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# Global Citizenship Education / Learning for Sustainability: tensions, ‘flaws’, and contradictions as critical moments of possibility and radical hope in educating for alternative futures

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## ABSTRACT

‘Global citizenship’ entered public parlance prominently during heightened globalisation. To be a citizen of this new globalised, interconnected world was to be a subject of capital. Like Janus, a subject of this neoliberal world order was to be both an inwardly-gazing subject of the nation state, and simultaneously an outwardly-gazing subject of global capital. ‘Global citizenship’ (GC) carries the inherent contradiction of Janus, being a juridical contradiction. It looks both inwards and outwards and carries borders as shadows. Viewing contradiction at the heart of GC as a ‘productive tension’, rather than ‘flaw’, by way of entry into Global Citizenship Education (GCE), and by implication Learning for Sustainability (Lfs), may offer the necessary vector in prizing open new windows to hopeful, alternative futures. The difficult task of doing so should not be sidestepped in the shift from GCE to Lfs. Recognition of the various ‘distancing strategies’ deployed within these discourses is critical in overcoming their overdetermination as instruments of state social, national and economic ambitions. The implications for education and our socio-ecological futures of the embrace of contradiction at the heart of GC needs critical attention toward the imperative of mobilising Critical GCE (CGCE) to enact possibilities of radically hopeful futures.

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## Introduction: in homage to contradiction

‘Global citizenship’ (GC) entered public parlance more prominently under heightened globalisation and ‘New Public Management’ systems, intensified multilateral free trade agreements, increased government austerity policies, and the economisation of all relations under the spread and seepage of global capital. As a newer mode of governmentality, neoliberal globalisation underwrote the conservative political doctrines of the then UK prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, and US president, Ronald Reagan, in the 1980s. In the 1990s, it came to be aligned, at least from ‘the West’, of triumphant capitalism exemplified by the fall of the Berlin wall, the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, and the fall of apartheid and emergence of a ‘New South Africa’ made in the image of Western capitalist democracies. To be a citizen of this new globalised and interconnected world was to be a subject of capital.

With the shift from an Enlightenment ‘Rights of Man’, to civil-libertarian ‘Rights of the Citizen’ (Gamal and Swanson 2018) as an extension of the nation state and its economic interests, the

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emphasis on the citizen, and hence the role, rights and duties of citizenship, produced a dialectical tension in this new globalising outlook. While borders were to be traversed in the name of capital, the state and patriotic allegiances to it centralised global competition, supporting the capitalist system at scale. This trend advanced capitalisation of securitisation as a heightened state of bordering, supporting a deepening ‘crimmigration’ system (Stumpf 2006) as internal and external migration increased and ‘the migrant’ became uncitizenised (Gamal and Swanson 2018). Under everyday bordering, the free flow of goods, services and capital, had its limits when it came to ‘citizens’. Not everyone could be a global citizen (Jefferess 2008). In this neoliberal world, being a subject of capital and a subject of the nation became necessary allies, albeit uncomfortable ones at times. Like Janus, the ancient Roman god of dualities, a subject of this world order was to be both an inwardly-gazing subject of the state, and simultaneously an outwardly-gazing subject of global capital, constantly on the prowl for new markets, new people, new places, and new opportunities to exploit.

The term GC carries the inherent contradiction of Janus, being a juridical contradiction. It looks both inwards and outwards, and carries borders-and-bordering as Derridean spectres (Swanson 2013a). ‘Global’ implies spillage out into the world beyond state borders, while ‘citizenship’ implies being subject to the state. Here, rights and duties of citizenship exact patronage to the state, with implications for how we might think of global citizenship education (GCE), enshrined in the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) (Target 4.7) [<https://indicators.report/targets/4-7/>]. The latent juridical contradiction in GC points to at least two differing interpretations and experiences of the term. It could either serve as a Euro-modernist ‘flaw’ at the root of its conception, or the site of a ‘productive tension’ with which one could more usefully engage, especially in its realisations as Critical GCE (CGCE). Viewing the contradiction at the heart of GC as *productive tension* by way of critical entry into GCE, may offer the necessary vector in prizing open new pathways to seeking alternative futures, while simultaneously not sidestepping the unavoidably difficult task of doing so. Neoliberalism casts a gaze (Swanson 2013b) over the world and renders it comprehensible/comprehensible to its own (common) sense-making, repulsing other versions of reality. The ‘gaze’ seeks to make the worldly systemic operations a unified frame under global capitalism. As neoliberalism casts its unifying/universalising gaze across the world, so the spaces of difficulty, ambiguity and the seemingly contradictory, as interpretations of GC and carried into GCE, become sites of possibility for critical resistance/resilience against Euro-modernism, capitalist exploitation and its colonial legacies.

The implications for education, and by extension our socio-ecological futures, of the critical embrace of contradiction and ambiguity at the heart of GC, rather than an opportunity for its categorical dismissal, is something which needs considered attention. Moves to subsume GC within sustainable development education (SDE) or LfS, as in the Scottish national curriculum, *Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)*, may appear to sidestep the discomforts of engaging critically with the conundrums created through our infatuation with capitalism, but does not diminish the urgent need to do so. It may be an unpalatable and inconvenient truth to foster in youth a worldly, critically-conscious disposition, especially if it encourages an unruliness toward authority and the establishment in resistance to the status quo. Often, it is perceived as a dangerous move for civil society bureaucrats to write into national schooling curricula principles of education that would encourage a critical stance by youth, where justified, toward their national governments and the inept policies they may enact. But, it is an act of radical hope (Lear 2006; Swanson 2014) that alternative futures may be sought. These are futures beyond our current apocalyptic one marked by enlarging, intersectional spheres of crisis.<sup>1</sup> Such discomforting moves require conviction, imagination, and courage, but also political will on the part of those that hold sway over education systems and public policies.

This article progresses arguments that engage contradictions and tensions latent to GC/GCE. It does not rehearse their cartographies, discursive positionings and ideological inheritances already articulated (Gamal and Swanson 2017, 2018; Swanson and Pashby 2016; Swanson 2015, 2013a, 2011; Andreotti et al. 2016; Pashby 2011; Khoo 2011; Stein 2015) in greater depth. It opens up

further trajectories by attentively considering *contradiction* within GCE, bringing into play the tensions between the social and ecological, especially around social and ecological justices (Swanson 2016) witnessed as shadows invested in GCE/LfS. Here, discourses of GCE (Swanson and Pashby 2016) will be updated in respect of Scotland, especially in the subsequent move from GCE as umbrella term for this curricular thematic area, to LfS as the newer umbrella term in which GCE becomes subsumed. This provides opportunities to analyse this shift and its recontextualisation within CfE, pointing at absences, surface linguistic performances, and missed opportunities.

‘Global citizenship education: inward and outward referencing’ explicates a brief history of the moves made by GCE and LfS, and the political economy of the term GCE under neoliberal operations, exemplified in the Scottish context (Gamal and Swanson 2017). ‘Distancing Strategies’ highlights the range of ideological communication devices and strategies deployed within Scottish policy to create *distance* to historiographies deemed problematic to the nation state and *proximity* to nationalist ambitions. This promotional language serves to evoke patriotic, nationalist sentiments in the process of ‘making the citizen’ via school educational directives within GCE and LfS. ‘The Conclusion: Contradiction as opportunity’ returns to the metaphor of Janus in articulating the ‘flaw’ within GC discourses. It restates the arguments that the double-facing contradictions within GC are *productive* for GCE and do not work against its critical purposes. Rather, they offer potential for deeper criticality that may foster spaces to mobilise alternative possibilities. The tug-and-pull of the dual movement acts as a site of ideological struggle and brings reflexivity to operationalising criticality within GCE. Such criticality turns inward in self-critique, while outwardly countenancing collective action to renew the world, in Arendtian terms (Gordon 2001). It creates opportunity to embrace and rework the inherent contradictions in GC(E) toward the purposes of making possible radically-different futures marked by hope. It connects this dual-facing orientation to a critique of the parallel metaphor of inward and outwardly-facing discursive strategies, often deployed to entrench nationalist interests via education. Rather than ‘whitewashing’ or indeed ‘greenwashing’ GC in the move from GCE to LfS, the argument instead asserts that the historical, latent contradictions and tensions within GC, GCE and LfS are critical opportunities for fostering critical consciousness, rather than problems that need sidestepping, dismissal or erasure.

‘The Conclusion’ restates key arguments and takes these further. Rather than creating the conditions for critical consciousness-raising in youth and fostering their political agency, the greenwashing and whitewashing deployed as nationalistic governing strategies via GCE and LfS take the place of genuine socio-ecological justice activisms. Such overtures suggest that political agency is achievable without the hard, courageous work that deep activism exacts from us, or the costs that are borne through transgressive pedagogical actions. Underscored by the deployment of a set of normalising governing and distancing strategies, such seamless ‘replacements’ are both beguiling and dangerous to the gritty task of prizing open windows into alternative futures, ones imbued with radical hope.

While *conceptual* in the main, the arguments outlined nevertheless apply a *critical discursive analytical approach* (CDA) (Wodak 2007; Mullet 2018) to strategic documents, policy frameworks, and performative-political discourses. While Scottish policy documents provide a small ‘case study’ or policy discourse example of the ways in which discourses are mobilised to perform ideological nationalisms and enact certain governing strategies, such analytical processes are equally applicable to other policy arenas, (inter)national contexts and institutional communications, where evident. These contexts are recognised where discourses on GCE and SDE find traction and have become political instruments in the making of ‘the citizen’. A range of postcolonial/decolonial tropes are deployed insofar as they underscore a CDA approach to highlighted policy texts and communications. By visibilising the hidden devices deployed within policy discourse, critiques are advanced that exemplify how the contradictions, tensions and dualities of GC might be positively (re)appropriated toward critical intentions and consciousness-raising, and thus mobilised toward the objectives of evoking possible, hopeful futures.

## Global citizenship education: inward and outward referencing

This section traces historical curricular moves around GC and LfS within Scotland's CfE. It discusses the manoeuvres attributable to a dualistic inward and outward-facing Scotland, as well as a number of 'distancing strategies', thus re-invoking the contradictions and dualisms of Janus.

### Historical context

In its 2010 manifesto, the Scottish National Party (SNP) stated that it welcomes, 'proposals for the creation of *One Planet Schools* and ... will include action to continue the development of professional standards around sustainability education ...' (Report of the One Planet Schools Working Group (OPSWG) 2013, 6). The SNP-led government (SG) formed the OPSWG to fulfil its manifesto pledge, subsequently accepting their 31 recommendations. Three strands, *sustainable development education*, *global citizenship* and *outdoor learning*, wove together to constitute LfS, a move intended to realise the SG's 'high level educational priorities including raising attainment, improving behaviour, supporting inclusion and promoting health and wellbeing' (OPSWG 2013, 6).

This change marked a shift in the policy status of GCE along a number of dimensions. Prior to the subsuming of GCE under the banner of LfS, GCE was conceptualised as conjoining *education for citizenship*, *international education* and *sustainable development education*. *Education Scotland* (ES) intentioned GCE as learning about a global world, learning for life and work in a global society, and learning through global contexts. Here, several values – wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity – underpinned its framing. Two rationales animated GCE: GCE was conceived of as a way of mitigating the unprecedented global challenges facing Scotland by enabling students to acquire a range of skills, knowledge, values and attributes to prepare them for 'living and working in a global society' (Learning and Teaching Scotland (L&TS) 2011, 8). GCE would also 'instil' in students an understanding of 'Scotland's role within the wider world', enable students to 'develop an understanding of and engagement in democratic processes', as well as to appreciate and 'celebrate the diversity of Scotland's history, culture and heritage' (L&TS 2011, 8). Crisscrossing these principles is a commitment to combatting injustice and inequality in society and to defending human rights, and above all achieving an understanding that 'our lives are linked together in our increasingly independent and globalised world' (L&TS 2011, 8).

There are a number of problematic assumptions in this version of GCE, pointing to contradiction at the floor/flow of GC. Here, GCE is instrumentalised as a governing strategy and lacks an engagement with the ethical complexities that GC necessitates (Swanson and Pashby 2016). As an extension of national citizenship, it is mobilised selectively as a resource to position Scotland as a nation committed to fairness, equality and equity. Simultaneously, it asserts a 'whole school' ethos, appropriating *behaviourism* under the 'improving behaviour' banner, alongside 'inclusion', 'health and wellbeing', and 'raising attainment', thus also connoting *responsibilism* (Halse, Hartung, and Wright 2018) alongside a smorgasbord of other ambitions (Swanson and Pashby 2016) that evoke and construct the 'ideal', ready, law-abiding, 'responsible', docile and economically-contributory citizen for Scotland. This shift in positioning GC as a facet of LfS does not amount to a radical reimagining of the nature, scope and purpose of GC as deployed within Scottish educational policy. Rather, animating this change of classification is an attempt to reorient the 'outward' referencing GCE enacted in previous policy articulations (Arnott and Ozga 2010, 2016). Here, GCE education has been mobilised as resource to interpellate and invite people in Scotland to espouse a range of myths and unified values (inward-referencing), and at the same time, GCE is invoked to position Scotland as a distinct nation leading the world in sustainability (outward-referencing). In both referencing strategies, a nationalist ethos heavily inflects GC.

### Inward and outward referencing

SNP-led educational policy can be explored through a nexus of 'governing' and 'legitimation' strategies (Arnott and Ozga 2010, 314) mobilised to reconstitute a nationalist project through a

‘simultaneous process of “inwards” ... and “outward” referencing’ (347). Taken together, these strategies constitute an assemblage where ‘nationalism may be invoked implicitly as well as explicitly’ (342) and, crucially, selectively, as a policy resource and governmentality (Foucault 1991) or mentality of rule (Rose 1999). In what follows, we trace the trajectory of ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ referencing, highlighting the effects of discursive shift in the previous articulation of GCE and the newer LfS.

In previous articulations of GC, the SG and its agency, ES, issued guidelines linking GC with the concerns of CfE:

‘Think global, act local’ is a world-famous slogan that has been attributed to Sir Patrick Geddes, the Scottish biologist who was also an innovative thinker in urban planning and education. The words are part of a legacy which has influenced education for global citizenship today. (L&TS 2011, 5)

By invoking ‘legacy’, people in Scotland are invited ‘to identify as inheritors’ of a world-famous tradition (Arnott and Ozga 2016, 257) in which education is inherently concerned with globalism. This simultaneous inward-and-outward-referencing is articulated in the conception of GCE in Scottish policy. Viewed largely as offering solutions to challenges and opportunities engendered by globalisation, GC ‘equips’ young people with the ‘skills and attitude’ to enable readiness for Scotland to ‘adapt and thrive’ in a competitive global environment. It also places Scotland within the frame of progressivist modernism in the evocation of ‘twenty-first century’ and ‘fast-changing world’ (L&TS 2011). Simultaneously, it aligns with neoliberal governmentality that fosters in individuals strategies for adaptation/adaptability. Here, Scotland’s citizens are to ‘acquire’ desirable attributes of self-sufficiency independent of state responsibilities, thus distancing the state from its citizens while maintaining the element of paternalism. Simultaneously, this outward-referencing, which throws into relief the global competitive economic environment, engenders an inward-referencing, singling out climate change and poverty as key GCE challenges. It implicitly foregrounds global justice and ‘the idea of Scottish education (as socially just and fair)’ (Arnott and Ozga 2016, 260):

the big issues affecting our planet, such as climate change and global poverty, require an innovative generation that knows how to find solutions. ... The injustice and inequalities in society require people who care about human rights. (L&TS 2011, 8)

In foregrounding a concern with global social justice, GCE inwardly references Scotland as a social democratic state. This idea is supported further in other pronouncements in which explicit nationalist hubris is engaged in the selective process of historical mythmaking, contradicted by classism, racism and poverty rampant in Scotland, with one-in-five people in Scotland living below the poverty line (BBC, 28 March 2019):

And this nation pioneered free education for all, which resulted in Scots inventing and explaining much of the modern world. We called this the Scottish Enlightenment. And out of educational access came social mobility as we reached all the talents of a nation to change the world for the better. (Salmond, Speech to SNP Conference March 2011, in Arnott and Ozga 2016, 261)

This triumphantist inward-referencing is articulated explicitly in principles that GCE within Scottish policy enacts. One such principle anticipates that young people should ‘know, respect and care for the rights, responsibilities, values and opinions of others and understand Scotland’s role within the wider world’ (L&TS 2011). What is significant here is not only that GCE is an extension of national citizenship, but also that there is reluctance to critically engage with the legacy of empire and coloniality (Dussel 1995; Mignolo 2007; Quijano 2007), which continues to selectively shape the very idea of Scottishness. The inward-referencing and the hubris it entails enables an assemblage of governing technologies that reinvent the nation for-and-to the people. Concomitantly, this also gestures towards an outward-referencing that constructs Scotland as a distinct nation from the English, a victim of English historical aggression and absent from complicity in colonial violence (Leith 2010, 2012). In distancing itself from empire, the notion of Scotland here is of its being anchored

onto a world stage. In a raft of policy documents, this distancing from the English is achieved by aligning educational policies with European frameworks, seen in ES's self-evaluation framework, *How Good is Our School* (2015), which embeds the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) 'excellence' criteria in the Scottish quality framework. Similarly, the SG policy review of the direction of CfE speaks of 'emerging impacts seen in quality and equity in Scottish Schooling' (OECD 2015, 3).

While the previous version of GC was extensively detailed, the LfS version of GC was scant on detail, assuming an already-accepted understanding. This was evidenced in the LfS National Implementation Group (NIG) (2016) report under the section, *Vision for Scotland in 2030* (2016), and referenced almost exclusively as an element of LfS. The shift also connotes a new emphasis on the 'ecological', which serves not as a complicating factor to the social or vice versa, but as a distraction away from the more difficult work of engaging the contradictions asserted by the social in relation to the ecological.

By contrast, *Global Citizenship: Scotland's International Development Strategy* (IDS) (2016) articulates in some detail its understanding of GC. In both documents, the inward-referencing is marked by its continuity with previous understandings of GC in its address to Scottish people as inheritors of a tradition of social justice, fairness and equality. Scotland self-regards as a 'good global citizen' and claims on behalf of the nation that 'it is who we are today' (4). In the NIG report (2016), this inward-referencing is considerably more pronounced. Addressing practitioners and school leaders in Scotland, the report positions them as already passionately 'committed to the principles of social justice, human rights, global citizenship, democratic participation and living within the ecological limits of our planet' (2016, 3). Further, the report invites Scottish people to inherit a tradition where:

Scotland is a renowned nation of innovation, science and great thinkers. We take pride in listing the many Scottish discoveries and inventions such as the television, telephone, pneumatic tyres and even the overdraft! Less well-known perhaps is Scotland's contribution to the creation of a more sustainable world. (Ibid, 10)

To substantiate this claim, the report lists the following:

1827 – Scottish essayist and writer Thomas Carlyle introduces the word 'environment' to the world.

1890 – The conservation work of Scottish-born John Muir in Yosemite in California leads him to be known as the 'Father of National Parks'.

What is troubling about these assertions is the uncritical engagement with the legacies of Carlyle and Muir. Thomas Carlyle's essay, *Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question* (1849), advocated the racial superiority of 'White Europeans' and asserted that Africans are innately stupid and lazy. Similarly, John Muir, in his book, *The Mountains of California* (1894), stated that:

Occasionally a good countenance may be seen among the Mono Indians, but these, the first specimens I had seen, were mostly ugly, and some of them altogether hideous ... Somehow they seemed to have no right place in the landscape ... (1894)

While the inward-referencing has remained constant, except perhaps with an amplification of 'sustainability' as a Scottish value, it is the outward-referencing that has been substantially reworked. As seen in previous articulations of GC (Swanson and Pashby 2016), the aim has been to position Scotland within the ambit of global competition, genuflecting to education as the means to foster 'social mobility' and help Scotland flourish. These discursive strategies support the state's desire to realise the ambition of being 'a nation which is confident, outward-looking, culturally enriched and knowledge-based' (ES 2014, 1), but the outward-referencing also constructs the nation not only as a player competing with others, but also as a leader in international affairs. This policy shift in outward-referencing posits the 2015 UN SDGs as a reference point in which the framing of Scotland as a leader as opposed to merely an implementer of these goals is sustained:

And at the same time as Scotland was identifying and implementing LfS (Learning for Sustainability) goals at a national level a parallel process was taking place globally. (NIG 2016, 4)

Within Scottish policy, UN Education Target 4.7 occupies a pivotal place. Yet, at the same time, it is seen as merely supporting and providing ‘crucial forward momentum’ for the ‘LfS agenda in Scotland’ (NIG 2016, 4). This drive to underline Scotland’s leadership in sustainability is amplified by First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon’s, pronouncement in July 2015:

The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals offer a vision of the world that I believe

people in Scotland share ... I am delighted to confirm that Scotland has become one of the first nations on Earth to publicly sign up to these goals and provide international leadership on reducing inequality across the globe. (NIG 2016, 6)

Again, we can see the policy slippage from outward to inward referencing in an attempt not only to foreground Scotland as leader, but also cement Scotland’s reputation as a fair and equal society: ‘LfS, after all, is fundamentally about social justice and the creation of a fairer and more equitable society’ (NIG 2016, 4). Yet, LfS, as deployed and referenced within Scottish policy, goes beyond articulating, reimagining and fashioning Scotland. Instead, in its claims to weave together GC, sustainable development education, outdoor learning and children’s rights, LfS can provide ‘coherent, rewarding and transformative learning experiences’ (ES 2015, 58). While the extent to which GCE in Scotland can meet the aims of Human Rights Education has been questioned, especially the ‘problems of apoliticality and the misguided focus on responsibilities’ (Daniels 2018, 85), the claim to ‘transformative’ experience is equally problematic. Consideration of who and what is to be transformed, and under whose auspices, is an enduring question. Taking these arguments further, LfS is deployed as a means not only to address inequities, but as a governing technique to bring about managerial changes:

Let’s rekindle the moral purpose of learning and teaching to unleash the potential within the system to raise attainment, tackle inequity and transform the life-chances of each and every learner, especially those most in need of support. ... [LfS] can also help us realise the ambitions of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, the National Improvement Framework and the Developing Young Workforce Programme (NIG 2016, 21).

In tracing the trajectory of GC deployment within Scottish policy, we are afforded insights into the SG’s attempt to define a ‘post-British Scottish state’ by emphasising ‘the distinctiveness of Scottish ... socio-cultural values and ... identity both in historical and contemporary terms’ (Mycock 2012, 58). Crucial in this attempt is the mobilising of GCE and LfS to produce an image of the nation as a global leader. In this manoeuvre, the narrative of the nation and the citizen (pupils, practitioners and leaders) mobilises a range of tropes that promote Scottish identity as inclusive, democratic and equitable. At the same time, this narrative deploys a range of ‘distancing strategies’ (Morris 2015), the effect of which is to qualify the nation as distinct from the English, to consolidate the claim of Scottish identity and nationalism as civic, and finally to defer Scotland’s extensive colonial history and its involvement with the slave trade.

The following discussion briefly addresses three particular distancing strategies deployed by SG policy discourse: (a) distancing from the English; (b) distancing from an ethnic-based nationalism; and (c) distancing from slavery and empire. We argue that these distancing strategies are a way of smoothing contradictions and ‘taming’ and ‘rehabilitating’ the tensions that these distancing strategies attempt to mask.

## Distancing strategies

### *Distancing from the English*

The first distancing strategy distinguishes the Scottish nation from the English, the effect of which is not merely to underplay Scotland’s role in the British empire and slavery, but also to disentangle the

two nations. The nascent image here is of a Scottish nation with its own distinct history and institutions. This is a difficult position to maintain, given the entangled history of Scotland with the empire. As Devine (2003, xxvii) avers: ‘So intense was the Scottish engagement with the empire that it affected almost every nook and cranny of Scottish life ...’ Within educational policy, this distinctiveness from the English is signalled through ‘presenting indigenous languages at the core of language learning’ to foster appreciation of ‘Scotland’s culture, identity and language’ and its ‘vibrant literary and linguistic heritage’ (Scottish Executive 2004, 127; in Patterson and Choi 2018, 488).

As Mycock (2012, 58) avers, this distancing strategy is sufficiently wide enough to extend to ‘political, economic and socio-cultural values and identity both in historical and contemporary terms’. A key aspect of this distancing is the absence of the UK or English as key referents. In the Report of the OPSWG (2013), the only reference to the UK is ‘UNICEF UK’. By contrast, GCE and LfS accentuate the distinctiveness of Scotland and the constant invocation of ‘fairness’ and ‘equality’ functions as a lynchpin, anchoring a distinct Scottish identity. This exceptionalism is also signalled by invoking a distinctly Scottish intellectual tradition, signalled by naming Adam Smith, Thomas Carlyle, David Livingstone and Patrick Geddes. While selective, it nevertheless mobilises a powerful ‘historiographical frame of autonomous endogenous origins and subsequent global diffusion’ (Bhambra 2011, 653) of Scottish modernity in which ‘the rest of the world was external to these world historical processes and that colonial connections and processes were insignificant to their development’.

### ***Distancing from an ethnic-based nationalism***

In the second distancing strategy, there is an attempt to move GCE away from an ethnic to civic nationalism. Here, Scottishness can be claimed by any individual who is resident in Scotland. Crucial in this move is the notion of inclusion. Linguistically, this is signalled through an abundant use of personal and possessive pronouns, *we* and *our*, as an interpellation device. In the IDS (2016), there are 95 instances of the pronoun *we* and 157 of possessive pronoun *our*. In the LfS NIG (2016), 58 instances of *we* and 43 of *our* occur. In *Education Scotland core strategies* (2014), there are 38 occurrence of *we* and 43 of *our*. The pivotal place given to ‘inclusion’ within policy serves a number of interrelated objectives. *Inclusion* is deployed as an antidote to a myriad of political ‘challenges’ that have gained popularity, notably concerns about immigration, the ‘refugee crisis’, and worries about radicalisation. Diverse values, according to some, may threaten national identity and damage social cohesion, thus undermining ‘communities’. Buttressed by claims of inclusion, GCE is mobilised here as a liberal-nationalist concern (Swanson and Pashby 2016) to develop ‘a sense of belonging to and identification with the nation-state’ (Vincent 2019, 12). GCE’s capacity to address these ‘challenges’ is declared as a key criterion for effective practice in school, and acts as a basis for claim-making about Scottish youth:

Children and young people are knowledgeable about equalities and inclusion. They feel able to challenge discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance when they come across it. (ES 2015, 49)

Inclusion as a key prerequisite for realising civic nationalism is said to foster a sense of national identity that holds together a culturally-diverse Scotland. Here, the notion of ‘community’ in Scotland is to be realised through GCE and LfS. The policy documents, *ES* (2015); *IDS* (2016); *NIG* (2016), and *ES core strategies* (2014), are replete with references to community, community resilience, community learning, community approaches, community empowerment and community partnership.

The notion of civic nationalism and assumptions about community, resilience and cohesion it espouses are highly problematic. The slippages in policy discourse from the nation to community resilience and cohesion, enables, as Worley (2005, 485) argues, ‘for language to become deracialized, whilst at the same time the language of community cohesion draws upon earlier discourses of

assimilation through notions of “integration”. In referencing the nation as a resilient community that shares a civic identity, LfS and GCE mask the deep schisms in Scotland. The problem of sectarianism, which is as Kelly (2011) argues, manifested by ‘the hierarchical dualism which juxtaposes the Irish-Scots with *authentic* Scots and continually presents Irish-Catholics as *outsiders* to be parodied, trivialized and demonized ...’ (2010, 431) betrays the unity advocated by the appeal to civic nationalism. As Davidson and Virdee (2018, 10) aver, while the SG has adopted a different stance towards immigration than the UK government’s hostile environment, the lived reality of the newly-arrived immigrants to Scotland, referred to as *the new Scots*, is marked by ‘racist harassment in the community’ and ‘systematic discrimination in the workplace’ (Ibid, 10). These *new Scots* ‘remain a class apart – one that is seen as somehow not quite Scottish’ and that racism, therefore, remains ‘a significant on-going problem in Scottish society’ (Davidson and Virdee 2018, 10). In this sense, GCE and LfS are entangled, despite the seeming disavowal of racism and xenophobia, with a hegemonic construction of an ethnic identity ‘which simultaneously reinforces boundaries of community, belonging and notions of ‘us’ and “them”’ (Worley 2005, 490). In seeking to mask the tensions and inherent violences, GCE conceives of the political community as a ‘project of fusion’ (Nancy 1991, 15), where individual identities amalgamate into one single being. Community and social cohesion within Scotland is thus equated with an ‘assimilatory, exclusionary, hierarchizing ... and homogenising’ vision of nationhood (Farrell 2016, 287). As Schwarzmantel (2007, 462) asserts, ‘community is always something always sought after, rather than fully achieved’. For Nancy, the nostalgic desire to regain and reconstitute a ‘lost community’ that was ‘woven of tight, harmonious, and infrangible bonds and in which ... it played back to itself, through its institutions ... [and] rituals’ (Nancy 1991, 9), is a form of totalitarianism that occludes the relational (being-in-common). That is to say, as James (2006, 197) argues, for Nancy,

it is impossible to think of the existence of community outside the appeal to myth, or rather it is necessary to think of the mutual implication or inevitable co-existence of one with the other: where there is community there is myth and vice-versa. (James 2006, 341)

Myth, in this context, is the assemblage of strategies and discourses of GCE and LfS fashioned out of a complex historical context as an homogeneous entity.

### ***Distancing from slavery and empire***

The third ‘distancing strategy’ consists in the collective as ‘(un)willed amnesia’ (Sassi 2007), which has sought to erase Scottish colonial history and its extensive involvement in the slave trade. The image of the nation and its history constructed in policy and other pronouncements overlooks ‘modern Scotland’ as ‘a “product of empire” whose economic success had a dark side linked to exploitation and slavery’ (Mycock 2012, 63). Here, ‘slave-based economies of the Atlantic’ played a pivotal role in the transformation of Scotland in the eighteenth century through the supply of raw materials, ‘market expansion and capital transfers to manufacturing, mining and agriculture’ (Devine 2003, 234). This amnesia is enacted in two ways: The first seeks to disentangle Scotland from empire and slavery. On a trip to the African continent, Pete Wishart, SNP Member of Parliament of the UK, claimed that ‘Scotland’s reputation as an honest broker, unburdened with any colonial past is understood and appreciated’, and Alex Salmond, former First Minister of Scotland, argued that, with independence, Scotland ‘would carry none of the baggage of the imperial past’ (Mycock 2012, 63). The second way of enacting amnesia is by invoking an ethical discourse that foregrounds Scotland’s role in the abolition of the slave trade. By extension, both the policy discourses and pronouncements of politicians are replete with liberal values of justice, fairness and equality.

Yet, in invoking this liberal discourse as leitmotif in articulating Scotland as heir to a tradition ‘of fairness and equality’ as ‘core values, historical and contemporary’, GCE mobilises liberalism as an intellectual tradition (Swanson and Pashby 2016) and imbues it with the capacity ‘for self-correction’ (Losurdo 2011, 344). Put differently, GCE in this vein uncritically appropriates an intellectual

tradition (Locke, Burke, Constant, de Tocqueville, Franklin, Jefferson) that is marked by a set of ‘exclusion clauses’ (Losurdo 2011, 342). These ‘exclusion clauses’ have asserted the liberty and equality of the ‘community of the free’ over the slave, the African and the Aborigine, amongst other ‘others’, all of whom were excluded from this ‘community’. These subjectivities are not only denied the ontological status of human, but also subjected to a necropolitics (Mbembé 2003) of slavery, colonial domination and extermination. As Losurdo eloquently asserted, to claim that liberalism is capable of ‘self correction’, then ‘the tragedy of peoples subjected to slavery or semi-slavery, or deported, decimated and destroyed, becomes utterly inexplicable’ (Losurdo 2011, 342).

By examining the Scottish context as a small ‘case study’ to discursively interrogate myths and contradictions inherent in the constitution of GC, the discursive strategies adopted by the nation state in their deployment of GCE and LfS can be critically revealed. This permits a reflexive, critical engagement in/with GC in order to move past reductive, mythological, promotional, and nationalist appropriations toward prizing open critical spaces of opportunity for making possible the invocation of alternative futures. The final section briefly restates key threads to arguments presented and offers some conclusions by way of an emerging agenda for GCE and LfS in catalysing radically hopeful futures beyond the current complex socio-ecological crises facing our planet.

### **Conclusion: contradiction as opportunity**

To be a citizen of our current Euro-modernist, hyper-globalised world is to be a subject of capital. Within these systemic terms of reference, all socio-ecological frames (Butler 2009) of reality are reduced to transactional relations, marked by ‘administrative’ and ‘economic rationalisms’ (Dryzek 2013). To be a citizen of such a world is to be one inherently invested in contradiction and created via a set of myths related to a ‘common-sense’, singular logic of how the world does and should work. This singularity serves as a strategy to cement ‘the real’ in these common-sense terms and repulse other versions of reality and options for action. In this world, relations of global capital reify the ‘the real’ in its image, while simultaneously seeking to hide or erase contradiction, its schizophrenic double-facedness. Like Janus, an ‘ideal’ subject of this neoliberal world order is to be both an inwardly-gazing subject of the nation state, and simultaneously an outwardly-gazing subject of global capital. Such expectations are presumptive of privilege while hiding the selective and hierarchical relations in which such histories, privileges and prejudices are intimately enshrined. In these ‘worldly’ terms, the ‘global’ hints at the ‘outward-facing’ and the opportunities for border-crossing, genuflecting to a transnationalist outlook, while ‘citizenship’ appeals to the ‘inwardly-facing’, bordering, national populisms and shores up the nation state rather than dissolving it (Gamal and Swanson 2017). It is about rights and duties, but only for the select, privileged few that can traverse borders while being secured by them. Not everyone can be a global citizen. The ‘cimmigration’ system filters and polices who can and cannot be such a global citizen behind a veil of ‘securitisation’ (Gamal and Swanson 2018). In the light of these prevailing circumstances, GC looks both inwards and outwards, and carries borders and ‘abyssal lines’ (de Sousa Santos 2017) as shadows.

Dismissing GC on the grounds of its incoherence may be an important lost opportunity, not only for critical, reflexive engagement with the term, but as a critical agenda for action toward viable futures. Replacing GC with LfS does not escape the complicatedness and political dangers invested in GC by mythologising LfS as a safe green space where the troubles of ‘the social’ can be smoothed over or placated. The power investments in such manoeuvres cannot be ignored. They are at the centre of a reflexive, critical GCE, and indeed an equally critical LfS that grapples with the tensions and complications of the social/ecological divide created and underscored by Euro-modernism. Likewise, viewing contradiction at the heart of GC as a ‘productive tension’ rather than ‘flaw’ by way of critical entry into GCE, and by implication LfS, we argue may offer the necessary vector in prizing open windows to hopeful futures. The difficult task of doing so should not be sidestepped in the shift from GCE to LfS, as exemplified in ES’s discursive strategies and that of the Scottish

International Development agenda. In a parallel reflexive move, recognition of the various *distan- cing strategies* deployed within GCE and LfS discourses, and revealing the ambiguities, tensions, myths and contradictions inherent in such manoeuvres, is critical in seeking to overcome GCE and LfS's overdetermination as instruments of state social, national and economic ambitions. More widely, on a global stage that properly considers the intimacy of the local with(in) the global, the implications for education and our socio-ecological futures of the critical embrace of contradic- tion and ambiguity at the heart of GC needs considered attention toward the imperative of mobilis- ing CGCE to enact possibilities of radically hopeful futures.

In overture to a post-critical, reflexive GCE and LfS, one that brings political action and activism to the invocation of radically hopeful futures, we draw this paper to a close, as a temporary resting place for this emergent agenda, by sharing the interlocutions of the Canadian indigenous scholar, Jonathan Lear. Lear presents a viable, non-utopian definition of radical hope as an act of extreme courage in the face of epistemicide and cultural devastation:

There is more to hope for than mere biological survival. It is not enough for me simply to survive. ... If I am going to go on living, I need to be able to see a genuine, positive, and honourable way of going forward. So, on the one hand, I need to recognize the discontinuity that is upon me – like it or not there will be a radical shift in form of life. I need to preserve some integrity across that discontinuity. There are some outcomes that would be worse than death. But I do have reason to hope for a dignified passage across the abyss, ... *We shall get the good back*, though at the moment we can have no more than a glimmer of what that might mean. (Lear 2006, 94–95)

Recognising the discontinuities and contradictions, and 'getting the good back', is difficult and uncomfortable work, and fostering critical consciousness toward deep democracy is a critical imperative for making possible alternative futures imbued with radical hope. Such a radical hope as 'acts of great courage', in Lear's terms, may be more about embracing an unruliness within the contradictions rather than one that serves a beguiling reinvention of the status quo under the banner of libertarian 'justice' discourses.

In the closing lines of one author's doctoral thesis (Swanson 2005, 296) that embraces *critical rhizomatic narrative* as methodological orientation to researching seemingly-intractable crises, the following was articulated. It is a sentiment that resonates with Lear's thought and holds true to the arguments we have set out as an agenda for CGCE and LfS in the search for hopeful futures:

But even in the symbolic irony, lies the mark of intent, of something someone or some people aspire to trying to achieve, ... no matter how utopian this might seem for this moment. A beginning ... or perhaps even more ... As Bertolt Brecht said: '*In the contradiction, lies the hope*'.

## Note

1. Examples of spheres of crisis: accelerating climate change, massive biodiversity loss, increased global inequalities and polarisations, and the expansion of totalitarianism, hunger, drought, wildfires, and water insecurity, amongst other global challenges.

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