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'Worldly' pedagogy: a way of conceptualizing teaching towards global citizenship

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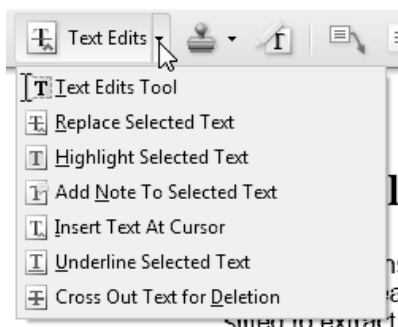
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‘Worldly’ pedagogy: a way of conceptualising teaching towards global citizenship

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In this paper, we discuss the characteristics of a form of pedagogy capable of addressing differences across nations and cultures in ways that do not inflate differences. We suggest that those conceptual insights are particularly relevant to the teaching of ‘global citizenship’. We have labelled this a ‘worldly’ pedagogy, because of the connection to teaching in a global context, and with reference to Arendt’s concept of ‘worldliness’ and the ‘worldly’ experience of human beings in their plurality sharing a ‘common world’. Our conceptual framework results from our analysis of a specific educational environment which we investigated through a small grant obtained from the Higher Education Academy (UK) that examined the pedagogies used to promote learning amongst two polarised (Palestinian and Israeli) communities. We carried out eight interviews with participants to this programme and report on the outcomes of this study. This paper contributes to the debate on tribal identities through the challenge it offers to positions on difference that display rigid essentialising identity readings and to homogenising discourses that fail to appreciate the differences within cultures/nations/groups.

Keywords: global citizenship; multiculturalism; reflexivity; identity; worldly pedagogy

Introduction

In this paper, we discuss the characteristics of a form of pedagogy capable of addressing differences across nations and cultures, and we relate those conceptual insights to the teaching of ‘global citizenship’, an activity in which many universities are presently engaged – in Europe in particular where the teaching of ‘global awareness’ or ‘understanding across cultures’ is often an explicit intention of the curriculum. We do this with reference to a specific educational environment which we investigated through a small grant obtained from the Higher Education Academy (UK) that examined the nature of the pedagogies used to promote learning amongst two polarised (Palestinian and Israeli) communities (Cousin and Fanghanel 2009). The empirical research is not reported in full details; it was mined to support our conceptual thinking, the main points of which concern the theories of knowledge and of identity and difference, underpinning the pedagogy we examine in this paper.

We have labelled this a ‘worldly’ pedagogy, because of the connection to teaching in a global context, and with reference to Arendt’s (1958) concept of ‘worldliness’

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and the ‘worldly’ experience of human beings in their plurality sharing a ‘common world’. Arendt’s double emphasis on the experience of sharing a common world, and of the human plurality inherent in that sharing, befits our argument and our reluctance to embrace inflated apprehensions of difference:

Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear. Under the conditions of a common world, reality is not guaranteed primarily by the ‘common nature’ of all men who constitute it, but rather by the fact that, differences of position and the resulting variety of perspectives notwithstanding, everybody is always concerned with the same object. (Arendt 1958, 57)

In an Arendtian spirit we argue that plurality is a necessary property of the human condition and can be harnessed in the pedagogical process against the backdrop of the common world that human beings share. This is explored in the details of this paper. Our ‘worldly’ pedagogy also draws on a range of concepts such as that of a ‘third space of enunciation’ (Bhabha 1994) – an ambivalent and turbulent space that confounds binary epistemologies and emerges from exposure to cultural dissonances; ‘deliberative democracy’ (Nixon 2004) – a space for rational deliberation; and cosmopolitanism (Hill 2000) as a refusal to adhere to ‘blood identity’ scripts (Hill 2009). It also contains a post-constructivist view of knowledge inspired by the work of social realist theorists – Young (2008) in particular.

To unfold our argument we first summarise the main characteristics of the empirical study. We then extrapolate from this to propose a normative framework for the teaching of global citizenship with reference to the current dominant theoretical positions on apprehending cultural difference in the context of global citizenship education. Broadly, and schematically at this stage, we locate our argument between two polar positions – on the one hand, a post-colonial perspective in which the bridging of difference is seen as an export of Western values to the rest of the world (e.g. Andreotti et al. 2010), and on the other, a relatively unproblematised multiculturalism which we think characterises many initiatives (e.g. see a review of this literature by Caruana and Spurling 2006).

Global citizenship

Global citizenship comprises a view of *citizenship* and a view of *globalisation* – or rather many views. Of both concepts, there are multiple definitions. Globalisation is a particularly contested concept with economic, technological and political components and significant interrogations on the nature and direction of cultural and economic ‘flows’ across the globe (Rizvi 2007). In the context of higher education, it refers to very diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives (Apple, Kenway, and Singh 2005; Bourn 2008; King 2004; Lingard and Ozga 2007). As indicated above, global citizenship education can be understood from at least two polarised points of view: (1) in a post-colonial perspective, as an attempt at Westernising the world – applying Western values and concepts to non-Western contexts, a form of neo-universalism, and (2) in a perspective mindful of this ‘danger’, a multiculturalist approach underpinned by a respect for cultural difference and ‘indigenous’ scripts and by a promotion of local cultures and local knowledges

(Andreotti et al. 2010; Spivak 1999). These approaches are premised on dichotomous epistemologies – where knowledge and values are presented as binary alongside a West/non-West axis. They emphasise ‘difference’ and do not pay justice to the complex heterogeneity of cultures which cannot be fully rendered by opposing the West and the non-West (Cousin 2011; Nussbaum 2000). They also leave aside any question of an economic or financial nature – neither of which are absent from any preoccupation with global citizenship education. The aspiration to educate graduates with reference to global issues is often framed from within a broader ‘internationalisation’ agenda (Knight 2004; Ritchie 2006). The approaches to achieve a global outlook (or internationalisation) are reflected in various curricular interventions that rarely problematise the cultural and moral issues inherent in the mutual exposure of home and international students to difference (Caruana and Spurling 2006).

Carter (2001) in a study of the concept of ‘global citizenship’ has established that it carries at least three meanings – firstly, in a neoliberal view, the citizen is a consumer with individual rights and the emphasis is on must-haves and entitlement; secondly, a concept of citizenship based on the liberal nineteenth century view which emphasises a political role within a nation, highlighting rights as well as duties, and notions of social responsibility and universal democratic values; thirdly, a view of the citizen as an activist, being engaged in global economic debates, green issues, social justice, world poverty, etc., briefly as an agenda addressing the failings of neoliberalism – what Falk (1994, 139) has called ‘globalisation from below’ – which focuses on agentic and local ‘indigenous’ manifestations and local responses to structural flows inherent in ‘globalisation from above’. Increasingly too, and perhaps inevitably, there has been a focus on the moral dimension and an emphasis on education that opens the mind to basic rights of humans (Nixon 2011; Nussbaum 2000; Sen 1999; Walker 2006). We argue specifically in this paper for a position that is a counterpoise to understandings of difference which privilege voice. We consider that voice localises individuals and anchors them in what Beck has called the ‘national prison theory of human existence’ (Beck 2006, 12) and is therefore not empowering. The worldly pedagogy we discuss here seeks to open that prison’s doors.

The Dove programme

With this perspective on global citizenship education, we set out to examine as a case study from which we were able to extrapolate conceptual understandings for global education, an original educational enterprise bringing Palestinian and Israeli students to a programme of study in the UK for a period of three years. The Dove programme offered equal numbers of Israeli and Palestinian students a chance to study in the UK for a first degree over a period of three years. The programme was directed at ‘gifted’ individuals who had been through a selection process that takes place in the region, and the main aims of the programme were to develop participants’ leadership skills in anticipation of their future careers, whilst promoting dialogue across the two communities and fostering mutual respect and cooperation in the pursuit of peace. The regular academic programme was complemented by a ‘cultural programme’ which provided students with an opportunity to (re-)examine the culture and history of the two nations through lectures, seminars, informal visits and entertainment. To our knowledge there is no example elsewhere of such an enterprise, although there exist many recreational or service-based cross-conflict

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programmes for children and young adults which include an educational dimension (Sugden 2006). The main characteristics of the Dove programme were the following:

- It took place over a long period of time and therefore generated long-term contact for members of two communities in conflict.
- It took place in 'real time' in terms of the ongoing conflict but in a space remote from it.
- It was directed at young adults whose identities were already substantially shaped by familial and community influences.
- It offered a mixture of regular academic activities and a social and cultural programme.
- Students were living on campus, sharing the same accommodation space.

The study

The case we studied offers an extreme example which places in sharp relief the issues we discuss and which we think have wider application. Dramatic examples such as the Dove Project provide opportunities for envisioning other options and unthought-of potentialities. We therefore considered that it might yield lessons in respect of the educational dynamics that permitted the physical, intellectual and emotional co-location of this group of students and of their journeying through the complex political, religious and cultural issues they had to face in the course of this experience. This specific example can usefully inform a reflection on global citizenship education because it provided an educational space rooted in strong and conflicting national and religious histories and identities as well as an opportunity to reflect on how respondents' views could move from one way of seeing the world to multiple ways of seeing it, without emphasising relativistic epistemologies. It also provided an opportunity to reflect on the impact of identity scripts in the process of shifting to multiple views.

Our research was based on documentary analysis (programme aims, course content, minutes, etc.) and a sample of eight respondents (four on either side of the conflict) who volunteered to be interviewed, from a cohort of 16. This sample included one female and seven male students, a gender balance that reflected the cohort's. Whilst it appears to be easier for male students to access this opportunity to study abroad, the issue of gender was not specifically investigated in this study. All students on the cohort were contacted; our intention was to interview an equal number of students from both provenances, and the sample represents those who volunteered to take part in this research project. Our research focus was on the meanings respondents had made of their experiences. We undertook in-depth interviews lasting between one and two hours, in which we sought to elicit a recall of the respondents' 'lived' experience, including descriptions of specific teaching strategies used on the programme, with systematic reference to the context in which learning was taking place – both locally at the university and through their distant or real link to the 'region' of conflict. We explored significant learning moments, events and experiences and elicited narratives about respondents' own motivations, perspectives about the conflict and changes experienced during their three years as students in the UK. When it came to data analysis, instead of the customary *verbatim*

transcription of interviews, we used Walford's method of repeatedly listening to the recorded interviews. His view is that this allows for a stronger sense of the event and avoids fetishising the transcript (Walford 2001); this method was also chosen because one of us only carried out the interviews and thus it had the added value of providing an effective way for the second researcher to get close to the understandings that come from a live conversation (intonations, silences, hesitations, humour, etc.). The themes which emerged as we listened to the data files were used to code the data horizontally (i.e. across all eight sets of interviews) and from this we derived our overarching notion of a 'worldly' pedagogy. We avoid any reference to gender in our report of respondents' accounts to protect the anonymity of the only female respondent in this sample. Respondents' nationality is only reported when it adds to a reader's understanding of the issues discussed.

Liminal states for learning

The reported experience of the respondents of the Dove programme resonates with Stephen Frayn's play *Noises off* (Frayn 1982), which is about what happens backstage whilst actors are performing onstage. A crucial point – a factor which perhaps overshadowed all others in this study – was the existential hiatus in which respondents found themselves during this period of study in the UK. They were brought together into an educational experience in the UK, and yet in permanent contact with their regions through their families and friends, visits, media reports and the ubiquity provided by today's media. This programme took place in the context of a live conflict with periods of escalation in the hostilities. This created a troubling climate for some respondents as the 'noise' of the conflict was always an offstage presence. They found themselves at the same time within and outwith the conflict. The effect of the distant presence of the conflict cannot be underestimated:

There was never a time in my life when I was so involved in the conflict as while I was on the programme in England. Because here (in Israel)...you create some kind of boundary between you and the conflict to be able live in this situation, whereas in England there are so many things that are not the conflict, you can make space for it, you have more security to make space for it, and the programme really leads you to think about it, to give it room. (R4)

This created tensions and anxiety, as well as a sense of dislocation. Even without the presence of a live conflict, we would argue that behind every discussion about cultural, ethnic and racialised difference, there are 'noises off'; this is one reason why we think that whilst rational debate is useful in helping people shape and reshape their thinking, the listening to each others' narratives of difference is also a vital means by which affective experiences contribute to meaning-making.

Some respondents spoke of the loneliness of their return once they had graduated and returned home; they had changed but their situation, families and community had not; this created a disjunction, an anticlimax, a sense of not quite belonging anymore and of needing to be careful about what to say to whom. Both Israeli and Palestinian respondents found the re-entry experience very difficult and thought that some post-programme structure would have been useful. Although many arriving at the university had far from entrenched views of the conflict, they talked of feeling

disheartened, demotivated, of having their world view disrupted and of not fitting in. Those who returned to their region talked of the isolation and dislocation they felt there and of the difficulty they had in ‘filling-up the gap’; some turned to political or community engagement, others focused on their own careers and others have left their region to settle elsewhere. Those who had not yet gone back feared the time when they would have to and did not feel prepared for safe re-entry. Whilst this suggests that some kind of preparation might be needed to support that transition safely, it evokes the passing beyond a threshold that made going ‘back’ a near impossibility.

Whilst this describes an extreme learning environment, we argue that the cognitive disturbance emanating from physical dislocation with ‘the real world’ is an important factor in less severe circumstances too. A ‘worldly’ pedagogy takes account of this dissonance and harnesses it through ongoing debate and dialogue that provide a safe space for students and gradually develop their ability to apprehend plurality as richness. The fragile provisional equilibrium in which this educational experience takes place is inherent in the pedagogical experience examined here. It leaves us with a sense that learning is not a set of planned reified outcomes but always in a state of becoming – challenged at regular intervals by the intrusion of experiences or knowledge that contradict the transitory rational understandings respondents might reach in the process. To bring Arendt back into this discussion, one could suggest that this form of pedagogy has some inchoative virtue and that it provides students with the capacity for continual beginnings, the power to continuously start and restart. Linking this back to Augustine, Arendt talks of this as ‘natality’:

This beginning is not the same as the beginning of the world; it is not the beginning of something but of somebody, who is a beginner himself. (Arendt 1958, 177)

This is why we describe this pedagogy as provisional – constantly reappraising and making learning a project that is never fully accomplished.

Learning plurality in a common world

The study’s data surfaced a sense that the programme offered respondents opportunities for reflective listening and ways of developing informed argument and of apprehending each others’ arguments with ‘appreciative intelligence’ (Thatchenkery and Metzker 2006). We uncovered, in the course of the interviews, a form of empowerment that stemmed from students’ exposure to difference within an acute awareness of their commonalities (Arendt’s ‘common world’) – more specifically, their desire to consider a common future, their acknowledgement of the ‘partial’ understanding of the world they brought with them, their sense of the intractability of their cultural roots and the narratives they made of them. We reproduce here statements that illustrate that quiet sense of empowerment couched in terms that elicit the acquisition of the multiple perspectives mentioned earlier:

My opinions haven’t changed. But I’ve learnt to listen to the others and sometimes understand their point of view. [...] We built a kind of bridge of how to avoid blaming each other and how to try and reach a common agreement with each other – not necessarily making each other happy. (R1)

I didn't expect to make a change in their mindset but at least to learn that there are people in Gaza who are willing to make peace with them. This is the only thing that I think I achieved. [...] [I have learnt] that when we deal with people about the conflict, we should not deal with the Israeli community as one whole body. (R3)

When I see things, when I hear about things I have lost the ability to think about it only from the Israeli point of view. (R4)

If both of you know different things it is hard to do something but if both of you know certain things which are alike and you see it together, and maybe agree that those are the facts, then maybe you can do something. (R5)

The programme we investigated had been beset with a number of practical problems, mainly linked to its management and the management of expectations in respect of its outcomes – particularly in relation to its culminating in a practical project that was meant to provide the transition back into the 'real' world at the end of the three years. This had to an extent marred the experience of students, and all of them mentioned this impediment, some more vocally than others. We were therefore surprised to find that, despite those disappointments, students had become reflective and articulate about the way they perceived their position and that of participants from 'the other side' (a term anchored in participants' register and used by nearly all respondents to designate their co-learners on the programme), as illustrated above.

The programme clearly provided space for students to understand the complexity of the stakes, of the competing narratives that emerged, of their linkages to specific histories and identities and of divided interpretations. This appeared to be achieved through what Hill (2000) has called a 'dialectics of distantiation and participation'. In Hill's formulation (2000, 35), this requires that students explore their situatedness (cultural, socio-economic, gendered, etc.) but then 'forget' this for a posture of 'critical distancing' from origins and formative experiences. Jason Hill locates his reflection beyond the post-colonial/West-centrism question, in terms of what he calls 'a dialectics of *participation* and *distantiation* vis-à-vis our communities and others'. He states:

Participation allows us to determine which of the customs, mores and ways of being-in-the-world we choose to retain after rational inquiry into their natures and social value. Distantiation provides the critical space to stand back and question, examine, and criticize and also discover the multiplicity of forces that constitute our background world and situatedness'. (Hill 2000, 35)

This is an *ideal* posture and we do not want to overstate the extent to which students achieved it given the turbulent context in which they were seeking critical distance. Sometimes, especially as they returned to their place of origin during the summer holidays, respondents were pulled back to a master narrative that was side-taking, as in the following comment from a Palestinian respondent:

When you return, even for one week, you will never hear of one day without any killing. So in this kind of situation, what can you tell your friends? What can you tell people? Do you say 'I was with some Israeli who want to make peace'? If they are educated, they will laugh. Or it can be a little bit more dangerous. Some people would have no problem of accusing me or any other Palestinians to be working for the Israeli. So these experiences are hidden in myself. (R3)

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Clearly this example is within a deeply troubling context of warfare. That said, taking a position that is at a distance from one's tribe is always going to involve grappling with what Perkins (1999) calls 'troublesome knowledge'. We suggest that this turbulence is the bearer of change – metamorphosis – that cannot be 'undone'. The diversity celebrations which are in vogue in many universities often dodge this troublesomeness and the powerful experiences that could be generated through some harnessing of the challenges it offers. Universities are places where people gather from all parts of the globe (and this is not just an international/home student divide), and this is a golden opportunity to provide spaces for critical engagements with readings of diversity. The university offers a cosmopolitan reality that can be exploited for a cosmopolitan outlook in which encounters with difference can harness the 'supercomplex' (Barnett 2000) and produce perhaps an apprehension of the plural richness, a space described by Arendt (and in her work populated by speech and action) as 'where people are *with* others and neither for nor against them – that is, in sheer human togetherness' (Arendt 1958, 180).

Acquiring a sense of the complexity and multidimensionality in the positions held 'on the other side' brings epistemic maturity and the tools to convey that maturity. This is a significant achievement in the extreme context we describe. The difficulty of being reflexive about such emotionally invested issues cannot, however, be underestimated. Some respondents, like the experience of the Palestinian respondent quoted above, suggested that they experienced a form of cognitive dissonance as they were exposed to narratives that competed with their beliefs and knowledge:

If you are educated in the Jewish narrative, you are born in it, and that's what they teach you, you don't have a choice. The programme allows that there are different narratives, and then make up you mind about those different narratives. (R2)

The empowerment that was achieved was inextricably linked to a sense that something almost irremissible was attached to their own personal narratives, anchored in their cultures, religions and upbringings – a 'Jewish narrative' for example – that needed to be remitted to ensure progress on this journey. Such for example, the inability to then see only from 'a Jewish perspective'. The intractability of their provenance scripts and the difficulty in achieving the distantiation of which Hill speaks was manifest:

When you live in Gaza, all that you think about is how to pass your day, how to manage to think about your evening, the maximum you will do is think about tomorrow. You will never think about the future. So life in Gaza makes your ambitions very limited. So the fact that I came here, I managed to do many things that I would never have been able to do in Gaza, it opened my eyes on the world. (R1)

Every time I had to go back, I felt a lot of frustration and to some extent I didn't want to be part of the programme anymore. It is really hard because you go there and you see things, then you come back here and you hear people speaking about different things. (R5)

At other times, respondents showed that they had managed to take a distance from their narrative or at least to grasp the problems of narrative affiliation, as the above Palestinian respondent continues:

Being born in a conflict zone makes you stronger it makes you stronger in life, you know how to deal with challenges and obstacles, but also it takes a bit of your humanity. Because you stop regarding people as humans, you start regarding them as targets and objects. (R1)

We now turn to a reflection on the nature of knowledge in this context of global citizenship education, mainly to emphasise that the 'global' question is not merely about culture, identity and religion, which very often it is reduced to.

Empowering theories of knowledge

The form of pedagogy we are examining here encourages deliberation and reflection, and therefore has some connection with the concept of 'deliberative democracy' (Nixon 2004) which is based on the view that debate must be informed and fed by expertise. Whilst we do not subscribe to the rationalist drift in some models of deliberative democracy – and stress the important role of affect in mitigating, challenging and paradoxically furthering deliberation – there were promising features of deliberative democracy in the Dove programme. We argue, however, that what was underpinning this deliberative space was a complex theory of knowledge, combining experiential knowledge, through access to narratives about each other's lives, and what Young (2008) has called 'powerful knowledge', which is abstract, subject-based knowledge that has been peer-reviewed and validated and is independent of context (such as Newton's theory of gravitation or Archimedes' principle). From his 'social realist' theoretical position, Young argues *inter alia* for a refocus in the curriculum on knowledge that transcends context and history:

[...] the approach to knowledge and the curriculum that I am arguing for is realist because it recognizes the context-independent characteristics of knowledge, and that the powerful discontinuities between knowledge and common sense are not some transient separation to be overcome in the future, but the real conditions that enable us to gain new knowledge about the world. Knowledge is socially and historically constructed, but it cannot be subsumed into the processes of historical and social construction; in other words, we make knowledge out of knowledge. (Young 2008, 63)

Without necessarily endorsing the social realist position in its entirety, we argue for an emphasis in the curriculum on this type of knowledge. In pressing for an engagement with formal knowledge, we are not wishing to dismiss localised or experiential knowledge as such, rather we are arguing against an exclusive reliance on it. In our view, the richness of the Dove programme lay in the combination of narrative making/listening and engagement with formal knowledge.

On the Dove programme, one significant benefit repeatedly identified by respondents was the strengthening of their understandings of the social, cultural, historical and political issues in the Middle East. The students attended lectures by distinguished academics in the field and felt enlightened by these and the discussions that followed. Indeed, respondents indicated that the programme had given them the tools for developing and sustaining an argument, making a point, actively listening to other perspectives, reflecting on the meaning of what was said and coming to informed judgements about the issues discussed. They indicated that they were better able to describe and analyse the conflict 'using vocabulary that was less emotional'

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(R2). They reported being able to articulate their own points of view (R3); developing listening skills (R3); the tools to argue (R5); learning that enabled dialogue (R6); learning to discuss (R7). This abstract knowledge was empowering:

I never had the confidence to express my views because they were not based on knowledge of the history of the conflict and of the region; and also because of my own my cultural heritage, the things I was born into, that I grew up with but never really analysed academically and spiritually as well. (R7)

In the meantime, access to what the following respondent calls ‘history’ (as denoting the narratives of other students on the programme concerning their life’s experience) provided that ability to accommodate emotional and practical understandings of other points of view:

I learnt a lot more about Israeli society and I learnt how I can connect to the other side better... I started to understand how they think... The history part of it was very important too, not kind of lecturing... it wasn’t really information I was looking for but more for the narratives. It was a very good experience to understand these narratives in terms of how you think about me, and how I think about you, these kinds of things. (R8)

From the testimonies of respondents, we identified as a vital ingredient the power to resist partisan, national or racialised arguments by pointing to the common humanity shared across and within the two communities:

When I see things, when I hear about things I have lost the ability to think about it only from the Israeli point of view [...] I really believe in humanising the conflict – putting humanistic values back into the system instead of the nationalistic values that control it now on both sides. (R4)

Physically encountering ‘the other side’, often for the first side, hearing narratives that problematised respondents’ beliefs and challenged their understanding of the history of the conflict contributed to this humanisation. Through this, respondents enhanced their emotional capital and their appreciation of internal variation and complexity.

A worldly pedagogy

Having established the presence of this complex set of tensions in the educational environment we studied, we now set out to state more fully what traits the pedagogy used on the programme offered that enabled a journey away from provenance scripts towards an understanding of plural scripts, what one of our Israeli respondents called ‘being in a third camp’ or a Palestinian respondent described as: ‘There is a lot of grey and very small black and white’ (R2). We have labelled this a ‘worldly’ pedagogy. As indicated earlier, it is inspired by Arendt’s notion of worldliness and its reminiscence of Heidegger’s ‘being in the world’. For Arendt worldliness is a characteristic of human life in its plurality and inherent in the experience of sharing a common world that is not ‘unified’ because that would imply reducing it to a common denominator. Worldliness is also a fragile concept, as humankind also contains (through totalitarianism and weapons of mass destruction for example) the

possibility of destroying humankind – what Arendt calls ‘worldlessness’ (Arendt 1958, 54):

The end of the common world has come when it is seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective. (Arendt 1958, 57)

A worldly pedagogy embodies in the same space this precariousness and this plurality. It harnesses dissonances and tensions inherent in a learning space that is not dissociated from the real world, and yet not so anchored into tribalism and localism that its ‘rootedness’ impedes its progress. It seeks to educate towards an understanding of global questions in the context of a common world shared by plural human beings, in which plurality is a condition for the world’s sustainability. It is predicated on a desire to empower students through understandings of that plurality outside of the dualistic perspectives of West/non-West apprehensions of culture and without resorting to relativistic theories of knowledge.

A worldly pedagogy is about critical engagement with difference, in a context of continuing questioning of beliefs and positionings. Learning is never fully achieved, always in the making, or as suggested earlier, always at its beginning. The environment it generates is one where the internal dynamics inherent in the group collide with the realities of the world directly or indirectly – a dialectics of distantiating and participation. This kind of pedagogy creates spaces for learning that combine criticality, reflexivity and the shaping of intellectual openness. We believe it opens up a path towards new understandings of cultural difference which dis-embed identity from nationalistic or provenance scripts, and resolutely position universities as places of searching. It empowers students by freeing them from Beck’s prison to find their freedom in an Ardentian perspective through the capacity to always begin and by exposure to knowledge, contradiction and the experience of others.

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