EDUCATION, DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP REVISITED

Pedagogical Encounters

Yusef Waghid
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>.................................................................</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>..........................................................................................</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>..........................................................................................</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1</strong>: Democratic citizenship education in the making – belligerence, deliberation and belonging</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2</strong>: Democratic citizenship education through compassionate imagining</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 3</strong>: Democratic citizenship education through friendship</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 4</strong>: Democratic citizenship education through respect and forgiveness</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 5</strong>: Cosmopolitanism through democratic citizenship education</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 6</strong>: Democratic citizenship education without violence and extremism</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 7</strong>: Democratic citizenship education through <em>ubuntu</em></td>
<td>..................................................</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 8</strong>: Democratic citizenship education and educational transformation in South Africa</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 9</strong>: Democratic citizenship education as a sceptical encounter with the other</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concluding remarks</strong></td>
<td>..................................................................................</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>......................................................................................</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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The following chapters contain updated and expanded versions of previously published articles which are reprinted with permission.

Chapter 1

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

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

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