faces; of *settings*, especially landscapes, houses, gardens and their elements; of *activities*, usually minor and commonplace: of actions, especially walking, looking or responding; of *emotions* and *sensations*, abstract and corporeal.
- *Sample*: opening paragraph from *Tilly Trotter Widowed* by Catherine Cookson (1982).

Mrs. Matilda Sopwith stood against the ship's rail and watched the waters darken as the sun slipped behind the rim of the horizon [...] She swung her mind away from her husband and sent it spinning fast into the future that would begin on the morrow when the boat docked. She'd be met by her brother-in-law, John Sopwith, and his wife, Anna, both young, little more than a boy and a girl, at least to her mind; and there was no doubt that they would shower her with affection because she knew they were truly fond of her, for hadn't she been the means of bringing them together; two people who felt themselves scarred with defects over which they had no control, for what control had a young girl over hideous birthmarks? Perhaps in the man's case there was some measure for control for his cross was merely a bad stammer.

Sample worksheet

1. Do the following belong to thrillers or to romances? Justify your answers and translate the extracts bearing in mind ideology, lexis and style.
 - a. «I'll be back»
 - b. Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again. It seemed to me I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive, and for a while I could not enter, for the way was barred to me.
 - c. «My dear,» said Axel to me in a voice of ice. «I have asked you twice to leave the room. I trust I do not have to ask you a third time.»
 - d. In a broad Moscow street not two hundred yards from the Leningrad station, on the upper floor of an ornate and hideous hotel built by Stalin in the style known to the Moscovites as Empire During the Plague, the British Council's first ever audio fair for the teaching of the English language and the spread of British culture was grinding to its excruciating end.

KEY: a. Arnold Schwarzenegger in James Cameron's *Terminator 3* / b. *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier / c. *The Shrouded Walls* by Susan Howatch / d. *The Russia House* by John Le Carré.

2. Choose TWO of the extracts, one belonging to a thriller and another to a romance, and either rewrite them in English or translate them *from the opposite point of view* (i.e. translate the thriller as if it were a romance and viceversa).
3. Read the text «Romance in Cartlandia» by Peter Thomas below and translate it. Alternatively, if you have any suggestions regarding the way in which you would like to translate it, you may comment on them with your teacher.

Romance in Cartlandia by Peter Thomas

THERE'S a theory that romantic fiction provides escapism from the grimness of real life. Forget it. Look into the novels of Barbara Cartland and you know romance means imprisonment.

In Cartlandia «escape» is always into the clutch of a patronising male. This has nothing to do with Love. Her heroines are fragile, vulnerable dimwits, and her heroes are dominant, square-shouldered and strong. And a woman needs a protecting man. It's not just in plot and character that the fiction is steeped in cliché. Gender permeates the language, too. In Cartlandian narrative even the prepositions reinforce the stereotypes. The girl is always looking *up* into the guy's eyes and he is always looking *down* into hers. His arms are always *around* her and her hands are *upon* his chest or reaching *up* to his neck. When it comes to passionate encounters of the labial kind, *his* lips are always on *hers*. What pretends to be romance is really the uniting of male superiority with female inferiority: the prepositions reflect the propositions. [...]

Recapitulating: Challenges for a New Century

A school should not be a preparation for life. A school should be life.

Elbert Hubbard

1. Commitments have been made and programmes are under way to try to implement Education for All. However, much remains to be done. No society can keep half its population from a basic education and an understanding of its developments. Education is empowerment and both men and women should have a right of access.
2. Access, however, is not enough. Quality should form part of the improvement programmes, too, in the shape of pedagogical approaches that include procedures to favour democracy, gender parity, emotional education, learning to work with others, and address issues related to ethnicity and social class. Quality also implies improving cognitive processes such as problem-solving, memorisation, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
3. Improving emotional intelligence is as relevant to education as developing multiple intelligences.

4. Although at the turn of the twentieth century, informed voices upheld that a more humane education was needed for both boys and girls, it has only been in the last thirty years that these ideas have really begun to enter mainstream education and the media.
5. Whilst, during the first half of the twentieth century, an education that implemented «masculine» attributes such as competition, aggressivity, hierarchy, vertical power-based relationships, or rationality was paramount, it seems that we are now going towards an education that highlights more «feminine» characteristics, namely, emotional intelligence, collaboration, respect for diversity and for intelligences considered as second-rate, etc. Problems may arise if only one or other approach is implemented. Boys' underachievement, for instance, may be one of them. It seems that both approaches should coexist and adapt to circumstances and students.
6. For years, feminism has held that gender is only a social construct. Scientific research helped by advances in fMRI is showing that biological differences do exist. Therefore, this stance may have to be, not substituted, but revised, to include biology, for research also points to the fact that education, both at school and in the parenting patterns adopted in families and in society, plays a crucial role in establishing gender-based behaviour.
7. In spite of tentative advances in the direction of implementing Transformation or Empowering approaches to education, they are still not widespread enough. Besides, there still exists an ironical gap between what is done in this kind of learning environments and what is tested. Testing and evaluating are still based on transmissionist principles. Changes are needed in this area to reconcile both approaches.
8. Finally, we could say that Pedagogy Studies *have* tried to put forward alternative options to the Transmissionist Approach that aim at building bridges and reconciling positions instead of widening gaps, and that procedures can be designed in translator training programmes to explore these issues. Many challenges, however, still remain.

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