



Historical and moral consciousness in the light of ethics of dissensus: One approach to handle plurality in education

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ABSTRACT: In the light of current tendencies where the fear of foreigners is increasing in seemingly stably democratic societies. This paper aims to revive the presence of the body as a central condition and experience for human interaction. The body as an inevitable source for conscious/unconscious responses to others helps to understand how various forms of violence such as xenophobia and hate crimes come into expression. The purpose of this contribution is to theoretically explore and empirically exemplify the relationship between *historical consciousness and moral consciousness* as an educational concern by turning to the writings of Ewa Ziarek and her notion of ethics of dissensus. Through the concept of ethics of dissensus she brings a fresh dimension into the discussion of how the relationship between historical and moral consciousness can be understood. She does this by providing concepts and understandings of how (history) education can be approached without overlooking the complicated presence of difference between the past-present-future, between two subjects and between the inner and the outer life. Accordingly, Ziarek's reasoning suggests the need to leave the simplified playing field of 'either-or' and engage in the communicative negotiation that constitutes the fragile middle-ground between two extreme poles in history education.

KEYWORDS: democracy, emancipation, plurality, ethics of dissensus, historical and moral consciousness, teachers' responsibilities.

Introduction

This paper aims to theoretically explore the relationship between *historical consciousness* and *moral consciousness* as an educational concern by turning to the writings of Ewa Ziarek (2001) and her notion of ethics of dissensus. In this paper ethics and morals are used as interconnected entities seeing that moral action is an expression of a specific ethical reasoning (Fox & DeMarco, 2001). Ziarek's understanding of ethics begins by highlighting an absence in ethical theory. According to her, mainstream moral reasoning overlooks how everyday violence such as hate-crimes, xenophobia, exclusion and devaluing of those who are conceived as different, are created due to the fact that people are a) irreducibly different from one and other and are forced to live with that difference, and b) that people's thoughts and actions are unavoidably tinted by irrational expressions that do not fully disappear with knowledge or maturity. The ethics she presents thus takes into account the consequences of people's everyday embodied responses to Others' life situation; and this paper seeks to explore how this particular way of making meaning out of ethics can be linked to historical and moral consciousness and also what it might demand of teachers' responsibilities in education.

The importance of paying regard to history in order to grapple with the present and an elusive future is emphasized from many directions, not the least in research addressing social justice and the desire to contest various kinds of injustice. In the research addressing the experiences

and conditions of people and groups of people it is frequently pointed out that universalism, neutrality and de-contextual approaches to history and morality are insufficient to handle different forms of injustices and accordingly that issues concerning plurality, context, and embodiment are imperative to address (see for instance, Coole, 1993; Cudd, 2006; Fanon, 1963; Lloyd, 1983; Pinar, 2008; Said, 1994). It is argued here that one means in which to oppose the harm of individuals and groups of people is by becoming aware of how present individuals' life conditions are unavoidably entangled in past goings-on and how this awareness opens up possibilities to change the future for the better (Pinar, 2012). Violence towards those who are considered as different from a group's norms has probably existed as long as there have been humans, but it has taken different expressions and has been more or less accepted depending on time and context (see for instance Chenoweth, Lawrence, & Stathis, 2010; Estrada, 2010; Sifton, 2015).

At the end of the Second World War, Europe and other western countries came to an agreement that the large scale brutalities of the two wars needed to be counteracted by creating a democratic system and hence a space in which plurality was considered as an essential dimension vital to protect (Weedon, 1999, chapter 1). This does not mean all democratic nations look the same or that violence in democratic countries is erased. Rather what is stressed here is that democracy as a political system carries with it an ambition to pay regard to pluralism, counteract violence, and secure peace contrary to many other political systems. Approximately half of the earth's population live in democracies (Economist, 2014) and many countries today strive to become democracies (Pharr & Putnam, 2000). After the Second World War, education in Sweden was singled out as one of the most important organs to foster democratic citizens and guarantee that the cruelty of war was to be kept at a distance (SOU, 1948, p. 27). The democratic communities aiming to secure peace and justice that were established after 1945 are however very fragile, seeing that violence is a multifaceted phenomenon that can come into expression in various ways. Rather than adhering to mainstream reasoning claiming that various forms of violence can be categorized and combated isolated from one and other Hamby and Grync (2013) show in their study how violence is created in the flow of life in ways that interconnects various dimensions and levels, such as individual, social, and political. This implies more attentiveness to the consequences in the present where the borders between care and cruelty are so easy to cross (Igra, 2011) and violence takes form through an intersection of various fields such as terrorism and war, everyday racism, hate-speech, violation, and discrimination, and through the consequences of political and economic systems - where some political and economic systems risks harming certain groups of people more than others (e.g. Young, 1990; Žižek, 2008).

Although a majority of the European population remains in favor of democracy, many countries with a long experience of democracy face an increased dissatisfaction with this form of governing today (Dalton, 2004; Hay, 2007; Mair, 2013; Pharr & Putnam, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Stoker, 2010) as well as an upsurge of intolerance and violence towards those who are considered as foreigners (BRÅ, 2014; Fernbrant, 2013). Parallel with these trends various societies are to a higher degree than previous ones are influenced by simplified populist rhetoric based on a binary logic of black and white that risks leading to extreme standpoints of what is right and wrong in ways that overlook nuances in social life (Lukacs, 2005), and universalism due to various conjoined forces such as conservatism and nationalism that share similar characteristics, namely to preserve a single order in ways that oppose plurality (Apple, 2011; Stephen J Ball, 2008). This, without claiming that there are not differences between various advocates of conservatism and nationalism. The moral implications that can be learnt from history constitutes one important responsibility for education to prepare citizens willing to fight for a peaceful future (Karlegård, 1984; Rösen, 2001). Using democracy and the desire to oppose various forms of violence as a foreshadow it becomes of interest to re-examine how moral

consciousness and historical consciousness in education can be understood and developed in ways that does not overlook plurality and embodied reactions.

Drawing on Ewa Ziarek's ethics of dissensus this paper asks how a connection between history and ethics in education can be comprehended that does not overlook the presence of the embodied Other? More precisely: a) How does Ziarek describe an ethics of dissensus in relation to moral and historical consciousness, b) what kind of teacher responsibilities can be drawn from her specific relationship between history and ethics, and c) how does the connection between ethics of dissensus, and dissensus of history described by Ziarek contribute in understanding the relationship between moral and historical consciousness in education?

This paper is divided into three parts: a background, results and a discussion/conclusion. In the background an overview of the concepts moral consciousness and historical consciousness is discussed in relation to the notion of plurality. In the second part of the paper the link between morality and history is examined by highlighting Ewa Ziarek's descriptions of an ethics of dissensus and its bonds to history. Furthermore, the reasoning is here placed in affiliation to teacher responsibilities exemplified by empirical examples. The paper ends with a brief discussion where the results are placed in dialogue to previous research about moral consciousness and historical consciousness.

The question of plurality in relation to moral and historical consciousness

This section discusses the place and features of plurality within the fields of moral and historical consciousness. Plurality is here grasped as a question of group difference, as a difference between unique individuals (Mouffe, 2000) and as a difference between the individuals' conscious and subconscious image of self (Todd, 2003). This suggests that plurality, from a historical perspective can also be about both past historical perspectives and plural ways of grasping the past in the present (Klein, 2010). From this way of reasoning plurality, in itself, is neither good nor bad, comes in many forms and is an intrinsic and thus unavoidable part of human life and every social order. What needs to be stressed though is that there are major differences in how social orders – including education – have approached the presence of plurality.

Documentations of history and morality can be understood as human made *narratives of history*. The word narrative signals that history and moral in a sense are human fabrications through language. Klein (2010) distinguishes between *open* and *closed narratives*. A closed narrative of history, and morality can be comprehended as a story that forces a universal and narrow meaning of the past, and right/wrong without questioning what is excluded and included in that narrative. Contrary to a closed narrative an open narrative pays regard to various stories that make it possible to approach historical phenomena, and moral from various angles that render the multilayered creation and re-creation of communities to become visible. In the very brief overview of research regarding moral and historical consciousness and their relationship to plurality can be interpreted with the help of the concepts *closed narratives* and *open narratives*.

Moral consciousness and plurality

Moral consciousness can broadly be described as: “(1) capacity – one's fundamental ability to discern good and evil, (2) process – as the discovering of what makes for being a good person, what particular action is right and wrong, the process of being formed and informed, and (3) judgment – following inquiry and leading to judgment... The word conscience is defined as a state of moral awareness a compass directing our behavior according to the moral fitness of

things” (Smith, 2013, p. 179). Central in moral consciousness theories is that moral responsibility only can be asked by those who are conscious of their actions towards others. This implies that a person hurting another unconsciously cannot be held responsible for her or his actions (King & Carruthers, 2012).

There is no single theory of moral consciousness rather it is constituted from various ideas ranging from care theories to justice theories. However, the most dominant perspective of moral consciousness is influenced by a closed narrative stemming from developmental psychology drawing on positivism, where universality, impartiality, prescriptivity, and reversibility are regarded as key concepts (ibid). From this sense, morality is viewed as an ability in every human being’s mind that can be stimulated and developed in a similar fashion, following universal developmental steps independent of person and context. Morality, in this way of arguing, is regarded as a purely cognitive endeavor based on formalism and universalism that does not take the situations, reactions and sentiments of unique individuals into deliberation. Accordingly, it is possible of being deemed as moral without taking the consequences of one’s actions towards others into consideration. A front figure of *moral consciousness* is Lawrence Kohlberg whose ideas are influenced by Meads’ pragmatism and John Rawls’ theory of natural law. Kohlberg’s way of reasoning has been found appealing by those who regard the need to reduce empirical variation of moral perspectives and as such presenting a moral theory that clearly distinguishes between rationally predefined right and wrong moral judgment (e.g. Habermas, 1990, pp., 117, 119, 120). Gilligan’s (1977) and later Noddings’ (2003) ethics of care has played a significant role in re-shaping the ethical landscape by opening up ethics for the presence, feelings and experiences of a unique individual. Drawing on Hume amongst others, their way of introducing relations and the unique Other has not only added a new dimension to the field of ethics, but has also indirectly shaken the very ground on which it rests. They have widened the narrative of moral consciousness by introducing the element of the unknown, which eludes any attempt to fix and isolate ethics to a specific foundation. Although the ethics of care opens up a way of approaching ethics without overlooking unique people’s everyday responses and feelings, it never fully leaves the platform of a foundation-enabling progression (Edling, 2009; Smith, 2013) and as such subsumes that the Other can be known and consequently de-Othered (Todd, 2003). This implies that the logic of moral consciousness – although important – is not enough to handle some forms of plurality.

Historical consciousness and plurality

Just as the notion universalism and impartiality have dominated the field of moral reasoning, attempts to understand history has been characterized by a desire to form fragmented views of history into a single one in order to develop a sense of group identity with the purpose to strengthen the glory of the nation. A desire to universalize European history started during the era of Enlightenment under the eighteenth century and was followed by a search for general laws in the nineteenth century. The process took place parallel with the building of the nation-state that required the creation of a collective identity of faithful and obedient citizens. Subsequently, shaping the history of human kind into a collective and ideal identity in service of the nation can be regarded as state power that glued various people in a country together in ex-change for citizenship rights (e.g. Vanhaute, 2013, pp., 17, 81).

The concept *historical consciousness* was established towards the end of 20th century by Karl-Ernst Jeismann, a historian within the field of curriculum studies. (Eikeland, 1999). Historical consciousness can generally be described as the mental connections between of the past, present, and future, i.e. how people individually and socially make sense of how it has been, how it is, and how it could be. The roots of historical consciousness is intimately interlaced with the progress of German *didaktik* in the 1960s and with critical theory primarily

linked to the ideas of Jürgen Habermas and Herbert Marcuse. One central aspect in their reasoning was the need to use education as a platform for emancipation which indirectly opens up history education to plurality of world-views and a desire to change the world for the better. Moreover, it stressed the need to pay regard to the unique individuals interpretation of self and their position in a world with others (e.g. Ammert, 2008, p. 41).

Debates to open up history education to a plurality of worldviews is not a new phenomenon but has been advocated for by those who have found their group or group perspectives excluded from the canon of history, such as women, black people, religious groups, working class people, and so forth (see for instance Burnett, Vincent, & Mayall, 1984; Fanon, 1982; Hirdman, 2004; Said, 1994; Scott, 1988; Wollstonecraft, 1975). In recent years the discussions have gained new fuel in the aftermath of globalization and migration (Seixas, 2007; Shemilt, 2000). Yet, how the presence of plurality is to be grasped and understood in history education is however not obvious. Whereas, some maintain that it is important to listen to various sometimes controversial historical narratives in order to single out the most rational one (e.g. Billman-Mahecha & Hausen, 2005; Habermas, 1990; Straub, 2005) others indicate that plurality is not just a nice narrative that can be objectively scrutinized and at times dismissed, but a force that nestles into the grand narratives and rupture them from within (Seixas, 2005). More precisely, whereas, critical pedagogy influenced by for instance Habermas argue for the need to create rational platforms where plural world-views and unique individuals' meaning-making are allowed space, others, such as, Seixas (2005) and Simon (2004) move the discussion of plurality further by arguing that there is no neutral platform where plural world-views are simply added to the debate in an ordered fashion. On the contrary according to them, plurality is often a force that breaks into various orders and ruptures them from within. In other words, history education, and morality is not merely about creating consensus from fragments but also about being aware that antagonism cannot be erased just hidden. Antagonism is created due to the fact that plural world-views exist in ways that logically cannot be forged together as a whole and as such tends to disturb the process of creating unity. Every seemingly objective judgement contains from this standpoint power-relationships that need to be taken into account since they cannot be fully tamed or erased. The progression of history is from this way of reasoning set in constant motion, i.e. ruptured, critical historical consciousness inverts given power relations by affirming the agency of the subaltern/.../it demonstrates the potential historical agency of those groups that were hidden and marginalized in traditional historical accounts. In so doing it may lead to fragmentation of the grand narratives that organized the progressive past of exemplary history" (Seixas, 2005, p. 148).

This reasoning has however also been questioned for demanding too much of teachers seeing that an openness to a plurality of perspectives is an openness to complexity and dangers of relativism. As such, the notion of plurality in education pleads for a critical awareness and dialogue about the past and its relation to the present (Barton & Levstik, 2004) which in Pinar's terms (2012) can be referred to as a plea for keeping a complicated conversation alive. The objective of this paper is to probe further into how this complicated conversation can be stimulated in education by turning the attention to the ethics of dissensus and its relationship to history.

Ethics of dissensus in relation to moral and historical consciousness placed in an educational context

Ethics of dissensus should by no means be understood as a superior ethical theory that should exchange other ethical theories, but rather be seen as an ongoing dialogue in understanding the unavoidable presence of radical plurality in ethical relationships. The ethics in question can be

grasped as a response to the absence of tools within the field of ethics of care and ethics of justice to approach various forms of social violence that stems from embodied reactions, where the conscious never can be fully separated from the unconscious manifested in xenophobia, hate speech, discrimination, and oppression. What is particularly lacking in ethics, Ziarek maintains, is the ability to pay regard to and process disturbing forces in societies like hostility, aggression, and power in ethical relations. The concept dissensus thus refers to the counter pole of consensus, and directs attention to people's fragmented embodied meaning making, which she maintains is essential to take into account if social violence is to be addressed and opposed: "To underscore this conflictual articulation of ethics, I deploy the neologism —dissensus (from the Latin dissension, disagreement, struggle; the opposite of consensus) to refer to the irreducible dimension of antagonism and power in discourse, embodiment, and democratic politics" (Ziarek, 2001, p. 1).

Two approaches to the role and responsibilities of teachers have dominated the educational debate, namely the *universal* (technical) and *practice oriented* (intellectual) approach. The two concepts should not be understood in dualistic terms but rather as two different epistemological and ontological starting-points for approaching the notion of teacher responsibility. The universal perspective is founded on a dualistic platform, a belief that everything's and everyone's essence can be located and that uncertainties and dilemmas in education can be erased. From the universal standpoint it is important that teachers base their education on empirical findings and nothing else (Ball, 1995). This view was strong in Sweden during the 1950s and 1960s, but experiences a renaissance in current time not the least due to the negative results of the PISA tests (Edling, 2014; Edling & Frelin, 2014). Contrary to the universal approach to teachers' responsibilities the practice oriented (intellectual) approach regard education as a living organism constituted out of specific contexts and relationships that requires teachers who are present and able to interpret and make deliberative judgment in the flow of everyday relationships. The latter does not imply that universal or technical approaches are unnecessary, merely that they cannot be applied without first judging the situation of the present (Ahlström, 1993; Stephen J. Ball, 1995; Colnerud & Granström, 2002; Fransson, 2012; Frelin, 2010).

The ethics of dissensus and its relation to history described by Ziarek can be regarded as a contribution to a practice oriented approach to teachers' responsibilities opening up to complicated conversations. Pinar (2012) describes a complicated conversation as a form of dialogue in which numerous variables are placed in relation to one and other, such as previous knowledge, students' different experiences, facts, feelings, the past, present, future, and also the gaps between them. Placing Ziarek's description of ethics and history in relation to teachers' responsibilities in education a) obliges teachers' to acknowledge certain aspects in education, b) encourage them to oscillate between intimacy and distance, and c) to stimulate certain traits that allow the complicated conversation to be kept alive.

In this section the notion of *ethics of dissensus* and its affiliation to *history* is presented and discussed in relationship to teachers' responsibilities in education. Every occasion in which Ziarek mentions history in relation to ethics in the book has been analyzed. The findings in these categories have continually been placed in connection to what they might bring to education and teachers' responsibilities.

Ethics of dissensus and moral consciousness in relation to teachers' responsibilities

And conversely, what kind of ethics is necessary in order to assure us, in Seyla Benhabib's words that "the agon of...or the contest of pluralism that cannot be adjudicated at the higher levels, will all be instances of good and just democratic politics as opposed to being instances of fascism, xenophobic: nationalism, right-wing politics (Ziarek, 2001, p. 64).

The ethics of dissensus is juxtaposed primarily of Emmanuel Lévinas *ethics of alterity* but is kept in dialogue with feminist and race theories stemming from Michel Foucault's notion of power, and psychoanalysis. Seeing that different forms of violence generally are created due to re-occurring difficulties of handling people's otherness Emmanuel Lévinas ethics of alterity plays a significant role in Ziarek's reasoning. Lévinas' questions the implicit acceptance of violence that exist in classical ethical theories in their way of defining who is human and who is not. Defining who is human and who is not indirectly signal who is worth saving and who can be disposed as garbage testified by the brutality of the Second World War (e.g. *ibid*, p. 72 see also Lévinas, 1981, p. 203).

Although consciousness, which Lévinas refers to as 'the for itself' is not only important but necessary in societies in order to make meaning, the ethical responsibility cannot be trapped in this consciousness but stem from an area outside it. If ethics solely would be a question of consciousness implies that the subject is isolated in herself, in her ego, and subsequently unable to allow the Other's presence to touch her. The Other with a capital 'O' signals a recognition of absolute alterity or difference between subjects. Following, Ziarek's reading of Lévinas people are always more than their consciousness since they, whether they want to or not, exist in their bodies (the in itself) that inevitably are expose to the world: "what is remarkable in Levinas's later work is that the possibility of ethical responsibility is located not in consciousness or free will but specifically in incarnation, defined as the extreme way of being exposed" (*ibid*, p. 49-50).

Hence, "embodiment", "living flesh", "embodied ego" or "ipseity" - an identity that exceeds consciousness, as described by Lévinas is central in the ethics of dissensus. Embodiment is both a *condition* and an *experience* in that it sets the frame sentiments/desires/drives/thoughts – in ways that affect others' life situation – and also is the only medium through which a subject can experience the world since an escape from our bodies is impossible (*ibid*, p. 49-50). If a person is physically irritated by, for instance refugees and beggars, the irritation stems from the subject's own body but risk erupting in everyday life in ways that influence the situation of the beggar or the refugee negatively. If difference, regarded as both as an unbridgeable difference, between subjects and between the subjects' conscious and subconscious, is to be taken seriously it implies that the progression, unanimity, and identity formation as a (sole) focus for teachers becomes insufficient since identity merely targets 'who I am' or 'whom I desire to be', and not 'how I respond' towards the Other' and 'how the Other affects my image of self' in an ongoing process.

The logic that Ziarek reasoning awakens is the need to leave the simplified playing field of 'either-or' and engage in the communicative negotiation in education that constitute the fragile middle-ground between two extreme poles such as fixed facts or fluctuating subjectivities or the conscious and the unconscious (e.g. Biesta & Säfström, 2011; Säfström, 2011). This way of reasoning requires teachers who are able to navigate in this middle-ground and oscillate between the said such as past knowledge about various events, policies and past experiences and to the questions, reactions, and sentiments that are in the saying in-front and around them. It also implies moving between cognitive judgment calling for well-grounded arguments and eschatological judgment based on sensing and touch in the present (see also Edling and Frelin, 2016). A teacher deemed to be good at his work expressed in an interview conducted by Frelin (2014) the balance act as follows: "J: I perceive myself as very sensitive to what's happening on the other side, for example, by seeing a facial expression. If I tell [a child to work a bit more], and then look [into her face], is it failure I see? Or is it [an expression conveying] 'Okay. I'll work a bit more.'" (Interview 1, lines 257–258, p. 6).

In order, to describe the difference between conscious representation, which is vital to social human beings, and the ethics of alterity that represents a hope for non-violent relations, time

plays a key role. Lévinas distinguishes between the *said* and the *saying*. Social representation is based on the *past said* and often used as a source for orientation and making judgment in form of knowledge banks, such as acts, written regulations and so forth. However, people tend to forget or ignore that the said is created out of a *present saying* and perhaps even more crucial that the never seizing present sayings impact on the world in the shadow of the said. In order to be affected by the Other the conscious *said* is insufficient. Indeed, the possibility of being affected or touched by the Other depends on the *saying*: “the saying, by contrast, reveals a different sense of sensibility and describes it as the capacity for being affected by the Other” (ibid, p. 51). Accordingly, the conscious representation of the world is unavoidable and constantly interwoven with the saying expressed through bodily drives and desires which influences the conditions of people. From this way of reasoning ethics cannot be dislocated from passion that breaks into intentionality and consciousness rupturing them from within: “just as the trace of the Other is incommensurate with the order of the said, so too the recurrence of the flesh, the passive synthesis of aging, evades the time of consciousness”. Combining Lévinas ethics of alterity with Irigaray, Lacan, and Kristeva’s psychoanalysis, Ziarek uses Jürgen Habermas’ discourse ethics as an example in order to problematize an ethics that solely is based on conscious reasoning. In accordance to her a purely conscious handling of plurality in ethical theories is insufficient since it overlooks the way the unconscious (the inner plurality) nestles into communications and disturbs it expressed for instance through feelings of dislike, fear, hatred, and irritation. The presence of the body also implies a need to move between conscious statements and the way the unconscious nestles into seemingly rational claims.

The interplay between conscious/subconscious requires the ability to look back to what have been said and done retrospectively and amend plausible damages for the sake of others. For instance: “You keep returning to the fact that you are irritated that the history book and my history lessons mention the role of homosexuals at various times in history. Can you elaborate on that irritation/can you elaborate on *why you feel* this?” For this reason she argues that there needs to be an ethics that takes this unavoidable disruption created through the movement between the inner and outer life seriously:

Specifically, the acknowledgement of the economy of drive in the intersubjective field not only foregrounds the passionate, ambivalent, and unconscious aspects of communication usually ignored by the ethics of communicative rationality...In place of identification the disjunction between the outward and the inward movement of the drive dramatizes not only the heterogeneity of the subject but also the asymmetry in the subject’s relation to the Other (ibid, p. 144).

By dislocating ethics from the *dominance* of consciousness the playing field of ethics shifts from only focusing on abstract guidelines and rules to the feeling of responsibility that comes with opening up for the presence of the (embodied) Other. This implies an awareness that teachers (and pupils) do not only have given responsibilities but are also vulnerable for felt responsibilities (Edling & Frelin, 2013) that highlights a sensing dimension in education (Edling & Frelin, 2016). The learning from the Other can take form by letting pupils to unconditionally listen to the stories of for instance victims of wars and the stories of their perpetrators in history lessons and see what dimensions of human interaction they awaken (Todd, 2003). With the help of Lévinas, Ziarek argues that the awakened responsibility can be either ignored or embraced. Whereas, classical ethical theories rooted in consciousness limits responsibility, the ethics of alterity is limitless and anarchic. If moral is understood as the imperative of ‘treating others as one self wants to be treated’ then responses to others following this principle can give a sense of fulfillment; a sense of being moral. On the contrary, Lévinas anarchic and limitless responsibility describes the responsibility that is born when passively encountering the face of an Other, for example when a subject becomes a face beyond conscious labels such as pupil, beggar, refugee, or neighbor but a presence exterior to ourselves pleading to be sensed and with a capability of touching us if we actively open up (become passive). By

being held hostage by the Other's presence, responsibility becomes limitless and anarchic – no one can decide for the subject what needs to be done or when s/he has done enough (e.g. *ibid.*, p. 60-61).

'History of dissensus' in relation to historical consciousness and teachers' responsibilities

In order to understand the connection between an ethics that pays regard to the existence of the Other and history Ziarek turns to feminism, race theory, and Foucault's notion of power. What she mainly problematizes is how the seemingly homogenous and causal representations of history seize to acknowledge past violence against those who diverge from governing norms (*ibid.*, p. 19). The process of emancipation during the era of enlightenment express the dilemma of wanting to free oppressed groups from hegemonic domination while speaking in the name of a group and as such eliminating differences within the groups (*ibid.*, p. 107). History treated as causal representation has a long history similar to causality in moral developmental theories. Yet, in the process of capturing the flow of life in causal terms, which Bentham's utilitarianism drew to its extreme the embodied Other is transformed into a number that can be disposed in the name of the human good: "by ascribing a proper function even to human waste, Jeremy Bentham's project *panopticon* is one of the paradigmatic examples of how the utilitarian notion of causality eliminates contingency for the sake of efficiency and calculability" (*ibid.*, p. 19). While modern historicism begins in the disciplining the "self-reflective subject" to locate "lost truths of the past" Ziarek shifts focus to a historical will to keep impossible conversations of the past alive that juggles shadows of past events and a desire to knit the fragmented events into something coherent (*ibid.*, p. 27).

As we have seen the critique of the soul reveals a complicity between the historical will to knowledge, fantasy consolidating identity, and the disciplinary formation of moral conscience/.../These parallels among modern historicism grounded in the figure of the self-reflective subject, the formation of moral conscience, and the soul are likewise an effect of a certain reflective turn of the reactive forces of punishment upon the subject *ibid.*, p. 29).

Leaning on Foucault, Ziarek maintains that central in theories about historical and moral consciousness is to teach subjects to discipline their thoughts and behaviors in ways deemed as socially desirable. The disciplinary function of both historical and moral consciousness referred to as subjugating reflexivity, can be regarded as an important part in social life but is far from sufficient in order to oppose inter-personal violence. What is needed to challenge of the disciplinary dominance of history and ethics is, according to Ziarek, to move from developing certain identities to acknowledge "the divergence within the subject" and how this divergence creates antagonism that disturbs rational reasoning (*ibid.*, p. 29, 30). She emphasizes that it is not a question of merely complaining about the past but rather about engaging in an experimental dialogue about how the future can be imagined in ways that deals with past wrongs. This experimental dialogue also, implicitly, invites the subject to ponder about how s/he can constantly re-image her or himself to become anew (*ibid.*, p. 40-41), i.e. 'do I act in a way that stimulates violence, if so how could I change for the sake of others?' She also uses Casteroidis's *social imaginary* and *radical imaginary* to exemplify this. The social imaginary is an ordered image of the world that society imposes on us while the radical imaginary can be understood as people's capability to think beyond the given (*ibid.*, p. 155).

Leaning on Foucault, Ziarek makes a distinction between *consciousness* and *continuity* contra *events* and *series* that discursively dictates what is to be seen as true knowledge at a certain point in time. Whereas, the former gives a sense of determinism to history the concepts events and series acknowledge the fragmented side of history that always is tinted by power relations. That is, whose experiences should be part of the big picture and whose should be excluded? Through Foucault's research about sexuality and madness he shows how perceptions

of madness and sexuality change over time and how power relations in that perception dictates the conditions for people at that time. It is subsequently not a question of objectivism versus relativism at stake here but rather how the evidence presented by Foucault can be grappled with (e.g. *ibid*, p. 18). With this as a background Ziarek maintains that the possibility to resist perceptions that harm people or groups of people lies in acknowledging how history itself is formed through the interweaving of visibility and signification (articulation) (*ibid*, p. 19 see also p. 162) that can be compared to Lévinas' concepts said and saying.

Ziarek struggles with the problem of judgment that difference (e.g. the different, the Other) poses ethics and history: "how do we respond to an injustice merely by the alarm of feeling? This is indeed the central ethico-political dilemma the differend poses for hegemonic politics" (*ibid*, p. 95). The dilemma can be described as follows: on the one hand rational criteria helps legitimizing judgment on the other hand it does not matter if a judgment is legitimate if it harms people – at least if the aim is to reduce human suffering. Rather than being occupied with if a judgment is legitimate or not she emphasizes the importance of also stimulating an eschatological judgment. The eschatological judgment can be interpreted as a response to shortcomings to judge the horrors of the Second World War. It became evident that rational judgments *in themselves* are incapable of explaining, opposing and judging the tortures and extinctions of millions of people. Eschatological judgment is based on a careful examination of each unique case without placing it in relation to an external rule (all I did was to obey orders) or an illusion of historical totality (we did in the name of humanity emphasized even by the ancient Greeks) (e.g. *ibid*, p. 95).

Accordingly, although facts are important to acknowledge in history, Ziarek states that history cannot only be about scientific facts since it does not take into account the experience of suffering. In order to grapple with the dilemma of judging the differend (the Other) further she turns to Lyotard and his use of the Kantian *signs of history* and *facts of history*:

The difference between the historical fact and the sign of history is all the more crucial since the appeal to 'historical evidence' has been used by "revisionist" historians such as Faurisson to deny the historical reality of the Holocaust and to silence the survivors testimony. For Lyotard, the Holocaust is the event that in the most singular way points to the political and moral crisis of modernity and thus necessitates the revision of the claim of history. The specific question that frames The Differend is how one listens to the testimonies of the inhumanity of Auschwitz, how one responds and bears witness to the destruction of reality and speech signified by this most catastrophic event of our time (*ibid*, p. 97).

Historical fact is the outcome of a collective forging verified fragmented pieces of a past into a hegemonic whole. The signs of history are what inevitably eludes the image of totality, i.e. that which always tends fall outside and cannot be captured in this fashion. For instance, a history book can proudly declare the supremacy of a nation's domination over another country while there is evidence of people experiencing the opposite (*ibid*, p. 96-97). By keeping a dialogue between signs and facts it becomes possible to connect to something shared while problematizing and at times rupturing it with the help of concrete experiences that helps prove the limits of the image of the hegemonic whole.

Allowing space for difference and radical imaginary does however not imply that every opinion is equally good in relation to various purposes. In a school for adults in Sweden one of the students claimed that there are proofs that the Holocaust did not exist and the teacher countered by pointing out the opposite. The student felt violated and the teacher was told by the responsible coordinator that he should not argue against the students' opinions the way he had done since everyone has the right of an opinion. Interpreting Ziarek's picture of history in relation to ethics of dissensus implies that the responsible coordinator is stuck in a dualistic or an either-or way of thinking that risks enhancing the harm against those who diverge from the norm rather than resisting it. Hence, existing in the middle field as teacher implies moving back

and forth from history of facts and history of signs in a never ending process that not only can lead to an awareness of limits in historical narratives but also involves a difficult questioning of one's own reactions and stand-points in relation to the Other.

A tentative conclusion

Ziarek reminds her readers that research about violence has shown that it is not enough to lean against one or some few models in education, seeing that each model is based on an inclusion/exclusion and also is created exterior to the flow of everyday life. Accordingly, a delicate balance act and a movement between dualistic assumptions that historically have been separated in an either-or fashion are required. By an either or thinking means here the tendency to regard, for instance teachers, as either theoretical or practical, either itty-witty/subjective or interested in facts, either a person who needs to ignore difference (plurality) or cherish it blindly and so forth. If the points Ziarek raises are to be taken seriously it obliges teachers to ponder about how they regard and handle issues of difference, embodiment (accompanied by the unconscious), power, and dilemmas in education. The reasoning she contributes with comes with specific directions and obligations for teachers, namely:

1. *Obliges teachers to stimulate:*
 - an honor of thinking amongst students, i.e. invite students and colleagues to join in understanding and handling the complicated puzzle that constitutes life
 - experimental praxis or dialogue amongst students based on trial and error

2. *Obliges the teacher to be aware of that:*
 - A contempt or ignorance of the Other risks enhancing violence and brutality towards those who diverge: important to learn from the Other
 - That we cannot escape from other bodies and that it therefore sets the condition for our existence with others as well as is the sole medium through which the world can be experienced
 - the unconscious tends to nestle into consciousness causing ruptures that needs to be acknowledged retrospectively for the sake of others
 - The forging of a unity (of history) always comes with exclusion and as such signals the presence of power relations
 - Dilemmas or antagonism is always present in education – at times hidden under a mantle of consensus
 - Identity (subject-in-process) and history (events and series) are fragmented and set in motion

3. *Importance of oscillating between:*
 - Saying/said
 - Social imaginary/radical imaginary
 - Facts of history/signs of history
 - Visibility/signification
 - Consciousness/unconsciousness
 - Cognitive judgment/eschatological judgment

Her reasoning bears a resemblance to open historical narratives where researchers, such as Seixas (2004) and Simon (2004) who problematize the belief in progression through historical

consciousness and argues that the presence of plurality tends to rupture history. Her philosophy can also be compared to those who argue that it is important pay more regard to complexity in history education (Barton & Levstik, 2004) and to stimulate a framework in education that allows the complexity and plural world-views to be dealt with critically (Boix-Mansilla, 2000; Lévesque, 2008; Shemilt, 2000; Wineburg, 2000). However, through the concept of ethics of dissensus where she brings a fresh dimension into the discussion by providing concepts and understandings of how (history) education can be approached without overlooking the complicated presence of difference between the past-present-future, between two subjects and between the inner and the outer life. Sub-Heading-2

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