

GOUGN97.075 (AARE 1997) Noel Gough: Globalisation and educational
inquiry

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association
for Research in Education, Brisbane, Queensland, 30 November-4 December
1997. The views expressed here are defensible as of 28 November 1997.

Quote at the risk of knowing that I change my mind frequently.

Globalisation and educational inquiry: conceptual and methodological issues

Noel Gough

Deakin Centre for Education and Change

Abstract

Globalisation implies new and increasingly complex patterns of
interconnectedness-cultural processes that destabilise
interrelationships among spaces and places, technologies and materials,
media and meanings, and that might previously have seemed to be
(relatively) 'settled'. This paper reports on issues for educational
inquiry that are emerging from a project that is examining
interrelationships between economic and cultural globalisation, new
curriculum priorities, and curriculum change in schools. This research

focuses on the ways in which globalisation processes are represented in curriculum policies and school programs, and expressed by teachers and students, with particular reference to the ways in which meanings that circulate in increasingly globalised media (television, the internet) are deployed in the construction of school knowledge. Conceptual and methodological implications of globalisation for curriculum inquiry will be a particular focus of this paper.

Globalisation and curriculum inquiry

Curriculum inquiry, for me, usually begins from a position informed by narrative theory and poststructuralism, one corollary of which is that I rarely feel any obligation to start a paper by providing stipulative definitions. In this paper, globalisation is not a subject and/or object to be constrained by definition, but a focus for speculation-for generating meanings. To paraphrase Clermont Gauthier's (1992: 185) orientation to his critique of action research, I want to know how globalisation works, and what it does, but not what it is. I am interested in what curriculum workers (teachers, administrators, academics, researchers) do, and do not do, with the meanings that we exchange under the sign of globalisation, and in working towards a defensible position on the meanings we should attempt to select, generate and reproduce through our curriculum practices.

Miriam Henry and Sandra Taylor (1997: 47) identify two aspects of globalisation-'the facts concerning transnational processes and

communication' and 'an increasing awareness of this reality'-and I will focus here on the second. There is, of course, no unitary 'reality' of globalisation, and I suggest that whatever 'awareness' may be 'increasing' is a somewhat inchoate apprehension of complex, multiple, proliferating and immanent realities, overlaid (and further complicated) by our own reflexive 'awareness' of the need to be-and to be seen to be-aware that globalisation is, indeed, worthy of our attention. My own attention is drawn to those traces of globalisation that Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake (1996: 6) describe as a 'transnational imaginary', namely:

the as-yet-unfigured horizon of contemporary cultural production by which national spaces/identities of political allegiance and economic regulation are being undone and imagined communities of modernity are being reshaped at the macropolitical (global) and micropolitical (cultural) levels of everyday existence [emphasis in original].

Like Madeleine Grumet (1981: 115), I take curriculum to be 'the collective story we tell our children about our past, our present, and our future', and therefore see curriculum work as one form of 'contemporary cultural production' through which this transnational imaginary may be expressed. As it coheres around the concept of 'globalisation', the appearance of this transnational imaginary in the Australian literature of educational inquiry has, for the most part, been restricted to discussions and debates about the economic management, marketing and organisation of education and training (see,

for example, Kenway, Bigum and Fitzclarence 1993, Kenway et al. 1994, Lingard, Knight and Porter 1993) and broad questions of national schooling policy (see, for example, Henry and Taylor 1997). For these scholars, economic restructuring-driven by the need for Australia to respond to international economic and technological trends-appears to be the master discourse informing policy decisions at all levels of education. While I do not dispute their judgments, we should not necessarily assume that the institutional force of globalisation within particular national and state policy discourses carries similar weight in other discursive communities. Transnational economic exchanges predate the spread of global capital, and imagining that they now constitute some kind of irresistible force transforming all aspects of late-twentieth century life may exaggerate the reach and extent of global economic integration. For example, Richard Barnett and John Cavanagh (1994: 383) estimate that about 80 percent of the world's population lives outside global consumer networks. More importantly, specific local expressions of globalisation,(1) such as the inclusion of schooling in Australia's federal (Labor) government's microeconomic reform agenda during the late 1980s, should not necessarily be taken as inevitable consequences of global economic processes that will routinely be found in other local discourses.

Furthermore, local expressions of the transnational imaginary of globalisation are not restricted to the economic arenas of social life, such as those concerned with the production, exchange and consumption of goods and services, and related issues of industry and employment.

Global relations are also expressed in and through mass media and converging information technologies, and the social institutions and movements through which we monitor and regulate our concerns about many quality of life issues including health (such as the global traffic in drugs and disease) and environmental issues (for example, global climate change). Globalisation is expressed in our apprehension of new and increasingly complex patterns of interconnectedness-cultural processes that destabilise relationships between social organisation and the spaces and places in which technologies, materials, media and meanings are produced, exchanged and consumed.

Economic globalisation clearly has consequences for both national and local curriculum policies, but evidence of the ways in which it may be informing and (dis)organising curriculum practices at the school level is chiefly anecdotal. For example, Henry and Taylor (1997: 56) observe that the pressures of microeconomic reform have already encouraged education systems and some schools 'to wheel and deal where they can in the attempt to become more competitive and cost-effective':

Schools buy in pre-packaged American software, and there are increasing pressures for schools to seek corporate sponsorship for all manner of things-from school bands through to computer laboratories. Increasing numbers of schools ply the Asian market for fee paying students. This commercial logic is essentially anarchic, with unpredictable effects on curriculum and schooling practices.

Despite these uncertainties, globalisation has so far had very little overt influence on curriculum theory-on the concepts and methods of academic curriculum inquiry. For example, there is no mention of globalisation in either of the two major synoptic texts published in the curriculum field during recent years (namely, Jackson 1992 and Pinar et al. 1995). This relative silence in the literature of curriculum theorising is evident even in works that are explicitly postmodernist in their approach. Thus, for example, despite passing references to the work of Fredric Jameson (1991), neither William Doll's (1993) *A Post-Modern Perspective on Curriculum*, nor Patrick Slattery's (1995) *Curriculum Development in the Postmodern Era*, acknowledge the global market forces of 'late capitalism' as a possible influence on curriculum theory and practice.

Precisely how school curricula will change in response to the new restructuring agendas driven by economic globalisation remains a very open question, especially as these are combined with, and complicated by, the increasing (and interconnected) effects of global media culture on what young people learn (in and out of schools). While it is possible to make some informed guesses about how globalisation will manifest itself in changing school curricula (and in whose interests), there are many gaps in our current knowledge of the dynamics of a transnational imaginary in curriculum work and in the theoretical resources which may assist us in identifying problems and opportunities as they emerge. In beginning to map these gaps, my methodological (dis)position is to understand curriculum as a deconstructed (or

deconstructing) text (see Gough 1994a), an orientation to inquiry succinctly characterised by the literary critic Barbara Johnson's response (as quoted by ImrŽ Salusinsky 1987: 81) to an invitation to define deconstruction:

One thing I could say is that the training most people get from the beginning, in school and through all the cultural pressures on us, is to answer the question: 'What's the bottom line?' What deconstruction does is to teach you to ask: 'What does the construction of the bottom line leave out? What does it repress? What does it disregard? What does it consider unimportant? What does it put in the margins?' So that it's a double process. You have to have some sense of what someone's conception of what the bottom line would be, is, in order to organize the 'noise' that is being disregarded.

Thus, for Johnson, deconstruction is less an academic argument about signs and meanings than a vocabulary and a set of practices oriented towards uncovering what she calls 'noise'-that which is disregarded or marginalised by our dominant cultural myths and narratives. In the remainder of this paper I will examine two sources of 'noise' that might complicate any attempts to locate the transnational imaginary of globalisation in the microdynamics of curriculum work, namely, (i) the sedimented history of global perspectives in school curricula and (ii) popular expectations that globalising technologies such as the internet will transform schools and their curricula. I have chosen these two facets of globalisation in curriculum discourse precisely because they

are so different. While the new global media networks (re)present themselves to us as leading edges of contemporary cultural transformations (see Gough 1996, 1997), existing global perspectives in school curricula occupy the 'trailing edges' of these changes.

Before globalisation: global perspectives in the curriculum

Global issues and concerns have long functioned as topics or themes in specific learning areas such as history and geography, and efforts to give more emphasis to global perspectives in school curricula are well-documented. For example, during the latter years of the 1980s, global themes became an explicit focus of a number of curriculum development initiatives in such relatively new curriculum areas as development education (Living in a Global Environment, Fien 1989), peace studies (Educating for Global Responsibility, Reardon 1988), world studies (Global Teacher, Global Learner, Pike and Selby 1987, and Making Global Connections, Hicks and Steiner 1989) and the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) Global Environmental Education Programme (Huckle 1988).⁽²⁾ Recognition of the global dimensions and significance of issues such as peace, environment, and industrialisation in developing nations, also led some international organisations (such as the United Nations and its various satellites and subsidiaries, including UNESCO) to attempt to influence school curricula through a variety of transnational curriculum development and/or teacher professional development projects. For example, the UNESCO-UNEP ⁽³⁾ International Environmental Education Programme, which commenced in

1974 and is still active, has sponsored many projects which have sought to promote educational action in response to concerns about the quality of the global environment (however, this program has also been criticised for perpetuating a neo-colonialist discourse in environmental education rather than promoting genuine international collaboration and cooperation; see Greenall Gough 1993).

Many of these curriculum development initiatives valorised variations on a familiar slogan- 'Think global. Act local'-though none, to my knowledge, recognised the irony of recycling a phrase that seems to owe much of its popularity to Theodore Levitt (1983: 92), who used it to encapsulate his advice that 'the globalization of markets is at hand' in an article for the Harvard Business Review. (4) But while global themes in the curriculum are undoubtedly one consequence of the success of transnational social movements, there is very little evidence that they express a transnational imaginary that has contributed to any significant changes in the key meanings that are mobilised in school-based curriculum deliberations and debates. (5) For example, it is obvious that environmental education has been understood in schools as an incremental addition or alternative to conventional curriculum content, but there is little or no evidence of it challenging the 'container' metaphor of curriculum. Yet this is precisely what might be expected if 'think global' had become a powerful imperative in thinking about school curriculum change, since it can be argued that all notions of 'containment' are destabilised and subverted by recognising the complexity and multiplicity of the global environment's

interconnections (thus, for example, we can no longer simply 'throw rubbish away', because in global environmental terms there is no 'away').

However, the point I wish to develop here is concerned with the ways in which global perspectives in national and state curriculum specifications function as a kind of 'noise' in any transformations of school curricula that might (or should) be taking place in response to economic globalisation and to broader cultural expressions of a transnational imaginary. For example, in 1995 the state of Victoria's Board of Studies published its Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) as a basis for curriculum planning in years P-10 and for reporting on student achievement. The eight-volume CSF (its contents are organised into the eight key learning areas 'agreed to nationally' by the former Australian Education Council) includes in its outcome statements references to many of the same global issues and concerns that have previously functioned as topics or themes in subjects such as history and geography. Moreover, the CSF can itself be understood as a product of a centralising tendency in educational restructuring that has been animated by economic globalisation. (6) However, while the CSF is undoubtedly influencing the rhetoric of school curriculum policies and priorities, any references to globalisation that are expressed in (or implied by) its outcome statements comprise only a relatively small sample of the possible meanings that actually circulate among teachers and students in schools.

For example, we have little knowledge of how teachers in the Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) key learning area deploy concepts of globalisation or other expressions of a transnational imaginary to 'explain economic decisions made by governments', (7) although a content analysis of syllabus documents and textbooks would undoubtedly provide us with some clues as to which explanations they are likely to privilege. John Fien and Jane Williamson-Fien (1996: 125) provide a recent overview of 'best practice' in teaching global perspectives in SOSE in which they assert that 'few Australian syllabuses provide students with [a] comprehensive view of the world as an interconnected and interdependent system'. However, a consideration of what these authors omit from their discussion and recommendations sheds useful light on the new complexities that globalisation introduces to the SOSE curriculum. Fien and Williamson-Fien (1996: 129) argue that 'the role of global education in a country such as Australia is to create public awareness and understanding of the nexus between development and lifestyle issues, and to promote values and lifestyle choices consistent with the core principles of life in a democracy'. These authors unabashedly write from a socially critical standpoint on the role of the industrial development paradigm in building nation-states, but they do not seem to recognise that the terms of the political debates in which they engage are rapidly changing. One set of such changes is usefully summarised by Philip McMichael's (1996: 26) list of five premises underlying his argument that globalisation has displaced the institutional and ideological relations constructed by the development project:

First, development is perhaps the 'master' concept of the social sciences, and has been understood as an evolutionary movement bringing rising standards of living—a logical outcome of human rationality as revealed in the European experience; second, the development project was a political strategy to institute nationally managed economic growth as a replicable pattern across the expanding system of states in the post-World War II world order; third, the paradigm of developmentalism offered a broadly acceptable interpretation of how to organize states and international institutions around the goal of maximizing national welfare via technological advances in industry and agriculture; fourth, this paradigm has collapsed with the puncturing of the illusion of development in the 1980s debt crisis, the management of which dismantled development institutions; and fifth, debt management instituted a new organizing principle of 'globalization' as an alternative institutional framework, with the underlying message that nation-states no longer 'develop,' rather, they position themselves in the global economy.

Fien and Williamson-Fien (1996: 129) argue that 'global education is based upon the assumption that the social and structural changes needed to make this a more peaceful, just and ecologically sustainable world' and that these will not occur without 'a fundamental re-education of the Western public'. But, as McMichael's analysis suggests, the 'social and structural changes' that might constitute socially just and ecologically sustainable responses to post-developmental capitalism

are not necessarily those that have been seen to be desirable in forms of global education that take a socially critical position on development. Fien and Williamson-Fien's (1996: 129) elaboration of their position demonstrates just how easily a language of opposition to the development paradigm can be accommodated by the new rhetoric of globalisation; they write: 'if it is true that the rich must live more simply so that the poor may simply live then, in the words of Trainer (1988)':

the keyÉ must be the education of publics in overdeveloped countries regarding these critical themes, so that eventually they will support the necessary restructuring of the global economy and the economies of their own countries. (8)

I suspect that many readers of Trainer's words could easily accommodate them to the dominant discourses of economic 'restructuring' with which Australia and many other OECD countries have been preoccupied since the mid-1980s; some may recognise that Trainer is likely to be anticipating a very different type of 'restructuring' from that which might be indicated by the OECD's economic agenda. My concern here is that the extant (or remnant) language of 'global education', as promulgated by even its most critical practitioners, may be a little too hospitable to an uncritical embrace of economic globalisation.

Globalising media technologies: an airport fiction

Popular understandings of globalisation are replete with apparent contradictions, including a curious tolerance of-or indifference to-extravagant claims about its significance and consequences in various arenas of social life. On the one hand, as Henry and Taylor (1997: 46) observe, 'there is a good deal of hype around the notion of globalisation', while on the other hand, as Malcolm Waters (1995: 1) notes, "'globalization" is far less controversial than 'postmodernism'". I want now to examine a specific form of transnational imaginary that is routinely expressed in expectations about the transformative effects of globalising technologies on schools and their curricula. The critique of expectations requires a different methodology from the critique of historical legacies. As I argue elsewhere (Gough 1994c), our purposes in educational inquiry are sometimes better served by (re)presenting the texts we produce as deliberate fictions rather than as 'factual' narratives that 'reflect' educational phenomena and experiences. Following Donna Haraway (1994), I also argue that some modes of fiction can help us to produce texts which diffract the storylines of educational inquiry and thus move research efforts beyond reflection and reflexivity: 'Diffraction is an optical metaphor for the effort to make a difference in the world' (Haraway 1997: 16).

I will begin by juxtaposing two stories referring to new information technologies that were carried on the front page of *The Age*, Wednesday

27 November 1996. One of these stories, appropriately located on the far right (of the page), reported suggestions by Victoria's Minister for Education, Phil Gude, for a novel approach to streamlining the delivery of government schooling:

School hours may be cut

The State Government has begun a review of school education policy that could lead to children spending fewer hours in class and more time learning from home.

The Education Minister, Mr Phil Gude, yesterday flagged the new policy-tentatively called Schools of the Third Millennium-which will build on the Government's contentious Schools of the Future program. Mr Gude said the Government had begun examining what the next generation of schools required.

He singled out the impact of new technology which, he said, raised the question of whether children should spend as much time at school as they do now.

"When you get the interlinking capabilities between the home and the workplace-called the school-could there be more work done in a domestic arrangement?" he asked. "What impact will that have on the structures and the natures of the physical building of the school?"

As part of the work on the new policy, Mr Gude will call a meeting of architects and builders within the next few months to review the design of schools.

The item goes on to report that the Minister will travel to the US

early next year, 'where he hopes to pick up ideas for the new policy' and, further, that the Education Department is looking at British examples of secondary schools which 'have a strong technology and business focus and have corporate sponsors'. In this item, which conjures up images of children wired to the World Wide Web through their home computers while the Minister shops for (duty free?) educational policies in the global marketplace, a transnational imaginary is clearly at work. (9)

I can only admire the Minister's bravery (gall?) in announcing a school education policy that invites comparison with Colleen McCullough's (1985) novel, *A Creed for the Third Millennium*-for this is educational policy as airport fiction, cheerfully flaunting its cliché-ridden commercialism and superficiality, with formulaic phrases like 'new technology' and 'corporate sponsorship' pushing enough buttons to entertain (but not to tax, in any sense) the business class passengers who are the real constituency of Victoria's present government. No doubt the Minister's plan to call a meeting of architects and builders to review the design of schools will keep some of his customers satisfied, but can you imagine the response of architects and builders if the Minister for Planning and Development announced that he would kick-start a review of major infrastructure projects by calling a meeting of school teachers and other educators? Like the 'Schools of the Future' program that preceded it, we can expect a 'Schools of the Third Millennium' policy to use deceptively forward-looking language to dress up the Kennett government's preferred approach to managing public

schooling. 'Schools of the Future' are nothing more than self-managing schools-an attempt to recreate in the government system the kind of competitive corporatism that has long been the norm for private schools. In other words, 'Schools of the Future' reflect the past practices of private education and the economic ideology of the present government. The phrase 'Schools of the Future' is a purely token gesture, using language which appears to herald a new and bold vision of education to disguise what is at heart a deeply conservative approach to public schooling. 'Schools of the Third Millennium' heralds a similarly retrogressive vision, with 'the impact of new technology' being used as yet another excuse to reduce the costs of public education. A deeply conservative approach to social policy also underlies any serious consideration of reducing the length of the school day. Who will supervise the work that the Minister expects to be done 'in a domestic arrangement'? Cutting school hours would seriously disrupt many families' domestic and income-producing activities-with the exception, of course, of another (local) imaginary: the virtually extinct traditional nuclear family in which one parent (usually male) 'works' and the other parent (usually female) undertakes 'home duties', which will henceforth include increased responsibility for children's compulsory schooling.

As I contemplated the Minister's vision of homes of the future, and of what might actually be achieved by students using 'the interlinking capabilities' provided by the new information technologies 'in a domestic arrangement', my attention was drawn to another item on the

same page:

Woman wants to download baby

Sandy Indlekofer-O'Sullivan wants to have a baby through the Net.

While sex with the prospective father is fine, romance is not, the Wollongong business-woman declares on her Internet babies page appealing for a cyberspace father.

"I am simply wanting to have a child without being married," she says.É Yesterday she said she had received about 100 insemination offers from as far apart as Sydney and the Netherlands.

She wants to meet the men first, but if all goes to plan the baby [will] arrive by late 1998.

Ms Indlekofer-O'Sullivan, who also makes a living setting up websites, said the Internet with its 120 million users seemed like a normal way to go about what she freely admits is not a normal process.

I am sure Phil Gude would have applauded Ms Indlekofer-O'Sullivan's marketing skills in placing a double column block advertisement for her website construction service on the front page of The Age at absolutely no cost to herself-another win for small business and free enterprise-and, as the Minister's own pronouncements demonstrate, you don't have to make sense to make news. These items have two things in common. First, both items point towards the changes that the new information technologies are making to what we now think of as 'natural' or 'normal'. (There is a particularly interesting reversal of current expectations in Ms Indlekofer-O'Sullivan's characterisation of

her public appeal to 120 million internet users to satisfy her maternal yearnings as 'a normal way to go about what she freely admits is not a normal process'. I would have thought that using the internet as a global do-it-yourself introduction agency was not yet a 'normal' way to go about the entirely normal/natural process of finding a sexual partner for procreational-or, for that matter, recreational-purposes which, advances in teledildonics notwithstanding, still require partners to be in the same locality. I very much doubt that these are the kinds of 'interlinking capabilities' that Phil Gude had in mind.)

Secondly, both items perpetuate stereotypical expectations about what might actually be achieved by the convergence and proliferation of new information technologies. But whereas downloading a baby is an absurd exaggeration of what can be accomplished by information technology (internet delivery hardware does not, and will not for the foreseeable future, have sufficient bandwidth to download even a virtual reality game, let alone a baby, and in any case it is not exactly what Ms Indlekofer-O'Sullivan has in mind), cutting school hours has just enough plausibility to be taken seriously, despite the simplistic reasoning which connects new information technologies with a reduction in school hours. This is not to say that the Minister's suggestion is in itself 'nonsense' (as the Leader of the Opposition, John Brumby, is reported to have said in a follow-up news item on page 2 of The Age, Thursday 27 November 1996). I have no quarrel with Phil Gude raising questions about the impact of changing media technologies on 'the structures and the natures' of school buildings-the difficulty I have is with (i) his premature foreclosure on the purposes and functions of

schooling as a social institution by treating it as just another 'workplace', and (ii) his attempt to short circuit the types of social, cultural and educational inquiries that these questions warrant by first seeking responses from architects and builders.

One question we must ask is: why should this particular 'revolution' in media technologies be expected to transform schooling when previous communications revolutions have not? The modern school is, both culturally and materially, an enduring monument to a print dominated culture. But while the domination of print has been eroded by a succession of electrical and electronic media technologies that have resulted in massive social and cultural change, these have resulted in only superficial modifications to the ways schools are built, organized, and operated. Our social relations and cultural values have been irreversibly transformed by the telegraph, the telephone, broadcast radio, the cinema, and especially by television. None of these, not even television, has changed the institutions of schooling to anything like the extent that each has changed society at large. In 1960 Marshall McLuhan wrote a short essay titled 'Classroom without walls' which described succinctly and persuasively why and how teaching and learning in schools should change in relation to the pervasive effects of mass televisual media. McLuhan's critique of print dominated schooling has gained considerably in its forcefulness during the past 37 years, not only because the effects he described have intensified and accelerated, but also because they have been extended and diversified by the convergence of broadcasting, computing and

telecommunications. (10)

We are no longer a print dominated culture and have not been for many years. We have been a television dominated culture for more than a generation, but when politicians bemoan the alleged decline in literacy standards, it is still only print literacy they are talking about, rather than the dispositions and skills needed for effective participation in the electronic culture of McLuhan's global village, in which 'entire societies inter-communicate by a sort of "macroscopic gesticulation"' (McLuhan and Fiore 1967: 17). Nevertheless, McKenzie Wark (1994: 47) provides a plausible reason for anticipating that computers might transform schooling in ways that television has not:

We like to think we are a print dominated culture because there is a class issue attached to these two media. Watching too much TV equals 'you're gonna screw your life up kid', equals 'you're not gonna make it into the middle class', equals 'you're a loser!' Learning to read and write equals 'you're going to make it into the middle class' equals 'you might get a job as opposed to you will' equals 'that's good, that's fine, that's okay'. So television is bad, video in the schools is bad. However there's a real kink in the way this is happening which occurs in the way people think about computers. Computers occupy that space that writing used to occupy in the fear and anxiety about the middleclassness of our kids. Computers equals work equals middle class skills equals good equals 'let's get them into the schools right now!' We never even got the last generation of media technology properly into

the schools, we are not educating anyone really on how we use our time, but we're going to get this new technology in there because you can attach the idea of the computer to the idea of work, to middle class values.

But in Victoria we now have the Phil Gude manoeuvre which goes something like this: yes, computers equals work equals middle class skills equals good equals 'let's get them into schools', but that's going to be way too expensive, so let's get computers into homes rather than schools-at parents' expense, of course-and, so long as they are 'interlinked' with what's left of the schools, we can call what kids do at home 'school work' (and, if only we really could download babies from the Internet, we could close a few more hospitals too).

To be continued

I have suggested that both the history of global perspectives in curriculum and the anticipated impacts of new information technologies can be understood as forms of 'noise' disrupting and complicating attempts to locate a transnational imaginary in curriculum work, but in identifying them as such I am not suggesting that they should be 'controlled' or suppressed. These 'noises' are just as much an expression of a transnational imaginary as are the national curriculum policy instruments that are intended to better position Australian education in the global marketplace. But we need to know more about how these complicating discourses-whether they be history or hype-interact,

shape one another, and shape school curricula.

I will conclude by briefly mentioning yet another source of 'noise' around globalisation that may provide further opportunities for fruitful inquiry. Timothy Scrase (1996: 65) argues that 'the majority of theoretical perspectives [on globalisation] have invariably been Western centred with little discussion so far of the impact of the latest phase of globalisation upon the lived experiences of those in the developing world'. Scrase (1996: 74) draws on examples from India (particularly in regard to problems of educational access and equity) to support his argument that 'globalisation has spawned a need to reconceptualise our understanding of education in the developing world'. There are, indeed, signs that globalisation is provoking considerable debate among comparative and international education scholars about their professional and academic responsibilities and commitments to education in developing countries (see, for example, McGinn 1996, Ilon 1997).

While I am happy to leave the comparativists to their own debates, there is a parallel issue for those of us who want to attend to what Betina Zolkower (1996) calls 'the Third World at home' and, turning Scrase's imperative around, to recognize that considering the impacts of globalisation upon developing nations may provide us with another standpoint from which to reconceptualise our understanding of education in the 'developed' world.

For example, the prospect of participating with colleagues in South

Africa in an institutional links program has recently provided me with the motivation to consider the different ways in which globalisation might be expressed in Australia and South Africa. 51% of South Africans live in rural settlements, many of them live from the land, and most (whether they like it or not) are in the process of joining the global economy now that the economic sanctions that once kept them separate have been lifted. Under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), as formulated in the early 1990s, agricultural efficiency is not achieved through national development plans (in which the farm sector of a nation's economy articulates with its industrial sector) but by world market 'breadbaskets' achieved through farm concentration and specialisation—a streamlining of agriculture that accelerates deruralisation. Australia has already reached the stage of having an almost residual rural sector: less than 15% of the population live in rural areas and the fraction employed in agriculture work on 'efficient' farms that produce the maximum amount of food for the minimum cost using the least number of people. James Goldsmith (1994, p. 39) provides a worst case scenario for the application of GATT in countries that retain a high percentage of rural settlement:

It is estimated that there are still 3.1 billion people in the world who live from the land. If GATT manages to impose worldwide the sort of productivity achieved by the intensive agriculture of nations such as Australia, then it becomes easy to calculate that about two billion of these people will become redundant. Some of these GATT refugees will move to urban slums. But a large number of them will be forced into

mass migration. We will have profoundly and tragically destabilized the world's population.

Schools are inevitably implicated in promoting (or resisting), mediating and ameliorating the deleterious effects of such social transformations. For example, Craig Howley (1997) argues that nation-building in the USA, which has been achieved partly through systems of schooling that privilege cosmopolitan interests, has served to debase rather than improve the quality of life in rural communities:

In fact, during the past century and a half, improving rural schools also meant reshaping and redirecting them into a national system—a system of schooling, manufacture, trade, politics, and culture—that has insured, if not required, the depopulation of the countryside.

My hunch is that the roles that educators may be expected to play in building the new South Africa will require them to think very carefully about what they are prepared to support and not support in the name of 'globalisation' (and of 'development' too, since this is far from being an extinct concept). Howley's speculations and suggestions about the types of research and educational policies that might honor rural interests in the USA are worthy of consideration in this regard, but the precise ways in which globalisation is being expressed and strategically deployed in South Africa will require the formulation of a distinctive local response. Given that Australia's rural sector might now be considered to be in a state of advanced globalisation, there are

very different questions to be asked about what it now might mean to 'improve' Australia's rural schools.

Scrase (1996: 61) suggests that social science research currently deploys two broad approaches to analysing globalisation. On the one hand, there are those researchers who view globalisation in terms of political economy, focusing on the increasing growth of a capitalist world economy and the resultant-often deleterious-socio-cultural effects on developing nation-states. On the other hand, there are those who stress the relative independence of cultural practices within globalisation processes, arguing that local cultures now have more resources and spaces for their expression. While I admit that when I began this research I tended to refer to my focus as 'cultural globalisation' (to register my initial sympathy with the latter perspective), this dichotomy now seems to me to be an unproductive oversimplification, especially since education seems invariably to be a site of cultural practices in which both of these tendencies are inextricably intertwined.

In drawing towards some sort of closure to this paper, it may suffice to say that curriculum inquiry advances by perturbations-by being challenged to respond to new problems and research questions. I have focused here on an emergent phenomenon-the ways in which the transnational imaginary of cultural globalisation is simultaneously represented in curriculum policies and school programs, expressed by teachers and students, circulated in popular media, and deployed in the construction of school knowledge-and I suspect that the concepts and

methods that will be most generative in advancing inquiries around this imaginary are more likely to emerge from a state of disequilibrium rather than stability. This paper is, I hope, a small contribution to sustaining instability in the conceptual and methodological landscape of curriculum inquiry.

Acknowledgments

The broader research from which this paper arises has been supported, in its initial phases, by a seeding grant from the Faculty of Education, Deakin University, and is being conducted in collaboration with Annette Gough. Conversations with Jane Kenway and other members of the Deakin Centre for Education and Change have also advanced this inquiry, but I stress that the idiosyncratic positions taken here are my responsibility and are not necessarily shared by my colleagues.

References

Barnet, Richard J. and Cavanagh, John (1994) *Global Dreams: Imperial Corporations and the New World Order* (New York: Touchstone).

Doll, William E. (1993) *A Post-Modern Perspective on Curriculum* (New York: Teachers College Press).

Fien, John (ed.) (1989) *Living in a Global Environment: Classroom Activities in Development Education* (Brisbane: Australian Geography Teachers Association).

Fien, John and Williamson-Fien, Jane (1996) *Global perspectives in Studies of Society and Environment*. In Gilbert, Rob (ed.) *Studying Society and Environment: A Handbook for Teachers* (South Melbourne: Macmillan), 125-140.

Gauthier, Clermont (1992) *Between crystal and smoke: or, how to miss the point in the debate about action research*. In Pinar, William F. and Reynolds, William M. (eds) *Understanding Curriculum as Phenomenological and Deconstructed Text* (New York: Teachers College Press), 184-194.

Gough, Annette (1997) *Education and the Environment: Policy, Trends and the Problems of Marginalisation* (Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research).

Gough, Noel (1994a) Imagining an erroneous order: understanding curriculum as phenomenological and deconstructed text. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 26 (5): 553-568.

Gough, Noel (1994b) Playing at catastrophe: ecopolitical education after poststructuralism. *Educational Theory* 44 (2): 189-210.

Gough, Noel (1994c) Narration, reflection, diffraction: aspects of fiction in educational inquiry. *Australian Educational Researcher* 21 (3): 47-76.

Gough, Noel (1996) Virtual geography, video art and the global environment: postmodernist possibilities for environmental education research. *Environmental Education Research* 2 (3): 379-389.

Gough, Noel (1997) Weather^a Incorporated: environmental education, postmodern identities, and technocultural constructions of nature. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education* 2 : 145-162.

Greenall Gough, Annette (1993) Globalizing environmental education: what's language got to do with it? *Journal of Experiential Education* 16 (3): 32-39.

Greig, Sue, Pike, Graham and Selby, David (1987) *Earthrights: Education as if the Planet Really Mattered* (London: World Wildlife Fund and Kogan Page).

Grumet, Madeleine R. (1981) Restitution and reconstruction of educational experience: an autobiographical method for curriculum theory. In Lawn, Martin and Barton, Len (eds) Rethinking Curriculum Studies: A Radical Approach (London: Croom Helm), 115-130.

Haraway, Donna J. (1994) A game of cat's cradle: science studies, feminist theory, cultural studies. *Configurations: A Journal of Literature, Science, and Technology* 2 (1): 59-71.

Haraway, Donna J. (1997)

Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan@_Meets_OncoMouse^a: Feminism and Technoscience (New York and London: Routledge).

Henry, Miriam and Taylor, Sandra (1997) Globalisation and national schooling policy in Australia. In Lingard, Bob and Porter, Paige (eds) *A National Approach to Schooling in Australia? Essays on the Development of National Policies in Schools Education* (Canberra: Australian College of Education), 45-59.

Hicks, David and Steiner, Miriam (eds) (1989) *Making Global Connections: A World Studies Workbook* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd).

Huckle, John (1988) *What We Consume: The Teachers' Handbook* (Richmond, Surrey: Richmond Publishing Company).

Ilon, Lynn (1997) Education, honesty, and globalization: a response to

the presidential address of Noel F. McGinn. *Comparative Education Review* 41 (3): 351-357.

Jackson, Philip W. (ed.) (1992) *Handbook of Research on Curriculum* (New York: Macmillan).

Jameson, Fredric (1991) *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso).

Kenway, Jane, Bigum, Chris and Fitzclarence, Lindsay (1993) Marketing education in the post-modern age. *Journal of Education Policy* 8 (2): 105-123.

Kenway, Jane, Bigum, Chris, Fitzclarence, Lindsay, Collier, Janine and Tregenza, Karen (1994) New education in new times. *Journal of Education Policy* 9 (4): 317-333.

Levitt, Theodore (1983) The globalization of markets. *Harvard Business Review* 83 (3): 92-102.

Lingard, Bob, Knight, John and Porter, Paige (eds) (1993) *Schooling*

Reform in Hard Times (London and Washington DC: The Falmer Press).

McCullough, Colleen (1985) *A Creed for the Third Millennium* (New York: Harper & Row)

McGinn, Noel F. (1996) Education, democratization, and globalization: a challenge for comparative education. *Comparative Education Review* 40 (4): 341-357.

McLuhan, Marshall (1960) Classroom without walls. In Carpenter, Edmund and McLuhan, Marshall (eds) *Explorations in Communication* (Boston: Beacon Press), 1-3.

McLuhan, Marshall and Fiore, Quentin (1967) *War and Peace in the Global Village* (New York: Bantam Books).

McMichael, Philip (1996) Globalization: myths and realities. *Rural Sociology* 61 (1): 25-55.

Pike, Graham and Selby, David (1987) *Global Teacher, Global Learner* (London: Hodder and Stoughton).

Pinar, William F., Reynolds, William M., Slattery, Patrick and Taubman, Peter (1995) *Understanding Curriculum: An Introduction to the Study of Historical and Contemporary Curriculum Discourses* (New York: Peter Lang).

Reardon, Betty A. (ed.) (1988) *Educating for Global Responsibility: Teacher-Designed Curricula for Peace Education, K-12* (New York and London: Teachers College Press).

Salusinsky, ImrŽ (1987) *Criticism in Society* (New York and London: Methuen).

Scrase, Timothy J. (1996) Globalisation, social justice and education in the developing world. *Melbourne Studies in Education* 37 (2): 61-76.

Shaviro, Steven (1997) *Doom Patrols: A Theoretical Fiction About Postmodernism* (New York and London: Serpent's Tail).

Slattery, Patrick (1995) *Curriculum Development in the Postmodern Era* (New York: Garland).

Victoria, Board of Studies (1995) *Curriculum and Standards Framework: Studies of Society and Environment* (Carlton, Victoria: Board of Studies).

Wark, McKenzie (1994) Understanding media culture, student identities and learning. In Kenway, Jane and Collier, Janine (eds) *Schooling What Future? Balancing the Education Agenda* (Geelong, Victoria: Deakin Centre for Education and Change), 45-56.

Waters, Malcolm (1995) *Globalization* (London and New York: Routledge).

Wilson, Rob and Dissanayake, Wimal (eds) (1996) *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham and London: Duke University Press).

Zolkower, Betina (1996) Math fictions. In Aronowitz, Stanley,
Martinsons, Barbara, Menser, Michael and Rich, Jennifer (eds)
Technoscience and Cyberculture (New York and London: Routledge), 57-96.

Correspondence

Noel Gough

Deakin Centre for Education and Change

Deakin University

221 Burwood Highway

Burwood Victoria 3125

Australia

+61 (0)3 9244 3854 (voice)

+61 (0)3 9244 6752 (fax)

noelg@deakin.edu.au

<http://www2.deakin.edu.au/e&c/dcec/members/Gough.html>

Notes

1 I follow Philip McMichael (1996: 27) in using the term 'local
expressions' as shorthand for 'the process by which local communities
negotiate their social contexts, which includes global relations as

embedded in institutions that condition local communities'.

2 It is difficult to cite just one source for this multi-volume program.

Huckle's (1988) book is the teachers' guide to ten book-length units that make up one of four curriculum modules in the program.

3 UNEP: United Nations Environment Program.

4 Greig, Pike and Selby (1987: 20) are typical of the authors of environmental education texts who render this slogan as 'think globally, act locally' without citing or otherwise acknowledging any source. Of course, the imperative to think globally has a longer history. For example, in 1968 Marshall McLuhan noted that with the advent of an electronic information environment, 'all the territorial aims and objectives of business and politics [tend] to become illusory' (McLuhan and Fiore 1967: 5).

5 See, for example, Annette Gough (1997), Noel Gough (1994b).

6 According to Kenway et al. (1994: 318), two dominant restructuring tendencies have emerged in Australian educational systems' responses to economic globalisation: a centralising tendency concerned with curriculum and professional development, enabled by corporate federalism and the new nationalism, and guided by the principles of vocationalism and scientific rationality; and a decentralising tendency concerned with money, management and industrial relations, and guided by principles of deregulation, devolution, privatisation, commercialisation and commodification.

7 This is a Level 5 learning outcome in the 'Natural and social systems' strand of the SOSE KLA; see Victoria, Board of Studies (1995: 18).

8 Fien and Williamson-Fien (1996) source this quote to F.E. [Ted]

Trainer (1988) 'Development re-think', School of Education, University
of New South Wales, Sydney, mimeo.

9 Six months later, another front page item in *The Age* (3 June 1997: 1)
indicated that the Minister had also shopped for educational policies
in New Zealand, Singapore and Japan.

10 Steven Shaviro (1997: vii) is, I believe, entirely justified in
asserting that Marshall McLuhan and Andy Warhol are 'the most
significant North American theorists of postmodernism, even if neither
of them used the term'.