

Spatialising the scholarly imagination: globalisation, refugees and education

Ravinder Sidhu and Pam Christie

University of Queensland, Australia

Introduction

The notion of globalisation has attracted much attention since its arrival as a master concept in the social science disciplines in the 1990s. Despite the flurry of commentary, much work remains to be done. One of the consequences of the emphasis on the newness and uniqueness of globalisation is a tendency to view established disciplines and intellectual traditions as ‘old fashioned’ or ‘outdated’ (Robinson, 2003, Eriksen, 2003). This, we suggest, is a problematic view. We use the case of refugees to argue that talk about a borderless world and global connectivity is misleading as ‘old’ ontologies of space, time and identity are still at work.

While the purpose of this paper is not to engage in an extended critique of studies about globalisation, we argue against uncritically embracing the idea of globalisation as a ‘new’, heroic and unprecedented sphere of reality. This is not to argue that nothing has changed: we live, after all, in a world which features sophisticated information and communication technologies, globally integrated financial markets, greater urbanisation, and population movements of all sorts. Our concern stems from the abstract and disembodied quality of many studies, as identified by a number of scholars (see Hesse, 1999; Massey, 1999; Sheppard, 2002; Tikly, 2001).

Our point of departure, using an approach authored by the French historian Michel Foucault, is the recognition that writing and thinking on/about globalisation themselves form ‘regimes of truth’ that govern space and subjects in particular ways. If globalisation is taken as a way of knowing and ordering the world, then it becomes possible to question what is often presented by politicians and policymakers as inevitabilities. We suggest that regimes of truth emerging from globalisation discourses may be unsettled by studying globalisation through ‘*peripheral places and marginal others*’ (Foucault, 1980, our emphasis). The management of refugees – marginal subjects from marginal spaces – by nation-states provides a rich opportunity to refine theorisations and methodologies about globalisation

The purpose of this paper is to explore the mechanisms that inform the governance of ‘marginal and peripheral’ subjects and spaces of globalisation, using Australia’s policies towards asylum seekers and refugees and their education as a focal point. Viewing asylum seekers and refugees as subjects of globalisation within a Foucauldian framework, we suggest that current ways of ordering and thinking about the space/time dimensions of globalisation may work to render peripheral spaces and subjects invisible and/or without rights in the state/citizen order. We conclude with a brief discussion of how curriculum work might engage ethically with knowledge of globalisation.

Governmentality

Governmentality (‘the art of governing’) is an expansive way of understanding governance as a project that embraces *the relations between people and things*, and more specifically, how these relations are played out in the governance of others (technologies of power) and of



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ourselves (technologies of the self). Foucault traces the origin of this plural form of governance to 16th century Europe, when the pertinence of individuals for the state became anchored in their capacity to contribute towards the strength of the state (Foucault, 2001b, p. 409). The aim of government thus mutated towards ‘the state’s preservation, expansion and felicity’ (p. 408). Governmentality (‘the conduct of conduct’) came to be defined as ‘... a *right manner of disposing things* so as to lead to ... an end that is *convenient* for each of the things that are to be governed’ (Foucault, 2001a, p. 211, our emphasis).

In the governmentality schema, power is not the antithesis of freedom. Instead, as Rose (1999, p. 4) observes: ‘To govern human beings is not to crush their capacity to act, but to acknowledge it and to utilize it for one’s own objectives’ (Rose, 1999, p. 4). Governmentality works at a variety of scales – inside and outside of the nation-state - from supranational authorities such as the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank, WTO, IMF), to governments and bureaucracies, to collectivities such as families and professional associations, to the level of the self, where it touches the bodies, desires, thoughts, fears and aspirations of individuals (Dean, 1999).

The paper focuses on three areas. First, we consider the ways in which globalisation is used as a governing technology by nation-states and nation-building institutions. Second, we illustrate how the governance mechanisms underpinning the refugee management policy in Australia are based on particular manipulations of space and time. Third, we explore the possibilities for subjects of knowledge to challenge and redress the epistemic damage arising from existing regimes of knowledge in light of the ethical codes that are available in the public sphere.

Globalisation as a governmentality

It is important not to restrict the idea of governing to the institution of government. Governing involves a range of devices including what we understand as knowledge practices – experts, theories, projects, conferences, academic papers, media reports and political speeches. The instruments of governing include images and ideas which flow almost instantaneously through information and media communication networks such as television and the Internet.

For example, electoral support for Australia’s treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in recent years has been secured by shaping the popular imagination through such formal and informal knowledge practices. The mobilization of fear in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York has reduced empathy for the suffering of refugees. Governments, media bodies and terrorism experts have created the conditions for ‘a culture of affect’ which operates on generalisations about ‘good versus evil’ (O’Tuathail 2003). As we discuss later in the paper, asylum seekers, particularly those who travelled to Australia in boats, have been regarded as potential terrorists, and treated in inhumane ways. Different kinds of knowledges and ideas, some new, and others long-standing, have been called on to specify the appropriate treatment not only for asylum seekers who are regarded as non-citizens, but also for ideal citizens and marginal citizens.

To summarise, governmentality is a multidimensional endeavour featuring both state and non-state actors. It recognises that the practices of just governance require an engagement with power, truth and the self. Acting as moral beings requires of us a willingness to engage with how power, truth and self form the conditions of life for ourselves and others. Being knowledgeable and ethical in our everyday practices requires ‘understanding how we constitute ourselves as subjects who *know*, who *act* on others and who are moral beings [agents]’ (O’Farrell, 1989, p.116). Merely accumulating knowledge is not by itself sufficient.

We apply these concepts to show how power and knowledge come together in discursive practices to produce particular truths about globalisation, the security of the nation-state and



refugees. We also explore how such truths are used to create governing and governable subjects. Identifying these truths in terms of power/knowledge helps to question current understandings and practices of citizenship and political community, as well as the ethical subjectivities of educators and researchers.

Location, location

For Slater (2003), the practices of knowledge production are marked by a tendency to give priority to issues and agendas that are inimical to the lives of majority of humanity. He has suggested that the producers and transmitters of knowledge explore and acknowledge the *limits* of their inquiry. This involves questioning how their *location* in the world – eg their country of origin and their social position – shapes the kinds of knowledge that they generate. We suggest that educators need to establish a ‘moral proximity’ with the marginal subjects and spaces of globalisation (see O’Tuathail, 1999). A critical first step involves paying attention to the language used to describe globalisation. The metaphors used in debates and discussions of globalisation – global village, flows, network society – construct a world that is borderless of all, where benefits and opportunities arising from global flows of capital, technology and ideas reach every global citizen. O’Tuathail invites researchers to ask ‘For whom is the world borderless? Who benefits?’ Who is excluded from global networks? Similarly, in imagining globalisation as ‘global flows’, there is a need to recognise that some flows are smooth and benign, while others are turbulent and profoundly destructive. We need to pay greater attention to the polarizations, marginalisation and struggles for livelihood faced by an increasing number of the world’s population whose material conditions do not necessarily benefit from global flows, speed and instant communication (Castells, 1996-1998; Appadurai, 2001, Nagar et al, 2002, Sheppard & Nagar, 2004, Slater, 2003).

A major factor why our understandings of globalisation have been dominated by notions like ‘global village’ or ‘the collapse of space and time’ is because globalisation theorists and their empirical work is largely drawn from the ‘core’ – the Anglo-American and European ‘first world’. The concentration of globalisation conferences in places of the first world, and the difficulties for non-English speakers writing for English speaking journals limit understandings that scholars of the ‘North/West’ may have of how globalisation processes are played out in the ‘South/East’ (see Nagar et al, 2004; Robinson, 2003; Slater, 2003; Sheppard & Nagar, 2004; Appadurai, 2001). As an aside, we suggest that it is useful to consider the ways in which academic research and publishing processes privilege and universalise Euro-American perspectives and approaches in Australian educational institutions.

But knowledge practices which engage with issues of geography (spatialisation) are not by themselves adequate. Spatialisation does not of itself produce more equal power relations. We offer one example of this. In certain strands of globalisation studies and development, poverty and asymmetrical development have been attributed to ‘the tyranny of geography’ or ‘bad latitude’ (see Hausmann 2001; see also Watts 2003. Bassin 2003, Mitchell 2003 for a critique of this geographic determinism). Closely associated with the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, ‘a veritable growth industry’ has emerged which notes equates temperate regions and temperate cultures with spectacular progress and productivity. In this logic, the geographically challenged and intemperate regions are best served by ‘a good dose of [neoliberal] globalisation’ (Hausman, 2001, cited in Watts, 2003, p.11). Equally worrying is the turn to culture as proposed by Samuel Huntington, who argues that cultural values are a key variable in the capacities of societies to achieve economic progress and political democratisation. For Huntington, ‘it is bad attitude rather than bad latitude that prevents the laggards from taking advantage of markets’ (Hart, 2002, p. 814). In both schools,



the historical legacies of colonialism and the role of contemporary postcolonial politics in sustaining staggering levels of inequality are not acknowledged.

While greater engagement with postcolonial issues has the potential to increase our understandings of the marginal subjects and spaces of globalisation, this does not necessarily result in more equal power relations. As Sharp (2003, p. 70) cautions, researchers need to resist the potential depoliticisation and dematerialisation of postcolonial research:

...too many theorists (western and western-educated third world academics) are interested in postcolonialism to look for difference and new approaches to enliven their own theories and advance their own careers, rather than having a deep commitment to drawing the marginalised and silent into the heart of academic debate. These debates replicate the geographical violence of Orientalism rather than overturning it' (Sharp 2003, p. 70 in Agnew, Mitchell & Toal, 2003, p. 70)

Spatialising the discipline?

Conventional framings of globalisation and knowledge economies inform educational policies and practices by exerting a series of normalizing effects. These framings are transmitted through state bureaucracies, nation-building institutions such as schools and universities and multilateral institutions like the World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund). In the discipline of Education, globalisation has emerged as a 'master concept anchored in a network of kindred terms such as knowledge society, information society, information economy, knowledge based economy and post-Fordism' (Peters, 2004). Globalisation is portrayed as ushering in 'new times' characterised by greater competition within and between nations (Rizvi & Lingard, 2000; Burbules & Torres, 2000). The language of change, inevitability and necessity is pervasive: knowledge is now regarded as a factor in production; technology has a vital role to play in all facets of education; educational institutions need to prepare students to be enterprising subjects, making them 'work ready' and equipping them with the capacities for lifelong learning to enable them to re-train for 'portfolio careers' (Peters, 2004; Robertson, 2005).

The language of change is often accompanied by a narrative of a 'failure' of the curriculum of public education to develop students who are attuned to new standards of excellence. In a globalised world of knowledge economies, education is viewed as a key contributor to the nation's economic competitiveness, and schools and their curricula are seen to be at risk of failing in this task. Similar in tenor are the knowledge economy narratives found in World Bank and OECD policy discourses. They, too, are animated by a narrative of crisis featuring inflexible and outdated schools, teachers and curricula, which are held responsible for failing young people and society (Robertson 2005).

As Peters (2004) observes in his comments on education and the knowledge society, concepts like globalisation are often uncritically absorbed into the policy templates of nation-states. When this happens, particular regimes of truth are allied to globalisation – its inevitability, its unstoppableness, and its neoliberal forms.

Through its incarnation as the knowledge/network society, globalisation is often portrayed as the 'next phase of human development' (see Jessop, 2000, Thrift, 2003). Globalisation, then, comes to be seen as a natural part of human evolution. The greatest casualties of this crude neo-Darwinist ethic are those deemed 'other', the marginal and peripheral subjects of globalisation, found in both the 'developed' and 'developing' worlds as, for example, refugees or indigenous people. They are either rendered invisible, or their ways of life are deemed to be 'backward', requiring 'improvement' through various 'capacity building' aid and welfare programmes.



Like Peters (2004), Law and Urry (2004) remind us that concepts like globalisation and the knowledge society do not merely describe a reality, but help to construct social realities and social worlds. In other words, 'theory has effect; methods are performative – they enact realities; they bring into being what they discover' (Law & Urry, 2004, pp. 392-393). Law and Urry pose a set of questions which may be usefully considered by researchers:

If methods help to make realities, which realities might we wish to enact? Neoclassical ones? Ameliorist agendas? Revolutionary realities? Anti-patriarchal or postcolonial worlds? Realities composed of post-structuralist partialities and shifting identities? (2004, p. 396).

How do Australian curricula engage with this profusion of 'new' discourses about 'new times', and new imperatives to overcome the 'crisis' of schooling for the knowledge society? How are Australian citizens being educated to become members of a global and national community? What space exists for greater moral proximity with the marginal subjects of globalisation such as refugee youth?

Educating for the 'strategic cosmopolitan'

The spatial logics deployed by Australian schooling in its engagement with globalisation are notable for their paradoxes. The 1999 *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling for the 21st Century* captures these paradoxes. The Declaration acknowledges schooling's holistic goals to develop in students 'the capacity to exercise judgement and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world'. Schooling is also expected to prepare students with 'an understanding of, and concern for stewardship of the national environment, and the knowledge and skills to contribute to ecologically sustainable development'.

However, these commendable goals that aim to build on the socially just impulses of schooling are counteracted by other practices: for example, curriculum and assessment that emphasise excellence through testing and performance measurements. As well, the goal to prepare students to engage with economic developments taking place on a global scale lends itself to a focus on skills and mobility for economic competitiveness. This also involves the project of re-making the educated person into the lifelong learner who accepts personal responsibility to adjust to a shifting labour market.

The Declaration's *National Goals* may be read in ways that implicate schooling in the task of scripting a particular kind of national identity, that of the responsible, enterprising, productive citizen who can contribute to national development within a global capitalist economy:

The achievement of the national goals for schooling will assist young people to contribute to Australia's social, cultural and economic development in local and global contexts. Their achievement will also assist young people to develop a disposition towards learning throughout their lives so that they can exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of Australia

With national societies networked into global systems of social, political and economic relationships, emerging transnational citizenship narratives may be read as engaging 'strategically' with the economic institutions of globalisation, rather than being concerned with the inequalities of neoliberal global capitalism or with building social cohesion on a global scale. This trend is not restricted to Australia but is found in Europe, North America



(Mitchell, 2003; Popkewitz, 2003) and in the Asia Pacific in countries such as Singapore and Malaysia (Ong, 2005; (Sidhu 2005). The mobility of the cosmopolitan is read in idealist terms: highly skilled individuals who move across national boundaries to maximise economic opportunities, or elite travellers savouring the cultures of strange places. The actually existing, albeit enforced, unplanned cosmopolitanism of refugees goes largely unacknowledged. Our empirical work on schooling and refugees has confirmed that schools tend to regard refugees not as hopeful survivors making the best of their enforced cosmopolitanism but at best as victims of trauma and displacement. At worst, they are pathologised as deviant subjects at risk of terrorism, criminality or welfare dependency.

The particular case of refugees and asylum seekers provides a good point for reflection on the spatial logic of the nation state and its governmentality. This we explore in the section which follows. We show that amidst celebrations of greater global connectivity, membership of the political community continues to define who is entitled to be the recipient of justice and ethics.

Outside the citizenship project: Australia's governance of refugees and asylum seekers

At a time when notions of global interdependency and flows have assumed currency in academic discourse, the management and governance of refugees suggests that there are limits to these notions. In the international order of sovereign states, refugees occupy a precarious position. As non-citizens – belonging to no state – they have ‘no rights to rights’, as Hannah Arendt (1967) famously noted. Falling outside of the nation state, they are easily rendered invisible and abject.

The refugee experience captures the tensions between perceptions of a borderless, interconnected and interdependent world peopled by fluid and eclectic identities, and the inescapable materiality of borders, nation-states and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Out of place and denied the territorialisation of life and existence, in the face of the uncertainties of statelessness, the refugee experience offers a sobering perspective on mobility in the 21st century, and draws our attention to the less triumphal aspects of globalisation. The governance of refugees in the present geopolitical climate also highlights the resilience of the state's sovereign powers and calls into question predictions about ‘the end of the nation-state’ (Lui, 2004).

What practices, logics and power relationships govern the refugee subject in Australia? Through a detailed grid of governmental practices, Australia applies a strict regulatory framework to all who seek to enter the country. The primary principle of classification is by citizenship or visa category. The Australian Migration Act of 1958 stipulates that every ‘non-citizen’ who enters or stays in Australia must have a valid visa to do so (see Crock and Saul, 2002). There are two streams of controlled migration, each with an allocated number of places: the migration stream, including family migrants, skilled migrants and special eligibility migrants; and the humanitarian stream, made up of refugees, special humanitarian, and onshore protection visas. Each category and subcategory is elaborated in immigration regulations, with different visa categories bringing different entitlements in terms of duration and benefits. Only people who apply for refugee status from outside Australia, or who are assessed as refugees by UNHCR before arriving, are given refugee status, with full residence rights and the right to apply for citizenship.

Mode of arrival operates as a second principle of classification and control. All people who arrive by boat without visas are deemed to be ‘unlawful non-citizens’. Since 1994 they have immediately been placed under mandatory detention while their refugee status is assessed. Asylum seekers who are subsequently assessed to be genuine refugees are released



into the community on temporary protection visas (TPVs) for three years, and must apply for visa renewal. Even though they meet international criteria for refugee status, they are not granted permanent residence visas or refugee status in Australia. By law, those who are deemed not to be genuine refugees are to be repatriated. In contrast, those who arrive by air with valid visas (student, visitor, business, etc) may apply for asylum within 45 days of arrival. In the interim, they are granted bridging visas and released into the community. Even if they are assessed to be genuine refugees, they are granted permanent protection visas (PPVs) rather than full refugee status. Those who miss the 45-day rule are not eligible for protection status. In 2002, Crock and Saul (2002) estimated that most visa over-stayers came from the UK and USA. It would appear that having arrived within the law, this group has been able to slip from view, and not aggressively pursued in the same way as those deemed to have arrived 'unlawfully'. The vastly different treatment of asylum seekers who arrive by boat compared to those who arrive by air draws on a long-standing fear of Australia as a fragile continent whose vulnerable maritime borders opens it to hostility from its northern Asian neighbours. Similarly, the general tolerance exercised towards over-stayers suggests a bias towards Australia having a Euro-American cultural identity.

With different visa categorizations come different entitlements, and different rights to social and economic participation. Those who are classified as refugees or have permanent protection visas are entitled to assistance of various sorts funded by the Australian federal government: employment assistance, English language tuition, family reunion, travel rights, social security benefits, health care, accommodation and settlement assistance, and schooling for children, including fully funded English Second Language (ESL) support. In stark contrast, people granted TPVs (who are genuine refugees) have not been eligible for employment assistance or English language tuition; for family reunion or travel rights; or for accommodation and settlement assistance. Children on bridging visas have had to apply for special ministerial permission for free schooling. At university level, people on TPVs and bridging visas are treated as foreigners and temporary residents, and thus must pay full fees as overseas students.

The elaborate classification of refugees and asylum seekers and the attendant regulations and limitations on their rights illustrate the detailed operation of governmental power, with its forms of knowledge, strategies of power and modes of subjectification. A graduated moral order operates to classify and control population in the Australian nation-state: those who have rights from birth; those who have visas, classified by categories; and those who fall outside (Christie & Sidhu 2006).

Australia's strict visa regime is justified in terms of what is considered to be the national interest. State security and border protection are seen to justify tight controls over entry, including criminalisation of asylum seekers as 'unlawful non-citizens' warranting mandatory detention. Yet, as Crock and Saul (2002) point out, in terms of international conventions there is nothing unlawful in asylum seekers arriving in another country to seek protection. In fact, under international conventions to which Australia is a signatory, Australia has obligations to protect these people until their refugee status is determined. Nonetheless, the Australian government has resurrected the historical problematic of a nation under threat of invasion by dangerous foreigners to secure popular consent to the inhumane treatment of a vulnerable group.

Alongside the laws to regulate the refugee as subject, Australia has also taken significant steps in relation to borders and sovereignty. It has excluded a number of remote atolls and islands from its migration zone, and has entered into arrangements with poor neighbours to incarcerate asylum seekers arriving by boat in return for aid payments. As the Human Rights Watch (2003) points out, Australia's 'Pacific Solution' appears to have established a precedent for a new vision in refugee management, now being considered by several



European countries. What is proposed is the establishment of 'transit processing centres' and 'regional protection zones' where refugees and asylum seekers would be intercepted and required to submit their case that they are indeed suffering persecution. Of concern to human rights advocates is the use of poorer countries for hosting these processing centres, many of which also have a poor record of defending the human rights of their own citizens as well as refugees.

The influence of neoliberal ideology is also evident in governmental practices. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs has highlighted the cost of 'unauthorised arrivals' to the community at large, noting that it removed 'taxpayers money that could have been spent on services for you and your children' (DIMIA, 2001, cited by Rajaram, 2003, p. 13). Immigration Detention Centres in Australia are run by private, for-profit companies on tender from the government. Services provided to refugees under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme are also administered by private providers on contract through tender. Not only is this a distancing of direct responsibility for care; it also reflects assumptions that profits may be made from refugees and asylum seekers in a neoliberal order.

We tentatively conclude that there are signs that the social changes associated with economic globalisation, state securitisation and neoliberalism are creating 'fragile citizen subjects' who operate on increasingly restricted conceptions of moral borders. The question of 'what we owe others' is inextricably linked to the question of who we are (see Perera, 2001). Nation-states operate in powerful ways to create differential subjects in the moral order. Differential power relations are created and sustained in the multidimensional practices of government, accompanied by ways of thinking and understanding the world. In strong contrast to the transnational mobility of elites and associated notions of cosmopolitanism, the ethnoscape of asylum seekers and refugees shows a regime of nation state regulations that radically exclude and deny human rights to those deemed to fall outside of the recognised order. If we assume that globalisation produces a borderless world and equality of access in global flows, this logic in itself operates to render invisible the experience of marginal and peripheral subjects.

Conclusion: the ethical imperative for subjects of knowledge

What are the implications of what we have said for curriculum practices? First, we suggest, is the importance of recognising the spatial and temporal influences that operate in knowledge production, in this case, of globalisation. Given that theories are themselves part of the construction of social realities, it is important that curriculum practices enable knowledge to be problematised rather than naturalised. In the case of globalisation, concepts of borderlessness and connectivity are fruitfully explored by considering exclusions as well as inclusions and by questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of changes under globalisation. In some cases, 'old' ontologies of space, time and identity may valuably put to use rather than discarded. An ethical approach towards the curriculum requires reflexivity and continual attentiveness to the power relations and partialities of knowledge.

Second, we suggest that one of the ethical imperatives for educators as subjects of knowledge is to recognise and question the spatial privileges that underpin knowledge production generally, including, very often, our own scholarship. This may have the uncomfortable effect of undermining the centrality and importance of the position of leaders of particular fields (see Robinson, 2003). The knowledges produced within contemporary circuits of intellectual labour today are shadowed by the relentless pressure to secure yet another grant and to produce yet another publication before the caravan of new ideas moves on. 'Just-in-time academic production' militates against deep and reciprocal engagements



with other spatialities of difference. We need to recognise that our own activities in meeting our pressured commitments may have the effect of reproducing the unequal relationships that we reflect upon in our research and teaching.

Whether the ethical imperatives are for the subjects of knowledge in academe to postcolonialise, internationalise or cosmopolitanise their knowledges, theories and methodologies, a key challenge is to question the existing power relations that influence the production and circulation of knowledge and to commit to a 'will to truth' that pushes the boundaries of power.

Citizenship is, after all, an assemblage of techniques and technologies aimed at producing governable subjects, and Foucault acknowledges the reach of broader societal forces, including global forces, on the subject (White and Hunt, 2000).

Individuals can create coercive, dominating or ethical relations with self and others through the mediation of power/knowledge structures. Ethical choices have to be made daily and ethical work integrated into the framework of the social and professional self. Foucault wryly observes that:

For centuries we have been convinced that...we couldn't change anything...without ruining our economy, our democracy, and so on. I think we have to get rid of this idea of an analytical or necessary link between ethics and other social or economic or political structures (Foucault, 1997, p. 261).

As Foucault's (1988, 1997) work reveals, there is arbitrariness with which social, political and economic processes are put in order. There are always possibilities to unsettle the seemingly habitual (Foucault, 1988, Foucault, 1997), and the challenge for educators is to do just this in ethical ways. The example we have used of refugees in Australia suggests that the construction of an inclusive and critical cosmopolitan citizenship, as opposed to its partial and strategic doppelganger, is a worthwhile ethical task for curriculum theorists to engage with.

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Authors

Ravinder Sidhu is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the School of Education, University of Queensland, St Lucia, Queensland 4072. Correspondence to: r.sidhu@uq.edu.au

Pam Christie is a Professorial Research Fellow in the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Queensland, St Lucia, Queensland 4072, and Visiting Professor at the University of Witwatersrand. Correspondence to: p.christie@uq.edu.au

