Class, Opportunity and the Lesser Minds Problem: A Ragged University Response

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1. A Starting Position

In this paper psychological research is used to develop a framework in which we can place notions of class in terms of relative dehumanisation as ingroups and outgroups to understand how opportunities are afforded to some and not to others, with categorical identities set up on the basis of inclusion or exclusion from cultural production. It draws upon political economy as a Social Science to examine how resulting culture reinforces relative advantage and disadvantage through finance as a mechanism which dispossesses the most disadvantaged from their inherent human capital as wealth appropriated by the advantaged. It introduces education as necessarily a project of social justice, with the Ragged University as a model in education consistent with human development and designed to function for the least advantaged under the hostile sociology of artificial scarcity.

The way we perceive other people affects how we behave towards them and the opportunities we afford to them. The Lesser Minds Problem (the propensity to perceive and value other minds less vividly than one's own) and the process of dementalisation are active participants in our behaviour as an animal species. I see these processes of dehumanisation as informing the basis of class behaviours and from this position, suggest that group dynamics of the formation of ingroups and outgroups can be meaningfully understood.

The organisational structures which shape our opportunities and interactions in a post-industrial urbanised world are largely dictated by the resources and the capital available. I argue that this forms the basis of class and the categorical formulations used to make distinctions between ingroups and outgroups. In a time when the physical world is no longer available as a commons, capital accumulation has turned to the realm of the intellectual and its associated commons; portions of human capital which traditionally have been regarded as inherently owned by the individual and valued as public goods.

Education is increasingly characterised as a product sold as a 'luxury brand' offering financial inclusion for those who can afford to engage in it. This contrasts with the notion of education and pedagogy associated with a nurturing and drawing out of the abilities inherent in, and belonging to, the individual as a part of their existential wealth. Class, as a psychology of group behaviours, plays out in education as a type of dispossessive economy, where a gate kept system of symbolic accreditation is increasingly available only to those who can pay to participate.

As a counterpoint to this dispossessive economy, as someone who needed the succour of an intellectual life and to be in relation with a community of peers, I describe the rationale behind how the Ragged University was created; a project to create a practical philosophy of education in terms of human development which is resistant to appropriation by finance and co-opting by those already privileged.

2. Tendencies Underlying Our Psychology Which Inform Class

I am particularly interested in relating 'The Lesser Minds Problem' in the field of dehumanisation psychology (Waytz, Schroeder, Epley, 2014) to the problem of class; conceptualisation articulating how psychological processes involved in dehumanisation are active in our everyday actions and behaviours. Previously it was thought dehumanisation required the active othering of a group or individual such that they become diminished in the eyes of, and in comparison to, those considered a part of the ingroup.

The understanding that such socially diminishing processes are not rarefied instances of extreme circumstances (such as the dehumanisation of the cultural groups in situations of war) but exist en masse to varying degrees in the average person's day to day encounters with others is important. Acknowledging this hidden sociology suggests a means of understanding

how class identities are formed, how poverties can be visited on the disadvantaged from those in positions of relative privilege, and how the culture of privilege over others continues to spring from the minutia of our encounters.

In our experience of being, our own thoughts are by incident more prominent and evident than the thoughts of others, our actions have more obvious impact where the impact of others is apprehended secondarily, and our propensity to value our own parsing of the world over others by dint of active belief: present obstacles to understanding others as equally human and valuable. We see other minds in the first instance as lesser minds due to the relative immediacy and fidelity of the ontological experience. In knowing that this takes place we can not only develop the counter balance to this inherent bias in our psychology, but also gain helpful bearings to analyse larger social phenomena which embody network effects.

To understand "class behaviours", first we must acknowledge and understand some of the basic psychology which underpins group behaviours that make major contributions to the formation of social groups. As Haslam (2006) remarks, 'The denial of full humanness to others, and the cruelty and suffering that accompany it, is an all-too familiar phenomenon' (p. 252). The effects of dehumanisation have been examined and documented in various domains including ethnicity, gender, professionalisation, disability, technology, sport, as well as other areas. Specifically, in this paper I am exploring dehumanisation tendencies as encountered in relation to perceptions of class (Loughnan, Haslam, Sutton and Spencer, 2014). Kofta, Baran and Tarnowska (2014) articulate dehumanisation as a denial of human potentials illustrating that there is an extensive literature which demonstrates that individuals who are perceived not to belong in a group (outgroup members) are subject to the tendency of dehumanisation behaviours.

Perceived identity plays a pivotal role in the treatment and opportunities which members belonging to one group extend to those who are thought to belong to another. How our identities are constructed by the perception of others involves the reading of various signs and signifiers which relate to our life circumstances. What is troubling in all this is that dehumanisation is commonplace and regular, influencing behaviour consistently at all levels of society. Far from just being the psychology of group dynamics which requires the active demonisation of another, evidence shows that a phenomenon known as infrahumanisation

occurs (Marcu and Chyrssochoou, 2005); where there is the inclination to ascribe human secondary emotions more to ingroups than to outgroups. Secondary emotions are emotional reactions we have to other emotions (i.e. what affection is to love, and cheerfulness is to joy).

According to Kofta and colleagues it is measurable that when an individual expresses secondary emotion, it has a different impact on an observer's responses when shown by an ingroup or an outgroup member (Kofta, Baran and Tarnowska, 2014). In addition, when an ingroup member expresses secondary emotions, this increases the recipients' implicit conformity to the actor's suggestions, makes their linguistic behaviour more prosocial, and stimulates an automatic motor approach response (a person with an 'approach response' displays behaviour that brings them closer to a reward). When an outgroup member does the same thing, opposite effects emerge.

Crucial to understanding class as an ingroup is the grasping of these aspects of Social Psychology. In considering how various groups might be denied their human potential it is important to differentiate between ingroup humanisation and outgroup dehumanisation (Vaes, Leyens, Paladino and Miranda, 2012). Dehumanisation is reported as a pervasive phenomenon in interpersonal and intergroup contexts and occurs in a large variety of social domains with the finding from Leyens and colleagues (2000) being commonly reported; humanness is reserved to describe one's own group and that humanity is ascribed as the essence of the "we" category.

3. Processes of dehumanisation and dementalisation

It is through our recognition of infrahumanisation that we understand more about the assignations which occur when we examine our associative networks and the undercurrents which shape who is privileged with which opportunities; in the context of this paper, those of pedagogy and education relating to class. Before we move on to scrutinize this scheme of understanding, first I examine how the processes of dehumanisation involves the dementalisation of those in the outgroup context. The acknowledgement of cognitive capacity or lack thereof is a significant part of the dehumanisation process. Mentalisation is a part of the process of recognising somebody as human. The denial of mind is known as dementalisation and thus is conversely a part of the process of dehumanisation (Harris and Fiske, 2009; Kozak, Marsh and Wegner, 2006; Waytz, Grey, Epley and Wegner, 2010).

In ascribing mind, we accord an individual with moral rights and give meaning to their actions. Thus, mind attribution is relevant as a social attribution on multiple levels. The dementalisation of individuals diminishes them in the eyes of the law (diminished capacity), in the practice of medicine (Szasz, 2005) and more widely in terms of a moral agent (Jahoda, 1999). A Kantian model of persons as rational and autonomous lays out much of the foundations of how culturally we have come to equate humanness to mind. The cultural status signifiers denoting mind often confer where in established 'hierarchies of legitimacy' (Elias, 1982) they feature in respects afforded to them.

At this point we must examine some of the key mechanisms which bring about the distinctions that contribute to the construction of ingroups and outgroups that display themselves as class identities, whilst simultaneously reinforcing and recreating such categorical behaviours.

The process of mentalisation of an individual has been shown to be influenced by the perceiver's feelings toward them (which may be flexible across time and situation). Waytz et al and showed that an adult fully capable of mentalising other individuals may fail to do so in instances when the individual is disliked (Waytz, Gray, Epley, and Wegner, 2010). Disliked individuals are dementalised, and this can manifest itself in both low-level identifications as well as reduced attributions of mind. Low-level identifications tend to convey a sense of how an activity is done, whereas high-level identifications tend to convey a sense of why (e.g., the baking of bread is a low-level identification, the reason of being hungry is a high-level). In this context it can mean outgroup members are dehumanised by being perceived as robots that lack emotional sensitivity and self-reflection (Kofta, Baran, and Tarnowska, 2014).

This is coupled with the aforementioned 'Lesser Minds Problem' (Waytz, Schroeder and Epley, 2014). Human beings have brains which are highly capable, equipped with the ability to reason about the experience of others, think about how others are perceiving the world, the attitudes they encounter, the intentions they meet with, to develop complex pictures of reputations and call to mind the stores of knowledge distributed throughout a community. This ability comes along with a significant issue – the minds of other people routinely appear dimmer, and by experience, lesser than one's own. This, the authors suggest, is primarily due to three phenomena of being: we have direct access to our own minds versus those we

encounter, and in turn know the causal importance of our own mind versus others'; we perceive our experience as immediately objective versus others' as subjective.

Collectively the psychological phenomena described above are active factors in group dynamics which play out in the formation of ingroups and outgroups; hierarchies of legitimacy bound up as much in politics as in rational, meritocratic schemes of order which structure our lives. To approach an understanding of class and behaviour in the institutional structures of education and pedagogy we must gain an appreciation of resources, their allocation and how scarcity affects the interrelationship amongst them.

4. The Historical and Economic Setting of Our Institutions and Social Habitat

Our society is heavily stratified by the effect finance has on cultural life; what money you have overwhelmingly dictates what opportunities you can take part in. This is the case with formal education and the signifiers of formal education which an individual gains that go on to determine what opportunities are open to them. This paper forwards the idea that the structure of the social landscape is given definition by access to economic resources out of which categorical identities emerge, in particular those which are commonly referred to in terms of class. This speaks both to my experience and also to the methods of logic which are helpful in deconstructing that experience. It is necessary to unpick the pressures and constraints which are acting on our psychology before we can attempt an understanding of pedagogy and education in context.

For millennia humans have conjured hierarchies and orders to categorise things, from the early anthropocentric formulations positioning the human being as the most significant entity of the universe to modern day mythologies of meritocracy and social class essentialism. The kind of deterministic privileging embedded in such world views is subtle and insidious as it is easily adopted and recreated (even by those disadvantaged by it) however, less easily deconstructed and adjusted for. Virginia Eubanks describes such ideas as 'magical thinking' (Eubanks, 2012, p. xv) which obfuscate with their implicit Panglossian world views of how the most deserving get what they are due. The use of the notion of meritocracy carries with it simplistic assumptions such as the world operates under conditions of perfect competition and perfect information in an environment which lacks structural barriers and/or structural violence. The term Panglossian derives from Voltaire's satirical criticism of Gottfried Liebniz's

formulation that we live in the 'most perfect of all possible worlds' (Leibniz, 2005, p. 37). In Voltaire's 'Candide: or, All for the Best' (1759) the young protagonist having grown up in privilege is taught by Professor Pangloss to understand the world in terms of the Leibnizian optimism pervasive at the time (i.e. 1759). Candide then encounters the end of his good fortune embarking on a journey which is a progressive and traumatic disillusionment as he encounters destitution in the world.

Another continuation of such wholesale myths takes place in Samuel Smiles' famous 1859 book 'Self Help' which began a whole genre of writing. Central in this work is the position espousing that those who persevere with good conduct will be valued and rewarded in society. Robert Tressell, in his social commentary, 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists' suggested 'it was suitable for perusal by persons suffering from almost complete obliteration of the mental faculties' (1914, p. 289). Kraus and Keltner (2013) analyse the evidence of how perceptions of social class can influence a range of social cognitive predispositions, from forms of causal attribution to moral conclusions. They study the effects of social class essentialism in the playing out of attitudes and behaviours and identify how diminished resources and lower social class ranking constrain social outcomes promoting contextualist understandings of the world in those affected, such as social constructivism. Conversely it was found that an abundance of resources and higher social class ranking generate situations which enhance personal freedoms and promote social cognitive tendencies that are solipsistic and individualistic tending to affirm and reinforce their own position in contexts (Kraus, Piff, Mendoza-Denton, Rheinschmidt and Keltner, 2012).

Here I have briefly touched upon the ideas of social class essentialism and associated concepts such as meritocracy to illustrate how dehumanisation through the Lesser Minds problem and dementalisation are historically and socially reproduced in cultural terms.

From the view of the United Kingdom in 2018, the resources available to individuals at this particular point of history are fashioned from the flow of events culminating to the present. To arrive at a place where it is possible to articulate an informed position on pedagogy, education and class, some elementary interpretive sketching of the historical and economic landscape is necessary. In the Middle Ages (approximately 5th to 15th centuries CE) there was the emergence of the first universities formed of feudal guilds of students learning under those considered learned masters (Rashdall, 2013). What is commonly referred to as

the Renaissance period (approximately 14th to 17th centuries CE) in European history followed bringing into view an intellectual humanism, a rebirth of culture that broadened and diverged from the medieval scholasticism of the Middle Ages. After this in the 18th century CE, the 'Age of Enlightenment' is described where cultures and figures with diverse interests and perspectives placed reason as the authority and source of legitimacy. After this age the Industrial Revolution (mid 18th to mid-19th century CE) influenced by figures such as Richard Cantillon and Adam Smith organising political economy from the scattered writings of the Mercantilists.

Parallel to this in the 17th century were the enclosures of commons where traditionally people drew what they needed from the land to live. In England figures such as Gerrard Winstanley were involved in protesting the revoking of the tacit rights to farm and forage in certain tracts of land in movements known as the Diggers and True Levellers. Later, in Scotland first the Lowland Clearances (1760-1830 CE) saw people slowly and consistently displaced from their common subsistence arrangements on land making way for early super farms of sheep and cattle; this preceded the more well-known Highland Clearances (mid 18th to 19th centuries CE) which took place in a more sudden and violent fashion. The effect this had on the population was that urban centres became populated by those uprooted from their traditional plots and connection with the land thus filling the mills and factories with labour forces which had arisen with the advent of various technological advances in materials and energy such as steam power.

The point illustrated here is the dispossession of people from their means of living on the land as the physical commons. A class of dispossessed people emerged who were then malleable due their subsistence needs and thus served as workforces for merchants up and down the country, often in the most dire and exploitative conditions. Those who had the resources of finance and capital could buy the land and continue the feudal legacy under the guise of Mercantilism. Those who had finance had one set of opportunities, those who did not had a different set often articulated as those who own the property and those who paid rent to them by serving a function. Following the industrial revolution came the period loosely referred to as Modern History taking us from the 19th century CE through to what gets described as the postmodern period (mid-20th century onwards).

In his landmark work 'The Civilizing Process', Elias (1982) articulates a perspective on the above history which focuses on changes in how labour was divided over a long period as structural changes to the habitat of human populations affect their movements. The analysis follows the consolidation of political authority and the capture of physical power through growing monopolies. Such a concentration of resources, agency and wealth throughout the ages is documented by Piketty (2014) in his work 'Capital in the Twenty-First Century' which brings together data covering three centuries and from more than twenty countries representing one of the largest economic studies done to date. The thesis is that inequality is a feature of the system of capital accumulation which structures our world.

In our current position in history, the term of a 'post-industrial urbanized world' describes the reality that nearly every aspect of our lives is locked up with the workings of the urban landscape. I concur with Rockström and colleagues (2009), that the physical world and its commons have found their bounded nature, both in the possessed ownership of the rentier classes but also in terms of the planetary boundaries of the resources and ecosystem upon which we depend as a species.

To live now must necessarily be through co-existence in a society of individuals, states, organisations and institutions. In this scheme of affairs, we need to engender a cognitive society; one in which every individual is a participant in knowledge production and meaning making, as well as co-producing a civilization which is sustainable with the means available to us and co-owning the problems our species has collectively brought about. This paper puts forward the economic thesis that through the concentration of wealth in the form of finance, investments – particularly via the abstract vehicle of the stockmarket system – have exhausted the 'high growth' in traditional markets of physical goods and services. In the abstract world of finance there is the drive to ever seek out new markets and mediums to invest in and thereby to extract profit from. Glattfelder (2010) documents the emergence of an “economic super entity” largely in the agglomeration of investment banks. Another paper sets out an analysis of how patterns of investment have moved in on the institution of education as an investment medium through the production of scarcity (Dunedin, 2017). It is this production of scarcity which has the effect of displacing people from the knowledge and skills which are an innate part of their being via a process I call “unvaluing”.

Traditionally the formulation of the concept of Human Capital in political economy values the stock of skills and knowledge that the individual possesses as their own (Goldin, 2016). Education, training and health are commonly subject headings under the study of human capital. Importantly, in the context of human capital, Schultz (1961) stated that free people were not to be equated with property and marketable assets as it carried the implication of slavery.

Despite this recognition by some economists of the moral hazard in regarding the knowledge and skills inherent in the individual – the human capital of which the individual is sovereign - as a market opportunity, the financial world has moved in to enclose the lifeworlds of people through various means. Education along with other public goods are being repositioned in the cultural context in terms of consumption, consumers, brands, and products (Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion, 2011) – all of which illustrate the superimposition of market values on intellectual commons that represent essential elements of the human psychological and social habitats.

I have attempted above to layout the mechanisms by which inequality of access/distribution of resources gives rise to the conditions for classes to emerge on the basis of accumulation of wealth thereby coalescing the conditions on which processes of dehumanisation can thrive and offering an account for the repeated reproduction of educational – and associated social and economic – exclusion. I suggest in my interpretive narrative that there are behaviours of appropriation and accumulation which are repeated, and which have a bearing on how we can read today's macro-social picture in which we find ourselves operating.

5. Education and Pedagogy as a Project of Social Justice

The next section examines how we can read the relationships we encounter in pedagogy and explore education in terms of a project of social justice which stands in contrast to its reduction to a product, the student as a consumer, and society/the lives of people as a marketplace. I will be drawing a line of reasoning bringing together the psychology of dehumanisation discussed in the first section with the cultural setting of the artificial production of scarcity we find sketched in the economic picture of the second section, where resources are concentrated into a small group of privileged individuals.

First, I examine the notion of pedagogy. The word derives from the Latin 'pais, paid' meaning ‘boy’ conjugated with the Greek 'agōgos' meaning to ‘guide’; thus, a pedagogue is someone who acts to guide a child. The roots of “educate” derive from the Latin verb 'educare' meaning to 'draw out' or 'lead out'. So, the pedagogy in the activity of education manifests as someone acting as a support and guide to an individual helping to draw out the capabilities inherent in their being.

This notion found in the language speaks of education in terms of a nurturing which we might immediately associate with a parent. The linguistic roots of 'parent' have the Proto Indo-European root 'pere' meaning "to produce, bring forth". Thus, there are resonances between the root meanings at the heart of these words.

The meanings ingrained in the words have continuity with a theme previously developed to give an account of what education means in terms of an institution (Dunedin, 2014). This work draws upon Umberto Eco's analysis of key elementary cultural phenomena where he describes ‘Kinship relations as the primary nucleus of institutionalised social relations’ (Eco, 1997). This provides a conceptual framework to examine the relationships which constitute the social phenomena of education and pedagogy as well as other public goods.

Various institutions describe themselves as 'corporate parents' across the United Kingdom. In Scotland legislation has named central government, local authorities, police, health boards, qualifications association, universities, colleges, prison services, and legal services all as corporate parents (Scottish Government, 2015). Similarly, this framing happens in England (Cockett, 2016), Northern Ireland (Access All Areas (NI) (2017), and Wales (Llywodraeth Cymru, Welsh Government, 2009). This forces us to analyse what kind of parent each corporate parent is? At first when notionalising the parent and family, the idealised myth fills our vision. In the soft glow of the notion of the family we stand in the projection of ideals and images; just as commonly happens with individuals and organisations, the best is put forward – the image 'we' would most like to be identified with is conjured; a fiction assembled from aspects designed to achieve a particular response.

In the same way that homo sapiens dress and grooms themselves in social interactions, a corporacy has a whole apparatus designed to project the idealised self, whilst hiding, detracting from and disguising unattractive aspects which it does not want to draw attention

to. Put in the converse, in the same way that corporate myths are conjured, so are myths of the parent and family. They are lionised and act as a medium upon which a charter for action is writ.

These myths which shape our actions individually and collectively take on a certain character ‘once we have realized that myth serves principally to establish a sociological charter, or a retrospective moral pattern of behaviour’ (Malinowski, p. 120-21). We must break down the myth of the family as categorically benevolent as it is not uncommon for families to be the most destructive, manipulative and devastating forces in individuals’ lives (Forbes, 2007).

The parent and family have become spoken about in ways that warn of a heresy – too sacred to critique. To understand how behaviour can pan out in an educational context, we can look to the lessons which have been learned from the field of natural history. Behaviours emerge from certain circumstances which do not map onto the idealised notions of parents, families and educational institutions that are projected and which we are so familiar with. 'A poverty of resources is the direct antecedent of child abuse and infanticide in both animals and humans. Limited supply and excess demand animate conflict' states Forbes in his book, 'A Natural History of Families' (2007, p. 198). This provides us with understanding as to what happens to a population’s behaviour when artificial poverties are imposed on some via dispossessive economies. Via the field of natural history, we can articulate our grasp of what happens when habitat and resources are withdrawn from a social creature (homo sapiens); sibling turns on sibling, parents can ignore and abandon children, and they can pit their offspring against each other. Ingroups and outgroups are formed according to available resources and identities are significantly forged around them.

It is with this backdrop that I suggest education is necessarily a project of social justice in the same manner that a representative and democratic state is. To recap, capital accumulation results in the creation of classes – haves and have nots, which form the basis of ingroups and outgroups. In the current UK context, we face an economy which dispossesses people of their inherent wealth of knowledge and capabilities should they not have the relevant signals to show they are a part of the ingroup culture. Thus, the circumstances for dehumanisation of outgroups are set up. The poor and marginalised become misidentified and misrepresented through both the effects of ingroup infrahumanisation and outgroup

dehumanisation, and via processes of dementalisation are structured out of opportunities otherwise available and recognized as fundamental rights to all people.

Take the example used by Waytz, Schroeder and Epley (2014); the lieutenant governor of South Carolina, Andre Bauer, in 2010 whilst speaking about government assistance, argues that the poor should not be given food assistance because 'they will reproduce, especially the ones that don't think too much further than that... They don't know any better'. Bauer's statement has implicit in it that the poor have a relatively diminished capacity for foresight to think carefully about the consequences of their actions; it implies that the poor have lesser minds.

In the Higher Education context, Archer, Hutchings, Leathwood and Ross (2005) examine how working class groups which are socially excluded from higher education, are linked to initiatives to 'raise working class aspirations and attainment' – squarely placing the deficit in those absent from higher education. Archer and colleagues write that the notion of social inclusion as achievable through widened participation in higher education is problematic and that, 'Social exclusion can also appear to reflect a static, homogenized position, ignoring multiple inequalities and relationships, positions and forms of participation' (p.195).

Access to educational opportunity and capabilities is couched in language which is consistently problematic. The discourse of 'barriers', 'access' and 'participation' is largely superficial according to Burke (2012, p. 141) framing the realities which people face in simplistic ways where they only have to 'overcome' or 'lift the barrier' to resolve the issue. She suggests that these ways of representing the issues 'without examining the deeply embedded processes of privileging certain social groups and epistemological perspectives above others that lie beneath those barriers' may be contributing to the long-standing inequalities.

The gates are guarded as to who gets to say what in which realm. As I have discovered in conversations about learning in the context of Ragged University (a free community education project I run); there are paramount issues with recognising knowledge outside of the formal setting of education. Whilst exploring how knowledge created in the community context could be valued, I was told by a senior and well-known Sociologist in administration

from a local university that “You may get some interest from some radical department of the humanities but there is no way that you will get traction in the STEM subjects”.

Similarly, whilst discussing the same question with a group of administrators from the Scottish Qualifications Association, I was told after a conversation about how knowledge might be valued when an individual possesses it and can demonstrate a working knowledge or contribution to a field - “What is in it for us?” It strikes me there is a resonant fiction for these kinds of contexts from Ursula Le Guin's science fiction book, 'The Dispossessed', where, ‘The individual cannot bargain with the State. The State recognizes no coinage but power: and it issues the coins itself’ (LeGuin, 1974, p. 219).

6. Point Counterpoint: A Practical Response

In this paper I have laid out what I see as important factors and understandings relating to class, pedagogy and education. I set out to develop the practical philosophy of the Ragged University project as a response to a disadvantaged position in culture which made it impossible for me, personally, to glean the benefits of formal education which I needed to survive and thrive in my cultural circumstances.

This meant conceiving of and engendering a practice of education that ultimately gave rise to the opportunities I needed as a human being to develop my capabilities; it is through these opportunities that I can then take part in a meaningful existence in relationships with others in my society developing the skills and knowledge which I need to thrive.

I took the view that I needed to embody the education system which I needed to see in the world specifically because the bureaucracy ridden superstructures permeated with financial values did not recognise me (or a large number who are financially impoverished in society). I was not acknowledged as part of the system because I ultimately did not have the finance to register in its scheme of value, thus anything which was to be successful would need to be built from different forms of wealth which were resistant to appropriation by finance.

I and my peer group had/have no money and whatever was to be embodied needed to be developed in such a way such that it could not be co-opted by those who were already

privileged, as commonly occurs. It needed to be a practice of independent means – some room of one's own to think and develop learning through activity in relation with others.

The kernel of the Ragged University was thus formed around the interest and passion which drives people in their own discovery. This I discovered through friendship with people who were intrinsically motivated by what they were doing. Simply put, I found people who loved what they do because the qualities of the activity and subject excited them (whatever it was). It is that connection which gives them endless energy which they invest in their subject because it is pleasure to them. It was also evident that many people are delighted to share insights with others in social ways.

The only learning environments dynamic enough to provide a place suitable for such sharing were informal and reciprocal. As an organiser of a shared curriculum, the goal is the creation of the set of circumstances where a community of people freely meet up and engage with each other on their own terms.

Activities need to be independent of money as finance carries into the group behaviour an economy of exclusion, whereas an economy of knowledge has a generative and inclusive aspect to it. If I have an idea and you have an idea, and we both swap ideas then we both have two ideas; the same cannot be said for money which has a poverty all of its own.

So, events only take place with people and venues which understand the spirit of the project – one which is not financial. This is not to say that it is not generative or reciprocal for those kind hosting spaces; part of the learning is seated in hospitality and as a coordinator of events, finding ways to be reciprocal is part of the educational arc. Rather than symbols of promises (money) we remove the middle man and are directly in relationship with each other as embodiments of value. What I have learned through serving public good where I can is immeasurable and provides a series of exercises in the basic humility which is essential as a learner; I would argue that what we refer to as humanity also comes from the same source.

Being open to what I do not know and setting aside assumptions is another core part of the model of Ragged University. Anyone can do a talk, you just have to love what you do and want to share it with others in a social space. Whoever writes down their speakers' information and gets it back, gets scheduled in the next slot. This way my personal prejudices

and individual biases do not control the content of the curriculum; it is a way of meeting the world in what it presents to you and being open to that discovery.

Serendipity and eclecticism are key aspects of the approach which help avoid becoming bound by habit and assumptions. This also is a mechanism to help step out of one's own prescriptive behaviours that filter the world in self-selecting ways. Being a coordinator is not about presiding over other people and gatekeeping knowledge, but instead learning through being in dialogue with other people who are unlike you.

It is about exercising communication skills, learning through doing, connecting with and understanding your social-cultural-economic world set within the environment and its ecosystems. Coordinating Ragged University is a path of discovery which is uninvolved with curricula vitae – these never get asked for, and indeed, most of the time, only the first name of people is used to connect with thus dispensing of various layers of affectation that can make so many uncomfortable.

It is about manifesting opportunities using available infrastructure and common technology. Coordinating events gives me the opportunity to view the world in a different way; seeing what was around me which I could utilise rather than creating a wish list and seeking out the requisite finance to acquire what I needed.

For me it has become about building and restoring the social habitat and engendering a life which is socially just because it is a more pleasant, enriching and interesting world which warms and humanises us all.

It is about knowing that I am co-owner of a rich shared intellectual legacy which is most often available through dialogue with others, be that in the creation of artefacts, the holding of discussions, or the participation in discourses. Ragged University is a long journey which embodies every aspect of a university through a personal covenant with learning which is shared.

This vignette is designed to show how Ragged University as a pedagogical practice has been crafted to break out of the psychology of ingroups and outgroups; the classes which are accorded to people because of their access to resources and opportunities, and to actively counter the prejudices which arise in psychology that set people into hierarchies of

legitimacy. It is not an alternative to formal education but an extension, an annex to it. It is an educational vision which is rooted in human development that necessarily needs to extend beyond the cultural configuration we live in today.

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