

EDUCATION, DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP REVISITED

Pedagogical Encounters

Yusef Waghid



Education, Democracy and Citizenship Revisited
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Published by SUN MeDIA Stellenbosch under the imprint SUN PReSS.

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First edition 2010

ISBN: 978-1-920338-43-5

e-ISBN: 978-1-920338-51-0

DOI: 10.18820/9781920338510

Set in 11/13.2 Adobe Garamond Pro

Design & Layout by SUN MeDIA Stellenbosch

Cover image by Petr Kratochvil Modern Architecture

Academic, professional and reference works are published under this imprint in print and electronic format. This publication may be ordered directly from www.sun-e-shop.co.za.

Printed and bound by SUN MeDIA Stellenbosch, Ryneveld Street, Stellenbosch, 7600.

www.africansunmedia.co.za

www.sun-e-shop.co.za

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following chapters contain updated and expanded versions of previously published articles which are reprinted with permission.

Chapter 1

Waghid, Y. (2008) Democratic citizenship education and friendship revisited: In defence of democratic justice, *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 27(2/3): 197-206. [Permission to reproduce the article in an expanded form has been granted by Springer at <http://www.springer.com> through Copyright Clearance Center]

Waghid, Y. (2007) Education, responsibility and democratic justice: Cultivating friendship to alleviate some of the injustices on the African continent, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 39(2): 182-196. [Permission to reproduce the article in an expanded form has been granted by John Wiley and Sons at www.interscience.wiley.com through Copyright Clearance Center]

Chapter 2

Waghid, Y. (2004) Compassionate citizenship and education, *Perspectives in Education*, 22(1): 41-50. [Reprinted in expanded form by permission from the editor, Professor Kobus Maree Kobus.Maree@upo.ac.za]

Chapter 3

Waghid, Y. (2006) Reclaiming freedom and friendship through post-graduate student supervision, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11(4): 427-439. [Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Taylor and Francis Ltd at <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals>]

Chapter 4

Waghid, Y. (2005) On the possibility of cultivating justice through teaching and learning: An argument for civic reconciliation in South Africa, *Policy Futures*

in Education, 3(2): 132-140. [Reprinted in expanded form by permission from the editor, Professor Michael Peters <http://www.wwords.co.uk/PFIE>]

Chapter 5

Waghid, Y. (2009) Education for responsible citizenship, *Perspectives in Education*, 27(1): 85-90. [Reprinted in expanded form by permission from the editor, Professor Kobus Maree Kobus.Maree@upo.ac.za]

Chapter 6

Waghid, Y. (2006) Dialogue and the limits of violence: Some thoughts on responsible action, *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 27(3): 315-326. [Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Taylor and Francis Ltd at <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals>]

Chapter 8

Waghid, Y. (2009) Patriotism and democratic citizenship education in South Africa: On the (im)possibility of reconciliation and nation building, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41(4): 399-409. [Permission to reproduce the article in an expanded form has been granted by John Wiley and Sons at www.interscience.wiley.com through Copyright Clearance Center]

Chapter 9

Waghid, Y. & Smeyers, P. (2010) On doing justice to cosmopolitan values and the otherness of the other, *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 29(2): 197-211. [Permission to reproduce the article in an expanded form has been granted by Springer at <http://www.springer.com> through Copyright Clearance Center]

PREFACE

This book contains a revised collection of previously published articles spanning a period of five years (2004-2009) during which my seminal thoughts on democratic citizenship education have been developed. I situate myself in relation to these works on democratic citizenship education as well as on (un)pedagogical encounters throughout the major part of my life, to make a case for a communitarian conception of democratic citizenship education.

Central to this book is the notion that democratic citizenship education ought to be deliberative, compassionate and friendly in order that teachers and students (learners) may respect one another and take risks in and through their pedagogical encounters. In this way, hopefully, students and teachers may become more critical, explorative and engaging, thus making democratic citizenship education a highly pragmatic experience for the sake of cultivating our civility and humanity.

INTRODUCTION

My academic intellectual journey was enhanced as a postgraduate student in the early 1990s when I completed the Master's in Philosophy of Education (Democracy and Education) at a local university – a programme which at the time was considered to be amongst the most rigorous in the country, partly due to its uniquely analytical orientation, but also because the presenters of the programme considered higher education as an enabling condition for transformation in this country. At that time, I had not encountered serious South African theoretical contributions about democratic citizenship education and relied (as did some of the programme presenters) mostly on the intellectual contributions of some Anglo-Saxon philosophers of education whose leading thoughts on the subject can now be found in the monumental four-volume classic on the philosophy of education edited by Paul Hirst and Patricia White in 1998 entitled, *Philosophy of Education: Major Themes in the Analytic Tradition*. My exposure to theories in and about democratic citizenship education was also enhanced through my attendance of conferences organised by the International Network of Philosophers of Education (INPE) and the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESGB), which published two major journals in the field, namely *Studies in Philosophy and Education* and *Journal of Philosophy of Education*. These two journals, together with *Educational Theory* and *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, are the publications which most articulated defensible liberal forms of democratic citizenship education – a subject area which to my knowledge had not been thoroughly explored in South Africa. So, I consider my contribution through the publication of this book as foregrounding another liberal voice in the pursuit of a plausible conception of democratic citizenship education mostly using my own pedagogical encounters in my native country as a springboard to articulate my position. In a way, my voice (which is partly narratival) offers a different take on the subject – one that (re)shapes current theories on democratic citizenship education on the basis of an autobiographical account of (un)pedagogical moments of practice. Put differently, I endeavour to foreground current understandings of democratic citizenship education with the intention of extending some of its meanings on the basis of personal pedagogical experiences.

The main aim of the book is to advance arguments in defence of democratic citizenship education that can engender opportunities for the

achievement of democratic educational justice, in particular by making a case for deliberative engagement, compassionate imagining, and connecting with the other and its otherness, whether locally (through *ubuntu*), globally and/or sceptically (through cosmopolitanism). Whereas most theoretical accounts of democratic citizenship education seem to be somewhat biased towards the significance of deliberation and connecting with the other, my view is that democratic citizenship education also has to consider the connecting with the other (albeit sceptically) in a compassionate way – invariably then, the possibility for democratic educational justice might become a reality. In doing the aforementioned, I have organised this book into nine interconnected chapters.

In the first chapter, I connect the practice of deliberation to belligerence and storytelling. My reason for doing so is premised on two considerations: firstly, if one cannot create spaces for others to narrate their stories (about their life experiences), one would not have established conditions for deliberation – that is, listening to and creating conditions for the other to ‘talk back’; secondly, if one does not begin to challenge others belligerently in order to provoke and engender better forms of engagement, one would not establish conditions for ‘talking back’ at all. But it is, I argue, in the construction of the stories one listens to that deeper meanings could emanate through becoming more attentive to the stories of one another and actually reconstructing others’ stories of what one imagines others could possibly have articulated. In Chapter 2, I argue that deliberative engagements among human beings ought to create conditions for both belligerence and compassion. If belligerent engagement is always searched for and one does not take into account the vulnerabilities of others to whom one should compassionately respond, deliberation would have the potential to exclude rather than include others. In Chapter 3, I argue that democratic justice is possible through the enactment of deliberations which could engender friendships – only then would people hopefully take more risks and move towards unexplored possibilities. In Chapter 4, I argue that forgiveness and respect are preconditions for democratic citizenship education. People cannot begin to engage one another if they do not respect others as persons. What is more, they cannot deliberate equally and compassionately as friends if they do not forgive, which opens up an education for democratic citizenship open to unimaginable possibilities.

In Chapter 5, I show that democratic citizenship education provides the premise for cosmopolitan education, which to my mind can secure forms of local, cultural and global legitimacy and justice. In Chapter 6, I argue that any plausible understanding of democratic citizenship education should be delinked from violent actions. Any form of violence, I suggest, would be counterproductive to deliberative and compassionate engagement – the possibility of friendship would always be undermined. In Chapter 7, I show how *ubuntu* (human decency and collective engagement) can be realised as an instance of African democratic citizenship education. In Chapter 8, I argue that expansive patriotism, which itself is attracted to the cultivation of open-mindedness, pluralism, deliberation, connecting with the other, and peace-building, can in fact create conditions for the realisation of democratic citizenship education. Expansive patriotism would invariably enable citizens to connect deliberatively with one another without the possibility of conflict in a context where conflicting groups can begin to consider peace, racism and other forms of segregation. In the last chapter I argue that democratic citizenship is not always a neat and tidy practice, but that it can and should also be messy and fractured. This opens up the possibility of talking about democratic citizenship education as a sceptical encounter with the other – that is, democratic citizenship should primarily be about being responsible towards the other, recognising the other's humanity, and connecting with the other with a readiness for departure. In a way, I am somewhat suggesting that democratic citizenship is ongoing and that a particular understanding of the concept must always be troubled in order to ensure its fluidity and relevance.

I invite readers to share in my thoughts about democratic citizenship education, in particular the multiple ways in which the concept can remain inexhaustibly (un)situated in practices that can ensure the advancement of pedagogical encounters.

1

**Democratic
citizenship
education in
the making
– belligerence,
deliberation and
belonging**

CHAPTER

Undemocratic and uncitizenship encounters

This is not just another book on the theoretical dimensions of democratic citizenship education. There is an abundance of literature that comprehensively elucidates the theory and practice of democratic citizenship education. In fact, I draw on (un)pedagogical encounters over the past forty years to explore and extend notions of democratic citizenship education. Often my personal testimonies are used to elucidate conceptions of democracy and citizenship in relation to educational discourses I have had the privilege to have experienced together with others – mostly my students and teachers. So, let me begin by offering my first story.

At the age of eleven, I witnessed with amazement how the bulldozers moved into District Six (a suburb in the heart of Cape Town, situated directly opposite the harbour) to destroy vacated and dilapidated buildings in my neighbourhood. I was always disappointed when these buildings were destroyed in such a manner, because as a child I was keen to acquire the cast iron pipes left behind, which friends and I then sold to the local scrap metal company so that we could have money to buy the ‘polonies’ (red meat sausages) which we heated over the fire so that we could enjoy a meal together. This was not just another meal, but more importantly, a gathering around a fire where we contemplated the happenings of the day. Frequently we spoke of the destruction of many peoples’ homes. These were people who were forcibly relocated to township areas, often far away from Cape Town, as part of the government’s Group Areas Act. This separation from their known environment had devastating consequences for many heartbroken families – their togetherness and friendships had instantly been annihilated. So, one day, as a brave young boy at the tender age of about eleven, I decided to question the building construction supervisor (a white man) in charge of a demolition job opposite my grandfather’s house. He simply dismissed me, scolded me for being too young to raise ‘political issues’, and retorted that he was merely following orders. What a cliché this has become! For me this was my first pedagogical encounter with undemocratic and uncitizenship action. Let me elaborate.

The building construction supervisor did not listen to my questioning. In fact, he ridiculed me to the extent that I left with a feeling of apathy. To say the least, I was scared of being physically manhandled. I did not have an

opportunity to hear his rejoinder about my speech act – that is, expressing my dissatisfaction with what I then considered as an unacceptable act on his part. I felt that I could actually do nothing but console myself with the thought that I did not belong to my tormentor's life-world. To me, this initial encounter I had with undemocratic and uncitizenship actions foregrounds the despair and helplessness many people experienced as often demoralised victims of racial apartheid. Drawing on Seyla Benhabib's (1996) and Eamonn Callan's (1997) compelling expositions of democratic citizenship education theory, I shall now highlight some of the democratic and citizenship actions that were definitely absent during this pedagogical encounter.

Deliberation and attachment as conditions for democratic citizenship

To begin with, Benhabib (2002:169) argues that democracy and citizenship can co-exist, because the former frames education as a process of active consent and participation, whereas the latter designates the sense of belonging people demonstrate when socialised into educative practices. Active participation and belonging are both conceptually connected to some form of engagement in relation to someone else – I participate with others in a conversation, so I engage with them; and I belong to a group where members are in conversation with one another, so I engage with them by being attached to the conversation. On the one hand, by 'active participation' Benhabib (2002:133-134) means that people are free and equal moral beings who attempt to influence each other's opinions by engaging in a public dialogue in which they examine and critique each other's positions in a civil and considerate manner, while explaining reasons for their own. I cannot recall a moment when the building construction supervisor was in fact civil and considerate towards me and my concerns. On the other hand, 'belonging' means that people are committed to the task of education through being more accountable to the process and deepening their attachment to it. Moreover, for Benhabib democratic citizenship education (more specifically, educating people to become democratic citizens) would at least be constituted by three interrelated aspects: collective identity, privileges of membership, and social rights and benefits.

Firstly, educating people to be democratic citizens has to take into account people's linguistic, cultural, ethnic and religious commonalities (Benhabib, 2002:162). The idea of finding a civil space for the sharing of different people's commonalities is based on the understanding that people need to learn to live with the otherness of others whose ways of being may be deeply threatening to their own (Benhabib, 2002:130). And, by creating a civil space, referred to by Benhabib (2002:127) as 'intercultural dialogue', where people can enact what they have in common and at the same time make public their competing narratives and significations, people might have a real opportunity to co-exist. In this way, they would not only establish a community of conversation and interdependence (that is, they share commonalities), but also one of disagreement (that is, they do not share commonalities) without disrespecting others' life-worlds (Benhabib, 2002:35 and 41). Put differently, when people are engaged in a conversation underpinned by interdependence and disagreement, they engage in an educative process with a collective identity – they share commonalities. And educating people to become democratic citizens involves creating civil spaces where they can learn to share commonalities and to respect the differences of others.

Secondly, educating people to be democratic citizens involves making them aware of the right of political participation, the right to hold certain offices and perform certain tasks, and the right to deliberate and decide upon certain questions (Benhabib, 2002:162). The point is that people need to be educated to accept that they cannot be excluded from holding certain positions or performing certain tasks on the basis of their cultural differences. They have the right to participate, to be heard and to offer an account of their reasons 'within a civil public space of multicultural understanding and confrontation' (Benhabib, 2002:130). Of particular importance to this discussion on democratic citizenship education is the notion of educating people about the right to deliberate and decide on certain questions. What this implies is that we should recognise the right of people capable of speech and action to be participants in the moral conversation, whereby they should have the same rights to various speech acts, to initiate new topics and to ask for justification of the presuppositions of the conversation (Benhabib, 2002:107). Only then do people become participants in an educative process underpinned by

democratic citizenship. The building construction supervisor dismissed my rights to free speech and to initiate a discussion. His blunt refusal to engage me was a clear rejection of our collective rights to deliberate.

Thirdly, democratic citizenship education also involves educating people about their civil, political and social rights. Such a process would educate people about the rights to protection of life, liberty and property, the right to freedom of conscience, and certain associational rights, such as those of contract and marriage – all civil rights. People would also be educated about the rights to self-determination, to run for and to hold office, to enjoy freedom of speech and opinion, and to establish political and non-political associations, including a free press and free institutions of science and culture – that is, political rights. And they would be educated about the right to form trade unions as well as other professional and trade associations, health care rights, unemployment compensation, old-age pensions, child care, housing and educational subsidies – that is, social rights (Benhabib, 2002:163-164). Reflecting on my attempt to initiate discussion with the building construction supervisor, I can now obviously infer that my civil rights were deeply questioned and denied.

In essence, following Benhabib, a democratic citizenship education aims to cultivate public pedagogical spaces (in associational and non-associational networks such as schools, universities, religious sites and clubs) where people can be educated about one another's shared commonalities and to respect cultural differences (where culture represents people's shared values, meanings, linguistic signs and symbols). A democratic citizenship education would also educate people to deliberate in such a way as to offer an account of one's reasons and in turn listen to the reasons of others, and to recognise and respect people's civil, political and social rights. An education which takes into account these issues is underpinned by democracy and citizenship.

My encounter with the building construction supervisor who so crudely dismissed me on the grounds that my questioning did not merit any serious consideration, can be regarded as one that lacked any form of listening to the other and his or her reasons. Simply put, there did not exist an opportunity for deliberation, because in the first place it requires willing

participants who are free and equal to listen to one another's rejoinders. There wasn't even an iota of space to offer an account of one another's judgements. Certainly my attachment to the existential spaces I occupied (where I lived) had been deeply threatened, thus putting my citizenship aspirations to sleep very early in my life. The issue remains: If I did not have the opportunity then to engage deliberatively with someone else (who was highly dismissive even of my presence), how could I actually reclaim the right to engage belligerently with others whose ways of being are immensely threatening to my own? This brings me to another poignant (un)pedagogical encounter during my lived experiences with the other.

Exactly seven years after I came face to face with the wrath of apartheid politics in the form of a building construction supervisor, I found myself in the final year of my schooling career. In what ought to have been the year in which my promise as a hardworking, bright young learner should have been realised, I found myself immersed in the 1976 anti-apartheid liberatory politics. And of course, my grades suffered. Since my peers saw me as the natural leader of local school resistance initiatives in our neighbourhood – primarily because of the popularity I gained during my leading roles in two school plays – I set out together with some fellow learners to organise political rallies which would confirm the local community's political support for the Soweto revolts. For these daring initiatives (our lives as learners were at stake and we could face unexpected imprisonment and torture at the time), the role of key communicator with my fellow learners and their parents (whom we had to persuade about our anti-apartheid education stance) was unexpectedly foisted on me. When one day I managed to disobey my strict headmaster by organising the first high school rally in the area in solidarity with those who suffered inhumane torture, imprisonment and murder as a consequence of learners' political stand against the introduction of Afrikaans (the then language of the oppressor) in black schools, I experienced an extension of my earlier encounter with the building construction supervisor who uncompromisingly demolished our homes in the early 1970s. What I learned during my encounters with students and parents as a high school student was the art of persuasion through belligerence. How did this happen? And why is belligerence so important to deliberation, more specifically democratic citizenship education?

Belligerence and distress as provocative moments during deliberative engagement

Participating in clandestine political gatherings during the oppressive apartheid days was highly risky. Yet fellow students and I met frequently at different students' homes (for fear of possible police harassment and arrests). At these local venues of political activism we plotted activities for the day. Often our deliberations were rough to the extent that we disagreed strongly with one another on our strategies of political resistance. Should we burn down the school, the local shop (whose owner we suspected of being a police informant), or the nearest police station and civic hall? These were drastic and quite ambitious initiatives, because at stake was possible recriminations as a result of our intentions to commit arson. After most of us had been persuaded not to burn down our school on the grounds that although it was government property it was still our physical place of learning, some of our group left and were caught red-handed with containers of fuel to burn down the school. Of course they were accosted by police and arrested, but later released on the grounds of their explanation that their vehicle had run out of fuel. What I remember well about our deliberative encounters in Auntie A's home, is that we vehemently disagreed yet did not consider dialogical victory over the other as our primary reason for making important, life-threatening decisions. At times we also had to convince some parents (by visiting them) of the actual reasons for our political activism by explaining why our formal school education should momentarily take a back seat for the sake of liberation. Heated debates ensued, yet our anger did not cause us to alienate and abandon one another during these difficult and trying times. And so, the actual march from one high school to the other followed, based on a deliberative, belligerent decision taken the previous evening. We decided not to burn down our local high school, but to participate in a protest march which eventually ended up two train stations from our school before riot police and security personnel intervened (as usual), firing rubber bullets and tear gas, beating us up and arresting many students who eventually spent the night in jail. Again, at the police station we used our skills of negotiation to secure the release of some terrified students. Of course, as leader of the protest march, I also faced the anger of some parents and teachers who accused me of having endangered the careers of my fellow students.

The headmaster refused to allow me back at school, because of what he claimed to have been my disruptive behaviour during our times of political uncertainty. I never returned to school and wrote my final examinations in the local community hall. And so, for me, 1976 (in fact my schooling career) came to an abrupt end. I was again on my own, but satisfied with our (the students and my) contribution to democratic action and change in the country.

What does democratic action involve?

Callan (1997:73 and 221-222) makes a cogent case for democratic action as being constituted by at least the following aspects: cohesive identity, public deliberation, and responsibility for the rights of others. Firstly, democratic action, particularly in pluralistic free societies, makes urgent the task of creating democratic citizens who share a sufficiently cohesive identity – in our case a cohesive identity that bonded high school students together and inspired them to take collective action. By this he means that such a conception of democratic action ‘honours the sources of diversity that thrive within the boundaries of a strong common citizenship, and yet supports a judicious tolerance to ways of life that conflict with some of its demands’. The pursuit of a collective identity without discounting the differences of others could do much to prevent ethnic hatred and religious intolerance. My focus is on Callan’s view of democratic action as a way to prevent ethnic hatred and religious intolerance. (South) Africa’s history has been marred by ethnic violence and religious bigotry – Zulus fighting Xhosas, Afrikaners resenting English-speaking people in South Africa, Muslims and non-Muslims attacking one another in Nigeria, and the Zimbabwean government confiscating white farmers’ property and evicting them. It is here that teaching and learning can provide enabling conditions for democratic action, more specifically by pursuing a pathway to collective political identity. This implies that teachers should not merely listen attentively to students’ narratives, but that they should actively encourage a spirit of living together in diversity – that is, through dialogical action teachers and students together should establish dialogical opportunities that take into account people’s linguistic, cultural, ethnic and religious commonalities and diversities. The idea of finding a dialogical space for the sharing of different people’s commonalities is based on the

understanding that people need to learn to live with the otherness of others whose ways of being may be deeply threatening to their own. By creating a dialogical space – referred to by Benhabib (2002:127) as ‘intercultural dialogue’ – where people can enact what they have in common and at the same time make public their competing narratives and significations, people might have a real opportunity to co-exist. In this way, they would not only establish a community of conversation and interdependence (that is, they share commonalities), but also one of disagreement (that is, they do not share commonalities) without disrespecting others’ life-worlds (Benhabib, 2002:35 and 41). Put differently, when teachers and students are engaged in a conversation underpinned by interdependence and disagreement, they engage in democratic action with a collective identity – they share commonalities. And educating students to become democratic citizens involves creating civil spaces where they can learn to share commonalities and to respect the differences of others. Our political gatherings offered civil spaces where my fellow-students and I learned from one another through what we had in common and how and why we differed.

Secondly, Callan (1997:215) favours a conception of public deliberation characterised by the distress and belligerence (that is, a rough process of struggle) of confrontation that will naturally give way to conciliation as moral truth is pieced together from the fragmentary insights of conflicting viewpoints. For him, the idea of public deliberation is not an attempt ‘to achieve dialogical victory over our adversaries, but rather the attempt to find and enact terms of political coexistence that we and they can reasonably endorse as morally acceptable’. Through public deliberation, participants provoke doubts about the correctness of their moral beliefs or about the importance of the differences between what they and others believe (a matter of arousing distress) accompanied by a rough process of struggle and ethical confrontation – that is, belligerence (Callan, 1997:211). If this happens, belligerence and distress eventually give way to moments of ethical conciliation, when the truth and error in rival positions have been made clear and a fitting synthesis of factional viewpoints is achieved (Callan, 1997:212) – this is an idea of public deliberation with which I agree, where no one has the right to silence dissent and all participants can speak their minds. In the words of Callan (1997:201-202), ‘real moral dialogue (as constitutive of democratic action), as opposed to carefully

policed conversations about the meaning of some moral orthodoxy, cannot occur without the risk of offence; an offence-free school would oblige us to eschew dialogue'. During our belligerent deliberations in Auntie A's home, the students and I did not silence one another, nor did we abandon the project we eventually embarked upon. It does seem that some teachers listening attentively to students' narratives become culpable of steering the conversation in a way whereby preference is no longer given to the substantiveness of articulated views. Rather, these teachers seem to focus on who the students are and not also on what they substantively have to say. I am sometimes inclined to listen to students' claims about how difficult it is to write a section of a thesis. They sometimes attribute their incapacity to produce argumentative writing to not having been taught argumentation in their undergraduate studies. Of course, this might be true. But then, to have reached the stage of thesis writing, one should at least know what it means to write a lucid, substantiated and coherent argument. For this reason, it would not be inappropriate to confront and even offend students. Simply put, tell students that their writing is not good enough and that they could do something about improving it.¹

Thirdly, Callan (1997:73) does not merely call for recognition of and respect for others' rights (whether civil, political or social) through democratic action, but he also stresses the importance of taking responsibility for the rights of others. In his words, taking rights seriously means 'accepting appropriate responsibility for the rights of others, not just making a fuss about our own' (Callan, 1997:73). For instance, people who champion the right to employment in South Africa also consider just as important the cause of others to take responsibility to meet the needs of those who are jobless. Such an understanding of democratic action could extend the mere recognition of, and respect for, others' rights to a position where we assume appropriate responsibility for the rights of others. In South Africa, with the neo-liberal market economy influencing universities – in particular coercing universities to offer inter- and transdisciplinary programmes – many departments and academics are beginning to work together under the guise of deliberative engagement. However, such collaboration is

1 I recall my supervisor for my Master's in Education once bluntly telling me that my writing is pedantic and muddled.

mostly geared towards designing and developing programmes that have a market orientation with which graduates stand a better chance of being taken up in the competitive job market. What invariably happens is that students become more and more self-centred and narcissistic about their own individual futures and prospects at the expense of national interests, without deliberating about what their collective contributions can be in shaping the future of their country. Most of the students whom I have encountered in the Postgraduate Certificate in Education programme offer the following reasoning: 'I want to be a teacher so that I can secure a job'. Very little is said about how prospective teachers ought to deliberate about improving schooling in order to produce better citizens, or what ought to be done about making schools into environments that are more conducive to learning and teaching. On the one hand, it seems as if university teachers produce materials mostly aimed at equipping students with universal skills that match the requirements of the world of work, while disregarding what it means to be educated in a transformative society. On the other hand, some students selfishly acquire formal qualifications which seemingly prepare them for the labour market, but do not instill in them qualities which can help build a better country – one free from social oppression (drug and alcohol abuse, gangsterism, and human rights abuses), economic marginalisation (unemployment is rife among the majority of the previously disadvantaged), and subtle forms of racist exclusion (the most lucrative jobs are still occupied by those who were privileged in the past). The point is that unless universities become havens of deliberative discourse aimed at producing a better future for all South Africans, we would not have seriously engaged with the challenges of the unexpected – that is to say, our deliberative efforts have not been responsible enough. In fact, they have been biased towards perpetuating injustices. Therefore, we have acted irresponsibly. In this regard, Arcilla (2003:149) makes the point that teachers and students need to take more responsibility for the social context of their education. This is what the other students and I had in mind in 1976: taking responsibility for our education by making an appeal to the then apartheid government to liberate our schools and society at large.

Undemocratic and uncitizenship education as acts of storytelling

The building construction supervisor who insulted me for questioning him, and the white policeman who injured me (during a school protest march) with his sjambok (a Zulu word for rubber cane), represent two poignant moments in my life where I attempted to respond to the racial challenges I faced during my teens. To have acted in association with others (my fellow-learners) and to have experienced belonging to my native country (I desired to be recognised as a franchised citizen) were democratic encounters deeply remote from my very being. Yet, having been denied the right to engage and encounter the other at a very early moment in my life, as well as having been subjected to mental and physical ‘violence’, must have shaped my early conceptions of undemocratic citizenship education, which I attempted to share with others. My feelings of national rejection and denial of the opportunity to engage the perpetrators of the apartheid regime are lived experiences which foreground the cardinal sins of undemocratic and uncitizenship education.

Yet, narratives (like the ones I have provided so far) can in themselves be construed as acts of democratic storytelling. Why? For a response to this question, I quickly turn to Iris Marion Young (2000). Young’s idea of inclusive democratic (inter)action attends to virtues or a set of dispositions of communication – greeting, rhetoric and narrative – in addition to the contents of arguments in order to achieve an ‘enlarged conception’ of democratic engagement (2000:79). Greeting, she claims, precedes the giving and evaluating of reasons in dialogue by participants publicly acknowledging and recognising one another. Simply put, greeting refers to those moments in everyday communication – that is, ‘Hello’, ‘How are you?’, as well as forms of speech – which lubricate discussion with mild forms of flattery, stroking of egos, deference and politeness such as handshakes and making small talk before commencing with business (2000:58). In other words, greeting is a communicative moment of taking the risk of trusting in order to establish and widen the bond of trust necessary for a discussion to proceed in good faith (2000:60). This makes sense for the reason that, if teachers and students do not acknowledge and recognise one another as worthy of listening to, deliberation might be stunted (as was the case with my encounters with the building construction supervisor

and policeman) prematurely, because the parties refused to engage one another as dialogical partners. For instance, if teachers refuse to listen to students' diverse views on an issue, the practice of presenting and evaluating arguments cannot begin to unfold.

Young (2000:79) claims that rhetoric should also accompany argument by situating the argument for a particular audience and giving it embodied style and tone. In other words, rhetoric concerns the manner in which arguments are made as distinct from the assertive value of the arguments. The good rhetorician is one who attempts to persuade listeners by acceding to others that they are the 'judges' of arguments, rather than claiming herself to 'know' (2000:69). For instance, in rhetorical style a teacher might request her students to carefully consider a view on justice and await some of their responses to the concept – a matter of producing alertness for the sake of ensuring democratic (inter)action. Of interest to this discussion are Young's views on storytelling. Narrative or relating stories is considered to be a means of giving voice to kinds of experience which often go unheard. For instance, at the institution where I work, several non-Afrikaans-speaking students often feel excluded and marginalised when some academics teach and provide class notes only in Afrikaans. In this case, storytelling by students to each other and to a wider public as to why such practices constitute an injustice with respect to their learning could enlarge thinking about the problem of language use at my institution. In this way, listeners (academics) can hopefully learn about how their own position and actions appear to others from the stories they tell (2000:76).

I share Young's view that practices of greeting, rhetoric and narrative can complement argument. I am also less sceptical about these virtues of communication devaluing or dismissing central normative concerns about argument in the sense that such forms of communication could be superficial, insincere and merely aimed at gaining the assent of others through flattery and not by reason. What concerns me more is that narrative in particular still requires people to articulate their experiences (and at times eloquently) in order that others should listen attentively to such experiences. The point I am making is that it seems rather unlikely that the individual testimony of a student who relates a sense of wrong without some manner of justification can resolve, for instance, the

language dilemma at my institution. For this reason, (democratic) action also requires that teachers in particular recognise the vulnerabilities of others (including the injustices students might experience) and not just the probative strength of students' reasons. Put differently, although narrative (the way I told my story) can bring to the fore what would have remained muted and suppressed encounters with the other, had I not told my story, it does not adequately reveal my feelings of emotion and the way I have actually been traumatised by others who seemed to have been unperturbed by my solitary moments of victimisation and exclusion. The point I am making is that democratic citizenship education cannot be experienced freely if one does not also consider others' emotional encounters with the other and their otherness – a discussion I wish to pursue in the following chapter.

In sum, in this chapter I have attempted to (re)construct a notion of deliberation that involves engaging others through belligerence and storytelling. If one cannot create spaces for others to narrate their stories (about their life experiences) one would not have established conditions for deliberation – that is, listening and responding to the other. Similarly, if one does not begin to challenge others belligerently in order to provoke and engender better forms of engagement, one cannot establish conditions for deliberation at all. However, where I wish to extend arguments in defence of deliberation through belligerence and storytelling is in the construction of the stories one listens to. Sometimes people also encounter difficulties in articulating their views, yet they are encouraged to tell their stories. Of course, the one who listens to the stories actually constructs the stories. And, these constructions of people's stories on the part of listeners are consistent with the spirit of the articulations. What I expected the building construction supervisor to have done when he encountered my teenage aggression, was actually to have constructed the deeper meanings behind my inarticulate speech. He failed to do so, because he did not want to establish conditions for deliberation. In essence, deliberation requires that people do not merely participate, but actually engage collectively. People's engagements are shaped through belligerence and distress; they are attentive to one another's stories and they deepen their understandings of others' stories through their own constructions of what they imagine could have been told.

2

**Democratic
citizenship
education
through
compassionate
imagining**

CHAPTER

Uncompassionate dismissal

As a young teacher in my twenties (or perhaps I should rather say ‘unqualified’ teacher, because I wasn’t in possession of a teaching diploma at the time), I had the privilege of teaching at a public high school in a township community in the morning, and in the afternoon I would teach Muslim pupils some of the basic tenets of the Islamic faith, including the recitation of the Qur’an at a local *madrassah* (private afternoon Muslim school). Practically my entire day was occupied in socialising with young people and initiating young minds into the discourses of science and religion. I remember vividly an incident when the principal of the local *madrassah* came with the message that three pupils should no longer be allowed to attend classes because their father was an affiliate member of an organisation deemed to be un-Islamic. Ironically, at least one of these youngsters attended the public school where I taught her science as well. In hindsight, I should have quitted the *madrassah*, but for some reason or the other (probably because I would have been branded as a sympathiser) I witnessed with disgust how innocent and vulnerable pupils were told to leave the *madrassah* they had become so fond of. I was particularly distressed, because some of our lessons had involved bridging the divide between science and religion. This stands out as one of the most uncompassionate moments that I have ever witnessed, particularly since the local police arrested these children because they refused to write examinations under the supervision of the police during the turbulent eighties in my country. Let me dwell a bit on the uncompassionate encounter I happened to have had – a callous act from which I too cannot be exonerated. At least I had the decency to explain to the parents what had transpired in our *madrassah* that afternoon. The fact is that young people’s vulnerabilities were unsympathetically exploited and nobody did anything about the situation. It is for this reason that I today find solace in the seminal work of Martha Nussbaum, particularly in her view of compassionate imagining.

In defence of compassionate imagining

Martha Nussbaum (2001) raises the question of what positive contribution emotions such as compassionate imagining can make in guiding deliberation amongst teachers and students. Her main argument

in defence of compassionate imagining is that it ought to be the emotion which should be most frequently cultivated when people embark upon democratic action in public life (Nussbaum, 2001:299). Her view is that deliberative engagement ought to be occasioned by the impulse to treat others justly and humanely, that is, with compassion. Certainly in South African universities – where diverse students of advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds (black and white) are beginning to deliberate about matters of public concern such as crime, victimisation, homelessness, job discrimination, unemployment, domestic violence, abuse of women, poverty and lack of food, political alienation, alcoholism and drug abuse, and absence of good prospects – students must make certain practical judgements about these variants of their public and personal lives. Invariably, the judgements to be made will be based on students' perceptions of others' distress, undeserved misfortune, suffering, injustice, plight, disability and disease. It is in this regard that compassionate imagining becomes a necessary condition to deliberate about such matters. Compassionate imagining not only prompts in people an awareness of the misfortune or suffering of others, but also pushes the boundaries of the self outward by focusing on others' suffering, which might have come about through no fault of their own – the *madrassah* pupils did nothing wrong to deserve such harsh treatment.

Nussbaum's understanding of compassion as painful emotional judgement embodies at least two cognitive requirements: firstly, a belief or appraisal that the suffering of others is serious and not trivial, and that they do not deserve the suffering; and secondly, the belief that the possibilities of the person who experiences the emotion are similar to those of the sufferer. I shall now discuss these two requirements of compassion in relation to the way that students and university teachers ought to deliberate rationally (which includes being good listeners), while also cultivating within themselves the concern to be just and humane towards others – to be compassionate.

Firstly, in so far as one can become serious about the suffering of others, one believes them to be without blame for the kind of undeserved injustice they might have suffered, and one recognises that their plight needs to be alleviated. Many students, who are perhaps blameless for their inability

to pay university fees as a result of their parents not enjoying economic prosperity after decades of apartheid, require the compassion of others. In such circumstances, deliberation at universities should rather take the form of ascertaining what could be done to ensure that students who do not have the finances to study remain part of the university community, rather than finding ways to penalise or at times humiliate them. So, compassion requires blamelessness on the part of students who are unable to pay university fees, as well as on the part of onlookers who can make judgements about the need to expedite the flourishing of the students in question. Similarly, a university teacher has compassion for students with an impoverished schooling background not necessarily of their own creation (parents could not afford to send children to more affluent and organised schools, or to pay for the services of extra mural tutors, as is the case in South Africa). Such a university teacher recognises the need to find creative ways to assist disadvantaged students to come to grips with difficult concepts in their studies and at the same time acknowledges that the unjust education system which these students might have been exposed to is no fault of their own. One could argue that all students should be treated equally and that no student should receive preferential treatment in terms of additional pedagogical support. But this would be to ignore the undeserved unequal education many students, certainly in South Africa, have been – or might still be – subjected to.

Secondly, compassion is best cultivated if one acknowledges some sort of community between oneself and the other, understanding what it might mean for one to encounter possibilities and vulnerabilities similar to those of the sufferer: '[One] will learn compassion best if he [she] begins by focusing on their sufferings' (Nussbaum, 2001:317). Again, 'in order for compassion to be present, the person must consider the suffering of another as a significant part of his or her own scheme of goals and ends. She must take that person's ill as affecting her own flourishing. In effect, she must make herself vulnerable in the person of another' (Nussbaum, 2001:319). What this recognition of one's own related vulnerability means, is that students who might have a clear understanding of, say, concepts in a literature classroom and who become impatient with their peers for not grasping such concepts, should imagine what it would mean for them to encounter difficulty with concepts. Likewise, university

academics teaching literature studies should become more aware of what it means for students to encounter epistemological difficulty. In the words of Nussbaum (2001:319), 'the recognition of one's own related vulnerability is, then, an important and frequently an indispensable epistemological requirement for compassion in human beings'.

In essence, compassionate imagining brings to the fore the intellectual emotions of people in ethical deliberation. It is simply not sufficient to educate by just focusing on deliberative argumentation and narratives without also cultivating compassion. Deliberation and narratives prompt students and university teachers to question meanings, imagine alternative possibilities, modify practical judgements, and foster respect and critical engagement. Yet, it seldom brings into play those emotions of people that are necessary to make it worthwhile to continue the dialogical interaction. If one is going to ignore the pedagogical vulnerabilities of the weak, very little will be done in the direction of meaningful education. We also need compassionate students and university teachers. However, an overwhelming application of compassionate imagining in relation to democratic action could reduce the rigorous forms of argumentation that are required in deliberative engagement. For instance, it is one thing to recognise that some students have physical and epistemological (including articulation) vulnerabilities and that when they articulate their narratives university teachers ought to listen to their voices, but that does not mean that one should merely accept everything students have to say if they do not offer reasonable and sufficient justifications for their views. I cannot imagine that university teachers in South Africa would accept feeble arguments of students to use violence against alleged racists. Likewise, I cannot agree with views that advocate the establishment of a Black Native Club movement which aims to advance the interests of only African blacks in academe to the exclusion of whites, coloureds and Indians. One ought to listen compassionately to the claims of some black academics who allege that they still encounter exclusion and marginalisation in the higher education sector, but establishing a movement on the basis of excluding others who might have similar common aspirations to rekindle the voices of the marginalised (vulnerable), would undermine democratic action – that is, as South African academics, we should collectively oppose exclusion and other forms of discrimination in higher education. However, university

teachers and students cannot do so just on the grounds of compassionate imagining – whereby we recognise the vulnerabilities of one another and others – without those forms of democratic engagement which bring to the fore our most substantive opinions and preferences.

Compassionate imagining as an instance of democratic citizenship education

Nussbaum's compelling account of compassionate imagining articulates practical strategies which educators could employ to support and cultivate an education for democratic citizenship. Firstly, in Nussbaum's (2001:426) view, compassionate imagining involves cultivating in learners the ability to imagine the experiences of others and to participate in their sufferings – to extend their empathy to more people and more types of people. This can already be done at an elementary level when learners learn their first stories, rhymes and songs, in particular through seeking out works that acquaint the learner with a sense of wonder – a sense of mystery that blends curiosity with surprise. Think of the song that begins, 'Imagine there's no people'. In learning the song, the learner learns to imagine what life would be without other human beings and thus psychologically develops a concern for people outside herself. Later on, she may also be encouraged to notice the suffering of people with a new keenness which might cause her to be exposed to other stories that display the vulnerabilities of human life – death, illness, rape, war, deceit and tragedy. As far as tragedy is concerned, Nussbaum (2001:428) argues that tragedies acquaint learners with bad things that may happen in human life long before life itself does so, thus enabling a concern for others who are suffering what she has not suffered. For instance, through myth, story, poetry, drama, music and works of art, educators could acquaint learners with a wide range of possible calamities and other important things vulnerable to calamity, which can cause learners to become attentive and concerned about the distress that human beings can experience. Novels about the fate of a tragic and worthy hero, the trauma of young women raped in wartime, the murder of children, the experiences of the mentally disabled, and people who have suffered from the hatred of those in power, could be used by educators as powerful sources of 'compassionate imagining' (Nussbaum, 2001:430).

Secondly, an education for compassionate imagining should also be a multicultural education. This involves an education (through the teaching of indigenous languages and literature, social sciences, and life orientation curricula in South Africa) which acquaints learners with a rudimentary understanding of the histories and cultures of many different people, that is, major religious and cultural groups, ethnic, racial and social majorities, and those with an alternative sexual orientation. Awareness of cultural difference is necessary in order to engender respect for one another, which is an essential underpinning for compassionate imagining. Moreover, education for compassionate imagining needs to begin early. As soon as learners engage in storytelling, they can tell stories about other nations and countries. Certainly in South Africa, they could learn that religions other than Christianity exist or -that people have different ways of thinking, traditions and beliefs. For instance, one such theme in life orientation for primary school learners could involve educating learners about African myths and folktales and the injustices perpetrated against Africans. By the time they reach university, they should be well-equipped to deal with demanding courses on human diversity outside the dominant Western traditions. The goals of such a theme could be threefold: to develop in learners a sense of informed, compassionate imagining as they enter the broader South African society of increasing diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, social class and religious sectarianism; to provide learners with an intellectual awareness of the causes and effects of structured inequalities and prejudicial exclusion in South African society; and to expand learners' ability to think critically about controversial issues that stem from the gender, race, class, ethnic and religious differences that pervade our society. Nussbaum (2001:432) supports such a view when she claims: 'Our pupils must learn to appreciate the diversity of circumstances in which human beings struggle for flourishing; this means, not just learning some facts about classes, races, nationalities, sexual orientations other than her own, but being drawn into those lives through the imagination, becoming a participant in those struggles'. In the next part of this chapter I shall deal with some of the principles I used in teaching a Philosophy of Education course for final-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education students at my institution, and which related to educating prospective educators about compassionate imagining.

Educating prospective school educators about compassionate imagining

Describing the method of data analysis for this discussion presents a bit of a challenge in that most of the data constructed involved my own self-reflective notes on classroom discussions and my reflexive reading of student journals and written assignments. In constructing data about prospective school educators' pre-service training in Philosophy of Education, I asked myself important questions such as the following: How could students be led to inquire in new ways on issues of equity and redress, educational transformation, quality and equality in education, injustice, poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment in relation to practical (deliberative) reasoning and compassion? How would such issues affect students' ensuing educational experiences in schools? How could I entice students to inquire into alternative ways of viewing teaching and learning in relation to compassionate imagining? My contention is that it would be difficult for learners (in schools) to learn about compassionate imagining if their educators are not appropriately skilled. As a university educator, I infused compassionate imagining into the Philosophy of Education course for final-year students about to become educators in schools. I now offer an account of this course (as taught during most of the late 2000s) and how its underlying principles suggest possibilities for educators to cultivate compassionate imagining as an instance of democratic citizenship education in South African public schools. From the beginning this course was informed by three decisions. The first was to put practical reasoning at the heart of the matter, which would awaken critical and independent thinking about values such as deliberative democracy, citizenship, equality and freedom, human rights, and socio-economic and political justice in relation to education in public schools. Students engaged in a lot of serious discussion of issues related to these themes. The clear focus of the course, its emphasis on lively debate and argumentation among students rather than simply the acquisition of facts, and deliberation on the above-mentioned themes in group discussions during which students report to the whole class all make this a reasonable course to elicit active critical engagement.

The data students and I constructed from our journals and self-reflective notes were intended to help us learn about incidents in schools that struck

us as troubling or exciting given our focus on practical reasoning and compassion. The questions we asked ourselves in classroom conversations became the lenses for analysing our data. We challenged each other to consider alternative interpretations for some incidents in South African schools on the basis of practical reasoning and compassion. We sought to understand through our reflexive notes and journals more about what was happening in the teaching and learning of students in schools. Some of the incidents on which we deliberated involved the prevalence of racism in some former Model C schools (schools formerly reserved for white students), withholding reports of students unable to pay their school fees, overcrowding of disadvantaged classrooms, non-appointment of teachers to vacant posts, as well as the apparent unpreparedness of teachers to implement the new curriculum and the accompanying new mode of assessment through Common Task Assessments (CTAs). Each of these aspects brought to the fore discussion among students in my class. In this way they did not only start questioning these incidents, but also themselves. Through my analysis of their stories, I realised what my own teaching role entailed and I came to dislike it in the sense that students were provided opportunities to explore their own thinking on incidents related to education in schools, but I was always in charge about the path they needed to follow. In a way I subjected their voices to mine, which of course undermines the discourse of practical reasoning I initially set out to cultivate in the classroom. However, as students began to find their own meaning of what practical reasoning is about, they somehow redirected our discussions in a way that would give voice to their thoughts and led them to be practical reasoners. Practical reasoning then was no longer about what I imagined, but what they found meaningful. On some occasions students directed our deliberations. They asserted their roles as practical reasoners as they caused me to take notice of their quest for deliberation and understanding of the incidents that transpired in schools.

The second decision was to focus on an area of diversity by selecting a non-Western culture from among three African countries, namely Ethiopia, Kenya and Mozambique. Students had to raise critical issues about race, gender, ethnicity, social class and religious sectarianism. While critical discussion of cultural diversity in an African country enhanced students' awareness of difference, it also ensured that they reflected dialectically on

the beliefs and practices of their own culture, while exploring a foreign culture. As I reflect on my teaching, I am vividly reminded of the complex discussions in class which centred on issues of race as they relate to public schooling. For instance, the class had read a newspaper article on racial conflict in an ex-Model C school. As we began to talk in class, I sensed a certain undercurrent that seemed resentful. Still, the discussions remained civil, if somewhat distant and academic. At one point, a student said that she understood the issues of racial discrimination, but could not see the need for equitable redress to continue specifically to establish conditions that would favour disadvantaged black learners. 'When are they going to be equal to us (whites)?' she asked. In order to push our thinking, I asked, 'Why do whites accept that black students and communities should be more advantaged than others?' After the usual pause as students considered their options, one student offered her response, 'Maybe because we (whites) haven't begun to understand what it means to teach in a black township school'. This remark became a moment on which future discussions in the class would hinge. Some students contested why they should be teaching in black schools, while others felt it necessary to do so. It was interesting to note that for some students, dialogue about the issues of diversity and multiculturalism remained important, while for other students taking sides and airing uninterrogated opinion became part of the debates in class. Yet it was evident from their journals that all the students realised that every student has a responsibility to see that questions are raised and views are challenged. They understood their role as practical reasoners.

The third decision was to focus on a theme called 'Poverty, famine and hunger'. Students learned to think about the relationship of poverty, hunger and famine to distress, undeserved misfortune, suffering, injustice, disability and disease on the African continent. They were also encouraged to teach after having qualified as teachers (educators) for at least a month at an African school, in countries such as Mozambique and Nigeria (which had been ravaged by civil war), Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo-Brazzaville, Sierra Leone and Burundi (in continuing turmoil), Rwanda (which suffered genocide), Ghana and Namibia (which had been subjected to liberation struggles with colonial powers), Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia (which had experienced drought and famine). In this way, prospective educators would become obliged to encounter features

of African life and one of their tasks should be to find ways to give voice to the suffering of people on the continent – a matter of listening to the voices of those who suffered the injustices perpetrated by the people who abused power and inflicted harm on the African continent.

Our process of critical inquiry in relation to practical reasoning took a compassionate turn when students engaged in classroom discussions about the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Our discussions about the HIV and AIDS crisis in South African schools, particularly about many teachers being infected by the virus, brought to the surface of our deliberations unexamined issues that could be explored in relation to education. The data from students' journals validated the view that the classroom should not only be a place where arguments are articulated in justifiable fashion – in this instance about the do's and don'ts in relation to HIV and AIDS – but that we should begin to cultivate in ourselves a sense of 'humanity' (Nussbaum, 1997). This means nurturing within ourselves a concern for the other who might be experiencing a vulnerability such as the HIV and AIDS, perhaps through no fault of their own. When education institutions become intensely concerned about what Nussbaum (2001:403) refers to as 'tragic predicaments and their prevention' vis-à-vis HIV and AIDS in the country, such institutions embody compassion, since they rely on compassionate learners and educators to keep alive the essential concern to attend to the well-being of others – a matter of balancing their responsibilities and emotions. As one student wrote in her journal: 'Our community service as in-service teachers should be about finding imaginative and compassionate ways of serving the vulnerable people; those people suffering from hunger, poverty, unemployment, and HIV and AIDS'.

In summary of this section, our deliberations in the Philosophy of Education classroom are not over. In writing this chapter, I have realised that my exploration into practical reasoning and compassion is only beginning and that there is more to learn. A clear limitation of this work is to imagine what it means for pre-service or prospective educators in their final year of study, with little or no teaching experience, to go forth and implement practical reasoning and compassion in their own classrooms. Perhaps herein also lies the strength of this work: in particular exploring

the implications of practical reasoning and compassion in relation to a dominant outcomes-based education discourse in public schools, which in many ways prohibits creative and imaginative thought, since it lends itself to instrumentally justifiable manipulation and control (Waghid, 2003:245).

Thus far I have argued that democratic citizenship education would most appropriately work in schools and universities if deliberative engagements among human beings are lived out belligerently yet compassionately – that is, if these practices are not incommensurate, and in fact deepen the enactment of democratic citizenship education. Once again, with reference to the unfair dismissal of the *madrassah* pupils, we should have deliberated quite belligerently the decision to deny pupils access to the *madrassah* and we could have done so with profound compassionate imagining. Only if we were more compassionate towards the vulnerabilities of young *madrassah* pupils, proffering arguments as to why they should not have left the Muslim school, we might have sown the seeds of democratic citizenship education at a time in South Africa's history when it was most needed. But of course we did not do so (and instead humiliated the pupils) and I would attribute this insensitive act to a lack of friendship amongst the staff members of the *madrassah*. This brings me to a discussion of friendship as human agency in the cultivation of democratic citizenship education in institutions.

3

**Democratic
citizenship
education
through
friendship**

CHAPTER

Unfriendly supervision

Considering the fact that I completed most of my postgraduate studies on a part-time basis (because I was a full-time teacher in a public school quite far from the university where I studied), I was privileged in my early thirties to have enrolled as a doctoral candidate in Philosophy of Education. I was even more fortunate when the university decided to appoint three supervisors for my studies, primarily because of my interest in Philosophy of Education and Islamic conceptions of knowledge. I thought that I had been assigned some of the leading supervisors in the country as a consequence of their specific research interests – two philosophers of education and one Islamic scholar. What I did not know, was that, with them, I would experience some of the most unfriendly encounters during my three years of studies. This is not a diatribe against my supervisors. I wish only to point out moments of unfriendliness that surfaced during my studies: one of my supervisors took six months to give me feedback on a chapter (I was constantly told how busy this person was); another read my chapters and simply dismissed my work by scribbling on a page in the text, ‘I am stopping here’ (meaning ‘I have had enough and do not intend to read further’); and one supervisor met with me frequently, but seldom introduced me to the rigorous texts which I now continuously explore in Philosophy of Education. Despite the aforementioned blind spots during my supervision, I have to admit that I was supported by at least one supervisor who applied for a study grant on my behalf, offered me work as a tutor to supplement my monthly income, and even encouraged me to present a paper at a local conference and to publish my work. In fact, this supervisor took care in supervising me and commented painstakingly and meticulously on my work. But it is the unfriendly encounters which I wish to explore in relation to Nancy Sherman’s (1997) and Jacques Derrida’s (1997a) seminal contributions on friendship. I shall show how both Sherman’s and Derrida’s ideas of friendship can be used to nurture teaching and learning which involve taking risks. My argument in defence of taking risks through friendships is hopefully a move away from fostering deliberative democratic interactions among teachers and students which could potentially ignore forms of action that involve challenging, undermining and disagreeing with one’s friends.

Friendship and mutuality

Nancy Sherman's (1997) Aristotelian account of friendship seems to be more compelling in developing forms of teaching and learning that connect plausibly with democratic citizenship education. Firstly, Sherman claims that friendship can take the form of mutual attachment – a matter of doing things together – where both teachers and students demonstrate a willingness to give priority to one another in terms of time and resources. In other words, when teaching and learning take place, teachers and students avoid being dismissive of one another, that is, they listen with interest and appreciation to one another. In this way, the possibility is enhanced that they correct one another and learn from the strengths and wisdom of one another in an atmosphere of trust, goodwill and mutual benefit (Sherman, 1997:206-207). When students and teachers attend to one another with interest and appreciation in an atmosphere of non-dismissiveness, they care for one another in such a way that their potentialities are developed. For instance, when students produce arguments, they are not afraid of being corrected by teachers and other students. They are also not concerned that their judgements will be dismissed by teachers. This situation gives rise to critical learning for the reason that students' judgements are attended to and reflected upon with interest and, in turn, students have to give an account of their reasons, which will invariably be taken into systematic controversy by teachers and fellow students. In a different way, I find that my students become more critical if I become attached to them – that is, if I listen to their views with interest, appreciation and care. In turn, students expect to be corrected if their reasons cannot be justified. In this way, friendship is nurtured and the possibility of attending to the reasons of students in an atmosphere of respect and sharing becomes very important.

Secondly, Sherman (1997:208) argues that friendship entails that people become mutually attuned to one another. In other words, they relax their boundaries and become stimulated by one another through argument. When students and teachers engage in argumentation on the basis that they relax their boundaries it seems rather unlikely that their deliberations would result in hostile antagonism and conflicts which could potentially thwart their dialogical engagement. However, my potential critic might

quite correctly claim that deliberative argumentation favours those students who are eloquent and that not all students could articulate their views in defence. I agree, and for this reason I want to complement Sherman's idea of mutual attunement with Iris Marion Young's (1996) idea of listening to the stories of others (an idea developed in the previous chapter), irrespective of whether these narratives are recounted in ways that do not attend to strict rules of argumentation. If teachers do so, the possibility of mutual attunement would further be enhanced. Failing to create spaces for inarticulate, non-eloquent voices would not only exclude legitimate student voices from learning activities, but would also truncate critical learning – to openly and fairly evaluate the reasons of others, while at the same time showing respect for others' points of view, no matter how inarticulate these might be. I cannot imagine students becoming critical if they are prematurely excluded from learning on the grounds that they lack certain levels of articulation.

Thirdly, Sherman's idea of mutual action (1997:212) that will occur among teachers and students is in some ways linked to Hannah Arendt's (1998) notion of initiating students into new ways of doing. This means that when teachers teach, they initiate students into new understandings and meanings not perhaps thought of before. Similarly, when students learn, they (de)construct meanings in ways that open up new possibilities for their learning. In this way, teaching and learning is continuous, because every initiative teachers and learners take is considered as opening up possibilities to see things anew – that is, meanings are always in rendering the outcomes of education inconclusive. What follows from such a view of teaching and learning is that the outcomes of education are always incomplete and the possibility of something new arising always seems to be there. Such a form of mutual action would give much hope for critical learning, on the basis that such learning is connected to something new arising.

Sherman's idea of friendship as mutuality would invariably sustain democratic citizenship education, more specifically teaching and learning, for the reason that democratic citizenship education has in mind that teachers and students connect with one another, engage deliberatively through argument and narrative, and (de)construct meanings which

are always inconclusive. However, such an account of friendship is not sufficient to ensure that teaching and learning remain critical. Why not? Mutual attachment can have the effect that teachers and students listen with interest and appreciation to one another; mutual attunement can create possibilities for deliberative engagement; and mutual action can ensure that the outcomes of education are inconclusive and the products of new initiatives. Yet, such forms of mutuality are not sufficient to ensure that teaching and learning is ongoing in the sense that new possibilities that can sustain criticality are opened up. For instance, when students learn to analyse, evaluate and modify arguments and judgements, the possibility exists that they abandon previously held preferences, opinions and views, and the desire to explore alternatives even if it means taking undue risks. Likewise, when teachers teach, they do not merely restrict their teaching to the achievement of expected or perhaps unexpected outcomes. This would mark the end of education, because teachers have not ventured far enough in pursuit of the unintended or the lucky find – that is, they have not taken sufficient risks and have thus limited their explorations. Such a situation in turn would also limit friendship, because it cannot last unless teachers have confidence in their students – friends – to take risks without knowing in advance what the outcomes might be – that is, without necessarily expecting something positive in return. It is for this reason that I am also attracted to the views of Jacques Derrida (1997a), who develops a conception of friendship which can positively contribute towards addressing some of the limitations of mutuality – in particular encouraging students to take risks.

Towards a politics of friendship

I shall now extend the idea of friendship as mutuality to a friendship of ‘love’, as found in the seminal thoughts of Derrida. Derrida (1997a) raises the question of the positive contribution friendship can make in dialogue with others. For him, friendship is the act of loving (*philia*), rather than letting oneself be loved or being loved – what he refers to as ‘inducing love’ (Derrida, 1997a:8). Of course, it is possible that one can be loved without knowing it. But it is impossible to love without knowing it. Derrida (1997a:9) makes the claim that ‘the friend is the person who loves (and declares his or her love) before being the person who is loved’. And,

if one thinks friendship, one is to start with the ‘friend-who-loves’ not with the ‘friend-who-is-loved’ (Derrida, 1997a:9). Thus, when teachers and students regard themselves as friends, they willingly declare their love to one another to ‘the limit of its possibility’ (Derrida, 1997a:12). I feel myself loving my students when I care for them in a way that evokes their potentialities in order that they come up with possibilities that I might not even have thought of. Without being affectionate towards them, I cultivate in them the capacity to reach their own justifiable conclusions to which they are to be held accountable by and to others – referred to by MacIntyre (1999:83) as the ability to evaluate, modify or reject their own practical judgements. Only then can I consider myself to be a ‘friend-who-loves’, since I do not expect being loved in return; that is, when students reach their own justifiable conclusions about educational issues, they do so without having to please me – without loving me in return. Similarly, when students come up with sufficiently good reasons for acting and imagining alternative possibilities so as to be able to re-educate themselves rationally about educational issues without having to please me, they can be said to be ‘friends-who-love’. It is this idea of friendship that can go some way towards achieving critical learning.

Why? If I teach students, then I must first declare myself a ‘friend-who-loves’, since I would not desire to be loved in return. Erich Fromm, in *The Art of Loving*, describes such a loving relationship as an attitude, an orientation of character, which determines the relatedness of a person to others in the context in which they find themselves (Fromm, 1957:36). In other words, loving relationships are ‘brotherly’ (sisterly) because they invoke a sense of responsibility, care and respect towards others (Fromm, 1957:37). This would imply that, as the teacher, I should create conditions where students learn authentically, which requires that the following moves be put in place: encouraging students to imagine situations in and beyond the parameters of their research interests, where things would be better – that is, to be caring towards students; democratising our interactions so that students can take the initiative to imagine possibilities not otherwise thought of – that is, to be responsible towards students; and connecting with students’ storytelling with the aim to discovering untapped possibilities – that is, to be respectful towards students. So, a teacher does not only connect with students, deliberate with them, and nurture activities in ways where

the outcomes are unintended, but also establishes possibilities whereby students can come up with meanings which they (the teachers) might not have expected. In other words, through their teaching, the possibility exists for students to come up with defensible meanings, irrespective of what their teachers might want. In order for this to happen, students should be encouraged to take risks (as teachers' friends), because taking risks involves venturing into the unknown and unexpected and from which unforeseen possibilities might arise. So, teachers who 'love' their students as friends are concerned that learning should result in unimagined possibilities – ways of doing that teachers had not perhaps thought of before, nor expect students to come up with. For instance, this could happen when a student learns that the unexpected can be expected, that is, that he or she is capable of performing what is 'infinitely improbable' (Arendt, 1998:178). In doing so, a student not only announces what he or she does, has done and intends to do, but also seeks to do the unexpected (Arendt, 1998:179). One way of ensuring that one acts without knowing what to expect, can be to stand back or detach oneself from one's own reasons and to ask if others' reasons are in fact justifiable or not. One would not know what to expect if one sets out to evaluate, for instance, what one considers as master texts. And when one evaluates these texts (through engaging in systematic controversy with them), one would invariably set out to revise one's own reasons, or abandon them, or replace them with other unexpected reasons (MacIntyre, 1999:91). In this way, one detaches oneself from one's own reasons to revise or abandon them in the light of what others with whom one engages – in this case, the authors of texts – have to say. MacIntyre (1999:96) argues that we come to know when we are able not just to evaluate our reasons as better or worse, but also when we detach ourselves from the immediacy of our own desires in order to 'imagine alternative realistic futures' which might give rise to unexpected results. This implies that it would be inconceivable to read texts as master works which should not be engaged with and not to stand back from one's rational judgements about one's understanding of these texts. Detaching oneself from one's own reasons in relation to one's evaluation of texts suggests that these texts cannot be treated *uncritically* and *uncontroversially*. The mere fact that one acts through evaluation and detachment brings into question the underlying assumptions of texts that one reads and analyses. Only then can the unexpected be anticipated, which suggests that only then is one acting – and learning.

Thus far, I have argued that critical teaching and learning can best be achieved by means of mutuality and love – more specifically complementary forms of friendship. These forms of friendship have in mind what democratic citizenship education sets out to achieve: taking risks to cultivate sharing, deliberative engagement and the recognition that others' rights have to be respected. I shall now explore how such a notion of friendship can bring about democratic justice in relation to teaching and learning.

Democratic justice – a valuable 'good' of friendship

Amy Gutmann (2003) gives a compelling account of democratic justice which I argue can be achieved through friendship in teaching and learning. For Gutmann (2003:26-27), democratic justice involves three interrelated aspects: the capacity to live one's own life as one sees fit, consistent with respecting equal freedoms of others – 'to treat all individuals as equal agents'; the capacity to contribute to the justice of one's society and one's world; and the capacity of individuals to live a decent life with a fair chance of choosing among their preferred ways of living. Firstly, if one learns to respect the liberties of others as being equally as important as one's own, then one recognises that others have similar freedoms to live their lives according to how they see fit. So, when South African students are taught to respect the freedoms of other students (say from their neighbouring countries or from communities that are different from their own), they do not become agitated when others present points of view perhaps different from theirs – they respect the views of others. However, this does not mean that they necessarily agree with everything others have to say. They also have the right to question, undermine and refute the judgements of others. At least the possibility of learning is there when students begin to scrutinise one another's views critically in an atmosphere of mutual respect for one another's different or at times conflicting judgements. When students respect one another equally, they are said to be critical, because criticality demands that we give due consideration to the views of others. A group of students once came to me to express their inability to grasp some of the key concepts in Philosophy of Education. When I told the other students about this in the classroom, they became agitated with the group (not necessarily homogeneous in terms of race and culture), because they claimed that these students had no legitimate grounds to

claim ignorance of the subject. I felt the majority of students were wrong to be dismissive of the group, because one aspect of critical learning is that we begin to connect with students who might encounter some difficulty in getting to understand aspects of the course – a matter of nurturing friendships. In this regard, equally respecting the rights of others in order to gain some understanding of what appear to be concepts that are difficult to grasp amounts to recognising that others have a legitimate voice that needs to be heard. Only then would the possibility of critical learning be enhanced. In this way, learning to recognise the different and often conflicting judgements of others seems to be a way in which to maximise critical learning. This is so because critical learning has some connection with considering the merit of the conflicting views of others – that is, whether these views make sense.

Secondly, to learn how to contribute to the justice of one's society and the world has some connection with critical learning. I remember a student who remarked that living in poverty is a choice which some people prefer to exercise. (This student specifically referred to the majority of blacks who live in squalor and abject poverty in informal settlements, better known as squatter camps in South Africa.) If the student means that some people are poor and therefore have little choice to determine where they live, then I agree with him. And, if he means (and I presume this is the case) that some people are poor and cannot afford to improve their living conditions, I also agree. But if he means that we should not be doing something (whether through protests or other means) about improving their precarious living conditions, then I disagree. In other words, one cannot claim to be a critical learner if one's learning does not result in some form of action that could contribute to the achievement of democratic justice. I cannot imagine how students could be critical if their learning does not cause them to act anew – they need to act with a sense of justice to others. Likewise, students cannot be critical if their learning does not contribute towards their advocating for a just world – for instance, the reduction of extreme and unacceptable levels of poverty on the African continent or the eradication of high levels of political dictatorships and corruption. This does not mean that they merely call for recognition and respect of others' rights (whether civil, political or social) within a critical learning agenda. Instead, they also stress the importance of taking responsibility for the

rights of others – a matter of taking others' rights seriously or 'accepting appropriate responsibility for the rights of others, not just making a fuss about our own' (Callan, 1997:73). For instance, people who champion the right to employment in South Africa, also consider as important the cause of others to take responsibility to meet the needs of those who are jobless. Such an understanding of justice could potentially extend the mere recognition of, and respect for, others' rights to a position where we assume appropriate responsibility for the rights of others as friends.

Thirdly, to learn what it means to be decent or civil (to be democratically just) has some connection to being critical. To show civility involves demonstrating what Stephen Macedo (1990) refers to as a sense of 'public-spiritedness' – that is, demonstrating a conscious awareness of others and recognising that they have to be respected on account of their difference. In South African university classrooms, there are students from various cultural backgrounds, and when these students demonstrate civility, they connect with one another's stories. They are acutely aware of one another's differences and through their 'public-spiritedness' collectively share the stories of their lives. That is, they are critical. However, encountering one another's differences does not mean that one merely listens to what others have to say without subjecting the truth of their claims to critical scrutiny. These students also question one another's stories with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the texts of their lived experiences. I recall one student in my Philosophy of Education class who questioned another student's bias towards Muslims in general. One student claimed that Muslims are bigots, whereas another student disagreed with this view on the basis that she lived in a Muslim country and her experience was that Muslims are generally moderate and respectful towards others (like herself) who have different cultural backgrounds. The point I am making is that questioning and undermining the views of others does not necessarily mean that one is disrespectful towards others. Rather, critically questioning people's unjustifiable assumptions about others is to treat them with honour, that is, not considering the unjustifiable views of others as 'beyond the pale of critical judgement' (Fay, 1996). In this way, one demonstrates a sense of decency (civility) – one is democratically just and therefore critical.

In essence, when students learn about democratic justice, they learn to recognise equally the freedoms of others, to contribute towards private and public justice, and to be decent. In this way, they learn to be critical, because criticality is linked to the realisation of a democratically just society on the grounds of having been exposed beforehand to texts which may enhance the possibility of achieving democratic justice. And, considering that the achievement of democratic justice can be enhanced through people deliberating together, taking risks and moving towards the unimagined, their friendships might stand a better chance of being sustained.

4

**Democratic
citizenship
education
through
respect and
forgiveness**

CHAPTER

Forgiveness as a prerequisite for friendship

The cultivation of friendship does not just suddenly happen. Friendships are nurtured over time as friends learn to experience one another in mutuality and as they endeavour to take risks. Yet, friendships do not emerge without conditions, although the friendship in itself should be unconditional. Here I wish to tell my story about the unconditional friendship I have been experiencing since joining the institution where I work in my late thirties. I narrate this story to illustrate how my unconditional friendships with colleagues in the faculty had to be determined by the prerequisite of forgiveness. On joining the faculty in the late 1990s, I was soon reminded by one of the senior academics about the uncertain nature of my appointment as Director of the Centre for Education Development (CENEDUS or SENOUS): ‘This is a grand job,’ he said sarcastically, ‘where you have to raise funds to secure your own employment.’ I said to myself that this was rather an odd welcome to the faculty.² During that same morning (my first week at the institution) the chair of SENOUS’s governing body accompanied me to the faculty staff room to introduce this new appointee (with a PhD from a different university) to faculty members. At that time, two other black colleagues had also recently joined the faculty in junior positions. While we were preparing ourselves to be introduced to our new colleagues, we heard one of the white male academics remark: ‘Is this a foreign invasion or a state coup?’ We were stunned and immediately felt unwanted in the faculty (although most of the senior staff were very accommodating). The white colleague who so flippantly dismissed us was to occupy an office next to mine when I joined one of the departments (of four) in the faculty after a highly productive six months’ stint at SENOUS, during which I managed to publish two journal articles – a feat welcomed by the then dean of the faculty.

Two years after my appointment as a senior lecturer in the faculty, I applied for an *ad hominem* associate professorship, which I got to the

2 Although CENEDUS was situated in the faculty, its staff members participated in development projects and the work of the director was to administer project activities at a cost which would secure funding for the Centre’s sustainability. My position was a contract of three years with the possibility of an extension. CENEDUS’s budget was included in, but not determined by, the faculty’s budget.

disappointment (or perhaps surprise) of some of my white colleagues in the faculty – not because it was their view that I did not deserve the promotion, but rather because some of them had been in the faculty for years and still occupied lower positions. Of course, my promotion could not have been an affirmative action initiative, because my academic record matched or even surpassed that of some of my senior colleagues. This promotion happened just after I had been constantly reminded by one of my white colleagues (who retired as a senior lecturer) about how difficult it was to gain promotion. My professorship came within a year when I had to apply for the position vacated by my mentor (a white man) in the department. I still attribute much of my growth and establishment in the faculty to the previous dean (a white man). At least, there were some white professors in the faculty who encouraged and supported me, and to whom I remain indebted. Despite the support of some colleagues, there were those who continuously reminded me how junior I really was and that I did apparently not know much about academic publishing – this at a time when my publications record surpassed those of all staff members in the faculty. Just before my promotion, I had a serious discussion with the dean about what I needed to do to gain promotion. After he informed me about the requirements for a senior academic position (perhaps he was telling me then that promotion would be premature for me), I felt greatly disheartened, because having perused most of my colleagues' academic records, I knew that, comparatively speaking, I warranted promotion. Then I lost my composure momentarily and asked: 'Must a black person produce ten times more than his white colleagues to gain promotion?' What I admired about him, was that he did not show any sign of resentment towards my outburst, nor did he later begrudge me for being so bold in his office (the same one I now occupy). In a way, I forgave him then for having done so much for me at the time.

But my forgiveness was short-lived. On applying for the Rector's Award for Excellent Research, I was told that my white colleague deserved it above me. This was a great disappointment, because as a black person I knew I was being watched with hawkish eyes by some of my colleagues, who I thought perhaps wanted to see a black person failing. I thought that nepotism was rife in the faculty, yet I did not become discouraged. I knew I had to forgive again, because my presence in the faculty was a calling and

I had to be here to be an instrument for transformation – transformation in the sense that black academics could not be looked upon as being incompetent and not deserving of higher academic appointments. For some years before my appointment as dean, I constantly pushed myself to ‘perform’, because the only way I thought I would prove to my white colleagues that I deserved to be in the faculty was to enhance my research outputs. Of course ‘performance’ was measured mostly against the quantity of research papers one produces. In hindsight such performativity, that of counting the quantity of journal articles, is not quite what I would encourage, because churning out publications (not that one should be unproductive), without having a longer intellectual project in mind, would in any case be a senseless, uneducative academic experience. One should rather work extensively on monographs or books than concern oneself with short pieces of writing that lack coherence and academic rigour. But let me continue narrating my journey of forgiveness.

Becoming chair of the academic department a year after my professorship was, to me, some achievement – not only because of having been appointed as the first black professor in the faculty for almost one hundred years, but also because I was nominated as the first black chair in the faculty. The nomination here is important to note, because your colleagues ask you to represent them at faculty level. You also had to provide the academic leadership, which I did. This was fairly easy, because I was working in an academic department whose performance indicators were not what they should have been. Now that I occupy the deanship (the first black dean of education in the university ever), I have become acutely aware of the challenges to transformation in my institution. My (white) colleagues are extremely courteous – I have not encountered a blatant dismissal of my presence since my first visit to the faculty staff room and the above-mentioned incident with one of my colleagues. But this should not be interpreted as an indication of approval – I know they would have preferred a white man (not necessarily woman) to have been in the deanship. But the university should be commended for having taken a meritorious decision in appointing what many considered as a deserving candidate for the position at the time (a position which I am happy to serve for only one term of five years).

For a black dean to draw on the support of his colleagues is a rather challenging task in this context. One cannot alienate oneself from others. Neither can one work with one's black colleagues only, for that matter. I have made many friends in the faculty and have seldom encountered fierce resistance. This situation I would attribute to my (mostly) non-confrontational attitude towards staff. I say 'mostly', because during academic discussions I would be very belligerent (as my colleagues have come to know me), but I realised that robust confrontation would not be apposite for sustainable relationships in the faculty. This way of constantly 'keeping oneself in check' is tantamount to a form of forgiveness which is an acknowledgement that one respects the ways of others (in this case, mostly my white colleagues), which might not always be consistent with the unkindness encountered during academic deliberations. Yet, this does not mean that my colleagues and I could do and say whatever we wanted to. Often, ill-conceived views are still challenged during sometimes unpleasant meetings. Often, during faculty board meetings, I observe some degree of irritation amongst my white colleagues when some black staff members articulate their views vigorously. I can understand this, because these black colleagues are used to the kind of anti-apartheid liberatory politics whereby, for instance, people have learnt to speak their minds regardless of whether their views might be distasteful to others. After more than three years as chair of the faculty board, I have also witnessed some conciliatory attitudes on the part of my white colleagues. For instance, the faculty board overwhelmingly supported the re-nomination of a black vice-dean, which indicates that people can think beyond colour in the faculty. In a way, I sense a kind of mutual respect that black and white colleagues have developed for one another. Let me now move on to a discussion of respect for persons, which I infer (from relations amongst staff in the faculty) ought to be a prerequisite for forgiveness.

Respect for persons, and forgiveness

What is it about 'respect for persons' that can engender defensible dialogues and subsequently establish conditions favourable for forgiveness? In the first instance, in a dialogue every participant wants to be recognised as someone with the same basic moral worth as another participant – that is, a person has something to say and wants to be heard. In other words, in

a dialogue people want to be seen as co-participants who share authority to determine how the dialogue ought to unfold. (This is what I encounter during meetings with the faculty executive.) This then requires participants in the dialogue to be prepared and willing to listen to what somebody else has to say. In short, every person wants to be respected for her worth – for the contribution she can make to the dialogue. Weale (1985:28) notes three ideas of respect:

The first is that persons have goals and purposes in their lives that are meaningful to them (they can contribute meaningfully to a dialogue). The second is that persons are capable of reflecting upon their circumstances and act on reasons that derive from these reflections. The third is that the goals that give meaning to people's lives are the product of their self-reflection, so that their goals are in part self-chosen, and derive a portion of their value from that fact. Respect for persons therefore involves the claim that persons should be allowed to act on their own conception of what is good and valuable for them, and that in so far as they are doing this they are expressing their natures as rational and reflective beings.

The point is, when people engage in a dialogue they show respect for one another when they allow one another to express themselves rationally – they are permitted to articulate meanings. In other words, as co-participants they respect one another as equals; this respect implying that each person recognises others as capable and competent to articulate what they have in mind. The upshot of this is that people show respect for one another when they consider their judgements to have value, because these judgements are the expressions of how people have chosen to make sense to others – to make others know what they think and reflect on. This is certainly what unfolds in faculty board meetings – people are persuaded that others' judgements 'have value' and are of interest to the faculty's decisions and initiatives.

The point about respecting people in a dialogue, is that every human being is considered by another as a source of value. This does not only mean that people have something to say, but more importantly, as pointed out by Hill (2000:77-80), that firstly, persons are capable of reflecting on their desires, setting their own ends, and rationally pursuing some means to

an end. This can only happen if they are allowed space and opportunity and even aided, to some extent, provided their means and ends are compatible with due respect to others. Secondly, people respect others as moral agents when they recognise others to reciprocate the moral standing they have imputed to others; that is, they recognise that others should not be 'written off' as creatures who can only respond to power, bribery and manipulation. Thirdly, respect for people involves considering them as particular individuals, whose identity is bound up with particular projects, personal attachments, and traditions. Fourthly, to respect is also to criticise if necessary; and finally, to respect means to appreciate the different values others have found in their groups. Thus, in a dialogue, if people are not recognised for having something worthwhile to say (that is, rationally), being excluded on account of their difference, and allowed to get away with unsubstantiated claims without being criticised or taken into systematic controversy, 'respect for persons' would no longer exist and by implication the dialogue will be short-lived.

Respect and university classroom encounters

This brings me to the question: What seems to be a reasonable and respectful attitude to take in a (South African) university classroom dialogue? Firstly, our culturally diverse student population requires that both university teachers and students make an effort to understand and appreciate (as far as they can) features of their cultures that they cherish and deem to be important to their particular identity (for instance, through their literature, histories and folklore, and with the help of teachers who themselves might represent a particular cultural heritage). Nowadays it is not uncommon to find Xhosas, Zulus, Sothos, white Afrikaners, coloureds, Indians and English-speaking whites in the same university classroom. It would be respectful if students and teachers from these groups were to become informed about one another's cultures: 'Respect is blind if uninformed about relevant values and the reasons they provide; and it inevitably remains uninformed if nothing shakes us from our habits of seeing everything exclusively from our primary cultures' perspective' (Hill, 2000:83).

Secondly, respect calls us to confront our biases, to judge by comparing with our familiar patterns, to curb our arrogant bias towards others whom we hardly understand. That is, we require openness in confronting other cultures and in curbing our moral arrogance – after all, no single group can warrant confidence that it possesses the best, or most humane and just, moral system (Hill, 2000:83). Here I specifically think of majority groups from perhaps the same culture (say whites) in my university classroom, who often seem to alienate other minority (coloured) students – they hardly talk to one another. Some of these students even at times create the impression that others (coloureds) should be very grateful to study at a former white Afrikaner institution. Anecdotally speaking, I recall my encounter with a white colleague in the faculty corridors, when he equated some of my black colleagues' presence in the institution with that of a 'technician' who has to repair the photocopying machine – such an attitude seems to be deeply dismissive of certain 'classes' of human beings and needs to be rejected. The point I am making, is that we can only show respect when we curb our moral arrogance – that is, stop looking at ourselves (as some white students and colleagues at my institution perhaps do) as being more privileged than others. Only then will dialogues in multicultural university classrooms begin to take a more critical, legitimate and democratic turn.

Thirdly, respect demands that we listen appreciatively to the victims of apartheid. Some students in one of my postgraduate classes were given the opportunity to share with others some of their stories. What we heard from students mostly related to 'deficiencies' in South African society and how these adversely affected education in schools – most students were in-service teachers. What we heard mostly involved what South African civil society on the whole seems to grapple with in the domain of education – inequalities in schools;³ black students being 'told' that they

3 Previously advantaged white schools remain privileged in terms of material and human resources – these schools can access substantial finances and can employ additional teachers in governing body posts in order to cope with overcrowded classes (disadvantaged black schools have teacher-learner ratios of 1:90 and 1:70 in comparison with white schools with ratios of 1:25 or 1:40). White schools have superior teaching aids, more qualified teachers, and well-equipped classrooms and sports fields.

are unable to think theoretically and rigorously;⁴ racism in universities and schools;⁵ unemployment of thousands of school leavers; the obsession of school bureaucrats with the idea that education should meet national economic and technical needs;⁶ dominance of the transmission mode of teaching in schools, despite the fact that the new curriculum demands that critical students be ‘produced’; insecurity (gangsterism and drug trafficking) at some schools which threatens learners and neighbourhoods; and the continuous humiliation suffered by those who remain marginalised (especially women) and poor, and who live mostly in informal settlements. The point I am making, is that our dialogical interaction in relation to education in South Africa has engendered a sense of reflection, opening up to one another what Maxine Greene (1995:116) calls ‘the texts of our lived lives’. In this way, by listening to the stories of those who were disadvantaged by apartheid education in one way or another, we (students and I, white and black) aroused one another’s interest. Likewise, we also heard some of the banal excuses of some white students who had been advantaged by apartheid education, claiming that they (in particular their white parents) were influenced by the rhetorical political views of the racist government. In other words, respect requires listening to many voices we like or dislike and deplore – that is, listening through active engagement.

Fourthly, in seeking to achieve respect, for instance, in the face of disagreement, we need to attend to the way people hold or express positions. For example, the way in which opponents should treat each other with regard to education policy issues, even when the policy debate ends in legislation and the state takes a position favouring one side of the dispute, needs to be grounded in principles constituting respect. In this

4 Sometimes I hear colleagues in my own department speaking about how difficult it is for black students to articulate points of view or formulate arguments.

5 Although some changes have occurred in the demographic profiles of universities and schools since 1994, there are still institutions where prejudices and biases towards black, coloured and Indian students are unacceptably deeply rooted.

6 Most of the students in the postgraduate class voiced their frustration with departmental officials (subject advisers and circuit school managers) about the uncritical implementation of South Africa’s outcomes-based education (OBE) curriculum. Teachers are not encouraged to engage critically with OBE and its assessment criteria. They slavishly have to make sure that marks are recorded and paperwork completed for external departmental moderations by school managers and subject advisers.

regard it is worth referring to Gutmann and Thompson (1990:76), who claim the following:

Like toleration, mutual respect is a form of agreeing to disagree. But mutual respect demands more than toleration. It requires a favourable attitude, and constructive interaction with, the persons with whom one disagrees. It consists in a reciprocal positive regard of citizens who manifest the excellence of character that permits a democracy to flourish in the face of (at least temporarily) irresolvable moral conflict.

In other words, respect should not merely be an unconditional acceptance of everything people say or propose – people should agree to disagree. University academics who support the government's education policies do not show respect for politicians by simply accepting everything they say; politicians do not show respect for university academics merely by appointing them to serve on review committees. Fay (1996:239) makes the following point about respect:

Respect demands that we hold others to the intellectual and moral standards we apply to our friends and ourselves. Excusing others from demands of intellectual rigor and honesty or moral sensitivity and wisdom on the grounds that everyone is entitled to his or her opinion no matter how ill-informed or ungrounded, or – worse – on the grounds that others need not or cannot live up to these demands, is to treat them with contempt. We honor others by challenging them when we think they are wrong, and by thoughtfully taking their (justifiable) criticisms of us. To do so is to take them seriously; to do any less is to dismiss them as unworthy of serious consideration, which is to say, to treat them with disrespect.

If university teachers in a dialogue deny students the right to question freely or if education policy bureaucrats are unable to handle criticism of policy initiatives, their actions should not be 'beyond the pale of critical judgment' (Fay, 1996:239). Respect does also not mean that everything education policy officials do is 'fine', such as when they overtly attempt to impose curriculum restructuring on universities. Respect means

that university academics should be held accountable to pursue policy restructuring on the basis of self-reflection and critique. In this way, respect does not simply mean acceptance of everything people do. Respect conceived as mere acceptance of everything people do or say negates dialogical interaction. According to Fay (1996:240), this understanding of respect 'enjoins us to appreciate others but not to engage them in mutual critical reflection'. Once again, Gutmann and Thompson (1996:76) aptly explain mutual respect as follows:

Mutual respect manifests a distinctively democratic kind of character – the character of individuals who are morally committed, self-reflective about their commitments, discerning of the difference between respectable and merely tolerable differences of opinion, and open to the possibility of changing their minds or modifying their positions at some time in the future if they confront unanswerable objections to their present point of view.

Thus far, I have argued that showing respect in dialogues about education involves the following: firstly, make an effort to understand and appreciate, as far as people can, features of other people's cultures; secondly, curb one's arrogant bias towards others whom one might hardly understand; thirdly, listen appreciatively to the stories of others we may like, dislike or deplore; and fourthly, hold others accountable to the intellectual and moral standards we apply to our friends and ourselves. In essence, respect entails that one recognises that others have something worthwhile to contribute to the dialogue and that they are not excluded from the dialogue on the basis of their difference or one's dismissive bias towards them. Furthermore, respect also allows one to challenge or criticise others if their reasons are not found to be persuasive or palatable enough. This brings me to a discussion of how these aspects of respect in dialogues can pave the way for the enhancement of forgiveness in South Africa.

Respect, forgiveness and classroom pedagogy

In the main, demanding respect becomes a struggle against racial bigotry, gender oppression, and cultural imperialism (Hill, 2000:60). Small wonder Kant equates 'respect for persons' with that of human dignity – everyone has an equal worth, independent of social standing and individual merits

(Hill, 2000:62-64). This implies that people are to be regarded 'as worthy of respect as human beings, regardless of how their values differ and whether or not we disapprove of what they do' (Hill, 2000:69). The point I am making, is that even those who perpetrated acts of racial bigotry, gender oppression and cultural imperialism should be respected as persons. This would at least leave open the door for reconciliation among contending parties if the opportunity arises. If there is too much hatred, anger and resentment towards others, the possibility of reconciliation would be slim. In this sense, I agree with Hannah Arendt (1998:240-241), who notes that '[f]orgiving ... is the only reaction which does not merely re-act but acts anew and unexpectedly, unconditioned by the act which provoked and therefore freeing from its consequences both the one who forgives and the one who is forgiven'. Put differently, respect opens the door for the enhancement of reconciliation; without respect, there is no recognition of human dignity and hence, the unlikelihood of reconciliation. According to Hill (2000:115), that '[a]ll moral agents should be respected as human beings should stand even for perpetrators of serious crimes and moral offences. Even they should not be seen as forfeiting all respect'. Of course, I know this is a highly contentious point: Should one respect the apartheid perpetrator of heinous and callous torture? I suppose I am arguing in the affirmative, because if one cannot respect the perpetrator as a person who has an innate sense of humanity, it would be difficult to forgive and begin anew. At least by respecting the person as a person, the possibility does arise for forgiveness. I am specifically thinking of Congolese militia (in Africa) who continue to maim and rape women and treat them as insects. If such militia could not be forgiven, then the possibility for dialogue would not be there.

This brings me to the point of how we can cultivate reconciliation in university classrooms through the idea of respect for persons. Firstly, if we want to appreciate the stories of others whom we might consider as less important, it becomes imperative that we diversify our university curricula (especially those that reinforce cultural bias or at least fail to help students to develop their resources to fight it) in a serious and substantial way. Failing to do so would further entrench extreme conservatism and make impossible the practice of respecting students as persons, and hence, reconciliation. I have argued (Waghid, 2005:323-342) that through the

teaching of indigenous languages and literature, social sciences, and life orientation curricula in South Africa, students would be acquainted with a rudimentary understanding of the histories and cultures of many different people, that is, major religious and cultural groups, as well as ethnic, racial and social majorities and sexual minorities. Awareness of cultural difference is necessary in order to engender respect for one another, which is an essential underpinning for reconciliatory action. Moreover, education as reconciliatory action needs to begin early. As soon as students engage in storytelling, they can tell stories about other nations and countries. Certainly in South Africa they could learn that religions other than Christianity exist, that people have different ways of thinking, traditions and beliefs. For instance, one such theme in life orientation for primary school children could involve educating them about African myths and folktales, and the injustices perpetrated against Africans. By the time they reach university, they should be well-equipped to deal with demanding courses on human diversity outside the dominant Western traditions. The goals of such a theme could be threefold: to develop in students a sense of informed, reconciliatory action as they enter the broader South African society of increasing diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, social class and religious sectarianism; to provide students with an intellectual awareness of the causes and effects of structured inequalities and prejudicial exclusion in South African society; and to expand students' ability to think critically about controversial issues that stem from the gender, race, class, ethnic and religious differences that pervade our society. In this way, students who, despite being embedded in perhaps different cultures, can enrich their lives by learning to appreciate values of another kind – or at least to respect those who do (Hill, 2000:86).

Secondly, as I have argued (Waghid, 2005:132-140), to forgive (and therefore to have respect) implies some form of intimacy and closeness one needs to establish with others; it entails engaging deliberately with others. One cannot begin to understand the feelings of others, neither can others comprehend how one feels, if deliberation does not occur among us. Reconciliatory action is a 'coming together' whereby, in this instance, university teachers and students 'engage in dialogues' (Greene, 1994:25). When teachers and students engage in dialogue they 'speak with others as passionately and eloquently as [they] can about justice and caring

and love and trust; all [they] can do is to look into each other's eyes and squeeze each other's hands' (Greene, 1994:25). To act deliberately and respectfully would go a long way towards promoting civic reconciliation, because reconciliation requires that we do not enter the dialogue with set and preconceived ideas about the past and present, but rather what grows out of the dialogue offers possibilities for people to reconcile. For instance, a university student does not enter into dialogue with others to run them down for the injustices that her parents might have experienced. Rather, she enters the dialogue in order to look for possibilities as to how the past injustices can be avoided and how the future can be imagined. I remember a white undergraduate student becoming agitated in class about a black student's presentation regarding the racial prejudice experienced by her elder sister during her years of study at a white Afrikaans-speaking university. This seemed to have been a deliberate attempt on the part of the black student to provoke her classmates without considering that the white students in her class were not responsible for discriminating against the black student's sibling in the past. In such a situation, possibilities for the future could not have been imagined, since the black student's intent was to blame her classmates unjustly for an act for which they could not have been responsible.

Thirdly, those serious about forgiveness ought to become respectful, because respect requires of one not just to express oneself freely, but also responsibly. This means that free expression should not become what Gutmann (2003:200) calls 'an unconstrained licence to discriminate'. Only then does one act responsibly, that is, respectfully. In other words, the right to free and unconstrained expression ends when injustice to others begins. One can no longer lay claim to being respectful and therefore being responsible, critical and just, if one advocates a particular point of view that cannot be separated from excluding certain individuals – that is, discriminating invidiously against others (particularly those individuals in society most vulnerable and who lack the same expressive freedom as those who are excluding them) on grounds such as gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity and religion (Gutmann, 2003:200). For example,

if the Dan Roodts⁷ of this world continue to express themselves with unhindered freedom, making unsubstantiated claims about the supposed aggression and murderous instincts of (South African) blacks (all in the name of criticism), the possibilities for civic reconciliation would seriously be thwarted. The point I am making, is that such unconstrained, irresponsible expressions are in fact disrespectful and uncritical utterances which do not offer possibilities for civic reconciliation to be achieved in our fifteen-year-old democracy. Yes, becoming respectful would be a matter of constraining our irresponsible speech. Only then would we enter a field of more possibilities – of connecting with all South Africans in the quest to achieve civic reconciliation.

Thus far, I have argued that forgiveness and respect are preconditions for any form of democratic practice and sense of belonging to a group. People cannot begin to engage one another if they do not respect others as human beings – as persons. Nor can people begin to deliberate equally and compassionately as friends if they do not begin anew, that is, with forgiveness. So, an education for democratic citizenship should be premised on the virtues of respect and forgiveness. I cannot imagine that our university classrooms claim to cultivate democratic citizenship education without situating pedagogical practices in having respect for the other and, in turn, to open up the possibility for forgiveness – to explore the unimaginable anew.

7 Dan Roodt is an Afrikaner academic who champions the cause of white exclusiveness and Afrikaans in South Africa.

5

**Cosmopolitanism
through
democratic
citizenship
education**

CHAPTER

Uncosmopolitan encounters

As dean of a faculty, I am privy to many students' stories about apparent racism and xenophobia they encounter at our institution. In a way, black students find comfort in sharing their stories about racism and xenophobia with a black dean. The stories which reached my office included the following: a black, elderly doctoral student alleged that she had encountered moments of extreme discomfort in her deliberations with her white supervisor; a postgraduate black student alleged that her white teacher had questioned her enrolment at this university which, she was told, is predominantly reserved for Afrikaans-speaking students; a doctoral student alleged that whenever he was in the presence of some white academics they would immediately excuse themselves from the conversation; and a postgraduate student from a neighbouring country complained that his lecturer did not treat his work with care. Even if these stories were not true, there is sufficient justification to consider the faculty to be a comfortable haven for white students who, at the undergraduate level, are in the majority. Not surprisingly, black students do experience feelings of alienation and exclusion, particularly at the level of language. I am not suggesting that racism is perpetrated only against black people. I remember the story told by one of my doctoral students about some black students in residences deliberately disrupting hostels at night in order to anger white students. However, at the institution where I work, and where blacks are in the minority, it is more likely that they will feel excluded than the other way around.

All the aforementioned stories suggest that there might be moments in which people's rights are violated. This has led me to ask the question: How can education contribute towards minimising and eradicating such inhumane and unjust acts against humanity? As far as I am concerned (and the trend of thought throughout this book has been a confirmation of this), we should constantly educate societies to inculcate the important virtues of democratic citizenship in order to prevent such forms of injustice. In other words, the rationale for democratic citizenship education is the eradication of all forms of injustice people might encounter. If our societies can internalise the virtues of democratic citizenship, the possibility of injustices against human beings could be minimised or

even eradicated. Simply put, the possibility that inhumane and unjust acts against human beings can be reduced is highly likely if people are educated to be democratic citizens. This is so because education in the first instance requires that people connect with one another – that is, they engage deliberatively, compassionately, in a friendly manner, respectfully and forgivingly in pedagogical practices. Let me elaborate. As has been argued already, important virtues of democratic citizenship include, firstly, the capacity to deliberate as free and equal citizens in a democratic polity, and secondly, conducting such deliberations so that they are about the demands of justice for all individuals (Gutmann, 1996:68-69). If we deliberate as free and equal citizens, then we first of all give an account of what we do to others, who might find our reasons justifiable or not. In turn, we consider the reasons of others equally, which can lead us either to accept or reject their reasons or their understanding of our reasons or justifications. Such justifications and concomitant actions happen in an atmosphere of free and open expression and are only hindered when our reasons embody an injustice towards others. For instance, when students deliberate among themselves about the racial discrimination experienced by South African blacks under apartheid and begin to equate affirmative action with discrimination towards whites, then free expression can no longer remain unrestricted, because the majority black South African government is unjustly being accused of racial discrimination. I am not suggesting that governments should not be questioned critically, but rather that unjustifiable criticism should not be countenanced, because affirmative action is one way of equalising opportunities for all South Africans, especially those previously excluded from gaining employment opportunities under apartheid. I cannot imagine myself in an academic position today if it were not because of the equalisation of opportunities for all of the country's citizens. For this reason, I agree with Gutmann, who claims that freedom of expression should not become 'an unconstrained licence to discriminate' and that it only be practised 'within the limits of doing no injustice to others' (Gutmann, 2003:200). So, when all Jews are accused of perpetrating acts of aggression against Palestinians, or if all Palestinians are branded as potential 'suicide bombers', then such potentially dangerous statements should not be condoned, because not only are people unjustly repudiated, but such irresponsible expressions

could also fuel already volatile relations in the Middle East. Similarly, if a young child in a South African school decides to dress in the military-style attire worn by, say, a 'suicide bomber', this cannot be condoned, because others might find it offensive as it might venerate 'suicide bombers' as heroes although they perpetrate heinous acts of violence against other human beings. In essence, educating people to be democratic citizens involves inculcating in them a spirit of openness and respect for the justifications of others, a recognition that others should be listened to, and that injustices should not be done to others under the guise of equal and free expression.

Moreover, if democratic citizenship demands that people deliberate about the demands of justice for all individuals, then, as aptly put by Gutmann (1996:69), 'doing what is right cannot be reduced to loyalty to, or identification with, any existing group of human beings'. Educational institutions should teach students, on the one hand, about their duties as citizens to advance justice and not to limit performance of these duties to some individuals or groups, and on the other hand, about their responsibilities as citizens to support institutional ways of moving towards better societies and a better world (Gutmann, 1996:71). In South Africa, the Department of Education envisages that students be taught 'social honour' through the singing of the national anthem, displaying the national flag, and saying out loud an oath of allegiance which reads as follows: 'I promise to be loyal to my country, South Africa, and do my best to promote the welfare and the well-being of all its citizens. I promise to show self-respect in all that I do and to respect all of my fellow citizens and all of our various traditions. Let us work for peace, friendship and reconciliation and heal the scars left by past conflicts. And let us build a common destiny together' (DoE, 2001:59). There seems to be little wrong in educating for 'social honour' through advancing peace, friendship, reconciliation and the building of a collective common destiny. It is a matter of exercising one's duty in doing what is right, particularly after the majority black population for decades suffered racial abuse, political exclusion and inhumane treatment at the hands of the apartheid regime. Reconciliation and justice are conditional upon all citizens who desire to live in peace and friendship, as is the recognition that all citizens should be respected for their human dignity. An individual or group can have

a moral edge over another only if that individual or group is more just than another.

However, it seems as if the pledge of allegiance can also open up the possibility for individuals not to enact their civic responsibilities of moving towards a better society and thus a better world. Why is this so? Limiting one's loyalty to one's country and promoting the welfare of fellow citizens could exclude immigrants from gaining one's support, particularly considering that many immigrants from Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe, who are currently fleeing their countries because of political instability and state harassment, now seek refuge in South Africa. Pledging one's support for fellow citizens, while immigrants are considered as 'foreign co-citizens' or 'resident aliens', could intensify existing xenophobic prejudices towards immigrants on account of their being considered 'outsiders' who do not deserve our respect and civility. Often these immigrant communities are subjected to indifference and cruelty, and sometimes hatred and assassinations. For instance, some time ago, Somali shopkeepers were gunned down in the Khayelitsha area of Cape Town, apparently for jeopardising job opportunities for locals. Likewise, I sometimes hear my doctoral student from Malawi complaining of how he experiences moments of stigmatisation and isolation. The point I am making, is that educating students to promote the welfare of South African citizens only could be interpreted as not having to attend to the rights of immigrant 'outsiders', which could in turn kindle xenophobia and prejudice. Like Callan (1999:198), I contend that students should be taught 'to see their neighbourhoods and the international community as arenas of civic participation'.

In essence, educating for democratic citizenship does not only involve cultivating in people a sense of deliberating together freely and equally about their common and collective destiny. It is also about achieving justice for all, including those immigrants who are victims of religious wars (Sudanese and Somali immigrants) and political alienation and suppression (Zimbabwean immigrants). In the words of Gutmann (1996:69):

[P]ublic education ought to cultivate in all students the skills and virtues of democratic citizenship, including the capacity to deliberate about the demands of justice for all individuals, not

only for present-day citizens of the United States [or any specific country]. Deliberating about the demands of justice is a central virtue of democratic citizenship, because it is primarily (not exclusively) through our empowerment of democratic citizens that we can further the cause of justice around the world.

This brings me to a discussion of cosmopolitanism.

Educating for cosmopolitanism

It seems as if the democratic citizenship education agenda is restricted in the sense that it considers action only from the vantage point of individuals or groups that need to respond towards other individuals or groups in a national context. So, the question remains: How can cosmopolitanism extend the democratic citizenship education agenda? Whereas democratic citizenship functions mostly within the boundaries of its memberships, emphasising citizens' duties and responsibilities towards other individuals and groups, cosmopolitanism recognises the rights of others to 'universal hospitality'. Simply put, others have the right to be treated hospitably. For Benhabib (2006:22), in a neo-Kantian sense,

[H]ospitality is not to be understood as a virtue of sociability, as the kindness and generosity one may show to strangers who come to one's land or who become dependent on one's act of kindness through circumstances of nature or history; hospitality is a right that belongs to all human beings as far as we view them as potential participants in a world republic.

Such a right to hospitality imposes an obligation on democratic states and their citizens not to deny refuge and asylum to those whose intentions are peaceful, particularly if refusing them would result in harm coming to them (Benhabib, 2006:25). So, if the intentions of Somali entrepreneurs are peaceful, it would be considered their right to be treated hospitably and it would be democratic citizens' obligation to ensure that these immigrants enjoy such a right.

What does such a cosmopolitan approach to education entail? Firstly, considering that cosmopolitanism involves the right to temporary residence

on the part of the 'stranger who comes to our land' (Benhabib, 2006:22), it follows that public schools in South Africa cannot deny access to children of immigrant communities. In most cases they are not refused. However, some children are excluded in subtle ways, considering that the language of instruction, for instance, is not in the mother tongue of these immigrant children. In fact, in the black township of Kayamandi (in Stellenbosch, South Africa) African children find it difficult to cope with non-mother-tongue instruction in public schools. Three Belgian teachers once requested a mediator to assist them in teaching children in Kayamandi to participate in art and cultural activities. And, taking into account that local school children find it difficult to cope with a different language, it would be extremely challenging for immigrant (say Somali) children to adapt to the public school life in their country of temporary sojourn. What cosmopolitanism thus demands is for immigrant children to be taught initially in their mother tongue before they are assimilated into the broader public school life. Or, alternatively, they should simultaneously learn the language of instruction and be supported in doing so. The point I am making is that one should not take for granted that people with immigrant status would fit naturally into the public structures of their adopted countries or countries of temporary residence. They have to be initiated gradually into social and public life on the basis of a sense of obligation on the part of democratic states. Failing to do so, for example by denying immigrant children gradual access into public schools and thus depriving them from developing and exercising their capacities, would amount to treating others unjustly. The upshot of this view is that if my Malawian student's children, who are attending the local Kayamandi school, are not treated hospitably by, for example, being initiated gradually into public school life by South African teachers and other learners, then the teachers and learners are not abiding by their obligation to treat others humanely – that is to say, justly. This unfavourable attitude towards immigrant others would not only retard interaction and cooperation among different people, but also impede the education for social justice project that the Department of Education (in South Africa) so dearly wants to implement in public schools. This is because the consequence would be that these immigrant children and their parents will invariably develop mistrust (as is seemingly the case with my Malawian student and his children) in the

public school sector – a situation which in turn increases their suffering (discomfort) and perpetuates what Iris Marion Young (2006:159) refers to as ‘structural social injustice’.

Secondly, ‘the right to have rights’ prohibits states from denying individuals citizenship rights and state protection against murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane acts such as persecution (whether political, cultural or religious) (Benhabib, 2006:25). So, if Somali immigrant children wish to wear their head scarves in South African public schools, following ‘the right to have rights’ notion, these children cannot be discriminated against if they wish to do so. Asking these children to remove their scarves, which they might consider as important to their religious and cultural identity, would constitute unjust treatment on the grounds that their right to be different would be undermined. Similarly, for the South African government to have deported a Pakistani national on the grounds of unreasonable suspicion that he might have been a terror suspect caused much humiliation and insult to his family (including his children at school), especially seeing that after more than six months the Department of Foreign Affairs has not yet produced any evidence of this person’s alleged al-Qaida connections. In this case, the political – more specifically, cosmopolitan – rights of a human being have been seriously compromised. Similarly, for French authorities to have passed a law preventing Muslim women and girls from wearing the head scarf is discriminatory and unjust. I cannot imagine how the head scarf in fact encroaches on French liberties. If some Muslims claim that wearing the head scarf is a religious or cultural practice and the scarf does not cause any harm to any person, then who are we to say that such a practice violates French liberties? In my view, denying Muslim women the right to wear the head scarf is tantamount to denying a people to exercise what they claim to be their religious and cultural right. Hence, such treatment would cause them to feel that they are being treated unjustly – that is, inhospitably.

In essence, cosmopolitanism and its concomitant agenda of hospitality which ought to be afforded other human beings (especially from immigrant communities) in many ways complement the duties and responsibilities associated with the activities of democratic citizens. Unless countries and their peoples recognise the rights of others to be treated with dignity and

respect, without having their rights suppressed, the achievement of justice will remain remote from the minds and hearts of people. I have argued that South African public schools can do much to promote these norms, which would inevitably consolidate and extend the just actions linked to the implementation of a democratic citizenship agenda.

Of course, it might seem as if my argument in defence of cosmopolitanism lends itself to a notion of citizenship which does not invoke legal entitlements on the part of 'citizens', particularly immigrants and other marginalised communities. Simply put, my defence of cosmopolitanism might seem to have only moral value and that all 'citizens' would not necessarily benefit from the rights granted by nation states. In other words, immigrants and other marginalised communities do not politically/legally have access to rights. Of course one way out of such a predicament would be to argue that universal human rights discourses ought to be coupled with a cosmopolitan conception of citizenship. In other words, universal human rights might provide a theoretical underpinning for cosmopolitan citizenship. For instance, it might be quite apposite to claim that a Universal Declaration of Human Rights (as advocated by the United Nations) might be one way in which marginalised 'citizens', from nation states, might secure political/legal entitlements. Although such a view may seem to be untenable, because human rights cannot logically be a theoretical underpinning for cosmopolitan citizenship on the grounds that human rights discourses are located within a universalist frame of reference, in contrast to that of citizenship, which is located within a more particularist frame (Kiwani, 2005:37), I tend to hold the view that justice for all 'citizens' would reasonably be secured if universal human rights could be used by nation states to engender defensible forms of cosmopolitanism. In contrast to Kiwani's view, I believe that in this way the implementation of human rights discourses might not necessarily be conceptually distinct from cosmopolitan citizenship, and the conflating of human rights with citizenship might not be as conceptually incoherent. In fact, a Universal Declaration of Human Rights might enhance the empowerment and active participation of individual citizens in the context of a political community. Such a view makes sense on the basis that if marginalised 'citizens', particularly immigrants, are granted 'hospitality' on the grounds of a Universal Declaration of Human Rights (for instance,

that they cannot be excluded from political participation), the chances that cosmopolitan citizenship could be realised would seem highly likely. This is so, because a Universal Declaration of Human Rights would obligate nation states to respect the rights of all citizens.

This brings me to a discussion of some of the strategies that can be used in a university classroom to educate for democratic citizenship and cosmopolitanism.

University pedagogy, democratic citizenship and cosmopolitanism

Firstly, I invited my doctoral student from Malawi to teach our postgraduate students who were to become teachers in public schools the following year. He taught them 'Diversity and Inclusivity in Education', one of twelve modules for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education programme. At first, I started off as a co-teacher with him, but after that he taught the class entirely on his own. Because almost 50% of the class of about ninety students were Afrikaans-speaking, it was extremely difficult for him to connect with all students in their mother tongue. So, I decided to join him occasionally only to clarify concepts in Afrikaans. However, he did most of the teaching and also marked the English-speaking students' assignments, tests and examinations. Some of the students actually started to complain to me about him, in particular (according to them) about his seemingly inadequate teaching style, lack of communicative skills (in Afrikaans) and inability to clarify difficult concepts. Although some of these concerns were legitimate, especially the language issue, I found it hard to believe that he was a bad teacher, especially given the time he took to prepare his lectures and the discussions we had before lectures on the concepts related to multiculturalism, deliberative democracy and diversity. Consequently, he requested students to communicate with him (in English) via email correspondence. Quite surprisingly, many students did, but there were also some students who preferred to communicate directly with me. In the end, these students completed assignments, wrote tests and examinations and performed considerably well. I think what was at play here was that, initially, most students did not accept my student as someone who had the right to be a participant in the same university classroom, on the grounds that he came from a neighbouring country

and that he did not share a common language of communication with some students. Also, it seems as if some students were unwilling to be taught by one whom they considered to be a 'stranger'. It could also be that some (a very small minority of students) might even have projected xenophobic attitudes.⁸ I specifically remember his encounter with one particular student, who unjustifiably accused him of never being available after lectures, yet he was the one person in our department who was always at hand to talk to students. However, as the situation turned out, especially after many students had recorded good marks in their assignments, the students realised that he was not going to 'disappear' and that he had a legitimate right to teach them. In my view, educating for cosmopolitanism involves making students recognise and accept that those whom they consider as 'outside strangers' have the right to participate in a university classroom and that we (South African students and teachers) do not have sole proprietorship of pedagogical spaces.

Secondly, for this particular course our mode of teaching involved deliberation. We gave an account of why we included topics such as democratic citizenship, diversity and multiculturalism,⁹ and, in turn, students could give an account of why they thought it necessary or not to discuss these topics in relation to their own understanding and experiences. In the first instance, students had to read texts and make analytical summaries and presentations to the class. The idea was that students would feel free to articulate their views in an atmosphere of mutual trust. They could relax their boundaries without being concerned that others would

8 Recently in South Africa, there have been several xenophobic assaults on refugees: Firstly, fourteen Rwandese school children from the Bon Esperance refugee shelter in Philippi were tied up and assaulted on their return from school; and secondly, a Burundian refugee, who works in the country as a security guard, was stabbed in the head. He later dropped charges against his attacker. Currently 35,000 asylum seekers live in the Cape metropole alone.

9 The rationale for this course is to introduce students to pertinent theoretical concepts on deliberative democracy, citizenship, cosmopolitanism and universal justice, with the aim, firstly, to make sense of what it means to integrate discussions on democracy, social justice, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, *ubuntu* (human dignity), an open society, accountability (responsibility), the rule of law, respect, and reconciliation into the public school curriculum – all values related to the Department of Education's *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (2001); and secondly, to introduce students to discussions about genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, in particular by examining how educating for democratic citizenship and cosmopolitanism can minimise and eradicate such crimes.

dismiss their interpretations. Although some students felt insecure about their presentations and did not want to be criticised by their peers, the majority of them accepted that, if their interpretations were indefensible, they would concede or even attempt to produce more persuasive arguments in defence of their views. I want to relate a specific incident that sparked much heated debate and controversy. During a discussion about the political uncertainty in Zimbabwe, most students agreed that the crisis in Zimbabwe can be attributed to the dictatorial regime of its president and felt that the opposition is being instigated by outside forces who want to see the demise of Robert Mugabe. However, one coloured student argued that the only way one could achieve political justice in Zimbabwe is for Mugabe to continue to confiscate white farmers' land and that the same should happen in South Africa. This statement immediately led to a lot of disagreement and even resentment of the student's claim about what ought to happen in South Africa. In line with the process of deliberative engagement, it was not my task to limit debate, but rather to facilitate argumentation, which I did. But then a white student remarked: 'Africa is ruled by blacks and look at the political turmoil on the continent.' This statement brought about a turning point in deliberations. Although students felt free to express themselves, some felt that controversy should be avoided. I thought that controversy should be encouraged and asked students to produce counter-arguments to this statement. For a while belligerence and distress dominated our deliberations, until one white student convinced others that the statement was an expression of injustice towards others, because blacks were being falsely accused of bringing about political instability on the African continent, whereas colonisation by white settlers brought much harm to Africa. The point about deliberation is that it can be distressful. Students should recognise that belligerent argumentation should not lead to dismissing others unjustly and that free expression can never be unconstrained, especially if wrong is done to others.

Thirdly, for a compulsory assignment, students had to identify a controversial issue that related to democratic citizenship and cosmopolitanism, and then had to make presentations in groups to the class. I have selected only the following three issues that three groups presented, as these issues will clarify some of my claims about educating for democratic citizenship and

cosmopolitanism: The first group chose to write and speak about the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa; the second group introduced the inhumane treatment of people in the Darfur region in Sudan (Africa); and the third group raised the issue of America's 'war on terror'. I shall now explore some of the unintended pedagogical outcomes of this project.

Unintended pedagogical outcomes: Narratives in the making

The pedagogical outcomes of educating for democratic citizenship and cosmopolitanism have not been concluded in advance, for that would have signalled the end of education. In fact, our interactions have been framed by a notion of freedom whereby I aroused students' interests 'to go in search of their own' – that is, to provoke students to reach beyond themselves, to wonder, to imagine, and to pose their own questions. Greene (1998:12) aptly describes such a view of freedom:

Individuals (students) can be provoked to reach beyond themselves in their intersubjective space. It is through and by means of education that they may become empowered to think about what they are doing, to become mindful, to share meanings, to conceptualize, to make varied sense of their lived worlds. It is through education that preferences may be released, languages learned, intelligences developed, perspectives opened, possibilities disclosed.

This 'dialectic of freedom' seemed to have existed among students and between students and me. In other words, as an educator I felt the pedagogical need to distinctively orientate my students in such a way that they (students) would take the initiative, discover new possibilities, look at things as they could be otherwise, and move beyond with the awareness that such overcoming can never be complete. When students are taught to think about what they are doing and to share meanings with educators or their critical friends, it is unlikely that their learning would be frivolous or of little value. Thus, when students are taught to conceptualise in order to search for undisclosed possibilities and alternative meanings – to look at things as they could be otherwise – the potential is there on the part of students to engage scrupulously and carefully with texts and even to take texts into systematic controversy. In short, freedom implies that students

have developed the capacity to imagine alternative possibilities and that their educators have succeeded in establishing spaces where meanings could be shared, understood, reflected on, and contested. This implies that freedom does not become a preoccupation with self-dependence or self-regulated behaviour, but rather an involvement with others – a relationship. The upshot of this ‘dialectic of freedom’ in a relationship between a student and his or her educator, is that students would develop a passionate desire ‘to speak and write their own words’, and an educator would carefully and respectfully evaluate the work (assignments) of his or her students. In other words, students and educators are not merely functionaries in an instrumental system geared towards turning out theses (products) that meet the standards of quality control, but rather free participants in a highly esteemed academic enterprise – one in which students and educators mutually assert their autonomy and ‘prepare the ground for what is to come’ (Greene, 1988:3). These are the pedagogical spaces which my students hopefully acquired and which I invariably associate with educating for democratic citizenship and cosmopolitanism in a university setting.

Thus far, I have developed a notion of democratic citizenship education which provides the premise for cosmopolitan education. Of course, it appears as if I set up these types of education as elitist and beyond questioning. That is certainly not my intention. In fact, I rather emphasised those particularities of democratic citizenship and cosmopolitan education which can engender deliberation, compassion and justice. However, my potential critic might take issue with me for assuming that all communities require cosmopolitan education, for instance, and that such universalist ideals could undermine the cultural norms of particular societies. In fact, I am not arguing for a reduction in local cultural norms, rather that the universal (cosmopolitan) and the local be integrated. Failing to do so would in any case undermine the cosmopolitan education agenda – that is, not to violate the local, which can result in doing an injustice to indigenous communities. As it turns out, cosmopolitan education can in fact secure that the local and cultural be legitimately and justly recognised.

6

**Democratic
citizenship
education
without violence
and extremism**

CHAPTER

Introduction to the professoriate

Quite ironically, my interview for the vacant professorship in Philosophy of Education happened just a day after 9/11. I remember that one of my colleagues bumped into me on my way to the interviewing room and wished me well, especially considering that there might be some vexing times ahead for me and all other Muslims. I would like to believe that she wished me well instead of casting some form of admonition towards me. As if I were not reminded enough of my religious status, one of the questions posed by an interviewer related to whether there is a difference between doing philosophy and practising a religion – as if the terrorist attacks had some connection with the way I am practising religion. Just prior to my appointment to the post, a senior academic in the faculty requested me to provide information that I was practising ‘a moderate kind of Islam’ – an Islam which apparently cannot be associated with the practices of al-Qaida. Of course, I provided information to this person of certain sermons I once rendered in a mosque and which would probably be interpreted as ‘liberal’ views. By and large, the fuss about my appointment to the professoriate was short-lived. Of course, I do not deny that it must or must not have been quite a big step for the university to have appointed me to this position. After all, I was appointed professor at a time when the Minister of Education was also Muslim (or perhaps had some Muslim lineage). Be that as it may, I felt as if I now had a different challenge at hand: to convince my colleagues that I did not advocate for violence in any form of human action. At that time, South Africa was rife with the activities of People Against Gangsterism (PAGAD), and to have cast aspersions on me, some might have thought, would not have been unfounded. Today, as a democratic citizen, I cannot see how the concept of democratic citizenship can be associated at all with violence. It is to such a discussion that I now turn my attention.

Dialogue and the limits of violence

I shall now explore some of the limitations of violence, in particular focusing on how it can possibly be undermined by dialogical action – a constitutive practice of democratic citizenship education. Firstly, I argue that, although violence is at times justified by some people, its disrespectful use against

innocent others makes it illegitimate and therefore un-dialogical. Secondly, the use of violence is considered by some as circumstantial and restricted to the achievement of short-term goals. However, I argue that such action would lead to more violence and therefore should at all times be abandoned and conditions be established that are more favourable for dialogical action. Thirdly, violence ought to be prevented through the practice of responsible (respectful) action – action which takes into account non-instrumentality, impartiality and deliberation.

The fateful events of 9/11 posed many challenges to human relations and security in the world. Dialogue, or rather a lack thereof, is considered by many as having contributed significantly to the current tensions and ambiguities that exist in world affairs, whether at the political, economic, cultural (especially religious), or social levels. For instance, the ‘war on terrorism’ is justified as a pre-emptive *violent* measure to curb the terrorism of alleged radicals, who have been portrayed as a group of religious bigots who are intolerant and resentful of the economic prosperity, political democracies and social liberties of the West. These radicals are said to have been educated in the *madrassahs*, or traditional Islamic schools, where the focus (it is claimed) seems to be overwhelmingly on moral prescription and blind indoctrination, which could possibly lead to the breeding of hatred against the West. In turn, these radical groups see themselves as liberators fighting against the occupiers in lands such as Palestine, Kashmir, Iraq, Afghanistan and Chechnya, who through self-destruction (‘suicide bombings’) defend themselves *violently* against foreign aggression. They assert that through martyrdom they would be rid of the human indignity suffered at the hands of the ‘infidels’.

The point I am making, is that it seems as if people pursue activities justified on the basis of particular truth claims based on their vantage points, whether as perpetrators or victims of violence. For me, these activities seem to emanate from people’s understanding of why they act in specific violent ways – that is, their reasons for why they do certain things. Violent activities, whether through military invasion, ‘suicide bombings’, protest actions, bullying, or domestic abuse of women and children, have some connection with the reasons people offer for perpetrating the violence. In other words, some people’s violent actions are guided by their

understanding of why they respond the way they do – their violence stems from the reasons they offer to justify their actions. If one considers the Arendtian notion of violence, that is, ‘acting without argument or speech and without counting the consequences’ (1969:65), then it follows that violence is a non-dialogical activity, because dialogue is linked to the articulation of justifiable reasons for action – that is, argument and speech. A non-dialogical activity does not necessarily take into account what someone else has to say – that is, her reasons. In this way, perpetrating violence seems to be unconnected to dialogue. But acting violently is itself an activity which can be rationally justified – for instance, terrorists do give an account of their violent acts. They justify the ends of violence without considering its consequences. However, considering the offering of, say, implausible reasons alone as a sufficient justification for a rational activity, is questionable. Why? Violence, unlike dialogue, relies on action (say with reasons) independent of giving plausible justifications through ‘argument and speech’ and without considering its consequences. This makes violence a non-dialogical activity, since it minimises the potential for necessary human interaction with those considered as ‘other’. In short, violence and dialogue cannot be seen to co-exist, since dialogue is constituted by action based on giving an account of reasons, whereas violence constitutes action without ‘argument and speech’.

Now my potential critic might legitimately claim that dialogue and violence can work together: For instance, I might be subjected to domestic abuse and engage in a discussion with my spouse about the matter. Yet, I can experience unacceptable aggressive behaviour towards me while engaging in discussion with him. And, on the basis of this, one can claim that discussion does not necessarily deter violence against one, and that it can co-exist with violence. But this is not the kind of dialogue I am referring to. The dialogue I have in mind, is one that creates opportunities for people to listen to others and to be persuaded by reasons. What I have in mind, is dialogue as deliberation (as has been argued for previously), whereby people can act dialogically, listen to what co-participants in the dialogue have to say, be persuaded by a justifiable account of others’ points of view, and more importantly, can restrain their anger through respecting the dignity of the other person. In this way, the possibility of acting violently is curtailed by the very likelihood that what someone else has to

say or what someone else might have done (albeit wrongly) does not afford one sufficient reason to act violently towards that person – one at least exercises self-restraint on the basis that one respects the human dignity of others, that is to say, one curbs one's aggression and resentment towards others for the sake of respecting others' dignity. Of course I do not discount that blind hatred, racism and even nihilism do exist – acts which might not necessarily encourage reasoned argumentation in order to prevent violence. However, even those blinded by racism, for instance, should at least come to some realisation that one cannot always oppress and exclude others (as was the case in South Africa under apartheid), but that one can only co-exist humanely with others under conditions where dialogue and hence the exercise of respect for human dignity is possible. The point I am making, is that if conditions for dialogue were not possible in South Africa, civil war (including violence and disrespect towards human dignity) would have ensued because of unacceptable racism towards the majority of vulnerable people in the country. Also, the fact that some people are racist is an indication that they might not necessarily want to connect with or have knowledge of other people's culture and situation. Often, their blind racism is a matter of ignorance about others rather than a rational decision to discriminate against others – I am reminded of a colleague (white Afrikaner male) who once told me that if he had known more about blacks, he might not have discriminated against them in the past.

On the non-justification of the limited use of violence

At the outset I hasten to caution that any initiation of violence against people would be at odds with an important goal of dialogue – the achievement of desirable humane engagement in relation to human interdependence. Human co-existence – irrespective of the diversity of cultures, religions, ethnicities and nationalities – is desirable if people want to enjoy security, non-violence, non-discrimination and peace. Hence the desirability of any type of education, whether in Western institutions or the Islamic *madrassahs*, to cultivate understanding, reason, non-repression and non-discrimination.

The importance of dialogical action for non-violence is based on an understanding that any distorted or unfavourable human situation can

only be resolved through argument – that is, giving a justifiable account of one's reasons and finding others' reasons persuasive after having gone into systematic controversy with some of their reasons, which might result in rejecting, adjusting and modifying one's own reasons (MacIntyre, 1999). The problem is that one might not always be willing and prepared to evaluate one's reasons on account of the arguments others have to offer. This situation of not considering the reason of others as convincing enough has the potential to result in an impasse. Of course, this is not necessarily bad, because people can again reflect on their reasons in relation to the reasons of others and then, at a later stage, come up with better arguments (Benhabib, 1996). Yet even such a reflexive approach to the articulation of reasons might not always result in desirable agreement – I say desirable, because it might enhance the chances of improving human interaction. In this situation, deadlock would in any case result in an undesirable situation, since people would by then have exhausted most pathways to gaining some common understanding in terms of which human interaction and interdependence could be enhanced. For instance, during the Rwandan civil conflict in the 1990s, genocide could possibly have been prevented through desirable human engagement amongst Hutus and Tutsis. Yet the genocide took place, which suggests that somehow other potential pathways to argument and speech had not been explored, which in turn resulted in violent military United Nations intervention in order to prevent genocide. The point I am making, is that violence might not have been necessary in order to remedy an undesirable situation. So it seems as if violent action has been used as a temporary response to defuse an undesirable situation (NATO intervened violently to curb the genocide of Bosnian Muslims on the part of the Serbs; the Allied forces took temporary violent action against the Nazis to halt the Jewish holocaust).

What I have argued for thus far is that the use of violence in order to resolve an undesirable situation might not have been necessary, since not all potential pathways to argument and speech had been explored. I agree with Arendt, who claims that 'the practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world' (1969:80). In this sense, although the temporary use of violence had been justified, it does not make violence legitimate. Why not? In the first place, the use of violence against people can have the effect of

innocent bystanders losing their lives. This means that the perpetrators of violence disrespect the lives of others who might not necessarily have been responsible for an undesirable situation. I cannot imagine that all people in the New York Twin Towers, the London tubes, the Oklahoma World Trade Centre, and Baghdad were responsible for an undesirable situation which some people found offensive and worthy of violent self-destructive actions, that is, 'suicide bombings'. And, seeing that those who were subjected to violence and who suffered such human indignity, torture and aggression were innocent, the use of violence cannot be considered as legitimate. In support of this view, Hannah Arendt (1969:52) posits that:

Violence can be justifiable, but it never can be legitimate. Its justification loses in plausibility the farther its intended end recedes into the future. No one questions the use of violence in self-defence, because the danger is not only clear but present, and the end justifying the means is immediate.

What seems to be important to bear in mind is that violence as an act of aggression perpetrated against people might be justifiable, but its legitimacy can be questioned on the basis that the very act of violence aims to annihilate, destroy, hurt, and cause some sort of discomfort to people whom one might find unwilling as partners to engage in dialogical action. In other words, the act of causing physical and emotional harm to any people cannot be legitimate, because violence is meant to let the other experience suffering and pain. I say this, because legitimate action has some connection with what others agree should happen to them. In this way, by not agreeing to be violently assaulted, their human dignity somehow remains intact. This kind of violence is different from violence used in self-defence, as noted by Arendt. If I defend myself against those who perpetrate violence against me, then my violent retaliation or defence becomes legitimate only if I am willing to cease my defence once the perpetrator of violence against me decides to end the violence. In other words, legitimacy only has currency if I defend myself against violent acts and restrain my actions once others have ceased their violent ones. Consequently, the argument that violence can never be legitimate is a conditional one: self-defence against acts of violence is justifiable and legitimate when I restrain myself after the initial perpetrator of violence

has ceased all acts of violence against me. For instance, when the armed wing of the African National Congress (Umkhonto we sizwe) defended itself against the political killings of the apartheid state, their violent self-defence was only justifiable, and hence legitimate, until the apartheid government ceased the perpetration of violence against members of the liberation movement.

What follows from this, is that if institutions encourage people *solely* to use self-destructive ways of ending the lives of others to instill fear in the hearts and minds of those left behind, then such use of violence becomes illegitimate. This is so because fear, control and compliance are the intended ends of such violent acts that are undesirable for any form of human interaction and interdependence, and to which very few people would agree. If they do so for the sake of self-defence against a violent perpetrator, then their responses become conditionally legitimate. Therefore Arendt is correct when she states that 'violence is by nature instrumental; like all means, it always stands in need of guidance and justification through the end it pursues' (Arendt, 1969:51). In this way, the use of violence in itself remains illegitimate, but its use as self-defence makes it conditionally legitimate on the grounds that self-defence will end once acts of violence perpetrated against one have ceased. For instance, Umkhonto we sizwe ended its violent campaign once the apartheid state agreed to enter into dialogue with its 'enemy'. This brings me to a discussion of what some have perceived to be the circumstantial use of violence and the desirable use of dialogical action.

Dialogical action as a means to transcend violence

I have already alluded to the fact that the use of temporary violence is sometimes necessary, particularly in self-defence. This makes violence conditionally legitimate. I shall now argue that this temporary use of violence is also circumstantial; that is, its use depends on the conditions which have led to its initial use. I shall then make a case for dialogical action (with reference to Nussbaum's view of human capabilities) as a desirable way of preventing ensuing acts of violence.

The Bush administration convinced many of its allies that pre-emptive military intervention could prevent future violent activities on the part of

radicals. Unfortunately, this policy has not prevented radical groups from causing havoc and indulging in more violent terrorist acts in Israel, Palestine, Indonesia, Turkey, Spain, Iraq and Saudi Arabia (Hashim, 2005:131). Some might argue that the 'war on terrorism' is a way of settling the 'scales of justice' (Arendt, 1969:65). However, when violent military action contributes to an escalation of retaliatory violence – as seems to be the case in Afghanistan, Iraq and Chechnya – then one needs to question whether the 'war on terrorism' would actually be curbed on the basis of violent military action only. One can argue that initiating the 'war on terrorism' had some intended end in mind – the elimination of terrorists. But when such a means of curbing violence has not actually yielded the desired results (terrorists remain at large), then one needs to question whether persisting with violent military action against others should not be abandoned for other ways of settling the 'scales of justice'. Amy Gutmann (2003:170) makes a similar point when she states that 'some demand that violent aggression be resisted by proportional violence if necessary, and others demand that violence not be met with violence' – I share the latter view. Here I find Martha Nussbaum's (2000) advocacy of 'capability' approach as a possible way in which the unlimited use of violent action can be restricted and the 'war on terrorism' be given another slant. The question that needs to be asked is not whether the 'war on terrorism' has achieved its desired ends, but rather whether the people against whom such violent action is directed are actually capable of abandoning, or in a position to abandon, terrorist activities or not. Terrorists would claim that they actually have no alternative but to respond violently to imperialist aggression. But then their violent actions have made very few, if any, gains, with the result that by far the majority of moderate Muslims have distanced themselves from terrorism. So, the question that terrorists need to ask is not whether their actions have succeeded, but rather what others against whom they wage violence are in a position to do. For instance, Hamas's ascendancy to political power in Palestine does not have the support of Israel, because it is claimed that Hamas has not renounced its violent stance towards Israel – that is, Hamas does not recognise the state of Israel as legitimate and would like to see (and ensure) its demise. In turn, the government of Israel refuses to enter into political negotiations with Hamas, which they believe poses a threat to Israel's safety and security. Simply put, Hamas

is viewed as a terrorist group, despite its rise to political power through democratic procedures. Following my earlier line of argument, what Israel needs to ask is what Hamas is capable of doing now that it has political authority in Palestine and, in turn, what Hamas should be asking is what Israel is capable of doing, now that it has replaced the Palestinian authority as the legitimate political power that should 'govern' the territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The point I am making, is that one needs to ask about people's capabilities. Nussbaum (2000:78-80) claims that each person is a worthy human being on the basis of the fact that the person is able 'to imagine, think, and reason – and to do these things in a truly human way'; 'to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection'; 'to live with and toward others, to recognise and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction – to be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation (and) to have the capability for both justice and friendship'; 'to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others (which) entails, at a minimum, protections against discrimination on the basis of sex, race, sexual orientation, religion, caste, ethnicity, or national origin'; 'to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other(s)'.

At the core of the capability approach is the recognition that every person has the capability to reason, to show concern for another and to engage in meaningful relationships. Put differently, every person has the capability to offer respect to other persons. What is it about 'respect for persons' that can engender defensible dialogues and subsequently establish conditions favourable for non-violence? In the first instance, in a dialogue every participant wants to be recognised as someone with the same basic moral worth as any other participant – that is, a person has something to say and wants to be heard. In other words, in a dialogue people want to be seen as co-participants who share the authority to determine how the dialogue ought to unfold. This then requires participants in the dialogue to be prepared and willing to listen to what somebody else has to say. In short, every person wants to be respected for her worth – for the contribution she can potentially make to the dialogue. And this is where both Hamas

and the state of Israel can begin to recognise one another's capabilities towards a peaceful settlement in the Middle East and not to wait until Hamas pursues its strategy of attacking Israel, and Israel, in turn, persists with its military strategy of 'taking out' the political leaders of Hamas. In another way, both these political authorities need to respect one another. When people engage in a dialogue, they show respect for one another when they allow one another to express themselves rationally – they are permitted to articulate meanings. In other words, as co-participants they respect one another as equals; this respect implies that each person recognises others as *capable* and competent to articulate what they have in mind – they simply do not choose the path of blind hatred and exclusion. The upshot of this is that people show respect for one another when they consider their judgements to have value, because these judgements are the expressions of how people have chosen to make sense to others – to make others know what they think and reflect on. And this can only be done if dialogues ensue between different and even conflicting people, such as what happened at the Kempton Park negotiations between the ANC and the then apartheid Nationalist government in 1992 (two years prior to South Africa's first ever democratic elections).

Since the 'war on terrorism' began, many nations have overtly challenged minority practices in their attempts to curb radicals: Turkish soldiers intercept students wearing hijabs or turbans when they enter Istanbul University, and the French and Singaporean governments banned the wearing of headscarves in public schools. Only when we begin to engage in dialogical action with those who are other and different (especially the radicals), then will the looming dangers of violent action be seriously diminished. Moreover, respect (as has been argued for previously) demands that we listen appreciatively to those engaged in violent action, whether perceived as 'victim' or 'perpetrator'. The film *Paradise Now* clearly illustrates the need to engage with the reasons of potential 'suicide' bombers – that is, understanding why they have made particular choices to want to blow themselves up in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. In this film, potential 'suicide' bombers cite reasons such as having suffered human indignities at the hands of Israeli occupation, and the honour bestowed on martyrdom for a 'just' cause – as if blowing up others in a shopping market or a moving bus is indeed justice. Likewise, the film *Munich* depicts the

need to understand why Israel is so intent on eliminating the ‘enemy’: reasons such as protecting the Promised Land and protecting the people of Israel against Palestinian aggression come out clearly in defence of ‘Israeli retaliation’, or at times as justification for the pre-emptive use of violent force. In this way, listening to the stories of those subjected to violence could potentially lead to arousing their interest in preventing violence at all costs. In other words, respect requires listening to many voices we like or dislike and deplore – that is, listening through active engagement with the aim of preventing violent action.

This brings me to a discussion of responsible action as a means to curb violent action. Why? To act dialogically with respect for the dignity of others alone would not ensure non-violence – that is, peace, stability and human security in this world. There is sufficient empirical evidence to suggest that dialogue on its own cannot guarantee non-violence. The United Nations, widely perceived as a forum for dialogical action, could not prevent the war in Iraq. Similarly, dialogue among Sunni and Shi’i factions in Iraq cannot on its own prevent the ongoing conflict in that country. We also need what Hannah Arendt (1977) refers to as people who can take responsibility for the world – those who can prevent wars, conflict, and other forms of violence if opportunities for peace are envisaged. What does such kind of responsible action involve? For me, responsible action aimed at minimising and preventing violence should at least be constituted by three interrelated activities: non-instrumentality, impartiality and deliberation. I shall now explore how each of these acts of responsibility could reduce violence.

Firstly, to act non-instrumentally means that one is not just concerned about achieving completeness in what one does, more specifically how one can reach an end rather than why that end should be what one aims for. For instance, if agreement has been reached between different and rival factions about attaining a ceasefire, such an agreement should not be considered as complete and final without considering why a ceasefire is crucial. If one acts with the understanding that a ceasefire is a necessary condition in order for dialogue to proceed, then one acts responsibly. In other words, one acts non-instrumentally because one is not just intent on achieving some kind of agreement (in this instance a ceasefire between

contending factions), but more importantly, that a ceasefire could lay the grounds for dialogical action to occur whereby possibilities for non-violence can be explored. In this way, one acts responsibly.

Secondly, to act impartially means that one makes one's understanding of the world and events that occur in it known to others without any form of bias. It is always difficult for people to see things in impartial, unbiased ways (especially when they represent rival traditions). For instance, some citizens speak patriotically about their political leaders even when they know their leaders might be guilty of some acts of violence against people – Saddam Hussein continued to receive support from some Iraqi factions although there is sufficient evidence that he ordered the massacre of many Kurds. Likewise, Miroslav Milosevic gained unbridled support for his role in the Bosnian genocide. These citizens are acting with partiality – and hence, less responsibly. So when one engages in dialogues about possibilities for peace and reconciliation (as happened in South Africa with the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the 1990s) one has to learn what it means to act impartially even if it means going against oneself or against those whom one loyally supports.

Thirdly, to act deliberatively means that one has developed the capacity to listen to the voices of others, to respond critically to them, and to consider others' justifiable criticism of one's views. In South Africa, perpetrators of violent crimes against others listened to their victims, responded critically to overzealous claims about their alleged apartheid crimes, and also listened to their victims' justifiable criticism of them – these deliberative acts became the seedbeds for reconciliation in South Africa. To my mind, having acted deliberatively with others, both perpetrators and victims of apartheid crimes moved towards responsible action – those actions which can make possible what by now seems highly improbable, that is, peace and human security in this world of ours. This brings me to my next point on how to cultivate non-violence in educational institutions through the means of responsible action.

Against violence: Cultivating responsible action

I am sympathetic towards Arendt's claim that 'much of the present glorification of violence is caused by severe frustration of the faculty of

action in the modern world' (1969:83). In Arendt's view, to act means to disclose oneself through word and deed, and action is constituted of the following meanings: Firstly, to act means to begin by taking the initiative – to set something in motion (Arendt, 1998:177). Students are said to act when they initiate speech, and question and challenge without having to be told or asked by their teachers to do so. Following Arendt, by taking the initiative, students are *initium*, newcomers or beginners by virtue of their having been prompted into action. Secondly, when a person acts, then the unexpected can be expected, that is, she is capable of performing what is 'infinitely improbable' (Arendt, 1998:178). In doing so, a student announces what she does, has done and intends to do. For instance, a student who has not spoken a word in class decides to talk, which might come as a surprise to her teacher. She communicates to the class how she has felt excluded at times for not having said a word in earlier discussions, and then commits herself to engaging in future deliberations with fellow students – a matter of doing the unexpected. Thirdly, a student who acts never does so in isolation. Instead she acts in the presence of others (Arendt, 1998:178). In other words, an 'actor always moves among and in relation to other acting beings, he is never merely a "doer" but always and at the same time a sufferer' (Arendt, 1998:190). If my reading of Arendt is correct, then a person who acts has the capacity and willingness not only to disclose her inner voice through speech, but also to drive herself towards listening and responding to others without being inhibited in doing so. She recognises that her audience has a right to be heard and listened to. If this happens, then the act of deliberation can be understood as willing and unhindered dialogue. Fourthly, action has the effect of the outcome of, say deliberative argumentation, being unpredictable and irreversible (Arendt, 1998:220). When the outcome of deliberation is unpredictable and irreversible, then the possibility of the dialogue lasting is very likely. Such a situation in turn would enable students and teachers to engage in durable deliberations that make improbable the end of, and unpredictable the result of, argumentation. And if students and teachers act in this way, they would want their stories to be told, because what seems to be the end of a story marks the beginning of something else – the possibility of recognising the inner voices of others becomes more and more likely, because unknown voices can only be heard while deliberations are durable.

Although I agree with most of Arendt's views on action, I think she is wrong to suggest that action ought to be unconstrained and that its effects are irreversible. For instance, there is much outrage in the Muslim world over the publication of cartoons in Danish newspapers that ridicule and denigrate the prophet Muhammad. Published under the utility of freedom of speech, these cartoons seem to have offended many Muslims. There have consequently been peaceful protests on the part of some, as well as in a few instances violent actions on the part of others. In fact, radicals' recourse to violent action was spawned by what was perceived to be an assault on Islam. Of course, expressing disgust at the cartoons through peaceful means is justifiable. However, violent protests as a means to retaliate could spark more unacceptable violence (embassy burnings) and hence such action seems to be illegitimate. Therefore, my concern is: Should the Danish cartoons, which by far the majority of Muslims find offensive, have been published in the first place? In other words, can one just say, under the pretext of freedom of speech, what one wants to say, even though others might find it unjust and hurtful? In this respect, freedom of speech (as of action) cannot be unconstrained, because doing an injustice to others – that is, offending others' religion and their prophet – amounts to irresponsible speech. Why? Apart from the fact that radicals might use such actions as a platform to initiate further violence in the guise of being defenders of their faith, such unconstrained actions could deepen the growing rift between Islam and the West.

7

**Democratic
citizenship
education
through *ubuntu***

CHAPTER

Ubuntu moments

In the first few years after I became a full professor in the faculty, I received several invitations to do development work in black schools and amongst my black colleagues at other universities. What I remember quite glowingly, is that on all occasions I was treated with the utmost dignity and respect – so much so that I felt somewhat uncomfortable about what seemed to be highly humane moments. If such magnificent occurrences were to be associated with *ubuntu*, then I have every reason to believe that, if it were enacted in relation to pedagogy, it could greatly enhance the way students and teachers learn. Moreover, why would there then exist so much racial tension and xenophobia in several educational institutions in South Africa? One thing I am convinced of is that *ubuntu* (literally ‘I am because we are’) is not ubiquitously practised, yet it has enormous potential to enhance democratic citizenship education. Let me explore.

Towards an exposition of *ubuntu*

The concept *ubuntu* is found in almost all African languages although the same word is not always used, which suggests that the notion must have had currency amongst Africa’s people in the past. For instance, in Kenyan languages such as Kikuyu and Kimeru, the words used in referring to this concept are *umundu* and *umuntu*; in kiSukuma and kiHaya of Tanzania, *ubuntu* is referred to as *bumuntu*; in shiTsonga and shiTswa of Mozambique, the word is *vumuntu*; in Bobangi, spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is called *bomoto*; and in kiKongo of Angola, *ubuntu* is referred to as *gimuntu* (Kamwangamalu, 1999:26). I shall show how the challenges posed by educational institutions (in Africa) can be addressed by the notion of *ubuntu* – more specifically how *ubuntu* can engender a form of democratic citizenship education. *Ubuntu* (a form of communal engagement which allows space for criticality, non-domination and ensuring that human relationships flourish) is apposite to address a lack of democratic citizenship. The practice is specifically of relevance to African societies because of its history of colonisation, racial oppression and segregation, and economic, political and social instabilities, insecurities and complexities.

I draw on the views of Letseka (2000:179), who identifies the 'notion of *botho* or *ubuntu* (humanism) ... as pervasive and fundamental to African socioethical thought, as illuminating the communal rootedness and interdependence of persons, and highlighting the importance of human relationships ... as an important measure of human wellbeing or human flourishing in traditional African life'. He treats *botho* or *ubuntu* 'as normative in that it encapsulates moral norms and virtues such as kindness, generosity, compassion, benevolence, courtesy, and respect and concern for others' (Letseka, 2000:180). Then he suggests 'that educating for *botho* or *ubuntu*, for interpersonal and cooperative skills, and for human wellbeing or human flourishing, ought to be major concerns of an African philosophy of education' – more specifically Africanisation. The question arises: What is the particular standing of *ubuntu* in Africa? My reading of the concept is that it offers both a general philosophical position as to how people should co-exist organically, and a way of how Africa can contribute to global culture – a matter of reconciling the local (*ubuntu*) with the global (deliberative democracy).

As a philosophical position, *ubuntu* has in mind the co-existence of people along the lines of having respect for people together with recognising peoples' vulnerabilities and actually doing something about changing people's situation. When people respect one another, they allow one another to live their lives according to what might be good for them. They do not impose their understanding of the world and what is good for them on one another. For instance, Hutus and Tutsis from Rwanda, or Zulus and Xhosas from South Africa, respect one another without imposing their understanding of reality and what constitutes the good life on one another. Tribal rivalries, which often erupt in many regions on the African continent in the form of violent clashes (Kenya is the recent example in case), demonstrate that *ubuntu* is not always practised amongst these people, yet it is a philosophical position with its roots in African culture. Of course, there are places (such as in Namibia) where people co-exist in peace and harmony. In fact, *ubuntu* evolved over many centuries in traditional African culture and was expressed in the songs, stories, customs and institutions of people (Schutte, 2001:9). Some instances in which *ubuntu* was lived out in Africa are reflected in Nyerere's concept of *ujamaa* (namely that a person becomes a person through cooperation with

others), and *unhu* (that is, a way of confirming one's humanity in relations with others).

Of course, critics of *ubuntu* might argue that the practice is not new, because in Western societies communality and human interdependence have been part of people's practices for a long time, and that respect for the other, generosity, kindness and compassion are virtues which are not new at all. I agree. However, acting in relation to others also has a contextual dimension – that is, engaging with one another in post-colonial African societies will invariably be different to human interaction in other non-African societies. For instance, having compassion for people suffering from famine and poverty in the Darfur region of Sudan is distinctly different from showing compassion to some working-class European families who might be temporarily unemployed. The point is, on the one hand, that compassion in the sense advocated by *ubuntu* requires that people recognise the vulnerabilities of others brought about by ethnic conflict and political struggle in post-colonial societies and actually do something to minimise this. On the other hand, having compassion for unemployed working-class families because of insufficient job opportunities in perhaps highly flourishing economies which have never been subjected to pernicious forms of colonialism are quite different from exercising *ubuntu*. Put differently, practising *ubuntu* is exclusively linked to cultivating human cooperation and interdependence in post-colonial Africa intent on subverting forms of racism, exploitation and domination. It is in this regard that I share Pityana's (1999:148) view that *ubuntu* is logically connected to the preservation of human dignity, the achievement of equality, the enhancement of human rights and freedoms, and the enhancement of the common good (more specifically, the subversion of racism, exploitation and domination).

The question arises: How can the afore-mentioned view of *ubuntu* contribute towards engendering democratic citizenship education? In the first instance, *ubuntu* does not abandon the idea that human relationships should be subjected to deliberation. It is commonly accepted in many African cultures that the authority of people in leadership positions should not be challenged. This viewpoint is evident from the behaviours of several of my students from Southern African countries who seem to be hesitant

to challenge university professors at the institution where I work as a mark of respect for academic authority. I remember one student telling me that she once had the inclination to question the chieftain of her tribe, but refrained from doing so as a mark of respect for his leadership. This, she claimed, happened because *ubuntu* implies respect for the human dignity of others. Such a view of *ubuntu* is restricted in the sense that challenging someone else cannot be associated with disrespect. Such an idea of *ubuntu* also assumes that human beings do not have differences and that they constitute a homogeneous society. In fact, my argument is that human relations are constituted by ambivalence and conflict and that deliberation invariably happens when one person wants to justify his points of view and another person takes somebody else's view into critical scrutiny. Moreover, following Gyekye (1997) and considering Africa's history and culture, people ought to be less formal in deliberative conversations. If my reading of Gyekye is correct, then it means that conversations should not only be confined to articulating points of view in a logically defensible way through rigorous argumentation and debate whereby points of view are challenged and undermined, or where persuasion and the quest for the better argument become necessary conditions for deliberative inquiry to unfold. I agree, since illiteracy and the lack of eloquence amongst ordinary citizens would exclude them from the deliberative conversation. Gyekye (1997:27) contends that African colonial and postcolonial experience has had enduring effects on the mentality acquired by many Africans – a colonial mentality that engenders 'apism', that notion which enables people to look for answers to Africa's problems outside Africa, and more specifically within European culture. It is this same 'apist' attitude on the part of most of Africa's people that leads them to suppress their own opinions in preference to the wisdom of sages. I do not think that Gyekye would dismiss the wisdom of sagacity in deliberative discourse, since the individual's inclinations, orientations, intuitions and outlooks are important to philosophical inquiry (Gyekye, 1997:12). However, Gyekye's view suggests that ways should be found to make the less eloquent, illiterate and seemingly inarticulate person express his or her thoughts. For this reason his call for the application of less formal rules in deliberative conversation seems to be valid. In this regard, I have a suspicion that Gyekye's emphasis on the application of a minimalist

logic in deliberative conversation has some connection with allowing Africa's people to articulate their oral narratives about their beliefs, values, folktales, drama and cultural traditions without having to convince others of their orientations. This makes sense for the reason that many of Africa's people do not necessarily know the logical reasons for the beliefs and values bequeathed to them by their ancestral past. When I asked a Master's student of the Ovambu tribe in Namibia about his father's polygamous marriages, he did not entirely convince me when he told me that his father treats all spouses equally justly. However, if I were to have countered him on the apparent ludicrousness of polygamy, our conversation would not have continued for long. So, the idea of asking for a minimalist logic would establish conditions that would include rather than exclude people from the deliberative conversation. In fact, including them in the conversation might open up possibilities for them to begin to challenge and question their own positions self-reflexively.

In essence, practising *ubuntu* has the potential of harnessing critical inquiry and deliberative forms of teaching and learning. For me, the Africanisation of educational institutions does not mean that deliberations have to lead to the non-questioning and silencing of academic authority. Instead, *ubuntu* means to uphold respect for the human dignity of others through deliberation, which invariably involves questioning and the challenging of academic authority. If educational institutions are serious about Africanising, they should restore processes of deliberation whereby opportunities would be created for people to engage with one another and concomitantly develop respect for the views of others as persons. It is a sign of disrespect towards the other person if her views are not subjected to critical scrutiny. This brings me to a discussion of how *ubuntu* can become more influential in advancing democratic justice in and beyond African educational institutions.

Ubuntu and democratic justice

Of course, one of the limitations of *ubuntu* is that the practice assumes that people need to take collective responsibility for actions. But this is not always forthcoming, as is evident from the HIV and AIDS epidemic and escalating levels of crime in (South) Africa for which, it seems, no

one really wants to assume responsibility, because it is erroneously thought that individual responsibility cannot happen as 'a person is only a person through other persons'. Similarly, overextending *ubuntu* through deliberative democracy which invokes belligerence and distress could cause people to become alienated, because their collectivity through *ubuntu* might be undermined and some people even excluded. For instance, students at one higher education institution in South Africa, where campus violence erupted because of students' refusal to pay their debts, feel alienated and excluded because of management's attitude to deal with them (in dialogue) in an antagonistic fashion. More recently, in Chad and Kenya, mistrust and refusal to engage with the other is a vindication that *ubuntu* alone cannot contribute to resolving the political crises in these countries unless conditions are put in place whereby people can feel the need to co-exist through *ubuntu* and deliberative democracy. Simply put, the local value of *ubuntu* can only have real currency if people see the need to cooperate and co-exist peacefully.

8

**Democratic
citizenship
education and
educational
transformation
in South Africa**

CHAPTER

Towards a communitarian conception of democratic citizenship education in South Africa

Having been in a deanship for more than three years, I am no stranger to difference of opinion or even conflict. I recently experienced yet another volatile period in the history of my beloved country, South Africa. I have just taught a postgraduate class on the serious implications of hate speech, of which the ANC Youth League's President, Julius Malema, had been found guilty by the court, in particular in view of his singing the liberation song, 'Kill the Boer, Kill the Farmer' on public platforms at political rallies. The ANC leadership argued that Malema was honouring the liberation song, while others said that he was inciting black people to violence, which included killing farmers. On 3 April 2010, Eugene Terre'Blanche, the leader of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) – a movement which racially champions only the cause of white Afrikaners in post-apartheid South Africa – was allegedly killed by two black youths, aged 15 and 28. Whereas the government called for calm not to inflame political tensions, the AWB vowed to avenge their leader's brutal killing. President Jacob Zuma said the following on national television: 'It is our responsibility to denounce the crime and stay away from statements that might reverse nation building and racial cohesion.' The ANC has faced pressure to ban the song, which has been blamed for motivating the murder.¹⁰ At the same time, the two workers who had been arrested claimed that they had killed the leader because of a R600 wage dispute. They also alleged that Terre' Blanche was a bad employer who used to abuse them physically and verbally and that he had 'pushed them too far'. It is unacceptable for young black men to consider killing another person to settle a wage dispute and it should be condemned. If AWB members were to threaten South Africa's seemingly fragile democracy, it would further polarise racial groups in the country. Hence, the need to educate for democratic citizenship becomes increasingly important, because of the parochial and blind views espoused by both the ANC Youth League and the AWB leadership.

In line with the aforementioned need to educate for democratic citizenship, I shall explore how instances of liberal and communitarian conceptions of

10 Violence on farms is high, with 1,248 farmers and farm workers killed between 1997 and 2007.

democratic citizenship theory underscore education in South Africa. My contention is that democratic citizenship education as it evolved through 'Values, Education and Democracy' policy discourses seems to resemble instances of liberal and communitarian conceptions of democratic citizenship theory. Yet, aspects of such a democratic citizenship education also seem to be at odds with liberal and communitarian conceptions. My contention is that a communitarian conception of democratic citizenship education, which invokes expansive patriotism, has the potential to enact educational transformation in institutions. Consequently, I argue that democratic citizenship education initiatives in South Africa need to take seriously the notion of expansive patriotism so that students may become thinking, deliberative, forgiving, reconciliatory and peaceful – a precondition, as I argue, for educational transformation to occur.

Since the establishment of the country's new democratic system of government in April 1994, every education policy initiative has been linked to the democratic principles enunciated in the Constitution and Bill of Rights of 1996. It is not surprising that the national Department of Education (DoE) initiated the Tirisano Project ('Tirisano' meaning 'Working together') in 1999, with its strategic goals being to ensure that the country's new outcomes-based education system (OBE) could be successfully implemented in accord with a spirit of democracy, respect for human rights, justice, equality, freedom, nation building and reconciliation – key features listed in the Preamble of the Constitution.

After the second democratic elections in 1999, Kader Asmal was appointed Minister of Education to confirm and accelerate the transformative work done by his predecessor, Professor Sibusiso Bengu. The year 1999 also welcomed in the then President, Thabo Mbeki, whose watchword was 'accelerated delivery' (DoE 1999:7). In his State of the Nation address to Parliament on 25 June 1999, Mr Mbeki identified education and training as a critical priority for meeting the broader challenge of creating a democratic and prosperous society (DoE, 1999:11). On 27 July 1999, after vigorous discussions with the major stakeholders in the educational arena, the Minister of Education launched what he called 'a national mobilisation for education and training' under the slogan Tirisano, 'Working together', where he called upon all South Africans, in

the spirit of Tirisano, to join hands with the Ministry to tackle the most urgent problems in education. More specifically, the Tirisano Project announced the following as its goals: establishing cooperative governance in educational institutions; making schools 'centres of community and cultural life'; attending to and preventing the physical degradation of schools; developing the professionalism of teachers; cultivating active learning through OBE; creating an education and training system which could meet the socio-economic demands of the country; reconfiguring higher education in line with the imperatives of a global market economy; and dealing purposefully with HIV/AIDS (DoE, 1999).

In essence, the goals of the Tirisano Project stressed the Ministry of Education's commitment to producing 'good' citizens who, on the one hand, can contribute towards achieving the political stability and peace necessary to ensure the growth of a competitive labour market economy and, on the other hand, can combat the crime, corruption and moral decadence endemic to South African society.

Two Tirisano moments of democratic citizenship education

In modern times interest in democratic citizenship has been sparked by a number of political events and trends throughout the world – increasing apathy and long-term welfare dependency in the United States, the resurgence of nationalist movements in Eastern Europe, the stresses created by increasingly multicultural and multiracial populations in Western Europe, the failure of environmental policies that rely on citizens' voluntary cooperation, disaffection with globalisation and the perceived loss of national sovereignty (Kymlicka, 2002:284). These events indicated that the stability of modern democracies depends not only on the justice of their institutions – for instance, in the case of South Africa, its Constitution, Bill of Rights, Constitutional Court and multiparty democratic system – but also on the quality and attitude of its citizens: for example, their sense of identity and how they view potentially competing forms of national, regional, ethnic or religious identities; their ability to tolerate and work with others who are different from themselves; their desire to participate in the political process in order to promote the public good and hold authorities accountable; their willingness to show self-restraint and

exercise personal responsibility in their economic demands and in personal choices which affect their health and the environment. Without citizens who possess these qualities, democracies become difficult to govern, even unstable (Kymlicka, 2002:285).

The point I am making, is that South Africa's democratic education system would not necessarily function effectively in the absence of an especially responsible and accountable citizenry. Individuals cannot just pursue their own self-interest without regard for the common good; neither would procedural-institutional mechanisms such as a Constitution, Bill of Rights and multi-party democratic system of government be enough. Citizens also require what Galston (1991:217) and Macedo (1990:138) refer to as some level of civic virtue and public-spiritedness. In other words, effective education policy implementation relies on responsible citizenship. For instance, the state would be unable to provide a basic education if citizens do not act responsibly with respect to their own education in terms of attending school (both teachers and students), eradicating the vandalising of school buildings, and fostering communal involvement in school activities. Attempts to implement policy would flounder without the cooperation and self-restraint of citizens, that is, the exercise of civic virtue – citizens' willingness to participate, ability to trust, and giving expression to their sense of justice (Kymlicka, 2002:286).

In South Africa, two strategic moments spearheaded by the DoE sum up the country's commitment to implementing democratic citizenship education: (1) The Report of the Working Group on Values in Education (DoE, 2000), which culminated in the Saamtrek Conference on Values, Education and Democracy (DoE, 2001a); and (2) the Manifesto on Values in Education (DoE, 2001b), which was generated by the former. This brings me to a discussion of the main aspects associated with these moments.

Firstly, following the 1994 elections, the transformation of the education system became the top priority of the new government. According to Minister Asmal, the democratic values as enshrined in the Constitution had to be developed and internalised by South Africans, and schools were the most convenient point of embarking upon this project. As stated earlier, President Thabo Mbeki identified education and training as a

critical priority for meeting the broader challenge of creating a democratic and prosperous society. His position was that the transformation of the education system required a fundamental reassessment and rethinking in order to prepare people for 'citizenship' and 'nationhood'. Therefore, small wonder that Minister Asmal, in his Tirisano Implementation Plan, focused on 'developing people for [democratic] citizenship'. Minister Bengu announced on his appointment in 1994 that all schools and education institutions were open and without racial barriers of any kind, as promulgated in the 1993 Interim Constitution. The South African Schools Act of 1996 created the nation's first national and non-racial school system (DoE, 1999:63). On the one hand, however, a South African Human Rights Commission study on racial integration in schools found that racism was still extremely prevalent in some schools. On the other hand, another question being debated was whether the DoE should focus on 'race' alone as a form of discrimination: 'Race may be the most obvious and historically potent of the issues on which discrimination occurs, but racial intolerance is commonly associated with other forms of prejudice and bigotry, towards women, gays, foreigners, the disabled, and other religious traditions' (DoE, 1999:66).

It was during an informal discussion on religious education for the Tirisano Plan that the idea of a 'Values, Education and Democracy' project, following the international trend of 'education for democratic values and social participation', was born. Out of this broader concern for social solidarity and cohesion, the practice of peace, and civic participation in democratic institutions, Minister Kader Asmal requested that a working group on 'Values, Education and Democracy' be established in February 2000 (DoE, 1999:66-67).¹¹

11 The members of the Working Group on 'Values, Education and Democracy' were appointed by the Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, in their individual capacities. Headed by Professor Wilmot James (ex-Dean of Humanities, University of Cape Town), the other members were: Dr Frans Auerbach (retired educator, South African Jewish Board of Deputies); Prof. Zubeida Desai (Chairperson, Pan South African Language Board; Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape); Prof. Herman Giliomee (former Professor of Political Studies at the University of Cape Town); Dr Zallo Jordan (Minister of Parliament); Ms Antjie Krog (author, poet and journalist); Mr Tembile Kulati (Special Advisor to the Minister: Higher Education); Mr Khetsi Lehoko (Deputy Director-General in the DoE); Dr Brenda Leibowitz (Director: Centre for Teaching and Learning, Stellenbosch University); and Ms Pansy Tlakula (Member of the South African Human Rights Commission) (DoE, 2000:53).

Under the auspices of the Working Group, a school-based research project was conducted in October 2000 by a consortium of research organisations led by the Witwatersrand University Education Policy Unit to explore the ways that teachers, students and parents think and talk about values, education and democracy. Provincial officials chose ninety-seven schools across five provinces to represent the range of schools in their province. Questionnaires were distributed to all the teachers and principals. Three-hour participatory workshops were conducted separately with teachers, students and parents in thirteen schools (DoE, 2000:4). After a process of research and debate, this working group presented a report on its findings and recommendations, entitled 'Values, Education and Democracy: Report of the Working Group on Values in Education', in April 2000. According to the Report of the Working Group (RWG), the democratic Constitution and Bill of Rights accepted in 1996 provide the frame of reference for a democratic educational philosophy. The RWG outlines the importance of achieving the following in education:

1. Developing the intellectual abilities and critical faculties of students;
2. Establishing a climate of inclusiveness in institutions whereby students do not feel alienated and excluded; and
3. Equipping students with problem-solving abilities (DoE, 2000).

The Working Group proposed the promotion of six 'values' which they contended would contribute towards producing an inclusive, critical student population capable of problem solving. These values include: equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and social honour (DoE, 2000). A brief analytical summary of these values and their purposes as understood by the Working Group now follows:

- *Equity* is considered as a means to eradicate the inequalities in education, experienced mostly by Black students and teachers;
- *Tolerance* is considered as a priority in cultivating in students the capacities for mutual understanding, reciprocal altruism and the recognition of difference, particularly in managing and supporting the linguistic, religious, cultural and national diversity of the South African community of students and teachers (DoE, 2000:22);

- *Multilingualism* seeks to equalise the status of the eleven official languages as announced in the Constitution of 1996. These languages are: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Afrikaans and English. Two values are promoted in the area of language: firstly, the importance of studying in the language one knows best, or as this is popularly referred to, mother-tongue education; and secondly, the fostering of multilingualism, that is, since South Africa is a multilingual country, students are encouraged to be at least bilingual, but preferably trilingual (DoE, 2000:30-33);
- *Openness* is considered as a direct challenge to rote learning and the slavish repetition of information which characterised the apartheid system of education, where asking questions was discouraged and where an authoritarian attitude to learning and social conduct was expected of teachers. Cultivating openness principally has to do with engendering in students the capacities to be open and receptive to new ideas, such as the ability to ask good and penetrating questions, and being willing to debate to arrive at quality decisions (DoE, 2000:36-39);
- *Accountability* aims to foster in teachers and students a capacity for diligence, commitment to teaching and learning, and responsibility so desperately lacking in many dysfunctional black schools (DoE, 2000:42-45); and
- *Honour* is aimed at instilling in students and teachers a sense of 'common loyalty' to the state or to national symbols, which was lacking before 1994 (DoE, 2000:48-50).

The understanding of democratic citizenship education as espoused in the aforementioned six values seems to resemble a liberal conception of democratic citizenship as propounded by Rawls (1971), which places an emphasis on people possessing a set of rights and obligations they enjoy equally as citizens; for instance, having a right to personal security

and freedom of speech. Certainly the attainment of equity¹² implies that everyone has a right to education, whereas the promotion of multilingualism recognises the right of people to communicate in the language of their choice. Moreover, values such as tolerance, respect, openness, accountability and social honour can be related to the liberal view that people need to uphold the rule of law and generally not to interfere with others' enjoyment of their rights. In other words, a liberal conception of democratic citizenship aims to inculcate in people a sense of moral virtue or 'public-spiritedness' to respect the rule of law, to cultivate socio-economic justice and to promote commonality amongst themselves (Miller, 2000:83). Hence, the RWG seems to be aligned to a liberal conception of democratic citizenship education.

However, on taking a closer look at Rawls's ideas, the value of 'equity' as espoused by the RWG does seem to be at odds with a liberal conception of democratic citizenship. In presenting Rawls's ideas, I shall first expound on his 'general conception' of justice: 'All social primary goods – liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect – are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these goods is to the advantage of the least favored' (Rawls, 1971:303). Rawls ties the idea of justice to an equal sharing of social goods, but he adds treating people as equals does not mean that one has to remove all inequalities (as suggested by the RWG), especially when the presence of such inequalities favour the least advantaged. For instance, if giving poor citizens a better pension allowance than wealthy citizens actually promotes the welfare of the poor without disadvantaging the living conditions of the wealthy, then inequality is allowed.

12 According to figures supplied by the Department of Education, 4.3% of young adults and 17% of youths are illiterate (45% of adults are functionally illiterate); 4,407 schools are in 'poor' or 'very poor' condition; close to half of South Africa's schools have a shortage of classrooms (almost 65,000 classrooms are needed); 2.3 million students attend schools without water within walking distance; 6.6 million students attend schools that have no toilets; and only some 10% of primary schools and around a third of secondary schools have recreational facilities (Christiansen Cawthra, Helman-Smith and Moloi, 2001:88). Moreover, the South African Statistics Income and Expenditure Survey of 1995 showed that the poverty rate for Africans was slightly above 60% compared to 1% for whites; 60% of female-headed households fell under the poverty line compared to around 30% of male-headed households; and the poverty rate in rural areas was some 70% compared to almost 30% in urban areas (Christiansen Cawthra, Helman-Smith and Moloi, 2001:80).

Rawls breaks down this ‘general conception’ of justice into two principles:

First Principle – Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all.

Second Principle – Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both:

- a. to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, and
- b. attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity (Rawls, 1971:56).

According to these principles, equal liberties take precedence over equal opportunities, which take precedence over equal resources. But central to both principles is the idea that an inequality is allowed if it benefits ‘the least advantaged’. In contrast to such a Rawlsian idea, the RWG suggests that inequalities in education be eradicated. If the distribution of resources in South African schools favours the least advantaged, then the unequal resources of advantaged schools could be allowed in a Rawlsian sense.

In his more recent work, entitled *Political Liberalism*, Rawls still endorses his two principles of justice: the liberty principle, which guarantees every citizen equal basic liberties; and the difference principle, which requires an equal distribution of resources except where inequalities benefit the least advantaged people. Yet, it is his argument for the liberty principle that has changed. Rawls’s conception of liberty is no longer merely limited to providing equal basic liberties to individuals, but it entails that liberty (freedom) must be interpreted in terms of an individual’s capacity to form and revise his (her) conception of what it means to do good. Rawls (1993:30) makes the following statement: ‘As free persons, citizens claim the right to view their persons as independent from and as not identified with any particular conception of the good, or scheme of private ends’. For instance, according to this Rawlsian idea of ‘political liberalism’, every individual affiliated to a particular religious group has the right to exercise his (her) rights, and in so doing attempts to restrict or eliminate group-imposed hindrances that would nullify such private individual rights. In other words, groups cannot limit the basic liberties of their individual members,

including their right to be non-religious or to question and revise inherited conceptions of the good (Kymlicka, 2002:238). What Rawls's 'political liberalism' involves is not only giving to individuals certain formal legal rights to revise their understandings of what it means to do good, but also knowledge of these rights, as well as the educational and legal conditions required, which would enable individuals to exercise such rights in an autonomous way (Kymlicka, 2002:239). What seems to be at variance with such a Rawlsian idea of political liberalism is the RWG's emphasis on cultivating 'honour' in students. Instilling 'a common loyalty' in students would certainly restrict or nullify students' private individual rights, including their right to be non-loyal or to question and revise the RWG's and DoE's conception of 'honour'.

Secondly, the resolutions of the 'Values, Education and Democracy' (VED) Conference¹³ related to implementing a discourse of democratic citizenship education that had three dimensions:

1. Promoting anti-racism through the teaching of a new history curriculum, which requires that teachers be upgraded appropriately;
2. Integrating the aesthetic performing arts subjects and African languages into the curricula; and
3. Incorporating civics education into the curricula with an emphasis on people engaging critically in intersubjective deliberation (DoE, 2001a).

13 The publication of the Report of the Working Group on 'Values, Education and Democracy' was made possible by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in 2000 and presented for public deliberation. The issues raised by public debate in newspapers, academic journals, letters and submissions to the Ministry culminated in a national conference at the National Botanical Institute, Kirstenbosch, Cape Town on 22-24 February 2001. This conference was called "Saamtrek: Values, Education and Democracy in the 21st Century". More than 400 of South Africa's leading education specialists, researchers, politicians, intellectuals and members of non-governmental organisations gathered to deliberate the issues in an attempt to formulate a 'Values, Education and Democracy' policy and to deliberate on its implementation in schools. The following were the conference themes and discussions: rooting the new patriotism in the Constitution; the role of teachers; the question of equity; governance and institutional culture; the question of language; infusing schools with the values of human rights; the oral tradition as a carrier of values; the value of history; the value of arts and culture; religion education vs. religious education; the role of sport; values and technology; the role of the media; sexual responsibility and HIV/AIDS; and gender and schooling (DoE, 2001a).

Certainly the anti-racist agenda propounded at the conference resembles a liberal conception of democratic citizenship whereby people's rights, irrespective of race, colour, belief and ethnicity, cannot be violated. Yet the resolutions of the conference, which culminated in the generation of the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (MVE) (2001b), put a great deal of emphasis on citizens engaging actively with others in shaping the future of South African society through deliberation – an idea which seems to be attuned with a communitarian conception of democratic citizenship espoused by Macedo (1990), Galston (1991) and Kymlicka (2002). Put differently, a communitarian conception of democratic citizenship emphasises people's commitment to public participation, respectful dialogue, or critical attention to government; that is, 'the need for people to be active citizens who participate in public deliberation' (Kymlicka, 2002:293). Such an understanding of communitarian democratic citizenship education is aptly supported by Nussbaum¹⁴ (2002:293-299), who offers a threefold account of what it means: firstly, communitarian democratic citizenship education engenders the capacity for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions; secondly, it urges that people should see themselves as human beings who need to respect diversity; and thirdly, to imagine the 'Other', that is, the ability to imagine what it might be like to be in the position of a person different from oneself. Thus one finds that the MVE announces the achievement of the following ten communitarian values in educational institutions: democracy, social justice and equity, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, *ubuntu* (human dignity), an open society, accountability, the rule of law, respect and reconciliation (DoE, 2001b). I shall now explore these ten values announced in the MVE, specifically focusing on their resemblance with liberal and communitarian conceptions of democratic citizenship education.

14 My potential critic might refer to Nussbaum as a prominent liberal. I agree. However, considering that communitarianism is in fact a variant of liberalism, it would not be inappropriate to refer to Nussbaum as a communitarian, as some of her most recent writings suggest. Liberal communitarians, of whom Martha Nussbaum is a distinguished representative in recent political philosophy, holds that there are many valuable ways of life which people may choose to pursue in an autonomous way after reflecting on alternative ways of the good life. Although this sounds very Rawlsian, the communitarian twist occurs when Nussbaum argues that both the availability of a plurality of ways of life and the capacity for autonomous choice depend upon a communal background and restricting certain individual rights (Nussbaum, 2001).

To my mind, being democratic necessarily firstly implies that in deliberation with others one not only becomes critical of one's own position, but also through openness begins to respect the view that there are others who are different from one. In this regard, Quane (2002:316-319) argues quite correctly that people need to develop competencies such as communicating, being able to live together, critical thinking, being able to change and adapt to change, and creativity in nurturing '[democratic] citizenship and participation in community life'. Since both liberal and communitarian conceptions of democratic citizenship aim to achieve a sense of deliberative democracy, the MVE's reference to the value of democracy seems to resemble such conceptions of democratic citizenship. Barber's (1984:219) argument in defence of strong (deliberative) democracy through citizenship, and Young's (1996:121) notion of communicative deliberative democracy whereby citizens come together to talk about collective problems, goals, ideals and actions, vindicate liberal and communitarian moments of democratic citizenship.

Secondly, if one begins to imagine what it might be like to be in the shoes of someone different from oneself, then the possibilities for becoming socially just, equitable, egalitarian, non-racist, non-sexist, respectful, law-abiding, accountable and reconciliatory could be enhanced, since one invariably exhibits a sense of human dignity (*ubuntu*) towards the 'Other' – what Nussbaum (2002:301) refers to as having a 'cultivated humanity'. It follows that a strong case could be made for a communitarian view of these values as they unfold in the MVE since these values demand strong communal participation in societal matters. If we truly wish to accommodate communitarian conceptions of the self, then we must be willing to provide some exemption for communitarian groups from the rigorous enforcement of individual liberties (Kymlicka, 2002:240). The point is that people cannot just engage in societal practices (family life, religious observance and educational discourse) and political institutions (Parliament and voting), unless there are groups of people in society who engage in such practices and institutions. Moreover, as Miller (2000:102) asserts, the individual's capacity to exercise his (her) autonomous choice and to reflect critically upon any particular way of life is not something that people are natively endowed with, but it is a capacity that is nurtured by 'autonomy-supporting practices and institutions whose existence

cannot be taken for granted'. Put differently, people cannot be socially just, equitable, egalitarian, non-racist, non-sexist, respectful, law-abiding, accountable, reconciliatory and dignified without engaging with others in society – it is a matter of being socially situated.

Now that I have argued that the realisation of democratic citizenship education in educational institutions can engender transformation, I need to point out two dilemmas which could thwart the implementation of the MVE of the DoE.

Two dilemmas: 'Blind' patriotism and 'Safe expression'

The *Manifesto* considers the value of 'social honour' as central to the development of South Africa's democratic citizenship education agenda. The Working Group suggested that learners could achieve 'social honour' through singing the national anthem, displaying the national flag, and saying out loud an oath of allegiance which reads as follows: 'I promise to be loyal to *my* country, South Africa, and do my best to *promote the welfare and the wellbeing of all its citizens*. I promise to show self-respect in all that I do and to respect all of *my fellow citizens* and all of our various traditions. Let us work for peace, friendship and reconciliation and heal the scars left by past conflicts. And let us build a common destiny together' (my italics; DoE, 2001:59). This kind of blind patriotic expression seems to be constituted by two dimensions: commitment to country, and promotion of the welfare of 'insiders' (fellow citizens). What seems to be so pernicious about such a view of patriotism? Firstly, loyalty to one's country has nothing to do with building democracy and achieving reconciliation. During the apartheid past, elections occurred democratically among white citizens. The white minority South African citizens adopted a stance of what Kahne and Middaugh (2006:602) refer to as 'unquestioning endorsement of their country – denying the value of critique and analysis and generally emphasising allegiance and symbolic behaviours'. For instance, the majority of white South Africans believed that questioning the apartheid state was 'unpatriotic' and that criticising the state for its racist policies was an act of betrayal. More recently, some cabinet members of the African National Congress (ANC) government felt that criticising the policies of the new democratic state is tantamount to expressing unpatriotic

sentiments. Of course, questioning and criticising the policies of the new ANC government does not imply disloyalty to the country. In fact, patriotism is not inconsistent with criticism. One can be critical about the economic policies of one's government, but this does not necessarily mean that one is unpatriotic. Proclaiming one's loyalty to one's country does not necessarily imply that one should be intolerant of criticism. For this reason, a commitment to country in a parochial sense such as entailed in the pledge of allegiance is problematic, because, if taught, it could result in learners becoming 'blind patriots' or that they could fail to recognise the value of reasoned debate, analysis and critique as 'engines of improvement' (Kahne and Middaugh, 2006:602). In any case, during the apartheid years, patriotism to the state was parochial on the basis that not all citizens were considered to be equals in a democratic polity (blacks were excluded from the franchise), people did not deliberate together to advance social justice, and the dignity of blacks was disrespected.

Secondly, for learners to be taught that patriotism implies doing their best 'to promote the welfare and wellbeing of all its [South Africa's] citizens' is tantamount to saying that those people who are not citizens of the country, yet with temporary residential status, do not warrant one's support and forbearance. I specifically think of the many non-South Africans from neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Somalia and Nigeria, who often encounter xenophobic prejudice towards them on account of their being considered as 'outsiders' who do not deserve our respect and civility. Often these immigrant communities are subjected to indifference and cruelty, and sometimes hatred and assassinations.

This brings me to a discussion of why it would not be credible to say that blind patriotism engenders peace, friendship and reconciliation. From the above discussion it seems as if the 'oath of allegiance' could undermine the need for learners to be critical about their country, and the rights of 'outsider' immigrants to enjoy the respect and civility of citizens in a democracy. Why is this situation possibly a dilemma for the cultivation of peace, friendship and reconciliation? In the first place, peaceful human co-existence and non-aggression would not be possible if democratic citizens were not engaged in relations of friendship. Unlike the 'oath of allegiance', friendship does not imply that people act uncritically, without

questioning one another, or that they exclude or marginalise the other. To my mind, it would be possible to realise reconciliation in a country still suffering from the scars of apartheid discrimination and segregation if learners were taught what it means to act with trust, an appreciation of the other, and to open up opportunities to start anew – what Arendt (1998) refers to as forgiveness. But because the ‘oath of allegiance’ lends itself to stimulating a blind patriotism, it would be very unlikely that learners would learn to nurture their qualities of attending to the other, to act with trust, and to do things anew – a situation which could make reconciliation very unlikely. I shall now focus my attention on the *Manifesto*’s call for learners to be taught to engage in dialogue in an atmosphere of ‘safe expression’.

The *Manifesto* offers as one of its educational strategies the promotion of the values of the Constitution through the nurturing of a culture of communication and participation in schools, which function as a ‘space of safe expression’ (DoE, 2001:40). I agree with the *Manifesto* that nurturing a culture of dialogue should not happen at the expense of muting the voices of participants in the dialogue through what I would refer to as irresponsible expression. Those teachers and learners who are serious about cultivating forgiveness ought to become respectful, because respect requires of one not only to express oneself freely, but also responsibly. This means free expression should not become what Gutmann (2003:200) calls ‘an unconstrained licence to discriminate’ – only then does one act responsibly, that is, respectfully. In other words, the right to free and unconstrained expression ends when injustice to others begins. One can no longer lay claim to being respectful and therefore being responsible, critical and just, if one advocates a particular point of view that cannot be separated from excluding certain individuals – that is, discriminating invidiously against others (particularly those individuals in society who are most vulnerable and who lack the same expressive freedom or capacity as those who are excluding them) on grounds such as gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity and religion (Gutmann, 2003:200). But responsible expression is not the same as ‘safe expression’. For me, responsible expression has to do with taking risks through belligerent action, whereas safe expression tries to avoid causing distress and discomfort to the other. I think the *Manifesto* promotes the idea of ‘safe expression’ because it is thought that teachers and learners should avoid belligerence and distress in their

classroom deliberations. Such a view of 'safe expression' could undermine what deliberations ought to involve. Simply put, 'safe expression' – such as avoiding confrontation and discomfort – could reduce the impact of deliberations, for instance by preventing participants from taking risks. If dialogical partners are too concerned about 'safe' speech, they would not necessarily take risks such as when teachers and learners confront one another through deliberation.

In defence of educational transformation: Towards expansive patriotism

Thus far, I have developed the argument that educational transformation (in schools) would not necessarily be realisable through the advocacy of blind patriotism and safe expression, on the basis that such practices could counteract critique, deliberation and reconciliation. I now offer an account of expansive patriotism as a way to resist the damaging effects of parochial patriotism.

Drawing on the ideas of Sigal Ben-Porath (2006:118), I contend that patriotism would be unwarranted if informed by belligerent citizenship which 'reinforces national identities rather than demonstrating broader democratic interests'. For Ben-Porath (2006:31), belligerent citizenship 'challenges democracy through its emphasis on a growing sense of patriotic unity, a growing support for security measures even when they conflict with civil liberties, and a reduced tendency for deliberation'. How evident is the call for belligerent citizenship in the outbursts of the CEO of the AWB and the president of the ANCYL? Whereas the AWB leader demands increased security on farms (even to the extent of re-arming the right-wing group against black intruders), the ANCYL president insults and expels a BBC journalist from a news conference as a vindication of his opposition to deliberation. These moments of blind patriotism are potentially dangerous to the shared destiny of democratic citizenship education in South Africa. Hence, I propose a kind of expansive patriotism that would seriously threaten those emerging aspects of belligerent citizenship in South Africa.

Patriotism that is grounded in the concept of expansive education (that is, expansive patriotism) is attracted to the cultivation of open-mindedness, pluralism, deliberation, connecting with the other, and peace-building

(Ben-Porath, 2006:121-129). To be open-minded is to orientate oneself to a multiplicity of views and interpretations – unlike the AWB. Similarly, to endorse pluralism is to be exposed to a variety of perspectives, affiliations and understandings. Likewise, to connect with the other is ‘to share the other’s experiences’ (Ben-Porath, 2006:126), and to strive for peace is to begin to question the basic assumptions of conflict, as well as to do something about preventing it. Expansive patriotism would thus enable citizens to connect deliberatively with one another without the possibility of conflict, and where conflicting groups can begin to ‘envision actual futures of peace, including the challenges they generate and possible ways of overcoming them, together or apart’ (Ben-Porath, 2006:128). The educational process is central to the cultivation of expansive patriotism, because it is the ‘site where citizens (learners and teachers) learn to examine their common grounds ... where different views of history are presented and debated and different visions of the common future are explored’ (Ben-Porath, 2006:129).

9

**Democratic
citizenship
education as
a sceptical
encounter
with the other**

CHAPTER

Throughout this book it could be inferred that I have depicted democratic citizenship education as some form of essentialist notion which unfolds in practices in exactly the same way. Rather, I offer a philosophical position which (re)considers the situation of the self in relation with others. What I shall put forward in this chapter is an extension of Seyla Benhabib's (2006) view that the self and others should iteratively and hospitably engage in deliberation. Although I agree with Benhabib that iterations (as arguing over and over again and talking back) are worthwhile in themselves, reconsidering democratic citizenship education, I find Stanley Cavell's (1979) idea of 'living with scepticism' – particularly, acknowledging humanity in the Other and oneself – as more apposite to extend the theoretical premises of the notion. Although the practice of democratic citizenship education can be lived out differently amongst people, I want to add to the diverse ways in which the concept can both disrupt and offer ways as to how challenges of human conflict and violence can possibly be resolved.

Towards a Cavellian stance on democratic citizenship education

In my extension of the philosophical premises of democratic citizenship education, I refer to the situation which involves the Interahamwe, the Hutu militias from Rwanda (about 7,000 in number), who control 40% of East Congo, in particular the area around Bukavu. They are descendants of those responsible for the genocide of the Tutsi in 1994 and are now living outside of Rwanda, where a Tutsi government is in place. It will be recalled that more than four million people were killed directly or as a consequence of the genocide. The Congolese population is now the victim of these militia: women are raped (more than 4,000, though officially only few cases are reported), and, as a consequence of that, rejected by their own group. Mothers are supposed to either kill the children they have given birth to or disappear. The hate of the Interahamwe towards the Tutsi is kept alive through indoctrination. They call the Tutsi '*inyenzi*', which means cockroaches, in other words insects which have to be destroyed. The militias, who also 'regulate' about 25,000 Hutu citizens, cannot be controlled, notwithstanding the 17,000 soldiers of the peace-keeping force of the United Nations. So, what does a Cavellian view of democratic citizenship education have to offer to resolve this dilemma on the African continent?

Following Cavell (1979:440-441) 'living with skepticism' is in fact to live one's life with suspicion (distrust) about oneself in relation to the other (from both one's own vantage point and the other's point of view). By this Cavell means that one can be 'imperfectly' known to others and at the same time be a 'stranger' to them (1979:443). Similarly, one can partially know others (which suggests that one cannot completely know others) and at the same time be disappointed in one's knowing of the other – that is, not really know them. Cavell (1979:46) uses the example of human pain or suffering. At the same time one can know the pain of others on the basis of their behaviour, yet one would not really know their pain on the basis that their feelings would be deceiving. It is for this reason that Cavell (1979:45) aptly makes the point that 'our relation to the world as a whole, or to others in general, is not of knowing, where knowing construes itself as being certain. So it is also true that we do not *fail* to know such things (that is, to know that we do not always know)'. I consider 'living with scepticism' as a way to acknowledge humanity in the Other and oneself as salient to extend the theoretical premises of democratic citizenship education, in particular to avoid universalist notions of the concept developed thus far with reference to deliberative iterations.

Part(s) of the discourse on the Other and of otherness seems to us to ignore the importance of what Benhabib called 'an articulation of the normative basis of cosmopolitan republicanism in an increasingly decentred, fragmented world, depicted in an anti-metaphysical philosophy'. Though Benhabib's position is certainly attractive, it may, with its insistence on the normative basis of cosmopolitan republicanism, expose us to the danger of going too far in the opposite direction, that is, it may lead to an undesirable kind of universalism – one which I want to move away from in reconsidering democratic citizenship education. Moreover, the fact that democratic citizenship education is considered by most people as a practice which is morally good for society, and considering what might be perceived as good for society is always in the making, democratic citizenship education ought to be continuously subjected to modifications and adaptations. For instance, it may be morally good for society to engage in belligerent encounters at some stage in its history – and we may want to decide this in advance. But when hostility among people arises that make interactions develop into such distressful confrontations possibly resulting in the

exclusion of the Other, we may want to suggest that peoples' distressful encounters be curbed. That is, our practices should be about what is desirable for society, with the possibility or readiness to depart from such practices, which means that belligerence in deliberations might not always be desirable for the public good. By implication, democratic citizenship education cannot be considered as something fixed and monolithic which has to be imposed on people, but rather as a practice of remaking and reimagining as the life experiences of people change and as new challenges arise. This brings me to my threefold argument:

Firstly, I see myself reflected by the Other, which makes the Other a mirror that casts my image towards me, suggesting that there is some interconnectedness between the Other and me. In a Cavellian sense (1979:438) being a mirror image of the Other makes me 'answerable for what happens to them' – that is, enacting my responsibility towards them. The Other – the actual Other as well as the Other in myself – confronts the self and thus she is turned back upon her own self; thus the Other is not simply the friend, but becomes the teacher, the possibility of self-transcendence. It is not surprising to note that Cavell (1979:440) makes the point that 'the other is like oneself, that whatever one can know about the other one first has to find in oneself and then read into the other ... (that is) conceive the other from the other's point of view'. If Hutu militia can see in Tutsis mirror images of themselves as human beings (and not treat them as cockroaches), the possibility for murder, rape and enslavement might be thwarted – a situation which invokes a form of sceptical democratic citizenship in the sense that Hutu aggressors destabilise and confront themselves with a readiness to depart from their violent behaviour and in fact be for the Other (Tutsis) what the Other is for them (human beings). Of course, this is not denying the Cavellian position that some humans (say Hutus) do not regard other human beings (say Tutsis) as human at all. Instead Hutus treat Tutsis indifferently, that is, 'monstrously' and 'unforgiveably', but do not disregard them being humans. In fact, like Cavell, we acknowledge that Hutu aggression towards Tutsis is an unjust 'human possibility' (Cavell, 1979:378). And, considering that Cavell (1979:376) takes issue with certain human beings considering other human beings as slaves, we too take issue with Hutus who seem to be disconnected from Tutsis, whom they (Hutus) continually humiliate and

punish. The point we are making, is that the relationship between Hutus and Tutsis, albeit a violent one, is in fact a human relationship which opens up the possibility for humans to be answerable to the Other – in this case, violent Hutus finding some way as to live out their responsibility to Tutsis as humans. This is what democratic citizenship in the first place demands – an acknowledgement of a human encounter which makes the dominant (violent) answerable to the one against whom violence is perpetrated (the Tutsi). Thus, acting as an assemblage or multiplicity of people cannot happen under the name democratic citizenship if such actions turn violent towards another.

Secondly, central to one's connection with the Other is the notion that one has to acknowledge humanity in the Other – and the basis for such action lies in oneself: 'I have to acknowledge humanity in the other, and the basis of it seems to lie in me' (Cavell, 1979:433). Considering the unimagined hatred Hutus have for Tutsis, what Hutus ought to begin to acknowledge would be the humanity in those people whom they seemingly have no regard for as human beings – they fail to acknowledge the humanity in Tutsis, as they fail to acknowledge the humanity in the Congolese women whom they rape. In doing so Hutus, in a Cavellian sense, need to proceed from the point of acknowledging their own humanity, that is, their own feelings, emotions and compassion towards those who are vulnerable and whom they only want to harm. Unless their own humanity is brought to the fore, they would inevitably show no remorse when violating the sanctity of others' lives. This is what I think Cavell means when he states that hedging one's acknowledgement of humanity in others is hedging (protecting) one's own humanity (Cavell, 1979:434). Hedging one's own humanity and in turn not acknowledging humanity in the Other actually places a limit on one's humanity; this is described by Cavell as 'the passage into inhumanity (of which) its signal is horror' (Cavell, 1979:434). This makes sense considering the serious restrictions Hutus place on their own humanity, which led to the atrocities and acts of horror perpetrated against hapless Congolese women. These Hutus simply do not consider it important and respectful to recognise the humanity in the Other – that is, they feel that they do not owe others respect simply as human beings – a situation referred to by Cavell as 'the failure of which (humanity within others) reveals the failure of one's own humanity' (Cavell, 1979:434). The

point is that if Hutus consider Congolese women as persons whose dignity needs to be upheld, *they need to acknowledge themselves as persons who should consider others as being worthy as persons*. In other words, acknowledging others as human beings worthy of respect, one should simultaneously acknowledge oneself as a person who should exercise respect. This is what I think Cavell has in mind when he claims: ‘(A)nother may be owed acknowledgement simply on the ground of his humanity, acknowledgement as a human being, for which nothing will do but my revealing myself to him [her] as a human being, unrestrictedly, as his or her sheer other, his or her fellow, his or her *semblabale*’. So, democratic citizenship does require of a person to treat another person with hospitality in the sense of not violating the personhood of the other person. The very act of treating another person with hospitality determines the personhood of the Other and simultaneously gives another a passage into one’s humanity – that is, seeing one as a human being who merits being treated hospitably.

Thirdly, following Cavell (1979:269), democratic citizenship as virtue must leave itself open to repudiation – that is, the possibility that unvirtue might arise. It provides the possibility for others to exercise their rights, but it cannot be everything. ‘It provides a door through which someone alienated [Hutus who are rapists] can return by the offering of and the acceptance of explanation, excuses and justifications, or by the respect one human being will show another who sees and accepts the responsibility for a position which he himself would not adopt [Hutu rapists who accept forgiveness]’ (Cavell, 1979:269). In this way, the possibility exists for democratic citizenship to be unrelated to virtue, and hence, related to unvirtue or a practice which might not always be consistent with what is required of someone who acts as a democratic citizen. Such an unvirtuous encounter with others is only possible because we consider democratic citizenship not to be beyond reproach, as is certainly not the case when it comes up against what Cavell refers to as ‘the newest evil’ – that is, forgiving the unforgivable. As Cavell argues, invoking morality by deciding what might be good for others should at the same time establish the possibility for its repudiation. It is with such a view in mind that encounters with the Other through democratic citizenship should not be seen as a new form of universalism, but rather as an opening which creates opportunities both for attachment and detachment, that

is, acknowledgement and avoidance. Thus, as philosophers of education concerned with illuminating, identifying and solving major problems in our societies, we are now confronted with having to acknowledge the wrongs in our societies and simultaneously with the challenge to put into place ways as to how such ills can be avoided.

Derrida and Arendt on imaginative action: On forgiveness, hospitality and (non)violence

I started by referring to the situation of the women of East Congo and mentioned the injustice that is done to them and, more generally, by the Interahamwe to the Tutsi. My argument for democratic citizenship should not be seen as a new kind of universalism, which defines how the Other should live, not only now, but in the future as well. It should rather be read as an amended version of the position Benhabib developed and which is so correctly argued for by Cavell, who draws our attention to the idea of encounter. It is time for philosophers of education to embrace a similar position and thus not to produce an alibi (even unwillingly) for those who clearly abuse the other in the name of cherishing otherness as just difference. In the main, my argument in defence of democratic citizenship through the Cavellian notion of sceptical encounters is constituted by three moral positions: forgiveness, hospitality and non-violence. Drawing on the seminal thoughts of Jacques Derrida (1997b) and Hannah Arendt (1969), I shall now examine in further detail what such moral positions can offer democratic citizenship in order to ensure that the practice remains (re)imagined.

Firstly, Derrida (1997b:33) argues for a view of forgiveness which builds on the premise 'that forgiveness must announce itself as impossibility itself ... (and that) it can only be possible in doing the impossible'. 'Doing the impossible' for Derrida (1997b:33) implies forgiving the 'unforgivable'. In his words, 'forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable' – that is, atrocious and monstrous crimes against humanity, which might not be conceived as possible to forgive (Derrida, 1997b:32). Derrida (1997b:44) explicates forgiveness as 'a gracious gift without exchange and without condition'. Amongst crimes against humanity Derrida (1997b:52) includes genocide (say of Hutus against Tutsis), torture and terrorism. This notion of

forgiving the 'unforgivable' is spawned by the view that forgiveness is an act without finality – that is, the fault and the guilty (the one who perpetrates the evil) is considered as being capable of repeating the crime without repentance or promise that he or she will be transformed. And, forgiving the 'unforgivable' takes into consideration that the crime might be repeated, which makes forgiveness an act (of madness) of the impossible (Derrida, 1997b:45). Now a conception of forgiveness which makes possible the act of forgiving the 'unforgivable' makes sense, because if Tutsis are not going to venture into forgiving the 'unforgivable' genocidal acts of Hutus, these two different tribal communities might not begin to connect with one another and a process of inducing transformation within a Congolese or Rwandan society might not begin to take place. Such a Derridian view of forgiveness is grounded in an understanding that 'nothing is impardonable' (Derrida, 1997b:47) and, that 'grand beginnings' are often celebrated and redirected through amnesia of the most atrocious happenings – a point in case is South Africa's democracy, which grew out of forgiving those 'unforgivable' racial bigots who committed heinous crimes against those who opposed the racist state.

Secondly, Derrida (1997b:20) draws on Kant to develop a two-pronged approach to hospitality: every person has a right to universal hospitality without limits, and the right to hospitality is limited to the right of visitation (that is, temporary residence). On the right to universal hospitality, Derrida limits such a right to innocent people (perhaps not guilty of a major crime) who seek refuge or asylum in another country and who want to escape 'bloody vengeance'. Surely, innocent Tutsis who are subjected to Hutu torture, rape and enslavement have the right to seek and be granted asylum in another country. Following Derrida, these Tutsis (asylum seekers) cannot be considered as resident aliens in another country whose state and people ought to treat them hospitably – that is, without question. Such a situation is possible on the grounds that every person is endowed with a status of 'common possession of the earth' (Derrida, 1997b:20). Moreover, the right of visitation is granted on the basis that a peaceful treaty between states and their peoples are encouraged. So, for Tutsis to seek asylum in another country ought to be a temporary arrangement, on the grounds that Tutsis should have the right of return to the country of their origin. In other words, the possibility should not exist that they could

be declared as permanent refugees in another country. What follows from this is that such an understanding of hospitality would take the form of states offering temporary residence rights to people subjected to violence in their own countries, and that these people should not be denied the right to hospitable treatment by another state.

Thirdly, following Arendt's (1969) analysis of violence, it can be considered as a phenomenon whereby people impose themselves on others, making others the 'instruments' of their will (Arendt, 1969:56). In other words, violence is an instrumental means of coercion (Arendt, 1969:44). So, Hutu militia murder, torture, rape and maim Tutsi women and children because they use such instrumental acts in order to terrorise Tutsis. Non-violence can counteract violence, because unlike violence, non-violence is capable of speech acts – that is, 'violence itself is incapable of speech, and not merely that speech is helpless when confronted with violence' (Arendt, 1963:19). Unlike violence, which is determined by silence (Arendt, 1969:77) (such as the silence of both victims and perpetrators of torture in Nazi concentration camps), non-violence draws on the authoritative voice of speech. It is here that non-violence can begin to tackle the genocide of Hutus by Tutsis. Like Arendt, we contend that there is no legitimate justification for violence and that the use of violence will only result in more violence. Yet, following Cavell and Arendt, we sometimes require a disruption of existing practices of violence through violence. Is it conceivable that non-violent resistance will always be met with non-terrorisation and peace? I do not imagine so. If Hutu militia were to be resisted non-violently, massacre and submission of Tutsis will be the order of the day. Thus, in a Cavellian sense, we require a momentary breakage from non-violence in order to ensure lasting change in the Congo – that is, a condition ought to be set up whereby speech could become dominant in an attempt to resolve conflict. What this argument amounts to, is that democratic citizenship, with its insistence on speech acts, can temporarily create conditions for violence to counteract the destructive force of more violence. What I have argued for thus far, is that the notion of democratic citizenship is in fact a form of moral imagination which ought to be worked towards. And, such a moral imaginative experience can engender possible changes on the African continent through an emphasis on forgiveness, hospitality and non-violence.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this book, my arguments in defence of democratic citizenship education are situated within an ethical framework of concepts such as deliberation, compassion, friendship, forgiveness, respect, non-violence, human dignity, engagement, transformation and scepticism. Understandings of these concepts remain inexhaustible, as has been shown throughout the evolutionary discourse of philosophy of education. Like these concepts, democratic citizenship education has not attained conclusiveness, because societies are ever-evolving and constantly in the making. So, I am not offering an exhaustive account of democratic citizenship education, but rather a moment within the discourse of philosophy of education where people can recognise practices that are aimed at enriching their engagements and experiences of the other.

Of particular importance to the cultivation of democratic citizenship, I have argued, is the notion of education. Hence, my defence of democratic citizenship education involves establishing conditions of equality, non-violence, justice and scepticism as important practices to ensure that deliberation, compassion and friendship are ongoing and inconclusive. In fact, at the core of my arguments is the notion that teaching and learning in and beyond higher education institutions are seedbeds for the cultivation of what it means to be a good citizen. I use 'good' here in the sense that citizenship and democracy are plausible ways as to how students and teachers can best engage with one another in order to ensure that their education leads them to do morally worthwhile activities that can build societies. In quite a neo-Aristotelian way, I suggest some ways as to how one can make sense of democratic citizenship and its implications for education.

Finally, to have entitled this book *Education, Democracy and Citizenship Revisited: Pedagogical Encounters* is apposite in the face of serious threats that confront us today: global warming, poverty, violence and war, nuclear proliferation, racism and ethnic hatred. And the severity and complexity of human problems will demand from our educational institutions inclinations, dispositions and knowledge that will shape our social identities, ideological outlooks, moral preferences and attitudinal priorities differently. Through the teaching and learning of democratic citizenship education, I contend, our institutions can offer renewed possibilities to reconsider what education can mean for an educated human being in the twenty-first century.

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