

The shift towards socially constructivist pedagogy which is evidenced in USM's educational approach is in keeping with the change in direction of Malaysian educational public policy. The need to engage and tackle student subjectivity within pedagogy is a critical moment for USM. However, the aims of USM to "encourage multiple views, meanings or understanding of knowledge" (USM 2008, 24) run up against the contemporary problems of Malaysian education. What then are the critical problems? One of the critical areas of contention in Malaysian pedagogical discourse is in the area of how to instruct students (Abtar and Kuldip 2001; Neo and Neo 2002; Lee 2003; Wong et al. 2003; Yap 2004; Hairul Nizam and Alexander 2005; Ng et al. 2005). Critical literature on Malaysian pedagogy points out that the practices of traditional pedagogy and so-called rote learning characterize Malaysian educational institutions and teaching.

Malaysian scholars such as Nirwan Idrus expose the problems of rote learning in the Malaysian context and how it stymies growth and learning (Nirwan 2007). Habsah Hussin (2006) also provides us with interesting discussion of the limitations of questioning techniques in the Malaysian classroom and the connection between this and a rote learning approach. Hairul Nizam and Alexander note the top down instruction that characterizes Malaysian schooling. They argue that, "students in Malaysia are not practiced in engaging in classroom activities that require active one-to-one interaction, let alone having constructive argument among themselves" (Hairul Nizam and Alexander 2005, 68).

Several Malaysian critics such as Ng, Kamariah, Samsilah, Wong Su Lan and Petri Zabariah argue

that, “a great number of Malaysian students are actually passive learners and spoon-fed learners, who rely heavily on rote learning” (Ng et al. 2005). This perception is widespread and popularly held. Following on from the analysis of the likes of Zairon (1998), Habsah (2006), and Effandi and Zanatun (2007), there is a common recognition that Malaysian traditional pedagogics have also been teacher centred (Ramlee and Abu 2001). Effandi Zakaria and Zanatun Iksan point out that:

Two pedagogical limitations have been identified as the major shortcomings in traditional secondary education: lecture-based instruction and teacher-centred instruction. Lecture-based instruction emphasized the passive acquisition of knowledge. In such an environment, students become passive recipients of knowledge and resort to rote learning. The majority of work involved teacher-talk using either a lecture technique or a simple question and answer that demand basic recall of knowledge from the learners.

They continue:

Lecture based instruction dominates classroom activity with the teacher delivering well over 80% of the talk in most classrooms. Generally, only correct answers are accepted by the teacher and incorrect answers are simply ignored. Students seldom ask questions or exchange thought with other students in the class. The traditional classroom is also characterized by directed demonstrations and activities to verify previously introduced concepts. Instruction is therefore not for conceptual understanding but rather for memorizing and recalling of facts (Effandi and Zanatun 2007, 35).

The critique of rote instruction by Malaysian critics is not simply a question of proper technique. This debate is fundamentally a debate over social relations, power, and authority in Malaysian universities and society. The University in a Garden approach by USM is a deep engagement with precisely these tensions. The criticism of rote learning and authoritarian teaching styles is a critique of social relations in the classroom as well as a critique of old-fashioned views on learning. A deeper assessment of the challenges for educational reform and student learning issues reveals a need to interrogate how to achieve the kinds of changes in social interactions that underpin pedagogical change. The importance of student voice and respect in the classroom is now a critical component of progressive educational reform. In practice, this entails shifting pedagogy from top down instruction to a more dialogical approach using collaborative and engaged pedagogies such as group work which empower student voice and cultivate deep and embedded learning. The influence of information technologies, and culture and the 'global information society', all force a re-interrogation of the nature of the social relationship between teacher and student, however, as argued above, this needs to be understood in cultural and ethical context.

If the issue of rote versus dialogical pedagogy is reduced to a problem of 'technique' stripped of its ethical dimension, we may fail to have recourse to the cultural influences that inform how and why teachers teach the way they do. USM runs the risk of reintroducing the dualism criticized by Malaysian scholars in its pedagogy if it introduces an expressivist form of constructivism into its pedagogy without grounding it in a deeper normative and ethical set of commitments. Without understanding the normative

framework within which pedagogical technique is practiced, we may face another form of cargo cult mentality where certain forms of pedagogical technique are objectified as good in all cases in all times and stripped of their value and cultural basis.

Another way of putting this is to note that a debate that reduces pedagogy to simple technique misses the deeper spiritual basis of pedagogical instruction and learning as pedagogy of care (Wan Mohd Nor 2009). The ethical social and spiritual/values dimension of learning speaks to deeper and fuller commitments, and the problems that students and teachers face are not merely the choice of the right 'technique'. The critical sensibility and deeper 'disenchantment' that characterizes Western pedagogy rooted in Cartesian doubt has produced many problems not least of which is an all pervading individualism. Basing pedagogy within a commitment to service and understanding not domination and individualism (Rosnani 2007, 96–97) is captured in USM's approach. USM's policy proclaims:

In the area of teaching and learning, for example, the university will provide and offer various programmes relating to a deeper understanding of 'sustainability' so that the learning accrued by students and staff will compel them to be more involved, committed and dedicated for the sustainable wellness of the institution, community, and global environment. Though many attempts have been successfully carried out in the past, some are still on-going to engage and instill values which will further help to nurture ethically responsible and morally-sound adolescents of the school-going age. Their involvement in tertiary education and campus life will not only prepare them as employees with good corporate responsibility but also to be responsible global citizens with strong national-local commitments (USM 2008, iv).

The best dialogical and socially constructivist pedagogy has been rooted in a strong moral and ethical project, and framework (consider Freire for example) which tempers and restrains ‘hubris’. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas captures the problem to be avoided clearly:

Like a man with no personality, the modern university has no vital *centre*, no permanent underlying principle establishing its final purpose. It still pretends to contemplate the universal and even claims to possess faculties and departments as if it were the body of an organ—but it has no brain, let alone intellect and soul, except only in terms of a purely administrative function of maintenance and physical development. Its development is not guided by a *final* principle and definite purpose, except by the relative principle urging on the pursuit of knowledge incessantly, with no absolute end in view (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas 1985, 147).

The key issue with regards to the binary of rote traditional pedagogy and socially constructivist dialogical pedagogy is that the most important point that is rarely mentioned in discussions over which techniques to choose is how these techniques are positioned within a broader and deeper normative agenda which ensures that the excesses of reform do not constitute a kind of ‘Trojan Horse’ of values that undermine cultural integrity and identity. C.A. Bowers brings our attention to this in his critique of the cultural imperialism that can flow through an uncritical celebration of socially constructivist pedagogy (Bowers 2005).

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas makes a related point in regards to his critique of the way an uncritical

swallowing of Western knowledge forms can undermine and dissipate the values and normative commitments of Malaysian society (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas 1985). The problem of how USM ensures that its uptake of educational reform does not result in a radically westernized 'disenchanted' education and made utterly 'profane' in the context of an uncritical following of so-called 'best practice' or 'world class' pedagogy is a central existential dilemma for the USM project. USM's educational strategy seeks to engage with and overcome these problems. What then are the basic problems with reform to pedagogy and social relations in the university classroom? While pedagogical reform "needs to encourage more critical inquiry and open deliberation" (Rosnani and Charlene Tan 2009, 55), it also needs to be imbued with a sense of "mans purpose for knowing" (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas 1985, 132).

This temperance of the individualistic and destructive forces that are unleashed by a pedagogy based on individualism which engenders self-aggrandizement and profit seeking is in the Malaysian context critically important. USM's pedagogy must be informed by a cultural understanding and approach to the objectives and contextual characteristics of learning that must rework the otherwise 'apparently' universal or objective theories of pedagogical change that are fashionable at the moment. In the case of USM, there is a recognition that, "a creative and innovative blend and mix of teaching and research have to be harnessed in order to move up the ladder of quality and excellence" (Dzulkifli and Ramli 2006, 3).

However, the metaphor of the ladder can be misleading since it can suggest a linear and one

dimensional process of improvement with Western institutions at the top and others further down the rungs. One thing is clear; the normative aims of USM to address the dualism that characterizes Malaysian higher educational pedagogy must begin with an understanding that pedagogy is not simply a technique but rather is more broadly understood as a cultural and normative practice.

TRUST

Fundamentally, the implications of pedagogical reform especially of the reform to teaching practices and classroom pedagogics have implications to the creation or dissipation of patterns of trust between students and teachers. How we trust and recognize students and teachers, defines how we understand teaching, pedagogies, and the relationships of knowledge and power in the classroom and in the university. In other words, how USM's teachers and researchers view and socially construct youth/students, their identities, moral dispositions, and cognitive abilities is critical to the effectiveness of pedagogical technique.

Forms of trust and distrust in the basic normative direction of USM can help to either propel progressive change in pedagogy or undermine it (Meier 2002, 2003). Important research by Robiah Sidin (1993) points out the problems of trust and teaching in traditional classrooms. In the Malaysian context, Fauziah Ahmad, Parilah Mohd Shah, and Samsuddeen Abdul Aziz provide us with an interesting segue into the significance of trust and teaching methods in Malaysia. According to the authors, one of the characteristics of traditional pedagogy is the lack

of trust that is evidenced in the classrooms between teacher and student. According to them:

As a matter of fact, teachers do not trust students when it comes to integrating text. Instead they feel responsible to provide all the details to the students, becoming too engrossed, forgetting that they have a role to create conditions under which learning can best take place.... In a traditional classroom, teachers forget that their teaching method will make students become too dependent on them. They are withholding students' creativity and knowledge... (Fauziah, Parilah, and Samsuddeen 2005).

Anthony Bryk and Barbara Schneider also draw our attention to trust in educational institutions with. According to Bryk and Schneider, trust is a critical and ongoing necessity in successful education. Bryk goes one step further and suggests that trust between teacher and student, and between teachers and administrators rather than strict pedagogical knowledge is the critical determinant of educational success in schools and educational institutions generally (Bryk and Schneider 2002; Bryk 1988). Trust must form the basis of teacher relations, teacher-student relations, and teacher-community relations. A failure to understand this is a failure to understand the essential social capital that underpins the successful articulation of the necessary human capital pursued through pedagogic instruction (Bryk and Schneider 2002; Bryk 1988). What is the road to trust in The University in a Garden?

The road to trust appears to be strongly connected to the pursuit of a commonly held normative project. The extent to which "respect humility and intelligent trust" (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas 1985, 101) inform the pedagogy practiced at USM is the extent

to which USM can overcome dualism and address the imbalance of contemporary educational practice. USM's educational mission aims at reasserting the centrality of the values and normative commitments of university culture. The spiritual and redemptive aspect of knowledge is taken seriously and substantively engaged through the value of sustainability. In this way, USM can hope to bind students and teachers to a strong ethical project that builds commonality and trust between members of the university community.

For example, trust in education and in the classroom can be reinforced by shifting focus away from summative to formative forms of assessment which draw our attention to the processes of learning. Formative assessment of students as they learn enables both students and teachers to adjust and recalibrate teaching and learning as it is happening. This kind of assessment allows teachers to adapt and respond to student learning in ways which can ensure that a constant grounding in the normative aims of teaching is constantly reinforced. Student involvement in formative assessment is also critical for building forms of trust and interaction which can generate deep or embedded learning. Such involvement if monitored and framed properly by the teacher can both stimulate motivation as well as provide a practical vehicle for the enactment of substantive normative interactions. Provision of descriptive feedback during the process of learning also builds forms of trust and respect between students, and students and teachers (Butler and Winnie 1995; Sadler 1998; Black et al. 2003).

The way USM takes up reform, the language it uses, and the deep and embedded cultural values that inform it must be made explicit and understood.

The buy-in by teachers and students to this clearly posited project builds community and bonds of trust and ownership. This buy-in is critical in part because of our new understandings of learning theory and effective teaching.

The change in social epistemologies and the effect this has on teaching such as the recognition of multiple intelligences, and the way recognition of diverse ways of knowing and learning can unleash creativity is a critical issue for teaching. The reason that this is important is because it makes teachers realize that there is not only one way of knowing, and only one way of teaching. The rise of transdisciplinary modes of teaching and the breakdown of traditional authority patterns are all changing how we view the practices of education. However, if this shift in how authority is manifested is experienced within an individualistic value set that is not ethically informed then again the dualism that characterizes an education that does not educate the whole person is experienced. The aims of the student become 'relative' (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas 1985, 147) and the core interest to which students assert their effort becomes their own personal interest.

The development of human competencies in social constructivist communication is not simply skills or techniques that can be sequestered from our consciousness as if merely practices reserved for the workplace. These competencies also are articulations of forms of subjectivity that are challenges to traditional forms of authority and the normative ideologies and values that underpin them. In this sense, this form of pedagogy must be re-interrogated ethically and reworked to suit the aims of USM. The captivity of mind that characterizes purely

individualized learning undercuts the social values of recognition (Taylor and Gutmann 1992; Gutmann and Taylor 1994), respect, and cultural value realized through proper and balanced social constructivist pedagogy. The captive mind instils implicitly through processes of ideological articulation and hegemony a form of subordination. It is a mind that is disconnected from the ethics and cultural values of the host society and accepts as universally valid cultural values that are in fact specific forms of domination of neo-liberal westernization. Such an education leads inexorably to distrust, individually gratuitous competition, and a breakdown of social solidarity. This is what USM's approach is seeking to overcome. The next important binary that this monograph seeks to investigate and discuss is the binary between creativity and sustainability; it is to this that we now turn.

CRITICS OF THE SUSTAINABILITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CREATIVITY

The recent awarding of APEX status to the USM was in part due to its articulation of an educational agenda that combined commitments to pedagogical reform and a move away from top down pedagogic as well as a commitment to sustainability as well as creativity (Dzulkifli 2006; Shafie 2006; Zakri 2006). Changing higher educational pedagogical practice, and engaging sustainability and creativity are necessary parts of a successful knowledge economy and of a culturally defensible society. Yet the apparent simplicity and clarity of the aims belies the complex social, economic, political, and cultural analysis that informs the APEX agenda. This is important because the way pedagogy is framed in USM (which is the subject of this monograph) relies in large measure on

the broader need to balance creativity and progressive socially constructivist pedagogy and innovation with culturally sustained values.

Motives for creativity according to Jerome Ravetz have usually been related to ideas of pursuing knowledge for its own sake, obtaining power over things, people or nations, and profit. These kinds of institutionalized motivations characterize much knowledge production in the West. They cohere with the dominant values of possessive individualism (Macpherson 1962, 1987; Bellah 1985) that characterize neo-liberal hegemony in the contemporary era (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 2000; Etzkowitz and Zhou 2006). They are the critical kinds of motivations that characterize creative scientific advancement in much of what we refer to as the modern world. Within the neo-liberal hegemony, such motivations appear natural: curiosity power and profit.

Philosophically, the underlying idea that informs the creativity as understood through the radically secularized and individualistic paradigm is deeply imbued with doubt and a kind of tense restlessness born of 'disenchantment'. It acts to inspire creativity but with no real aim other than self-advancement (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas 1985, 128–129). Such creativity rooted in Eurocentric understandings of knowledge, "produces the insatiable desire to seek and to embark on a perpetual journey of discoveries" (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas 1985, 129) yet at the same time the individualism and rootless nature of inquiry in such a world view leads to a "loss of the capacity for discernment of the right and proper places of things" (Syed Hussein Alatas 1980, 34).

Indeed for defenders of neo-liberalism, the connection of creativity to the 'dynamism' and 'progress' that characterize consumer consciousness, competition, and the profit motive is of central importance. Sustainability or any other normative framework in such a paradigm is a break on exploiting the natural world and constant change. To fully grasp the theoretical issues at stake, in understanding the way USM can pursue a philosophy of sustainability and a pedagogy that is aimed at encouraging creativity, we must take a step back and engage the neo-liberal criticism of sustainability/creativity discourse. The specific leadership provided by USM in its educational direction has been historically animated by quite a different ethos (Ongkili 1985; Molly Lee 2004; Ministry of Higher Education 2007; Faizah and Lucia Quek 2007; Segawa 2007).

This ethos which is values driven seeks to ground creativity in forms of social responsibility and engagement which is both attuned to the need to frame pedagogy normatively but also attuned to the way students learn and grow in a communalistic communitarian culture. Rooted in a alternative view of student motivation and learning that foregrounds cooperation and social responsibility, USM's approach to creativity recognizes the way that deep learning is socially interactive, socially contextualized, and always tempered by ethical responsibility (Komalasari 2009). However, to understand what USM is striving for it is necessary to grasp philosophically what is opposing it.

We must understand how neo-liberalism curtails and inhibits a deeper understanding of the possibilities of sustainability and a creative learning philosophy that is not reducible to individualistic values. The

educational project of USM finds itself contending with a deep hegemonic notion of the basic possibilities of humankind, derived in large measure from the global authority and hegemony that neo-liberalism (Macpherson 1987) has over our concepts not simply of learning teaching and culture but of basic psychological identity itself. The following discussion provides an insight into what USM has to contend with philosophically in its social pedagogy of transformation and sustainability.

THE CHALLENGE OF NEO-LIBERALISM TO USM'S CREATIVE PEDAGOGY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Creativity in neo-liberal theory is linked to individual inspiration, reward, and 'creative destruction', which lies at the root of capitalist development and growth. According to critics of sustainability, one of the key results of pursuing sustainability is a curtailment of creativity and innovation: a stymieing of progress. Any philosophy that inhibits the possessive individualistic behaviours that are the root of capitalist development leads to a curtailment of creativity. Simply put, the essential argument is that neo-liberal values are the drivers of creativity and that sustainability as a doctrine is at odds with creativity and progress. This fundamental argument has to be squared up to in debates over sustainability, creativity, and the interrelationship between pedagogy and normative values in a society. 'If' this neo-liberal thesis is correct then the educational values that USM must pursue to encourage creativity are individualistic, possessive, consumption oriented, and rights oriented. The following discussion shall investigate two popular articulations of neo-liberal ideology concerning creativity and sustainability and then proceed to

engage the classical intellectual foundations behind these popularizations.

Standing behind this kind of critique of sustainability and its so-called authoritarian curtailment of growth, development and innovation lays the foundational works of Fredrick Hayek and Joseph Schumpeter. These thinkers provide a far more serious and challenging philosophical basis for the defence of neo-liberal hegemony. Hayek argues that, “the unavoidable imperfection of man’s knowledge and the consequent need for a process by which knowledge is constantly communicated and acquired” (Hayek 1945) is a fundamental fact with regard to the nature of knowledge and our relationship to it. Hayek proposed a subjective theory of value and framed this within a commitment to methodological individualism. This approach to knowledge and its correlation with individualism as a primary value provides the philosophical basis for a radically individualistic and contingent theory of knowledge. As Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas sagaciously argues the ‘inquiring spirit’ of Western thought which is captured in Hayek’s theory of knowledge, is “generated in a state of inner doubt and inner tension” (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas 1985, 129).

The second theorist whose work is even more obviously at the root of neo-liberal theories of creativity and progress is Joseph Schumpeter. Schumpeter’s work is usually cited more frequently with regard to creativity innovation and the market. According to Schumpeter, “The fundamental impulse that sets and keeps the capitalist engine in motion comes from the new consumers’ goods, the new methods of production or transportation, the new markets, the new forms of industrial organization that capitalist

enterprise creates” (Schumpeter 1962). According to Schumpeter, a process of incessant revolution within capitalism is a process of “incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one” (Schumpeter 1962). What’s more, “This process of Creative Destruction is the essential fact about capitalism. It is what capitalism consists in and what every capitalist concern has got to live in” (Schumpeter 1962).

The key point here concerning innovation and creativity in the discussion above is firstly, that it is explicitly linked to capitalism and individualism as an inherent cultural logic and secondly, that it is of necessity ‘creatively destructive’, which is to say that it is counter to the maintenance of the status quo. What then are the key characteristics of the neo-liberal position on sustainability and creativity? Firstly, creativity is formed through radical individual self-expression and pursuit of power, profit, and knowledge for its own sake. It is creatively destructive. Creativity is based upon the primacy of the individual over the social. Secondly, sustainability is characterized as authoritarian, conservative, and relentlessly inhibiting creativity. Sustainability and creativity are thus fundamentally in tension. Indeed according to the neo-liberal view, all normative philosophies that seek to temper human desire are limiting and hence impediments on what neo-liberalism views as human progress.

This view of progress and development which has pedagogical implications is tied to a notion that understanding is always a process of becoming, of doubt driven change which accepts no temperance or limitation (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas 1992, 36). In this view, creativity is never subordinated or informed by a higher principle or commitment.

Educationally, this has consequences. If creativity is purely individualistic and untrammelled by ethical contingency or moral purpose, then our teaching must seek to develop this regardless of where it leads. Such an approach to teaching and learning if accepted by USM would run counter to USM's stated aims of embedding cognitive growth and development in moral purpose.

Two contemporary examples of the neo-liberal way of framing the relationship between sustainability and creativity are found in the work of Virginia Postrel in *The Future and Its Enemies* (Postrel 1998) and Austin Williams in *The Enemies of Progress* (Williams 2008). Postrel and Williams provide us with a clear critique of sustainability and its presumed dragging effect on human creativity. First, according to Williams, "Sustainability is an insidiously dangerous concept at odds with progress" (Williams 2008) and "a pernicious and corrosive doctrine that has survived primarily because there seems to be no alternative to its canon" (Williams 2008).

Williams argues that creativity and innovation itself are stymied and deadened by the doctrine of sustainability. Sustainability according to this point of view is deadening enterprise, and curtailing inspiration and ambition. According to Williams, "[w]hat does ambition mean if we allow humanity to be represented as the biggest problem on the planet, rather than as creators of a better future...? If our ambition is to put nature first, humans come second" (Williams 2008). For Williams, sustainability is a doctrine of moribund and conservative antidevelopment. It curtails creativity because it inhibits ambition and inspiration. Innovation and creativity are according to Williams linked to our

personal ambition. Such is the way neo-liberal ethics connects to creativity and progress. Pedagogically, this kind of neo-liberal view means that a student's self-interest and the pursuit of self-interest must be the key driver in the classroom.

The individualistic bias in neo-liberal pedagogy entails a view that students enter educational institutions and sacrifice some liberty for security and the possibility of advancement, but the basic aim of education is for the student to realize their individual abilities. The full expression of individual capacity is the fundamental justification of such an educational philosophy. Social responsibilities in such a philosophy are always constraints at best tolerated for safety or pragmatic pedagogical considerations. Pedagogy based upon this kind of philosophy is ego centred and individualistic. This kind of view of creativity and its correlation with an egocentric educational teaching and learning agenda is fundamentally at odds with the USM approach which takes seriously the "spiritual, social, physical, emotional, mental and environmental aspects" of learning (Mohamed Izham 2005, 9).

The second theorist who is also hostile to the fundamental aims which animate USM is Virginia Postrel. Postrel develops a similar thesis to Williams in *The Future and Its Enemies*. She argues that in our actions, there is a fundamental conflict between 'dynamism' and 'stasis'. Dynamists are characterized by their commitment to dynamic growth and change. Dynamic institutions, "let people develop, extend, and act on their particular knowledge without asking permission of a higher, but less informed, authority" (Postrel 1998). On the other hand, stasis institutions and ideologies are characterized by two basic trends.

Firstly, by technocrats and technocratic ideology which is future oriented “as long as they control it” and secondly, by reactionaries who “seek to reverse change, restoring the literal or imagined past and holding it in place” (Postrel 1998). Postrel’s critique of what she refers to as stasis meshes with fears over sustainability. Articulating sustainability as a kind of authoritarian desire masked as ethical concern is a key critique for those who oppose both sustainability and seek to drive a wedge between it and innovation and creativity. Postrel and Williams, and the school of thought they represent and articulate see sustainability and concerns over consumer culture as efforts to reintroduce stability, prediction, and control to human life and thus curtail development and the spirit of progress. Postrel (1998) writes:

In the end, the debate between dynamism and stasis is a dispute over how civilizations learn, and whether they should. It is a struggle between those who believe they already know ‘the limit of human felicity’, and those who trust the pursuit of happiness to go in many different, and many unexpected, directions. And it is a conflict between those who believe culture is too dangerous to be left alone and those who believe it is too precious to be controlled.

In the example of USM, a critique based upon a neo-liberal ideology would view the desire to socially ground USM’s pedagogy in a commitment to sustainability, ethical concerns, and mutual respect as a form of implicit authoritarianism masked as progressive pedagogy. Seen from these neo-liberal perspective ideas of sustainability if caricatured as desires to seek certainty and maintain the status quo are fundamentally at odds with how knowledge is actually created and processed. Both Postrel and

Williams' viewpoint resonates with the values of neo-liberal hegemony. Educationally, their approach affords support to the romantic individualistic and expressivist school of pedagogy (Bartholomae 1985; Berlin 1988; Fishman and McCarthy 1992; Fareld 2007) which lends support to economic neo-liberalism. The radically individualistic ethics of their positions and the way this is fused with expressive creativity and individual expression fails to account for the aspirations of those left behind. Their positions analyse what they see as the authoritarian pessimism of sustainability theory by performing an act of philosophical reductionism and articulating the choices we face within a simple binary that is both misleading and representative of the underpinning logic of neo-liberal possessive individualism (Dator 1998).

If "neo-liberalism dissolve[s] public issues into utterly privatized and individualistic concerns" (Giroux 2004, 78), then liberal pedagogy also tends towards an individualistic expressivist view of learning that fails to grasp the importance of the social inter-subjectively ethical nature of learning. Liberal individualistic capacities of human beings in neo-liberal theory are established without recourse to their social communal, cultural, and institutional basis which are themselves products of 'social' purpose (Elias 2002). This reification of the individual as consumer at the expense of sociality is the critical philosophical move of neo-liberal individualism and the foundation of its approach to creativity and its critique of sustainability. However, the practices of higher educational institutions are not simply

competitive and individualistic; they are forms of 'cultural politics'. They represent "forms of social life" and privilege "forms of knowledge that support a specific vision of past, present and future" (Giroux and McLaren 1991, 153).

CRITIQUE: BREAKING THE GORDIAN KNOT

How then, do we engage the issue of creativity and sustainability when neo-liberal hegemony constructs the relationship in such pejorative, simplistic, and self-serving terms? This is a critical question for the USM project. To answer this question, we need to socially critique the neo-liberal concept of knowledge production as methodologically individualist, radically subjective, and creatively destructive. The first point of critique of the radically individualist notion of creativity is that, it fails to take into account the fact that individual achievement that neo-liberal theorists espouse and celebrate rest on communal presuppositions, which are necessary for individual achievement to occur.

In the Malaysian case and the case of USM, the underlying social values of respect, community engagement, and mutuality which are the hallmarks of a communitarian culture are the preconditions for individual achievement. USM's philosophy specifically recognizes, "the new needs of the community" and the individuals within USM "both economically, socially and culturally" (USM 2008, 10). In other words, the value set of USM recognizes individuals as social and cultural beings and not simply as separated or atomistic subjects. Without this fundamental recognition, the radical individualistic ethic that informs neo-liberalism leads to chaos and social breakdown.

In other words, the radically individualist ideas of individual achievement and creativity that are espoused by neo-liberal theorists and the way realization of these are articulated as untrammelled, limited, or inhibited by social or communal values fundamentally misstates and the way cultural, institutional, and communal values do in fact inform structure and generate the creative individual. There are plenty of examples of creativity occurring without having to express itself neo-liberally, as possessively individualistic or as profit and power driven. The pecuniary incentive 'is not a necessary or sufficient' condition for creativity.

If we accept the neo-liberal characterization of the relationship between creativity and individual expression, and possessive individualism as well as the corollary with constant creative destructive change, then it is indeed hard to see how sustainability can cohere with creativity. It is in other words difficult to see how USM's commitment to social values, cultural respect, and a socially responsible commitment to sustainability can cohere with the educational objectives of developing creativity and innovation if these values are based upon an individualistic, selfish, and me-oriented pedagogical philosophy. The individualistic cognitive theories that at root sustain the neo-liberal agenda in education are at odds with the culturally informed notions of social cognition at root in USM's approach to learning.

Indeed, the ethics of a sustainable society committed to social values, inter-subjective respect, and recognition as well as cultural understanding run up hard against a philosophy of individualism, profit, personal power, and self-expression at the expense of social responsibilities loyalties and shared values.

How then do we break the Gordian knot created by neo-liberalism? This fundamental problem animates the strategic direction of USM's APEX strategy since it is fundamentally engaged in a programme of sustainability and engaging and developing creativity and innovation. The key issue is the temperance of ambition by responsibility, profit by restraint, and the rights of individual advancement by social duty. To do this requires a pedagogical theory that is aware of the social basis of cognition, the role that inter-subjective values have in learning, and the salient significance of culture to educational outcomes. Above all, we need a pedagogy that understands the centrality of a normative basis for education.

CREATIVITY AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Creativity is constructed and realized within certain organizational and cultural orders and constructs, schools, universities, and families' national and local cultures, etc. As argued above, creativity itself either can be representative of individualistic values or informed by social purpose. Pedagogical and research values within a university will have a significant effect on this issue. This binary within creativity is characterized as a tension between creativity, which is taught as individual self-expression, and creativity which involves dialogical engagement with social values and concrete social problems. Teaching and engaging creativity and innovation can be addressed from two essential paradigms: the individualistic/romantic expressivist paradigm, which meshes easily into contemporary neo-liberalism, or a socially dialogical and reflexive paradigm that recognizes that creativity is a social product aimed at solving and engaging agreed upon social problems. According

to Peters, the first model of creativity is a 'highly individualistic', which posits Schumpeter's 'hero-entrepreneur' as its crowning glory. The second model is 'relational and social', it rests on 'principles of distributed knowledge and collective intelligence'. This kind of model "surfaces in related ideas of 'social capital', [and] 'situated learning'" (Peters 2009).

These two models of creativity provide us with quite different ways to envision creativity and different ways to correlate creativity and innovation with broader cultural, social, and economic theory. The first tradition coheres with the expressivist tradition and the romantic tradition of progressivism. It also finds itself easily meshed with the individualistic notions of neo-liberalism. The second tradition is more socially oriented and finds support in the social constructivist tradition (Slezak 2000). USM's commitment to sustainable values, socially informed ethics, and community values rests on engaging creativity relationally and socially. Tim Rudd, Dan Sutch and Keri Facer argue:

Educational and social research is increasingly making a case for a new understanding of learning processes that acknowledges their often networked, collaborative and connected properties. For example, the importance of the social and cultural 'situatedness' of learning and the power of collaboration and communication in developing meaningful experiences are recognized by many psychologists and researchers. Such researchers argue that connection and collaboration play important and complex roles in learning processes and knowledge acquisition (Rudd, Sutch, and Facer 2006, 4).

This rethinking of creativity is not simply a property of individuals but of social groups and their relations and problems (Tharp and Gallimore 1988; Scardamalia 2002) enables us to understand the way institutions such as USM seek to reconnect creativity back to defensible and socially just values. Hence, this re-theorization of non-individually possessive pedagogy frames creativity in a more socially ensconced manner and provides the bridge, through a community of practice (Wenger 1998), between sustainability and creativity that is the critical issue for the USM APEX strategy. Critical creativity theorists, such as Kobus Neethling for example, argues against 20th century understandings of creativity rooted in neo-liberal self-centredness and profit at the expense of environmental degradation, inequality, and compassion (Neethling 2002).

Swede (1993) argues that creativity is not simply a characteristic of a person (individualistic expressive creativity) but rather is a process (socially interactive dialogical). Such a rearticulation of creativity away from its presumed home as a characteristic of individuals and understood more by reference to the values and social processes within which it occurs is philosophically significant (Reid and Petocz 2004). One way of simplifying the discussion above is to remind ourselves that “creativity is not a stable idea but one that is constituted differently within different domains” (Reid and Petocz 2004).

The critical point at issue with the APEX strategy is to establish a way of breaking down the presumed identity between neo-liberal values and creativity and the presumed identity between the psychology of possessive individualism, personal ambition, destruction, and creativity. In other words, how does

USM inculcate in its culture of creative excellence an ethics of sustainable responsibility? Part of any educational approach to this issue requires a rigorous interrogation of learning theory, assessment theory, and practices of teaching. Learning theory needs to take on board social cognition theory and the positive support for learning spaces as a way to encourage deep learning for students and teachers alike (Kolb and Kolb 2005). The 'experience' of learning must be consciously thought through and process of dialogue, interaction, collaboration introduced at all levels of student learning. John Dewey captures the issue clearly when he argues that, "the central problem of an education based on experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences" (Dewey 1938, 28). Creativity is a form of social practice. It involves social capital and draws on cultural traditions. Understood in this way, creative practices within a university are forms of social interaction and expressions of cultural values.

We need an approach to understanding educational creativity that draws upon and recognizes cultural and social context and on the other hand, recognizes economic and structural change. How we view the practices of creativity are bound both by cultural and historical specifics and yet also by broader forces of social and economic change. Recent scholarship on how creativity is articulated in diverse cultures and diverse disciplines and social relationships points to the need to engage a theory of creativity that is not simply a kind of reification of Western cultural practices (Sternberg and Grigorenko 2004).

Getting the balance right in how we view educational reform and how we place ourselves in relation to

educational doctrines is the task. The USM APEX strategy is a complex effort at trying to 'get the balance right'. Understanding how individualistic and expressivist pedagogy can inculcate possessively individualistic values in students (masked as pursuit of creative genius) and how in an unequal global order this can lead to a disempowerment and educational disadvantage is reasonably clear. Brain drain, the pursuit of profit for its own sake, and cultural self-hatred can result from pedagogies that do not temper creativity and innovation with social values and commitments. The aims of USM cannot be achieved when students see their own values as deficit against an individualistic consumerist culture that rewards excellence at the expense of community values, greed at the expense of social justice, and ambition at the expense of social responsibility.

Put simply the USM agenda seeks to mesh sustainability and creativity to produce and inculcate resilient students with a moral compass, a 'vital centre'. This agenda critically informs the USM approach to both sustainability and pedagogical reform. The aim of USM is to produce resilient students who are morally informed, socially aware, creative, innovative, and able to both stand up for their culture and values as well as engage the broader world. Consider for example the following quotation from the Vice Chancellor of USM, Dzulkifli Abdul Razak:

A university worthy of its name should be engaged in protecting and defending as well as promoting humanity to higher ideals. We want our graduates to not only contribute to national and global developments but to become agents of change – in a sustainable way (Dzulkifli 2006).

Continuing in the same vein, the vice-chancellor argues that a students “involvement in tertiary education and campus life will not only prepare them as employees with good corporate responsibility but also to be responsible global citizens with strong national-local commitments” (USM 2008). The critical idea is that the products of USM are committed to socially responsible values but also able to adapt to change. An individualistic society based on consumerism and ambition without temperance by social responsibility may reward ‘creativity’ in its educational system without recourse to its social value. However, USM is committed to addressing real and lived issues that affect the Malaysian people. Its commitment to creativity and innovation must be understood within this framework.

USM’s pedagogical agenda also seeks to avoid the intellectual and normative imperialism that stifles creativity (Syed Hussein Alatas 1974, 1975). Intellectual imperialism, which involves the uncritical acceptance of concepts and ideas from the imperial centre, without localization, without attenuating it to local needs of considering local cultural context leads to subservience and ethical and social confusion. It leads to captivity of the mind and ultimately second rate status. The lack of recognition and dignity that attends such an approach to ideas in education is a characteristic of the unequal indeed asymmetrical inequality that permeates forms of pedagogical theory that are not culturally attenuated and informed. Imitation is not the sign of creativity. In the end, an “APEX University is not about conformity, it’s not about following current trends or following ‘some herd mentality’. Rather APEX is about creating a university in its ‘own mould’” (Najua 2008, 13). In

this sense, the philosophy of USM fits neatly with the insight of Syed Hussein Alatas who wrote:

We should assimilate as much as possible from all sources, from all parts of the world, all useful knowledge. But we need to do this with an independent critical spirit, without turning our backs on our own intellectual heritage. The phenomenon of servility and intellectual bondage are not the same as genuine creative assimilation from abroad (Syed Hussein Alatas 2000).

CONCLUSION THROUGH SOME PRACTICAL STEPS

Practical ways in which USM can engage the agenda of educational reform includes shifting learning to a student-centred approach which focuses on ensuring that students learning are deep and embedded in understandings that are far more engaged than the type of knowledge realized through rote instruction and the recitation of formula or facts. Problem-Based Learning which is currently practiced in the Health Sciences is an example of this approach (USM 2008, 27). Another reform which can embed the ethical programme into the way knowledge is taught is the Sustainability Development Criteria which entails courses being “required by their professional institutes to incorporate sustainable development into their curriculum” (USM 2008, 28). This is currently exercised in Engineering at USM. Finally reform to assessment strategies away from examinations and summative assessment towards formative assessment can help drive changes to teaching and learning which in turn will positively affect the development of the ‘whole personality’ and develop deeper more embedded knowledge as well as normative commitments. In short, changes

to pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment which are currently underway at USM give practical support to the philosophical arguments made here.

USM's pedagogical agenda seeks to avoid the intellectual imperialism and values degradation that characterizes the way neo-liberalism is assaulting Malaysian culture. USM's agenda is an attempt to avoid captivity of the mind, moral confusion, and ultimately second rate status that characterizes an educational agenda dogged by rote learning, summative exam-oriented pedagogy, and a failure to take seriously the ethical responsibility of higher education. USM's agenda is an effort inspired by an approach rooted in cultural self-respect and recognition of the importance and value that Malaysian ideas and culture can bring to higher educational reform.

Finally, in this monograph, we have attempted to engage the intellectual and normative values which inform the approach to pedagogy by USM. The essential argument of this monograph has been that the educational agenda of USM is an effort to address educational dualism in higher education. This effort is a difficult and challenging path. It requires a close look at pedagogy and our ideas of how we learn and create. The critical arguments in this monograph fall into two essential parts. Firstly, USM's educational agenda must be formed in opposition to educational imperialism and the captivity of mind that characterizes uncritical acceptance of Eurocentric educational ideas without first creatively engaging them and where necessary adapting them to Malaysian conditions. This argument is an argument about dignity and self-respect as a precondition to intellectual work and reform. Secondly, USM's educational agenda must be rooted in a firm ethical

framework which provides direction and support for its changes in pedagogy. This basis in a normative foundation and framework is critical if USM is to escape educational dilemmas.

These two essential arguments have been the drivers behind the critique of pedagogical method, trust, and the issue of creativity in the ethical context of sustainability. The pedagogical methods that are necessary for such a project entail a rigorous engagement with formative forms of assessment practice, collaborative learning, and deep and embedded forms of knowledge acquisition that are encouraged through student dialogue, participation, and mutuality. Approaching the USM project and its commitment to a Malaysian path to higher educational reform in the way outlined above is the critical way that USM can challenge the dominant neo-liberal agenda. Such an approach has its limitations and is often more suggestive than definitive. Nonetheless, the essential philosophical preconditions to pedagogical reform are important to discuss and given the new path USM is creating an engagement with basic ideas is a priority.

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