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Love and Revolution in the post-Truth University

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*The scholar and the world! The endless strife,
The discord in the harmonies of life!
The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,
And all the sweet serenity of books;
The market-place, the eager love of gain,
Whose aim is vanity, and whose end is pain!*

Henry Longfellow's poem of 1825 may as well have been written for the class of 2025, given that in our market-driven higher education economy, love of learning now comes at a price. (£9,000 this year, and if students love their universities enough, perhaps £12,000 in the next). If in 1968 the Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire (1921-1997) famously accused education of 'banking sickness' (Freire 2000, where knowledge was seen as a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing), 50 years later, it is surely bank robbery.

Harry Lewis, the former Dean of Harvard College (one of two schools within Harvard University granting undergraduate degrees), lamented in his book, *Excellence Without a Soul* (2007) that our universities, for all their academic and research brilliance, have lost sight of their core mission, which is to foster human beings in our full humanity. By this he means human beings with passion, compassion and a larger sense of purpose than career and success. A key reason for academic "blindness" to community and higher purpose, perhaps, is the deep cultural split between knowing and loving, yet:

'At bottom, knowing and loving significantly overlap each other: there are passions of the mind that are almost indistinguishable from passions of the heart in the energy they generate. That is why the eleventh-century theologian St. Simeon described the deepest form of human knowing as the result of thinking with 'the mind descended into the heart.' (Palmer and Zajonc 2010, p. 29).

Peter Le Breton (2012) contends that unchecked rationality, the worshipping of a

scientific (or *scientistic*) worldview that maintains the fiction of value-neutrality and objectivity is a root cause of higher education dilemmas, suggesting, as Thomas Moore put it: ‘Logos without Eros becomes sadistic’ (de Quincey 2005, p. 270). Evidently such a complex matter for any scholarly enquiry, it has been claimed that ‘love creates ontological panic in educrats’ (Gidley 2010, p. 353.). What follows nonetheless is an exploration of the role of love in higher education with special attention to metaphor- where the current danger is that post-truth universities have become part of what Henry Giroux (2007) calls the ‘military-industrial-academic complex,’ – about which Friedrich Nietzsche in an earlier era had noted: ‘they are cold, these scholars’ (Nietzsche, 1888, p. 217) From literature to research, and from classical to revolutionary models, an epistemology of love will be presented as the true heart of higher education.

If ‘Love and education, go together like a train and station’ (with apologies to Frank Sinatra) and in the face of the train wreck that is current education legislation, this chapter is a discussion of love and education pictured running on interconnected tracks: 1. self-love and authenticity; 2. revolutionary love; 3. love and freedom, and 4. love and playful affiliation. But first, to tackle the terms ‘love’ and ‘truth’.

What is love, anyway?

‘What is love, anyway?’ [Howard Jones, *Human’s Lib* album, 1983]

Defining love in the educational context is no simple matter. One of the key problems is the polysemous nature of the word ‘love’ itself. Its meanings are legion.

Socrates’ statement from the Symposium that ‘love is the desire for the perpetual possession of the good’ or a searching for beauty, reminds us that love does set up a belief that the beloved embodies the good. In Plato’s view love is cerebral (hence the term Platonic love) and involves our best love organ: the brain. If classical theories gave us three types: ‘Eros’ (desire) ‘Philia’ (community) and ‘Agape’ (humanity), in late consumer capitalism, is nothing left but the first?

Alfred North Whitehead (1916) described ‘the essence of education’ as religious in its deep connections to ‘reverence’, closely aligned to Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual position. In 1909 Steiner named love and devotion – the two sides of reverence- as the ‘best educators of the Soul’, and the selfless educative forces capable of developing humanity’s next stage of consciousness (Steiner 1930, p. 61). In a later anthroposophical lecture ‘Love and its meaning in the world’ (Zürich 1912) Steiner separates the values of love, wisdom and strength, arguing that neither love nor wisdom are egoistic, comparing wisdom to the flowering of a plant in maturity, as ‘an advanced stage of development’, but seeing love as ‘*the creative force in the world*’ (Steiner’s emphasis). Interestingly, Steiner also sees love as having no vested interest in the future but, in fact, pictured on an evolutionary timeline, ‘as a payment of debts incurred in the past’. Acts of love can therefore pay off the debt for our existence. Teaching has a special relationship to both truth and love, as:

‘To teach seriously is to lay hands on what is most vital in a human being. It is to seek access to the quick and the innermost of a child’s or adult’s integrity...Poor teaching, pedagogic routine, a style of instruction which is, consciously or not, cynical in its merely utilitarian aims are ruinous. They tear up hope by its roots. Bad teaching is, almost literally, murderous, and, metaphorically, a sin.’ (Steiner 2003, p. 18)

In 1988 psychologists Robert Sternberg and Michael Barnes created an anthology of then contemporary theories of love, each author presenting their own taxonomies, but Zick Rubin’s preface and critique of the volume (1988), that no one taxonomy or definition was maintained by the collection of authors, and that ‘love researchers might do well to move to a more common vocabulary’ (p. ix) has ironically not been realised by the newer edition (Sternberg and Weis 2006). In a key socio-psychological study (Fehr and Russell 1991) college students were asked to list as many forms of love as came to mind. After collapsing syntactic variants, 216 separate types of love were named, (mother-love, friendship-love, animal-love, etc.) and of those, 93 were named by more than one person.

Avoiding the types or subheadings attached to love in preference for its qualities, physicist Arther Zajonc developed what he calls an ‘epistemology of love’ (2005), organized around principles such as sustained attention, openness to diverse and contradictory possibility, respect for the views of others and gentle yet rigorous enquiry. Somewhat similarly, psychologist Ellen Berscheid’s (2006) taxonomy of love offers psychological, religious and philosophical frameworks with which to explore attachment and compassion, and she has more recently explored ‘love in the fourth dimension’ (2010) or temporal love; that which is sustained over time through the values of compassion and shared interest rather than personal benefit.

If these principles might be love, what might then be truth, particularly in relation to higher education? A vision in the service of truth might perhaps sound more suited to a faith university, but Thomas Aquinas’ truth as ‘adaequatio rei et intellectus,’ (conformity of the intellect with the thing itself) presumably marks the foundation of all institutions of higher education. As outlined in the Dominican University vision, commitment to truth is ‘both a virtue and a passion’ for Dominican scholars. Thomas Aquinas’ scholastic practice of *disputatio*, a method that seeks to resolve difficult questions by finding the truth in each, was required of medieval masters and students, ‘as it does today of teachers and learners, a rigorous exploration of multiple ways of resolving a question, ways leading to the one resolution that can be best supported by reason and evidence’ (DU 2012, p. 5).

However, what becomes of truth in an era when reason and objective facts may be less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief? In 1938, looking back on the misinformation around the Spanish civil war, George Orwell confessed that he felt frightened by the possibility that: ‘The very concept of

objective truth is fading out of the world... Lies will pass into history.' (Orwell 1968, p. 258). 'New truth regimes' do emerge, argued Michel Foucault, with each new corpus of knowledge, technology and scientific discourse, entangled with their own current 'multiple restraints' of power (Foucault in Lynch 2001, p. 317). Objective truth or facts are thus equally relative to any given paradigm. Is it possible that universities, with their post-Enlightenment conviction of unlearning truth in preference for Kant's 'dare to know', their post-modern hostility to grand narratives, their post-positivist outlook, have left themselves vulnerable to the idea of truth being open to endlessly relativist interpretation? Sydney University's recent research on the topic claims that

'in this context, it is possible to view post-truth discourse as the radicalisation of the Enlightenment. Specifically, in the realm of knowledge production, it is the democratisation of epistemology... [and that] post-truth finds intellectual legitimation in the necessary and critical approach to the construction of knowledge that is taken as a given in academia' (Wright 2017).

Joshua Forstenzer, Vice Chancellor's Fellow for the Public Benefit of Higher Education at the University of Sheffield declared in 2017 that he would never have 'believed that the very notions of "truth" and "expertise" would become objects of scorn and vilification in the media and the politics of advanced democracies'. He cites the Robbins Report of 1963, where universities were originally 'tasked with four functions: "instruction in skills" and "the promotion of the general powers of the mind so as to produce not mere specialists but rather cultivated men and women", as well as "the search for truth", and the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship' (Forenzer 2017, npn). If only!

However, the central 'post-truth paradox' is that, under these apparently privileged conditions, democracy in higher education seems to be regressing rather than progressing. In their urgent need to recruit, retain and be highly rated by fee-paying students, the sector is becoming increasingly corporatised and marketised (Neary & Winn 2009), with universities branding themselves with vision, mission and universal truth claims: 'putting students first', 'making the world better', and so on. With as yet little research on whether universities actually 'embody the values they espouse' (Elwick, 2017) there is some evidence (Arcimaviciene 2015) that the *metaphors* used (in this case of a study of 20 European university mission statements): staff 'assets'; student 'intake'; 'producing' excellence, and so on, demonstrate that 'the modern narrative of higher education is based on consumerism and property ideology, and this manner of representation is expected to be audience appealing' (p. 11) in a climate of corporate exchange. In post-truth discourse, trust in accountable evidence-based research has eroded to the extent that identity and populism can outrank argument or expertise. Coupled with a populist revolt against elites or the idea of expertise, higher education is potentially in significant trouble. Frustrated by media misinformation and outright lies, academics such as technical scientists have been pushed to online

gestures such as the ‘pro-truth pledge’ with its long list of commitments including the increasingly rare values of ‘balance’, ‘clarity’, ‘compassionate education’ and ‘honour’ (ProTruthPledge 2017). But where, amongst all this, are love and authenticity?

1. Self-love and authenticity

‘You gotta have the mindstate like: ‘I’m so great,’ and can’t nobody do it like you do. Miraculous, phenomenal and ain’t nobody in here stopping you.’ [Conceited album, Remy Ma, 2006]

Self-love, or regard for one’s own well-being and happiness should not be despised as a moral flaw. Where Shakespeare makes the silly vain Malvolio ‘sick of self-love, ... ‘and taste with a distempered appetite’ (Twelfth Night ACT1, Sc1), Erich Fromm resists the immoralities of such self-indulgence and narcissism by viewing self-love simply as the act of taking care and responsibility for oneself, as others may for you. The polemic *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (1969) recommended, along with

‘7. Prohibit teachers from asking questions they already know the answers to’, ...14. Require each teacher to provide some sort of evidence that he or she has had a loving relationship with at least one other human being.’ (Postman and Weingartner 1969, p. 136)

Accounts and research studies by early childhood educators are careful to acknowledge that love of teaching and love of the taught involves respecting the rights of others with a sense of fairness -which directly contributes to ‘feelings of professional authenticity’ (Goldstein 1997, p. 99). For me, professional authenticity has a relationship to self-love, in the sense that I cannot really imagine one able to exist without the other. Teaching requires a strong sense of self confidence and responsibility if one wants to encourage students to question and challenge the teacher’s or the institutional position. Self-love seems central to why, for example, I have stayed in teaching for over three decades.

By self-love, I do not refer to self-branding or the “professionalizing” of higher education academics for University marketing or social media, since that patently has a competitive – even divisive- commodifying effect (Duffy 2017). Elizabeth Barratt Browning’s lines from Sonnet 43: ‘How do I Love thee? Let me count the ways,’ reminds us we cannot count if we ‘love freely, as men strive for right’ (Barret Browning 2009). Rudolf Steiner pointed out at the turn of the twentieth century that all forms of self-measurement or that of others (in our times, Ofsted, REF, TEF, student/staff surveys, league tables and so on) are nothing more than an illusion as love cannot operate freely in the interest of self-perfecting. Simon Blackburn’s study of self-love acknowledges its near-relationship to self-mastery, self-respect and self-esteem, plus of course ‘arrogance, vanity, narcissism and others’ (2014, p. 10). Philosopher and writer Iris Murdoch was savage in her criticism of such self-

delusions, insisting that ‘the love which brings the right answer is an exercise of justice and realism, and really *looking*’ (Murdock in Rowe 2010 p.114); aiming, as she did in her writing, for serious objective attention to things *other* than ourselves. Feminist thinker Carol Gilligan’s theories of connectedness and ‘the intelligence of the heart’ (1993) has equally long resisted patriarchal, stereotyped perspectives for a wider, more interdisciplinary discourse. Her notion of Higher Education teaching and research ‘starting from a place of genuine curiosity’, ‘making oneself vulnerable to discovery’ and striving for ‘authentic listening’ challenges the idea of a purity or singularity of evidence-based single-discipline research or practice, as much as it reminds the academic of the need to open love up to the other ‘who stands at the door of understanding’ (McLaren 2000, p. 171.)

Part of Gilligan’s research practice noting ‘the structure of the narrative, the voices and points of view, the symbolism, patterns of repetition, omissions’ (Gilligan 2009) led, in my case, to noting the role of metaphor, as an associative, relational device. Hence, remarks such as ‘I love that book’, ‘I love her lectures’, ‘I love grammar’ or ‘I love my job’ which may appear glib, light or passive, function actively, descriptively and associatively at the metaphoric level. The verb love *stands for* commitment or application to, engagement with, scholarly interest and deep satisfaction in - in this case- teaching and learning. Etymologically speaking, the word ‘love’ from the Middle English word ‘luf’ is akin to another Old English word, ‘lēof’ which means ‘dear’. The Latin ‘lubere’, ‘libere,’ ‘to please’, associated with *liberē*, means ‘freely’ or ‘boldly’. Therefore, we might equally say ‘that book is dear to me’, ‘that lecture pleases me’, ‘grammar frees me’, or ‘I am bold in my job’, all of which highlight the sense of love as offering a security of emotional attachment as the necessary precondition for freedom, risk and resilience. Current formal measures of student evaluation of teaching do not wholly reflect actual teaching effectiveness, as the study ‘Love me, Love my teacher?’ (Shevlin et.al. 2000) found, and there is apparently also ‘not much love for the TEF’ (Teaching Excellence Framework) in its current manifestation (McRae 2017), either for academics or heads of higher education departments.

Higher education could thus aspire to Martin Luther King’s ‘love that does justice’ (Edwards 2005); a radical, equality-seeking force that sees self-love as the necessary step to self and other empowerment, allowing for relations based on truth and authenticity. Self-accepting love requires eradicating self-righteous superiority or false consciousness over others, so, as part of professional authenticity, I believe we should acknowledge the role of love towards freedom.

2. Love and Freedom

*All we have to do now
Is take these lies and make them true somehow
All we have to see
Is that I don't belong to you
And you don't belong to me
Freedom*

[‘Freedom’, George Michael, *Listen Without Prejudice* album, Vol.1. 1990]

Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire argued that a genuine act of love always generates ‘other acts of freedom; otherwise, it is not love. Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is a commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause—the cause of liberation.’ (Freire in McLaren 2000, p.171) He does not see the educationalist as shaping student lives, but guiding them to *becoming*. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) he wrote:

‘The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to *become themselves*.... Education is thus constantly remade in the praxis. In order to be it must *become*. Its "duration" (in the Bergsonian meaning of the word) is found in the interplay of opposites: permanence and change’ (Freire 2014, p.213).

The concept of ‘duration’ borrowed from philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) suggests that love and becoming offer a special continuity over lived times of static and change.

For Charles Isaacs, in his study *Praxis of Paulo Freire* (1972), Freire's discussion casts the limit-situation in such an optimistic light that it seems in danger of losing its meaning. For him and other critics this is a weakness in the Freirian dialectic as he appears to equivocate between idealism and materialism. Freire has been found inconsistent, even sexist, failing to define terms such as 'humanization' more specifically in terms of men and women, black and white or other forms of socially defined identities... but perhaps for him, love *was* blind. Despite feminist criticisms of his male-centred world view, for Freire, the false generosity of paternalism is not healthy; neither is cruelty, such as the subjection of women, for love must be fair, and plural. Oppressive relationships are inherently unfair and thus lack love.

For me, Freire brings the dialectic relation between the sentimental and the intellectual universe of the human being into relief, reversing technocratic rationalism which shatters and degrades the presence of the student into simple sets of abilities and measurable skills. Freire describes the teacher, pedagogy and praxis: “I personally, just do not love the world, but also the process itself of getting to know the world” (Freire in Gadotti 1994, p. 153).

Following Freire, American cultural critic bell hooks, argues, 'Even when we cannot change ongoing domination and exploitation, love gives life meaning, purpose and direction' (200, p. xxiv.). Hooks' borrowing of Freire's "education as the practice of freedom," refers to 'that quality of education that is enabling and empowering and that allows us to grow.' For Hooks, the heart of education as a practice of freedom is to promote mental, cultural and societal growth (hooks 1994). Hooks cites German social psychologist Erich Fromm's (1956) four elements that for him make up love: 'care, responsibility, respect and knowledge', informing, for her, a career bemoaning the absence of love as the defining characteristic of contemporary academic life, especially the intimate connections between race, class, gender, teaching and love. While other educators seek cautiously neutral, non-romantic or non-sexualised definitions born broadly out of attachment theory, reluctant perhaps to recognize that intimacy is part of pedagogic eros, hooks has no fear of it.

For Rudolf Steiner, in fact, 'transmuted anger is love in action...we can call it the teacher of love' (Steiner 1909) which Freire transforms as the freedom for political and personal self-determination:

I have the right to be angry and to express that anger, to hold it as my motivation to fight; just as I have the right to love and to express my love for the world, to hold it as my motivation to fight, because while a historical being, I live history as time of possibility, not of predetermination. ... My right, my justice is based on my disgust towards the denial of the right to "be more" which is etched in the nature of human beings (Freire 2004, pp. 58-59).

Freire's vision of love as the embodiment of and solution to struggle continued to resonate into the twenty-first century. Michael Edwards' claim that 'a healthy civil society depends on the development of our collective capacities to talk, argue, innovate, learn and ultimately solve our problems together through a process of social reason', or a "politics of freedom", in which no one has a monopoly of truth and everyone shares an obligation to negotiate their interests with each other' (Edwards 2005, npn), reads as so ideal it might be revolutionary.

3. Love and Revolution

It is time for a love revolution

It is time for a new constitution

You are a child of the most high

There is nothing you can't do and that is no lie

You were designed

To use your mind

'Love Revolution' Lenny Kravtitz, *It is Time for a Love Revolution* album, 2008

In times of social strife and cultural turmoil, love resists despair and apathy. As argued above, active, politicised love carries a radical significance, particularly in Freire's last works, where the notion of love is a continuous topic of reference. As Peter McLaren observes, 'love, for Freire, always stipulates a political project, since the love for humankind that remains disconnected from liberating politics does a profound disservice to its object' (McLaren 2000, p. 171). Moreover, Freire's concept of love is never standardized or static. On the contrary, he re-orientates the meaning of the notion, aligning it with a revolutionary essence, conceiving love as an act of freedom that becomes the pretext for other actions that lead to true emancipation, with passion and commitment.

For Freire, love transgresses unilateral psycho-sentimental interpretations. He re-defines love again as a combative 'for those that are sure of the right and duty to fight, to denounce and announce' (Freire 2009, p. 147). The ethics of love forms the active, spirited (but not aggressive) attitude of the radical teacher (Roberts, 2009), encouraging radical students. The denunciation of the de-humanizing structure and the announcement of a humanized structure is a commitment to participate in the social and political transformation of real conditions (Freire 1985). This notion of love springs from Freire's deep faith in humanity and a world 'in which it will be easier to love' (Freire, in Mayo 2004, p. 4), by bringing together revolution and love, embracing the rationale of Che Guevara (Gadotti 1994). The genuine rebel is motivated by a strong emotion of love. In 1965, Che wrote: 'At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality.' He went on to warn against 'dogmatic extremes, cold scholasticism, or an isolation from the masses', since it is the 'we' that will 'make the human being of the twenty-first century' (Che 2003, pp. 225-227).

Knowing and loving significantly overlap each other: there are passions of the mind that are almost indistinguishable from passions of the heart in the energy they generate. But we can be shallow. Che demanded, 'Everyday people straighten up the hair. Why not the heart?' (Deutschman 2003).

In pre-Castro Cuba, universities were the preserve of the privileged few, and autonomous from government. Following the 1959 revolution, the Association of Students of the Engineering Faculty at Havana university assumed control in 1960 and dismissed two professors, spurring the government into supportive action. Whilst much followed the Soviet model, this aspect was revolution as Hannah Arendt condones it, not out of pity or love for the poor, but the respect and solidarity that can follow the groundswell of groups claiming a place in political life (Arendt, 2006).

Cuba's acknowledgment of the complexity of university higher education and its responsibilities for political change informs their teacher training at this level. It is common for the best graduates to be approached by their own university to consider

tertiary level training as their career. These candidates embark first on a higher research degree, and after three years of laboratory and observational work, may reach Assistant Professor and teach small seminar groups for five years, moving to Associate Professor able to lecture for two more years, and finally full Professor: *ten years* in total (MacDonald 1996). Cuba's universities now contribute significantly to global development in areas such as primary public health and agriculture, climate change and sustainable water management, with programmes that stand unique in variety of length, flexibility of access and governance. Despite the country's economic difficulties under the US trade embargo, plus small island vulnerability to natural disaster and climate change, education continues to be free at all levels, and Cuba's generosity in cases of disaster and medical assistance overseas is an example of what love and revolution can bring to education for the wider global good.

4. Love and playful affiliation

Teacher's pet (pa dum pa dum), I wanna be teacher's pet (pa dum pa dum)
I wanna take home a diploma and show Ma that ya love me, too
[‘Teacher’s Pet’ sung by Doris Day, composed Joe Lubin 1958]

To be fair, all that most students probably want is for their parents and teachers to love them and to graduate without completely crippling debt. Kings College QAA Report ‘Student Expectations and Perceptions of Higher Education’ (2013) concluded with many recommendations for better practice, including the need for universities to explain the relationship of fees to the quality and value of the degree, better responsiveness and support for very different student needs, an acknowledgment of student preference for face-to-face interaction and a focus on process rather than product. As students are no doubt aware of the gap between graduate salaries and the debt they are incurring, something like Paul Frijters’ ‘economic theory of greed’ emerges, where ‘love-investment’ (2013, p. 354) is far less likely in the pursuit of self-interest (for both students and teachers in a competitive market).

Psychologist David McClelland called love *affiliation* in his well-known model of need and motivation within organizations – mutual trust, value, care and warmth (McClelland 1984, p. 6). Like McClelland, Irving Singer sees love as bestowed value, as ‘the beloved has become valuable for their own sake’ where reciprocity allows for shared value; what Martin calls ‘a 50-50 distribution to benefits and burdens’ (Martin 1996, p. 105.) Our higher education finance and human remains departments could learn much from this equation.

Martin identifies virtues of care, fairness, fidelity which enable love to ‘combine aspirations with earthiness’ (Martin 1996, p. 3)- as much for ourselves as others, guided by an attitude that we are worthy of such attention. With this self-affirmation is assurance about the potential of oneself and others, particularly in teaching, as one is passing on the idea of confidence and delight in existence. Daniel Cho (2005)

argues that love can unite the teacher and student in the quest for knowledge where love of learning can empower students to challenge knowledge, thereby pushing its limits (p.79) Pedagogic passion for Cho is akin to an exuberant desire for knowledge, caring about relationships and connections. Loreman (2011) sets great store by kindness as the environment in which love as pedagogy can flourish, and, out of an assumption of affiliated kindness towards and between students and teachers, my own experience has been that of developing pedagogies of playfulness. This includes teasing as well as praising, deliberate silliness as well as earnestness, and shock as well as gentleness.

Acknowledging the active role of the learning subject (teacher and student) in the construction of knowledge and culture, we affirm processes of agency, difference, resistance and democracy. Given the most common resistances to schooling (non-performance, truancy, disruptive behaviour) generally result in academic failure, it follows that those students who reach higher education are likely to have been more conformist. This means that teachers in HE have a particular responsibility to resist the possibility for insidious and unconscious reproduction of passive conformity. David Trend has argued that popular pedagogic programmes such as ‘learning how to learn’ can be simply another method of regularising behaviour’, rather than ‘pressing students to move toward subjective autonomy’ (Trend 1992, p. 151). Similarly, academics are under increasing pressure to demonstrate a kind of generic, corporatized excellence (measurable by student survey and the TEF). Obedience to institutionalised markers of ‘quality’, ‘environment’ or ‘learning gain’ may -in actuality- muffle any revolutionary sensibilities, in favour of taking shallow breaths in such a stifling culture of conformity. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) point to this hypocritical orthodoxy:

‘Academic culture might celebrate “critical thinking,” often elevating that capacity to its number-one goal for students. But academic culture is sometimes dominated by orthodoxy as profoundly as any church I know. If a mode of knowing, pedagogy, a life experience, or social perspective is not regarded as kosher in the academy, it too often does not get a fair hearing’ (p. 23).

In the interplay of opposites, of permanence and change, the armed loved - the fighting love of those convinced of the right and the duty to fight, to denounce and to announce, love of subject, love of study, playful affiliation, and above all things love of resistance and curiosity is the love that – in John Berger’s felicitous phrase - ‘holds everything dear’ (2008). ‘Dear’ also means expensive, of course. Higher education is certainly becoming dear.

Love and revolution in the post-truth university: a hopeful conclusion

Have we have lost sight of education as fostering complete human beings? Past expectations of a degree guaranteeing any prospects of employment no longer apply, as graduates find getting a job at McDonalds as hard as anyone else. Policy-makers and knee-jerk fluctuating university missions seem to be heading us for Freire's worst nightmare, that of anti-dialogue: a 'loveless, arrogant, hopeless, mistrustful and acritical' future (1973, p. 46).

Cynically, if higher education is largely for keeping young people off the streets and government unemployment figures for three years or so until it spits them out to financial debt and dependency on their parents or the state, how love features in this experience could at least make a difference to their mental health. I came into University teaching to freely educate future teachers to love the learning, the job and the learners. I stayed at it for 30 years. Now university education is a £9000 a year training to meet national standards struggling nationally to recruit, and, once trained, a majority of teachers stay in post less than five years after graduating (EPI 2018). I think we can now assume no-one is loving it.

Yet higher education is more important than ever in a post-truth world. To Forstenzer,

‘universities exist, at least partially, to serve as a place where a society comes face-to-face with itself. Do they truly succeed in this? Rarely, if ever. But does that mean they should stop trying? I think not. Now, perhaps more than ever, we need universities to find ways to enrich our understandings of ourselves and others. That is why I hope that this commitment to serving the public will ultimately be reflected in the legal definition of the “university” (2017, npn)

We should not be complacent about the need for love and revolution, though examples such as ‘The Centre for Contemplative Mind’ in Massachusetts, with a programme dedicated to love and compassion in the academy, are rare. Even more unusually, Case Western University’s Institute for the wonderfully titled ‘Study of Unlimited Love’ offers a liberal education for the twenty-first century based on service to humanity where ‘students can put aside self-interest and dedicate their lives to helping others through benevolent love’ (Mac Labhrain 2016). I have yet to discover a university combining love with Freire’s ‘pedagogy of laughter’, or a playful practice of freedom. To ‘play for love’ is to play for no stakes, after all, but the play alone.

‘Here, at the intersection between love and reason, lies the future of the University, of that I am sure... [yet] where *stands* the University in this regard, and where stand *we?*’ (Mac Labhrainn 2016). Edwards believes the one force that counterbalances the destructive interplay of reason and post-truth is love, love that is able to signify ‘the deliberate cultivation of mutually reinforcing cycles of personal and systemic change’. He argues that it is the *combination* of the two seemingly opposing qualities – ‘love, and forcefulness, rigour or reason – that defines the relationships central to

the democratic resolution of social problems.’ His vision is of a ‘social science of love,’ capable of transforming politics, economics, social and international relations. As Steiner also argued, teachers and learners are in debt to what is past: facts, thoughts, ideas, values; all the teaching and education that has gone before, and Edwards’ vision carries deep resonances of past radical love revolutionaries Steiner, Freire, Che Guavara, Postman and hooks:

This love is universal love, unconditional love, attached only to the equal and general welfare of the whole. This is love that contains a radical equality-consciousness, a force that breaks down all distance and hierarchy. This is a love that respects the necessary self-empowerment of others, eschewing paternalism and romanticism for relationships of truth and authenticity, even where they move through phases of conflict and disagreement, as all do. (Edwards, 2005, npn)

Love of this magnitude is a tall order. In 1874, Longfellow was urged to write a poem for the fiftieth anniversary of the graduation of his college class to be held the next summer, and that long poem, reluctantly written, titled “Morituri Salutamus” translated as ‘those who are about to die salute you’- famously the last words of gladiators to the emperor before they fought to the death. The poem suggests that, whilst we cannot stop the march of time, perhaps, if we have learnt something in life, we may become better as we age. Whilst many of the poet’s images are cautionary rather than revolutionary: lasting education as ‘not the blaze of noon’ in youth but the ‘living sparks’ in embers; ‘enough to warm but not enough to burn’; the poem also concludes hopefully, with ‘nothing is too late’ (Longfellow 1875).

Love and revolution have a strong association with our species’ survival, as both set up challenges and risks that only our ingenuity can master. Over two centuries after Steiner’s elemental metaphor ‘Love is the moral sun of the world’ (1912), I would call for more love in higher education and more revolution, lest we risk moral extinction.

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