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24. THE OWL SPREADS ITS WINGS:

*Global and International Education within the Local from
Critical Perspectives*

INTRODUCTION: SPREADING THE WOR(L)D

Within an era of a New Knowledge Society, assumptions abound regarding the ‘goodness’ and justice of global interconnections and distributions of knowledge through international educational organizations and structures worldwide. Just as George Bush Jr. in attempting to justify the invasion of Iraq made claim to the democratic goodness of the US ‘spreading their freedoms’ in the interests of an all-encompassing democratization of the world, so the assumption that sharing educational knowledge, especially an ‘all-knowing North’ with a ‘helpless South’ is without question for the greater good of all humanity.

Besides contributing to a politics of benevolence as part of a new neoliberal ‘global citizenship’ agenda (Jefferess, 2008; Swanson, 2011), as an ethical consequence of the power imbalance in this North-South (or West-East) relationship, little understanding is given to issues of recontextualization (Bernstein, 2000) in local contexts of the take up of ‘progressive’ educational discourse. Neither is preponderance given to local communities as to whether ‘new ways’ necessarily serve their interests, but for an often failed promise, as a relation of exchange, that these development initiatives may provide global recognition and access to political and economic empowerment. In this sense, the dissemination and universalization of these discourses as a ‘common sense’ pragmatic enacts a symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) on local communities or situated contexts in constituting doxic understandings of the new settled order of things.

Through symbolic control (Bernstein, 2000), the recontextualization¹ of knowledge and meanings from the perspective of the dominant gaze reconfigures the playing field with often naïvely unintended, if not unnoticed, consequences for those made vulnerable by such effects. While new possibilities may come into play, new limitations are also produced, although these may become invisible from the perspective of the dominant gaze within the sweep of solidifying discourses on the rightness of international ‘partnerships’ and marketization of Western-author(iz)ed or Scientifically-

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endorsed 'New Knowledge'. These limitations serve as new forms of oppression, which is the situation that many developing countries find themselves in, where their educational systems are now tied to paternalistic international agendas - whether these be vocational 'training' at the expense of (democratic/critical) education, or 'basic education' at the expense of higher education; beneficiaries of curricular or educational materials and technologies from the North, dependency on the World Bank and IMF, monetary dependency on mandated initiatives emanating from the UN Millennium goals, or internationally-funded collaborations with prominent Northern universities / institutes, or otherwise. Even as these 'developing' countries' 'brightest and best' are often educated within 'developed' world contexts invested in dominant socio-political and economic agendas, if they return as leaders to their 'developing' motherland, there is often a mismatch of contextual emphases, applicability, imperatives and cultural translations between the contexts, often extending rather than necessarily alleviating these oppressions. The marginalization of local and indigenous knowledge is reproduced in favour of global universal(ized/izing) forms as a normative condition of development and international education, rhetoricalized under the banner of 'upliftment', 'progress' and 'modernization'.

It is within this globalization mandate that internationalization of education finds a dominant place in the development agendas of many vulnerable nations. In this sense, 'developing' nations are often so caught up in the development project, Western-style, that resistance or fora for imagining otherwise is becoming increasingly difficult. As a normalized and legitimized logic, dependency on modes of global knowledge that have been verticalized over local, indigenous or situated ways of knowing and being (Swanson, 2007, 2010), educational systems in many 'developing' country contexts afford little opportunities for creating traction to assist in resisting and redirecting the development agendas set out for them by international agencies, partnerships and institutions that have an investment in the existing set of social relations.

Within this context, the escalating neoliberalization of institutions and societal structures worldwide, disseminating from a relatively wealthy North, has tended to operationalize forms of control and surveillance on individuals and groups in their daily/ nightly lives (Smith, 1999) in ways that have leached the capacity of ordinary individuals to resist these more insidious modes of control that have taken the form of a new universal depoliticized "common sense" hegemony, and even masqueraded as 'democratic' and 'fair' from positions of institutional dominance. The enticements of a utopianism of individual wealth marketed to 'developing' country peoples and the most cruel lure of hope that such ideological investments participate in have produced to a large degree an uncritical acceptance of such a status quo, although the current economic crisis and Arab uprising has tempered this to some extent in marking the failure of global capitalism, especially in its late phase where increasing

diminishment of democratic accountabilities has become prevalent. Nevertheless, this scenario has created an incapacitation to resist such economically-informed ideological agendas in ways that are somewhat necrophilic (Freire, 1970).

From the perspective of a globe in economic and ecological crisis, this is of deep concern, for just as, in the Hegelian sense, Minerva's owl spreads its wings at the falling of the dusk, so the imaginative capacity to think and assert otherwise may come too late for a meaningful and sustainable restructuring for all global citizens in local contexts of the Earth's ecosystems. What then can be done to prevent this rather pessimistic state of affairs? How then do we proceed to undo it? What is the leadership role of the university in such an undertaking, and within a context of the intensification of international education and competition, what might the possibilities be, if any, of 'exploiting' as counter-hegemonic the instruments of neoliberalization and / or globalization against themselves?

In the next sections, I begin to address some of the difficulties and options associated with the neoliberalization and intensification of international education through select examples and theoretical arguments that provide a few routes to approaching this subject more generally. The first section, *Institutional Spread of Neoliberalism as 'Global Evil'*, takes a broader theoretical discussion touching on globalizing neoliberalism in general and then its implications for academic institutions, especially as it refers to the intensification of international education and initiatives within and between global academic institutions. In the next section, *'Helping' Africa through Science: Hegemony in Practice*, I provide an exemplar of an international educational initiative whereby I deconstruct some of the problematic assumptions and ideological commitments underpinning such an initiative. Such an analysis is undertaken in relation to the dialectic of the global North and South and the ethical and political implications of such an initiative. The use of the exemplar is to highlight some of the dilemmas invoked by similar approaches and to make visible some aspects of their oppressive investments of power. This leads to the further section: *Critical Perspectives on Global Citizenship*, which introduces an example of an online international undergraduate course. This transdisciplinary course provides some possibilities of an alternative globalization project within the academic institution. I discuss how such a course initiative may begin to counter the effects of neoliberalism even as it makes use of its instruments. I then discuss how this is achieved through an overtly political approach to discussions on global citizenship from critical, reflexive perspectives that embrace a pedagogy and philosophy of globalization, and where the course is internally reflective. This provides an opening in the final section: *A Way In as a Way Out*, to begin a partial address of the questions posed in this introduction as an invitation to a possible

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counter-envisioning of our global future(s) in an era of rampant neoliberalism and its consequent intensification of international education globally.

INSTITUTIONAL SPREAD OF NEOLIBERALISM AS 'GLOBAL EVIL'

Drawing on the political theory of Hannah Arendt from an international relations perspective to illuminate the dangerous effects of a globalizing neoliberalism, Patrick Hayden avers that:

Even as globalization shapes the horizon of current political thought and action, it does so at the risk of drawing that horizon ever tighter; it is less certain that the concept of 'globalization' continues to express transformative potentials rather than functioning as a token of the very effacement of the political. Globalization has become not only the political foundation of the present, but also the suspect guardian of the future of the political itself. ... I argue that neoliberal economic globalization is a form of political evil (2009, p.92).

Just as neoliberalism in its global effect normalizes some of the severe widespread wrongs within the "global political-economic order – namely extreme global poverty and statelessness" as "forms of political evil in the Arendtian sense" (Hayden, 2009, p. 92), so international institutional partnerships between academies that normalize as 'acceptable' and even 'democratic' the power imbalances between them in their social and economic relations and epistemic (re)sources, as well as the exploitative and self-interested nature of many of these relationships, perform a political evil in a similar way. He further states that:

The main contemporary effect of the social in the guise of neoliberal globalization is to 'naturalize' all political-economic relations and thereby normalize the appearance of private interests in the public realm. The political evil of neoliberalism is to depoliticize human affairs and as such, to render the worldly spaces between people apolitical and devoid of care (Hayden, 2009, p.93).

In this sense, the socio-economic 'pragmatic' inevitability, that is produced by all-pervasive neoliberalism as a form of *realpolitik* of the current, renders the political superfluous. Henry Giroux (2004) goes further to describing the rise of neoliberalism in the US in the past decade in militant terms. For Giroux, the "terror of neoliberalism" has come with an increasing abandonment of democracy and the concomitant emergence of authoritarianism and systemic automatic surveillance in public spaces. Civil disobedience, transparent political debate and ideological resistance of any kind have become increasingly difficult in a context where the monitoring, management and audit

culture in public institutions is rampant and endemic, despite a new social and democratic face for America in the form of Barack Obama. In fact, the momentum has increased unabated. What then can be said for the university, which is not immune from this trend? If anything, the intensification of international education initiatives across campuses globally, especially those from the wealthy North that have the infrastructure and capacity to lead the game, is an indication of the extent of the neoliberal agenda afoot. Academy is pitted against academy in the competitive race to gain more and more of a foothold on lucrative international markets, whether it be number of international students on their campuses, number of online courses offered for international markets, especially Asian ones, or internationally-funded research initiatives that would increase university rankings and attract more students and funds.

The broader visionary ideals of democracy as a liberatory ideology, one that invests strongly in beliefs around rights and values, egalitarianism, justice, counter-hegemony, active capacity and social capital have been leached by technocratic functionalist approaches to the governance and mandate of educational research and practice. Treason has been committed on our future through an increasing narrowness and reductionism of what educational engagement, on a policy, research and practice front, has come to mean. An enclosing of the cultural commons has taken place (Bowers, 2006), an increasing regulation and compartmentalization of roles and duties has emerged, and an inscribing of identities in essentialized terms has persisted and become entrenched. This has resulted in the beginnings of a shutdown of the places and spaces of inquiry and speculation outside of very specific standardized forms that might otherwise ask questions *about the* questions that currently frame the agenda for education in an increasingly globalized, neo-liberally-saturated society.

In speaking in respect of the educational research field, Gert Biesta (2007) contests the increasing move in many Western nations, albeit to different degrees, towards centralized agenda-setting and regulation of educational research and practice that support evidence-based practices, standardizations, accountability and market-based models and managerial agendas. These approaches afford educational practice an ever more technocist and functionalist role in post-industrialized society and within the referents of global capitalism. For Biesta, the fact that educational professionals are being afforded less autonomy in decision-making processes within their own contexts, and being denied opportunities for deliberation and judgment about both the means and the ends of education is tantamount to a “democratic deficit” now arising in educational practices that reify evidence-based approaches. He further explains:

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If we really want to improve the relation between research, policy, and practice in education, we need an approach in which technical questions about education can be addressed in close connection with normative, educational, and political questions about what is educationally desirable. The extent to which a government not only allows the research field to raise this set of questions, but actively supports and encourages researchers to go beyond simplistic questions about “what works,” may well be an indication of the degree to which a society can be called democratic. From a point of view of democracy, an exclusive emphasis on “what works” will simply not work (Biesta, 2007, p. 22).

The conjoining of internationalization and marketization of universities with an ongoing neoliberal and neocolonial agenda is marked. This is particularly visible in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries where oil wealth has funded a proliferation of higher education institution campuses mostly imported from the US and United Kingdom (see Romanowski and Nasser, 2010). Concomitantly, international university partnerships have been competitively established as relations of exchange that are lucrative for the well-branded partnering universities in the West whose research budgets have diminished as a result of rationalizations, austerity measures and other economic cuts and downsizing through implementation of national economic policies as a consequence of the current global economic crisis. In return, GCC countries attempt to buy the privileges and advantages of Western ‘advancements’ via the popularist neoliberal discourse on ‘the Knowledge Economy’, and consume the rhetoric and ill-conceived modernist myth of rhetoric and ill-conceived modernist myth of ‘knowledge transfer.’² Arguably, the symbolic violence enacted in the patronage as well as ahistorical and apolitical benevolence agendas of prominent Northern universities assumes a form of global evil.

I now move on to describing an example of an international university partnership that I believe performs a violence in the form of an upliftment project through the authority, discourse and hegemonic disciplines of the Mathematical Sciences – one which not only encloses an African commons but which reproduces a colonized Other under the auspices of benevolence. I attempt to draw out some of the problematic assumptions and ideological commitments underpinning the initiative in relation to the dialectic of the globals North and South and the ethical and political implications for a continued divided and colonized world. The use of the exemplar is to highlight some of the dilemmas invoked by similar approaches to international university partnerships.

'HELPING' AFRICA THROUGH SCIENCE: HEGEMONY IN PRACTICE

There has been a recent initiative to develop a mathematical institute located on African soil with the aims of 'improving' access to Science for 'talented African students.' Neil Turock, born in Africa and now a theoretical physicist at Cambridge, led this initiative. Named the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), it has as its stated goals: to promote mathematics and science in Africa; to recruit and train talented students and teachers; to build capacity for African initiatives in education, research, and technology. At face value, the intent appears admirable. Who would criticize Turock's (2008) passion in advancing and trying to actualize such an ideal? As an attempt to rectify the oppression and injustice in the ongoing colonization and marginalization of Africa as its dominant message, who would wish to resist it? It is very true that credit needs to go to him and his supporters for taking on such an initiative with commitment, especially in the context of the ignorance and selective passivity to resistance around Africa's colonial history and resultant contemporary problems. One only has to examine the rather inept political stances and weak international reactions to the recent atrocities in The Congo or Sudan to realize that Africa does not count as far as the rest of the international community is concerned, despite recent efforts by the International Criminal Court, which has little teeth, to bring a few perpetrators to justice.

On the surface, Turok's advocacy, in the context of the constructions of a 'hopeless' continent, seems highly admirable. Yet, despite Turok's seemingly inspirational rhetoric, such as "the next Einstein will be African", there are some telling messages on which his project is based. In his TED broadcast, Turok (2008) promotes the mathematical sciences for "talented young Africans" as a panacea to all Africa's 'ills' and claims that "by unlocking and nurturing the continent's creative potential, we can create a change in Africa's future".³ Here 'Africa's future' depends on access to Western-endorsed mathematics.⁴ Mathematics has the power to 'know' what is best for Africa. If more 'talented young Africans' (and here 'talent' assumes exclusively 'mathematical talent', reifying this form over others) succeeded at mathematics, then Africa might be "fixed". For Africa to be awarded a construct of 'success', and only in Western-European terms, it must produce an Einstein. In other words, talented Africans must mimic Western scientific heroes. They need to emulate Western-European scientific discourses that have sole currency in the global modernization project. There is no other way to be 'successful' other than in these terms and judged from the dominant Western-European gaze. Turok misses the less-than-subtle irony, however, that one of Einstein's mathematical discoveries led to the production of the A-bomb, still the most destructive scientific development humanity has yet produced. This would surely not be 'our' hope for Africa!

Lack of scientific skill is seen as the cause of Africa's 'problems' and Africa and her people are pathologized in these terms. The fault of the problem is constructed as being with Africa, where Africa is to carry the burden of its constructed 'deficit', of not being successful because it is insufficiently like other more powerful, mostly Western, nations. Besides naïvely ignoring the subaltern colonized position, Africa is forced to submit to, given the massive power relations differential with other more powerful nations (seen in World Trade imbalances and other uneven political relations with Africa), the complex political nature of Africa's historical and current marginalization and oppression is naïvely reduced to the terms of access to the mathematical sciences. If one were to advocate that Africans need to learn more about art to "fix" themselves, it would be laughable, yet it comes across for a globalized audience as perfectly 'legitimate' to suggest that the route to Africa's 'success' is through Mathematics. Mathematical skill supports "areas of great relevance to Africa's development" according to Turok. Perhaps if Mandela spent more time trying to overcome Einstein's difficulties with his Unifying Theory, some of the complex problems of the post-apartheid era might have been satisfactorily resolved. Perhaps some ingenious technological inventions would have done the trick with political conflict related to complex social, cultural and historical issues.

My comments are perhaps facetious, but they do draw attention to the strong techno-scientific utilitarian pull that the mathematical sciences afford nevertheless, providing them with pre-eminence in the "social division of labour of discourses" (Bernstein, 2000) in the social domain. The power of the voice of the mathematical sciences is such that it casts a "mythologizing gaze" (Dowling, 1998, 2001) that "recontextualizes" (Bernstein, 2000; Dowling, 1998) the social, cultural, historical and political contingencies and complexities of the African context to the "regulating principles" (Bernstein, 2000) of Western mathematical discourses. It is achieved via its mythologizing reference to techno-scientific 'progress' as the "saviour" of humanity and the environment. Rationalist Enlightenment for which the technological and scientific achievements enabled by the mathematical sciences sustains the Western imagination's 'rightful' supremacy, permits this "rescue" of Africa and Africans from themselves in these terms.

Selected 'talented African' students, as individuals, are plucked from their communities, (where no doubt they may be 'tainted' by localized context, collectivist culture and indigenous knowledge) and inserted into the context of the AIMS institute where they have access to high-level Western-endorsed Science, and where the objectives and operations of the institute are supported by leading academic institutions in the United Kingdom in scientific disciplines that traditionally have no studied interest in contemporary Africa. This decontextualization, (where they are decontaminated from their community's 'deficits'), is ironically viewed as 'building capacity' in

individual African students to enable them to “fix” Africa’s problems. The ideology of individualism is transposed onto the complex collective concerns of African communities and the African context. These complex concerns of Africa, interconnected to historical global participation and engagement, are essentialized as ‘African problems’ that require Western-authorized Science to “fix” through scientifically-trained African individuals. The authority of the voice of Science to speak for issues outside its domains of theoretical practice to complex, issues of a socio-historical, political, cultural and global nature, while dismissing the investments of power and agency that has constructed “the problem” of Africa and contributed to the conditions of ongoing neo-colonialism is astonishingly naïve and somewhat arrogant.

The mythologizing and re-contextualizing gaze (Dowling, 1998; 2001) of the Mathematical Sciences is implicated in the various subjectivities or identities in which the subjects of mathematics teaching practices are constructed. Mathematical literacy (via the term ‘numeracy’) even goes to the core of one’s citizenship in the individualistic neo-liberal parlance of Western Mathematics curricular documents (Swanson, 2008). Within the constructs of ‘citizen’ afforded by the requirements of the nation state, economic contributions to its modernizing capacity are tied to ‘levels of literacy’, especially scientific literacy, and mathematical ‘failure’ is framed within discourses of need and ‘crisis’ (in the example of South Africa) for the nation state. Here mathematics education is in dissonance with democracy (Skovsmose and Valero, 2001). Constructions of disadvantage (Swanson, 1998, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008) and constructed ‘failure’ in mathematics are inextricably informed by social difference discourses, such as race, ethnicity, gender, ability, language, socio-economics, culture, as well as citizenship and geo-political differences. Zevenbergen (2003), Lerman and Tsatsaroni (1998), and Dowling (1998), as a few early examples, provide useful discussions on how ‘failure’ is constituted within mathematical discourses, performing violence on bodies in contexts of its production and the identities it constitutes. My own work has elaborated on this focus as well (Swanson, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006). I will now excerpt from a published contribution (Swanson, 2008), which was written as a response to Eric Gutstein (2008) with respect to a social justice mathematics education project. This excerpt speaks more definitively to the question of mathematics and citizenship and the oppressions this affords, providing a discursive example of this relationship within a curriculum document:

The prevalent, but false, understanding of mathematics as an objective discourse that affords positions of political “neutrality” within its discursive parameters is one which gives license to mathematics’ use as an instrument of capitalist relations of production and advances the cause of neo-liberalism globally. In other words, “neutrality” and

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“objectivity” serve as a ‘cover’ for neoliberal and neocolonial discourses. It doesn’t take much to notice that standard (Westernized) school mathematics curricular are underpinned by particular value systems (Bishop, 2001a, 2001b) that reify individualistic and civil libertarianism, and advance technocentric, progressivist, and capitalist tenets (Bishop, 1995).

Common progressivist and utilitarian rhetoric on the ‘importance’ of mathematics learning in schools often make claims to “good citizenship” and vocational advancement. A ‘successful citizen’, according to this tenet, is one that has access to the power of mathematics to ‘know the world’. This is because, (according to the BC 2007 Mathematics K-7 Curriculum IRP’s description of the ‘Nature of Mathematics’), “mathematics is one way of trying to understand, interpret, and describe our world” (p. 13). Yet, the politics of such ‘coming to know’ is most commonly denied, so that Mathematics’ ability to enable its knowing subjects to ‘describe our world’ is purportedly divorced from subjective influence and human interference: Mathematics has great utilitarian worth here, but is untainted by the messiness of politics and human vulnerability. ‘Failure’, in these terms, is therefore constructed, ironically, as a condition of being an unknowing mathematical subject.

Consequently, a citizen’s purpose and worth is defined by their access to mathematical numeracy: “Numeracy ...(is)... required by all persons to function successfully within our technological world” (BC 2007 K-7 Mathematics IRP’s Rationale), so that someone without access is a problem to the state and a ‘failed’ citizen. Yet, access to mathematics must nevertheless be differentiated to satisfy the socio-economic and political requirements of the nation state. Not all citizens are allowed to excel at mathematics! It is not for nothing that mathematics is most often the most divisive subject on the school curriculum (Dowling, 1998). Standardized testing, streaming / tracking systems in schools for mathematics and pronounced differentiated teaching practices in this subject, as well as other gate-keeping controls, ensure that a differentiated hierarchy of access is produced that emulates, assists, (re)produces, and is (re)produced by the hierarchy within capitalist relations of production. Mathematics’ high status in the “social division of labour of discourses” (Bernstein, 2000) within schools and society, makes it a high stakes game to play, and its “strong grammar” (Bernstein, 2000) provides it with significant cultural caché for those with the luck and privilege to have access to it as knowing subjects and citizens.

“Successful citizenship”, therefore, is constructed accordingly along the lines of privileged access to mathematical culture, but referenced in terms of ‘innate capacities’ and ‘ability’ to ensure that the privileged access is hidden, normalized, and often even justified under the auspices of being “democratic”. It is generally considered “democratic” for students to have differentiated

access to mathematics according to their “needs”, “learning styles” (often euphemistic for a legitimizing of constructions of “ability”), “interests”, and “abilities”. This is important to consider in coming to an understanding of what it might mean to do social justice mathematics education, while complicating these terms for their oxymoronic tendencies (Bernstein, 2000, p. 213–215).

The often suppressed ideological investments of mathematical discourse and practice in various contexts align strongly with questions of ethical engagement, and why we ‘do’ or ‘don’t’ do mathematics, who has access and what kinds of mathematics are taught or not taught to whom, and why, are caught up in these considerations.

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

In 2005, an initiative was undertaken at a prominent Western Canadian university, the University of British Columbia, to launch an online international undergraduate course offered to diverse international students of *Universitas21* partners world-wide that presented a critical global focus on some of the most important social, political and ecological issues of our time. Platformed on WebCT and later VISTA, the course was conceptualized as having a strong transdisciplinary mandate and, consistent with the university’s slogan of “Education for global citizenship”, it would be operationalized under this banner.

Under the leadership of Dr. Leah Macfadyen, collaboration from experts and interested parties across the university took place in developing the various themes, modules and materials for ‘global citizenship’, a concept that the university was using for international marketization as providing a ‘cutting-edge’ and ‘relevant’ educational experience for its students, and yet no one at the administrative level could define the meaning of it, let alone imagine what should be in such a course carrying ‘global citizenship’ in its title. Cross-disciplinary debate ensued as to what might be the key areas of focus for such a course while not foreclosing on any set definition. I have been involved in facilitating several offerings of the twelve-module course since its second offering in 2006, and have been since then involved in its evolution of ideas as well as a concomitant research project to better understand what appears to be the ‘transformative’ potential of the course. I have also presented on the course at various conferences and speaking opportunities. The transformative qualities of the course were noted by several facilitators early on in its offerings. From a report written by a group of course facilitators in 2006, the following was noted:

Instructors observed extensive inter-student discussion, idea-sharing and peer-teaching within the course. Student writing, discussion contributions and feedback suggest that the course was a challenging,

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inspiring and unusual learning experience. Students displayed evidence of increased critical thinking, understanding of linkages between 'global issues', and reflection on their learning and experience. Many described an increased commitment to participatory action as citizens, locally and globally. (Macfadyen, Hewling & Swanson, 2006, p. 2)

The transdisciplinary as well as international nature of the course offers opportunities not easily available in other courses, ones that permit intellectual and paradigmatic border crossing and a forum for participants from far-flung and local contexts to be able, from situated perspectives, to debate critical global concerns and possibilities from multiple perspectives as if looking at the world in parallax. In this sense, in providing a pedagogic and activist commons where participants can contribute ideas, knowledge, contribute further to course materials, and debate from their various locales, it opens up the possibility of performing glocalization pedagogically. While still administered by the university, the openness of this upper undergraduate course, while still conducted in English (and the hegemony of this cannot be ignored), permits participants from universities in Hong Kong, UK, US, Australia, South America, across Canada, and elsewhere to participate in real and non-real time discussions from their own perspectives and localized contexts, contributing to the learning and support of others. Students and facilitators from diverse interests, ethnic groups, cultures, spiritualities, immigrant and indigenous experiences, and political persuasions, interact with each other on a VISTA discussion board with threads and sub-threads being produced as rhizomes to nested conversations in a highly ecological way. Importantly, students bring their expertise and interests from different disciplinary, and hence also ideological, foci intensifying and enriching the critical and multiple forms of engagement – whether from education, business, sociology, nursing, social work, forestry, biological sciences, or other fields.

In this sense, this transdisciplinary course provides some possibilities of an alternative globalization project within the academic institution (Swanson, 2011). While the course is overtly political, it resists foreclosure, maintaining an internally reflective mandate by asking iteratively what global citizenship and its value might be across the modules, returning cyclically to the question of what global citizenship might mean for each participant from their situated and personal perspectives. Fostering a sense of reflective judgment (King & Kitchener, 1994) and discernment, enables personal choice and a sense of identity/ identifiableness in relation to concepts of global citizenship in critical perspective. This self-positioning and ethical engagement is encouraged from informed positions within the learning collective and activist commons. Rather than avoid uncomfortable and difficult knowledge (Britzman, 1998), the course critically encourages the embrace of the dilemmas, paradoxes and

contradictions of global citizenship, while nevertheless committing to an ethical stance in the world.

In this sense, I assert that this course begins to counter the effects of neoliberalism even as it makes use of its instruments (via its platforming as an international course through the university's internationalization project.) I believe this is achieved through the strong focus on critical, reflexive perspectives, the openness and dialogicness encouraged through the course, the embrace of a pedagogy and philosophy of glocalization, and in that the course is internally reflective with participants contributing to its curriculum and further development.

A WAY IN AS A WAY OUT

I briefly return to a set of questions introduced at the start of this chapter. They act as an invitation to a possible counter-envisioning of our global future(s) in an era of rampant neoliberalism and its consequent intensification of international education globally. From the perspective of a globe in economic and ecological crisis, we are reminded of Hegel's analogy to Minerva's owl that spreads its wings only at the falling of the dusk. With a sense of urgency, we might ask ourselves similarly if the imaginative capacity to think and assert otherwise will come too late for a meaningful and sustainable restructuring for all global citizens in local contexts of the Earth's ecosystems. What then can be done to prevent this self-and-other destructive scenario? How then do we proceed to undo it? What is the leadership role of the university in such an undertaking, and within a context of the intensification of international education, what might be the possibilities of a vitalization of a counter-hegemonic 'third forum' within the intellectual and political work of academics working within the evils of neoliberalized institutions within a broader context of globalization?

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NOTES

- ¹ In the delocation from one context and relocation into a new evoking context, knowledge and meanings are reconfigured through the recontextualization principle such that new possibilities and new limitations are produced, often with unintended consequences (Bernstein, 2000). Given the power relations differential in such a one-sided process, it opens up spaces for new and insidious forms of oppression. It is in the ‘knowledge transfer’ of pre-authored knowledge produced in a powerful North that oppressions are produced.
- ² These remarks are substantiated further by direct observation and personal experience, as I have just completed a term of consulting for a GCC university in a Gulf state, assisting their College of Education in opening up a new national centre for professional development of the state’s school teachers.
- ³ See Dowling’s 1998 critique of Paulus Gerdes’ assumptions in the use of such ethno-mathematical language applied to another mathematical and African cultural context.