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Global citizenship education otherwise: pedagogical and theoretical insights

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This chapter weaves together personal pedagogical and theoretical insights offered as tools for identifying problematic patterns of representations and relationships in global citizenship education. This analysis attempts to make visible the limits and implications of a dominant modern/colonial global imaginary that circumscribes and restricts what is possible to imagine in terms of educational change. These insights gesture towards the pedagogical urgency to think *educationally* about forms of global citizenship education that can help us to imagine *otherwise*.

Conundrums of educational practice

In 1998, after 8 years as a K-12 teacher in Brazil, I left the classroom to become a project coordinator at a British Council office in the State of Parana. My first job was to coordinate a program aiming to connect Brazilian and British State-funded schools for partnerships involving mutual visits (of teachers) around projects that should be 1)sustainable in the long term; 2)of mutual learning; and 3)focused on global citizenship. This followed a government initiative to to get every school in the UK linked to a school in a ‘developing country’. My first task was to participate in a school principals’ conference in the UK promoting the program and consulting with my ‘stakeholders’ in that country.

There was a great deal of interest in Brazil and I had the opportunity to ask many principals why they would like to link their schools with a Brazilian school and what they would like to see (*educationally*) happening in the partnership. The general response was that they wanted a school ‘out-in-the-sticks’ (preferably in the middle of the Amazon forest and without running water) in order to teach students in the UK ‘how lucky they were’ (so that they could appreciate their privilege) and give these students a sense of agency and achievement based on ‘making a difference to unfortunate others’. When I asked what they thought this would mean (*educationally*) for Brazilian teachers and schools, the overwhelming response was: ‘Do not worry! We will send poor schools in Brazil (old) books, computers, stationary and (used) shoes/clothes’.

I knew intuitively something was wrong, but I did not have the language at the time to name the problem. My next task was to do the same with principals and teachers at a conference in Brazil. There was again, a great deal of interest in the program and I asked the same questions (honestly, but naively, hoping my colleagues would help me articulate what the problem I encountered in the UK was): why do you want to link your school

with a school in the UK and what do you want to see (*educationally*) happening in the partnership? The response was both surprising and not: ‘We would like to connect our schools to schools in the ‘developed world’ to teach our children what progress looks like, what students here should aspire for’. When I asked if they saw any problem with that statement the response was: ‘Yes, our schools are under-funded. They could share their resources by sending us (old) books and computers too’.

I was left in a very difficult position. My ‘stakeholders’ agreed with each other, the success of the program seemed secure: the partnerships could be sustainable, they were learning from each other what they wanted to learn, their (thin/soft) common notion of global citizenship is the one upheld by most educators and institutions worldwide. As a project coordinator, my work was easy. As an educator, though, something kept me awake at night. The word ‘*educationally*’ (which I emphasized above) demands a very different kind of responsibility than the responsibility of implementing a project.

The modern/colonial global imaginary: a divided humanity

Since then, the task of naming and addressing this problem has become central to my work (see Andreotti 2006; 2011a; 2011b). I have focused my research efforts on trying to articulate how and why humanity has been divided between those who are perceived to be leading progress, development and human evolution; and those who are perceived to be lagging behind. I have recently started to articulate this problem as the result of the violent dissemination of a dominant modern/colonial global imaginary based on a single story of progress, development and human evolution that ascribes differentiated value to cultures/countries that are perceived to be ‘behind’ in history and time and cultures/countries perceived to be ‘ahead’. Many scholars have examined this educational phenomenon (see for example Willinsky 1998; Eriksson Baaz, 2005; Heron, 2007; McEwan, 2009; Bryan, 2008; Andreotti 2011a; Shultz 2007; Abdi and Shultz 2008; Tallon, 2012 among others) and have been perplexed by its power to capture our collective imagination and desires in ways that are extremely difficult to identify, let alone interrupt.

This single story equates economic development with knowledge of universal worth, conceptualises progress as advances in science and technology, and sees those who possess knowledge, science and technology as global leaders who can fix the problems of those who lack these traits (see for example Spivak, 2004; Jefferess, 2008; Andreotti, 2011). Therefore, in this modern/colonial global imaginary, humanity is divided between those who perceive themselves as knowledge holders, hard workers, world-problem solvers, rights dispensers, global leaders; and those who are perceived to be (and often *perceive their cultures* as) lacking knowledge, laid back, problem creators, aid dependent and global followers in their journey towards the undisputed goal of development. I have been interested in examining how this mythology has been constructed, sustained, normalized, and naturalized through education, why we have held to these constructs for so long despite the observable violence that they create, and whether we can re-orient education away from these tendencies (see for example Andreotti 2006; 2011; 2014a).

In my educational practice, I find it easier to demonstrate the systemic production of inequalities through a visual narrative inspired by the work of Gayatri C. Spivak. I use a modified version of Jens Galshiot's sculpture of *Justitia - The Western Goddess of Justice* to offer a glimpse of her critique. In Galshiot's sculpture, a very heavy white woman is being carried by a skinny black man. She has her eyes closed and is carrying a scale (representing justice) in one hand and a staff in another. She is saying: "I'm sitting on the back of a man. He is sinking under the burden. I would do anything to help him. Except stepping down from his back". I have re-drawn the scene to invert gender relations as a picture of a gagged black woman carrying a blindfolded heavy white man holding the scales and saying the same as the woman in the sculpture: "I will do anything to help you except what would really change the historical conditions of our relationship" (Andreotti 2014b).

When I present this to my students, I ask if they can count and name the injustices in the scene - both immediate injustices and injustices by implication. For example, the division of labour could be traced back to violent colonial/imperial processes involving expansionist control of lands and exploitative accumulation of wealth grounded on racialized notions of cultural supremacy and exceptionalism. Carrying the scales could represent the onto-epistemic violence of the 'worlding of the world as West' (i.e. the definition of what is meant by justice and the control of institutions that deliver it). The blindfold and the promise of help as long as nothing changes makes visible the connection between denials, desires and fantasies, where those enabled to dispense 'help' (education, development, health, credit, rights, and democracy) project themselves onto the world as benevolent agents of justice. I use the gagging of the subaltern woman to talk about Spivak's essay 'Can the subaltern speak?', in relation to two key questions: 'What are those over-socialized in cultural supremacy able to (and what do they want to) hear?'; and 'Can the subaltern be a self-transparent autonomous speaker?' I also use the image to problematize the tendency to see the 'Third World' as a repository of data for First world students to write papers about (and become 'experts' of).

North-South engagements

The relationship between the white man and the non-white woman in the picture mirrors historical patterns of international engagements that are extremely challenging to communicate, such as the often unacknowledged connections between knowledge production, discursive enunciations, and denial of complicity in harm. In response to the need to identify harmful tendencies in international engagements and representations, I have created a checklist of seven historical colonial patterns that forms the acronym 'HEADS UP', describing representations and engagements that are

1. **Hegemonic** (justifying superiority and exceptionalism)
2. **Ethnocentric** (projecting one view, one 'forward', one idea of development, as universal)
3. **Ahistorical** (forgetting historical legacies and complicities)
4. **Depoliticized** (disregarding power inequalities and ideological roots of analyses and proposals)

5. Self-congratulatory and self-serving (oriented towards self-affirmation /CV building)
6. (offering) Un-complicated solutions (offering easy solutions that do not require systemic change)
7. Paternalism (seeking affirmation of superiority through the provision of help) (Andreotti 2012a, 2)

I have also created a second list to complexify our attempts to address these tendencies. This second list asks how we can address:

1. hegemony without creating new hegemonies through our own forms of resistance?
2. ethnocentrism without falling into absolute relativism and forms of essentialism and anti-essentialism that reify elitism?
3. ahistoricism without fixing a single perspective of history to simply reverse hierarchies and without being caught in a self-sustaining narrative of vilification and victimisation?
4. depoliticization without high-jacking political agendas for self-serving ends and without engaging in self-empowering critical exercises of generalisation, homogenisation and dismissal of antagonistic positions?
5. self-congratulatory tendencies without crushing generosity and altruism?
6. people's tendency to want simplistic solutions without producing paralysis and hopelessness?
7. paternalism without closing opportunities for short-term redistribution? (Andreotti 2012b)

Working in this area has shown me that every 'solution' I find to a problem generates other problems that could not be predicted from the outset. I am now convinced that undoing the legacy of the single story will require an attitude of permanent vigilance and compassion. As we realize our wider complicity and vested interests in social hierarchies and principles of separability the auto-pilot position is to reproduce these same patterns precisely while declaring our innocence or transformation. Maybe it is only when we realize the circularity of our responses that other possibilities (for different mistakes) may open up. Until we learn this lesson, we will keep making the same mistakes we have made before.

Is knowledge enough?

Wrestling with these ideas for the past 17 years has led me to question whether knowledge is enough to change how people imagine themselves, their relationships with each other and with the world at large. The modern/colonial global imaginary is extremely powerful and works as an invisible frame that structures specific configurations of cognition, affect, embodiment, imagination, and aspiration. For those of us over-socialized within it, the imaginary is normal, natural and unlimited in its capacity to apprehend reality. It defines what is intelligible, the range of questions that can be formulated, and the appropriateness of responses: what is possible to think and to identify with. The modern/colonial global imaginary consecrates its 'shine' (of seamless progress, heroic human agency and evolution as wealth accumulation) while denying its necessary

shadow (of violent dispossession, destitution, extraction and genocide) (Mignolo 2011; Andreotti 2012a). In other words, for ‘us’ to think of ourselves as more knowledgeable, educated, ingenious, sanitary and evolved dispensers of rights, schooling and democracy, we have inevitably needed others who embody the opposite characteristics (see also Bhabha 1994). The potential equality of the Other as well as the awareness of our dependency and complicity in their material impoverishment significantly threatens our self-image and perceived (pleasurable) entitlements to intervene in the world as ‘change makers’. This constitutive disavowal (foreclosure) of complicity in historical (colonial) and on-going harm is one of the most difficult aspects to be addressed in international education.

Exposing the production of these relational hierarchical dichotomies is not enough to change them because our attachments to these hierarchies are not only cognitive or conscious. Drawing on psychoanalysis, Kapoor (2014) outlines how we are *libidinally bound* to the pleasures of this modern/colonial global imaginary and its by-products (e.g. nationalism, exceptionalism, consumerism, materialism, narcissism) as we enjoy the (false) sense of stability, fulfilment and satisfaction that they provide (e.g. the sense of belonging, community, togetherness, prestige, heroism, and pride). Kapoor (2014) reminds us that our unconscious desires and (humanitarian) fantasies circumscribe the ways we think and act: we do not necessarily know our vested interests in the global imaginary, global citizenship and/or international education.

Gayatri Spivak’s earlier work has also been particularly enabling in giving me the language to talk about these issues in educational contexts. Her elaborate examination of unequal global relations emphasizes the importance of complexifying analyses, exposing paradoxes, problematizing benevolence, uncovering our investments and addressing the constitutive denial of (our own) complicity in systemic harm (see for example Spivak 2004; Kapoor 2004; Andreotti 2007; Andreotti 2014a). By focusing on foreclosures rather than knowledge deficits that can be addressed with more information, Spivak problematizes the idea that by imparting knowledge we can change the way people behave. For Spivak, colonial modernity has conditioned us to desire things that reproduce systemic harm. It is only when we interrupt our satisfaction with these desires that we may be able to change how we feel and relate to the world. More knowledge (of what to do, for example) does not necessarily change the allocation of desire, but identifying desires can help de-mystify the fantasies behind them and mobilize desires in alternative directions to open up possibilities previously unintelligible to the invested self. In this sense, she conceptualizes education as “an uncoercive re-arrangement of desires” (Spivak 2004:526) that aims to generate “an ethical imperative towards the Other [of Western humanism], *before will*” (535).

In order to illustrate what she argues in practice, I usually propose a problem solving exercise, which is the following:

You are the teacher of Narcissus. Narcissus transforms into a mirror everything you show him. Your task as a teacher is to find a way to show Narcissus what he is doing so that so that he can relate to a world beyond himself. How do you do that? Most importantly, as you perform this exercise and start to unpack the layers

of representations within it, your task is also to observe yourself respond to this task – you need to hold before you any affect (e.g. joy, frustration, etc.) that is expressed in your body (rather than have the affect hold you). These affects are expressions of your conditioned (and consciously disavowed) desires that the exercise intends to put on the table.

As people move the focus beyond trying to provide solutions and start to see Narcissus as an image of themselves, they tend to get frustrated with the impossibility of the task. This is the point where some start to realize how our analyses of problems are already subordinated to our hopes for solutions, our desires for betterment, progress, knowledge, innocence, entitlement and futurity. People want to see themselves in a positive light in the mirror and this quest for satisfaction severely restricts their perception and what is possible to happen. In other words, the exercise tries to show that it is precisely by confronting the impossibility of our desire for changing the world without changing ourselves (by interrupting our satisfaction with pleasurable desires), that lies a possibility for change that can challenge the modern/colonial imaginary.

In my recent work in this area I have used a strategic distinction between political and existential spheres of existence that has been extremely useful (see Ahenakew, Andreotti, Cooper and Hireme 2014). The political sphere is marked by socially and historically constructed scripts of identity and institutions, while the existential sphere operates beyond these scripts. In the political sphere our relationships to each other are mediated by knowledge, identity and cognitive understandings. In the existential sphere, we connect to each other through an ineffable and visceral pull that centers our interdependence and that commands inter-entity responsibilities, before individual will (Spivak 2004). The educational task lies at the interface of both spheres: how do we address the modern tendency to either over-determine the world, or to withdraw from it (Biesta 2014)? How can we disarm and de-center ourselves and displace our desires and cognitive obsessions to wake up and grow up to face a plural, undefined, wonderful and terrifying world which inevitably brings both pain and joy, without turning our back to the violences we have so far inflicted upon it? How can we think about global citizenship education with/without constructs like the nation state, the market, modern subjectivities and modern educational institutions? What does global citizenship education look like for those enchanted with modernity and invested in its continuation? What does it look like for those disenchanting with it and already looking for alternatives?

Up the river work

I would like to finish this chapter with a visual narrative that speaks to the pressure to communicate critical analyses quickly and with precision. I have often encountered resistance coming from those advocating the speedy support for the (more urgent) immediate needs of people who are affected by poverty or injustice. In this context, critiques that problematize the benevolence of those trying to help are perceived as elitist, irrelevant and paralyzing. I use this visual narrative in my response to this assertion to show the importance of deep reflection and coordinated efforts in any form of intervention/ activism. The visual narrative involves a group of people who see many young children drowning in a river with a strong current. Their first impulse would

probably be to try to save them or to call for help. But what if they looked up the river and saw many boats throwing the children in the water and these boats were multiplying by the minute? How many different tasks would be necessary to stop the boats and prevent this from happening again? There are at least four inter-related tasks: (1) rescuing the children in the water, (2) stopping the boats from throwing the children in the water, (3) going to the villages of the boat crew to understand why this is happening in the first place, and (4) collecting the bodies of those who have died to grieve and raise awareness of what has happened. In deciding what to do, people would need to remember that some rescuing techniques may not work in the conditions of the river, and that some strategies to stop the boats may invite or fuel even more boats to join the fleet. They may even realize that they are actually in one of the boats, throwing children in the river with one hand and trying to rescue some of them back with the other hand.

I propose that education should help people in the task of learning to 'go up the river' to the roots of the problem, so that the emergency strategies down the river can be better informed in the hope that one day no more boats will throw children in the water. Going up the river work, while rescuing children in the river, involves asking essential, difficult and often disturbing begged questions that may implicate rescuers in the reproduction of harm. In the context of global citizenship education in Canada, questions could include: Why does it seem natural for us (and for people in other places) to believe that people in poorer countries need the help of Canadians? What ideals of knowledge and society are disseminated in these encounters if assumptions are left un-problematized? How is the implication of Canada and Canadians in unjust political and economic practices rendered visible or invisible in global citizenship initiatives? How is Canadian benevolence framed in the narratives of global citizenship (and what does it say about Canadian culture)? How is Canadian international benevolence mobilized in ways that deflect attention from (and responsibility for) local injustices that reproduce *here* similar violences, poverty and suffering to those experienced elsewhere? What are the implications of incorporating global citizenship into universities' corporate brands? How is the practice of global citizenship supporting or suppressing deeper education about global issues, and ethical solidarities with dissenting communities locally and globally? What global imaginaries and ideas of development are mobilized in global citizenship initiatives? How can education become a space for conversation where, together with our students, we can examine our desires for progress, innocence and futurity and our cravings for certainty, comfort and control? How can we secure spaces for grown up conversations in global citizenship education beyond fears of confronting (white) privilege and (Canadian) exceptionalism or the wish for a quick exit/redemption from implication in harm? (see also Andreotti 2014c; Andreotti and Pashby 2013; Tallon and McGregor 2014).

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