Cosmopolitan Education and Inclusion

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Human Engagement and the Self

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Foreword

It is generally accepted that public education was first created in Western societies to do two things: create workers for the newly emerging industrial economy that required at least minimal levels of literacy and numeracy; and forge a common citizenry out of the desperate peoples found in modern nation-states. In both cases homogeneity was regarded as very important; workers needed common skill sets and attitudes, and citizens needed to be weaned away from their socio-cultural particularities into compliance and loyalty to the nation-state. The forces of colonialism and neo-colonialism saw these approaches to education spread well beyond the so-called West.

While there has been considerable critique of the industrial and homogenising nature of public schooling around the world, the general template has proven quite resilient and largely persists to this day. The authors of this book for example, are critical of the "neo-liberal ideology in modern education" which is both narrowly focused on producing workers and is dismissive of local and diverse perspectives. In the jurisdiction where I live, the provincial government recently released a discussion paper on public education which criticises the original industrial model but begins with the sentence: "Our province needs a literate, numerate, critical thinking, problem-solving, workforce if we're going to succeed" (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2019, p. 3). It seems the type of industries might have changed, but preparation for work continues to dominate the purposes and structures of public education.

Around the world, democratic jurisdictions have struggled to move citizenship education away from its focus on ethnic and national cohesion

to approaches more open to fostering diversity and difference. A contemporary expression of the later is the movement to global education or, as one multilateral organisation puts it "global competencies" (OECD, 2018). A problem with this, however, is that global education is often as homogenising as previous approaches to citizenship education. It is very much like what the authors of this volume call "an absolutist transcendent conception of cosmopolitanism that demands every society to conform to allegedly universal and objective cosmopolitan norms."

In this book, the authors reject both neo-liberal and conformist goals for education. Instead, they propose a cosmopolitan education through which "people engage with difference." They do this in quite a cosmopolitan way, drawing on the work of nine prominent philosophers, five women and four men, with very different cultural and scholarly backgrounds and working in diverse parts of the world. The scholars focused on the idea of cosmopolitanism differently, but the authors of this volume weave together a set of coherent and consistent themes from their work. They then explore the implications of these themes for higher education generally and in an African context in particular.

First, engagement with difference is central to cosmopolitan education. The dominant approach to cosmopolitanism is the absolutist one described briefly above, but the philosophers drawn on here all "conceive of cosmopolitanism as an act of engaging with difference." Human beings are inherently cultural, cannot be divorced from their cultural context, and, therefore, cosmopolitan education has to engage with cultural difference in ways that are respectful and safe. As the authors put it, "rooted cosmopolitanism must necessarily be responsive to the sources of individual rootedness for different people across the world."

Second, cosmopolitan education is deliberative. It provides a place where people from different cultural contexts and backgrounds feel safe to make their case. It is akin, in Derrida's view, to a biblical "city of refuge," a sheltered place where people's stories and worldviews can be examined and respectfully considered.

Third, reflection, and particularly self-reflection, is key to cosmopolitan education. One cannot engage thoughtfully with difference without "the skill or capacity to engage critically with his or her own embedded values, beliefs and particular worldview." I have seen this repeatedly in my own work on how teachers and students conceive of and think about diversity. Most often they exhibit little or no sense that their own view is not "normal" or "universal" and this results in them categorising other views as

foreign, strange and even pathological (Peck, Sears, & Donaldson, 2008, Peck & Sears, 2014, Hamm, Peck, & Sears, 2018). The starting point for deep engagement with difference is recognition of one's own positioning.

Fourth, cosmopolitanism is very complex and so is a comprehensive approach to cosmopolitan education. These authors reject the homogenous approach to cosmopolitanism which, by definition, is much simpler than the "rooted" approach that engages with the interaction between and among cultural perspectives. They also reject the "world traveller" approach which, in the words of Marianna Papastephanou, sees cosmopolitans "as individuals who appear to function comfortably (outwardly) in various countries, frequently crossing international borders, and who seemingly embrace the globalised world as currently reality." For the authors of this book, the point of cosmopolitan education is not to create jetsetters, but rather to foster engaged and effective citizenship that seeks social justice and equity in a complex and diverse world.

The last chapter of the book seeks to apply these themes by exploring their implications for massive open online courses (MOOCs). MOOCs have been popular in Western education systems and these, authors argue, have the potential to address key issues in African higher education including accessibility and moving from the dominant "instructivist" model of education in most institutions to more "connectivist" approaches. The former emphasises the accumulation and recall of isolated facts, while the latter puts students at the centre and seeks to foster substantial connections among people leading to deep learning and understanding. One approach breeds homogeneity and rejects cultural rootedness and difference, while the other makes exploring difference the centre of education. In the view of these authors, "a cosmopolitan-deliberative approach can offer the implementation of MOOCs some ways as to why and how difference, dissent, and otherness can be cultivated among South African students and learners." They make a compelling case that this is so.

NB, Canada   Alan Sears

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Preface

Education has long been associated with acts of human engagement. Ancient Greek thinkers, such as Plato and Aristotle, have never looked at education (*padeia*) as independent from human interactions. Likewise, neo-Aristotelians, such as al-Farabi and al-Ghazzali in the Islamic tradition, considered education inextricably linked to acts of human engagement (*shura*). Ibn Khaldun, a Muslim philosopher-historian, was adamant that education ought to be associated with human (social) practices. To look at education other than seeing it as the involvment of humans in social practices would therefore be remiss of a necessary understanding of the concept. Simply put, education involves the human act of engagement whereby people get to experience one another on account of what they present through their interactions. Of course, there are different understandings of education on the basis of how one wants to elucidate the concept. And, as Muslim or Buddhist education reveals a particular kind of education, in the same manner, cosmopolitan education—the subject of this book—presents a particular understanding of education. If one were to conceive of cosmopolitanism as an act of engaging with difference, for instance, a person connecting with others and their otherness, then such a form of education accentuates the importance of bringing education into play with diversity and difference. The kind of cosmopolitan education that we wish to exposit in this book is one where people engage with difference.

Considering that cosmopolitan education already involves an education that connects with otherness, it might not be implausible to argue that those who are not other would invariably be excluded from human

engagement. For instance, sameness would imply that there might be no otherness and, consequently, the idea of cosmopolitanism might not be in the present. However, sameness or being similar does not necessarily imply a lack of otherness. One can be exposed to similar teaching methods but this does not mean that one's learning would not be different to that of others. It could well be, as is the case with so many students in a university classroom, that these students might be subjected to similar methods of teaching. But, this does not mean that their learning is exactly the same. It might be that some students happen to be more critical than others; yet, they might have been exposed to similar teaching approaches. The point is that otherness cannot be wished away on the grounds of similarities with which people are confronted. There might also be the element of difference in learning irrespective of how similar teaching might have occurred. What follows, is that those who might learn differently—irrespective of having been taught in the same manner—will therefore not necessarily be excluded from an educational encounter. Hence, those who are other might not have to be excluded from an educational encounter. For this reason, cosmopolitan education does not have to be delinked from inclusion. The argument in this manuscript is that cosmopolitan education engenders pedagogical spaces for encounters to be inclusive despite its emphasis on difference and otherness. Put more succinctly, one might be exposed to a cosmopolitan education but this does not always mean that one would be excluded. Our interest in this book is to show how cosmopolitan education enhances human inclusion rather than exclusion, despite the possibility that exclusion might also occur. As our main premise, the argument in this book is about the possibility of cosmopolitan education to include without being remiss of the possibility that such a form of education could also exclude. And, when the latter occurs, ways have to be found to cultivate inclusive human relations rather than perpetuating exclusion. Premised on the propositional thought of Immanuel Kant on cosmopolitanism, we infer that humans have a natural inclination towards freedom of expression and rationality in an atmosphere of antagonistic relations among themselves. In this way, humans are citizens in the world in terms of which they exercise their free and rational will in a spirit of resistance to achieve their cosmopolitan goals. For Kant (2010, p. 25), in considering the world, humans contemplate and apply their "supreme wisdom … to remain a constant reproach to everything else." Our interest in this book is how humans in pedagogical encounters exercise their freedom and rationality in relation to one another guided by co-operative,

co-existential and oppositional acts of resistance. It is on such an idea of cosmopolitan thought that we build throughout this book and according to which we elucidate and expand the deliberative spirit of university pedagogical encounters.

In light of the afore-mentioned Kantian argument, namely that humans are citizens in a world in which they exercise their freedom and rationality in an atmosphere of oppositional acts of resistance—a matter of enacting their (human) cosmopolitan purpose in the world, we have organised the book as follows: In Chap. 1, we expound on Martha C. Nussbaum's notion of universal hospitality in the pursuit of universal aspirations and world co-operation in an atmosphere of respect and human dignity. We specifically show why respect for cultural differences and an enactment of human responsibility can contribute towards confronting human problems on the basis of critical argumentation and deliberation as human beings endeavour to eradicate prejudice, inequality and injustices vis-à-vis their educational concerns. In Chap. 2, we use a Derridian understanding of cosmopolitanism to show why and how human relationships ought to be guided by a consideration to cultivate unconditional hospitality. As an attempt to accentuate the latter view of unconditional hospitality we rely on Derrida's explication of interruption as an act of forgiveness to show how forgiving the unforgiveable paves the way for human encounters enveloped by unconditional hospitality. We argue that such an understanding of unconditional hospitality guided by the act of forgiveness has much to offer to the contention against hatred, resentment, torture, genocide and other crimes against humanity. In Chap. 3, we use Seyla Benhabib's understanding of universalism that centres difference in conceptualising cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism, following Benhabib, is more plausible if it invokes a conceptualisation of universalism that privileges subjectivities in the constitution of our individual and collective autonomy as humans. In this chapter, we contend that a difference-based notion of cosmopolitanism can guide democratic iterations underscored by communicative freedom. In Chap. 4, we discuss the notion of inclusive cosmopolitanism as espoused by Kwame A. Appiah. The central theme of Appiah's cosmopolitanism is the idea of rooted cosmopolitanism. Rooted cosmopolitanism is grounded in the distinction Appiah draws between moral and ethical duties. On the one hand, moral duties pertain to the impartiality in the generally thin relations that are political in nature and governed by such things as distributive schemes of a society. Such duties could either be in reference to local or global people. Ethical duties, on

the other hand, pertain to the realm of individual commitments grounded in the nature of the individual as an embedded autonomous choice-making being about what constitutes the good life. The ethical person is an embedded being in a complex set of different personal relationships. Though individuals differently value the social-cultural context of their embedded-ness, elements of such a context are however, indispensable in the expression and concreteness of the autonomy of the individual. In this chapter, we contend that education informed by rooted cosmopolitanism must necessarily be responsive to the sources of individual rootedness for different people across the world. In Chap. 5, employing Jeremy Waldron's conception of cosmopolitanism, we argue that forms of cosmopolitanism that are preconditioned on the exclusion of culture in the configuration of universalism cannot achieve the cosmopolitan aspirations of equality. Human beings are enmeshed in culture though the notion of culture is usually under contestation. Individuals are usually unconscious of the entrenched role of culture in their routines of everyday life such that even the most radically liberal individuals and societies cannot successfully decouple their lives from the influence of culture. The chapter borrows from Waldron's position that generally all cultures have a cosmopolitan dimension since living everyday life involves endeavours of learning from other cultures and unlearning received attitudes and practices and values. Everyday life for every culture also involves seeking convincing justificatory reasons for practices and attitudes one has by virtue of being a member of one group. In Chap. 6, using Sharon Todd's notions of judgement and "cosmopolitics," which is a contestation of cosmopolitan universalism, we contend that learners are not a homogeneous group with generally common fundamental interests. What constitutes their moral needs as moral persons seeking just encounters and relations can be met by a cosmopolitanism that emphasises and embeds common values only in the objective roles and rules that govern educational encounters. The chapter argues that learners are concrete beings with constitutively different moral needs and interests, which cannot all be couched up in impartialist terms in order to expect that adherence to impartial rules and roles will guarantee satisfaction of cosmopolitan ideals. Given this background, it is imperative that judgement-making in the university by teachers and others should not be restricted to Todd's idea of scripted cosmopolitanism, but rather intersubjectivity must contextualise rules and roles to avoid the risk of ignoring and undermining legitimate moral interests that reside in a

learner's otherness as a concrete being. In Chap. 7, we propose that the rationale of cosmopolitan education developed in this book is constituted by a notion of justice. In reference to Amy Gutmann's understanding of democratic justice, we analyse how cosmopolitan education manifests in educational encounters. Firstly, we argue that democratic justice implies equalising human encounters to the extent that people engage freely. Secondly, we contend that exercising one's freedom cannot result in constrained human action whereby people are prevented to speak their minds. Rather, unlike Gutmann's view that unjust speech should be constrained, we argue that speech should be reconfigured to deal with harmful speech in the way Judith Butler proposes. Thirdly, democratic justice should have the effect that people take into controversy one another's taken-for-granted understandings. Through dissonance, human action would be poignantly poised to enacting just, cosmopolitan encounters. In Chap. 8, we draw specifically on the views of Marianna Papastephanou, who has reservations about some of the attributes that are often associated with cosmopolitanism. In the main, we argue that there is an inherent connection between cosmopolitanism and democracy. We discuss the possible implication of cosmopolitanism, as viewed by Papastephanou, for education. We specifically focus on deliberative education, which could be described as education that is concerned with pedagogical practices that incorporate encounters with the other. In Chap. 9, we draw on the seminal thoughts of David T. Hansen who takes a different look at cosmopolitanism and makes a cogent case for the notion of a reflexive openness to the self and what is known to the self. Put differently, cosmopolitanism as pursuing a reflexive openness to the self implies that one has to be open and reflexive towards that which is known to one—a matter of performing self-introspection and self-criticism. Only then the possibility exists for one to be open and critical to that which is known to one. Hansen further makes the case that cosmopolitanism is also about enhancing a reflexive openness to that which is still in becoming—an idea that undermines any thought that cosmopolitanism can be completely known. Drawing on Hansen's reflexive idea of cosmopolitanism, we argue why and how higher educational encounters can become self-reflexive and open to that which remains in becoming. We then analyse how pedagogical encounters manifesting with such an open and reflexive cosmopolitanism can guide education differently. In Chap. 10, we aim to respond to the following questions:

- first, how do we prepare students/learners from historically disadvantaged communities for a changing environment, one in which massive open online courses (MOOCs) may be necessary particularly with the drive towards what has become known as the Fourth Industrial Revolution teaching and learning; and
- second, how can we begin to establish MOOCs that focus on the lived experiences of Africans, more specifically a MOOC that places African students/learners at the fulcrum of their learning?

The need for a MOOC that aims to enhance African and Western knowledge sharing across geographical and cultural boundaries, on the one hand, while addressing societal inequities of student access to higher education in Africa, on the other, is vital in the quest for addressing instances of cognitive and social injustice in southern contexts. With further research required into southern learner-educator experiences, MOOCs premised on what we argue for in this chapter, namely defence of a cosmopolitanist-deliberative framework could create learning opportunities for students in such contexts in harnessing the educational potential of the Internet. Such an understanding of MOOCs holds for students the possibility of transforming the societal inequities of student access to higher education of the southern contexts through knowledge acquisition, sharing and co-construction towards developing agency in such students.

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