

Globalization(s)/Discourse/Education: Redefining Educational Space

Sarah DesRoches

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ABSTRACT

Globalization(s)/Discourse/Education: Redefining Academic Space

Sarah DesRoches

Post-secondary education in North America is submitting to the cultural and economic trends set out by globalizing, or neo-liberal, processes. Some of these processes include the standardization of knowledge and an increasing pressure to produce in a speedy manner. These impacts perpetuate the Dominant (neo-liberal) discourse: that knowledge which is 'productive' or can be commodified is more valuable than that which is not. Students, then, begin performing the needs of the market, perpetuating hegemonic power structures.

In this paper I argue that education is a unique space in that while it is undeniably a product of the Dominant Discourse, it is not inherently destined to maintain the values and goals of this Discourse. Educational spaces are fluid in that they are acted upon by neo-liberal political and economic ideologies. They also have the potential to *act upon* these dominant power structures. Simply put, post-secondary education should acknowledge that there are, in fact, many competing discourses in any social/educational space.

I explore the use of discourse analysis (from a Foucauldian framework) to describe how discourses represent more than use of language but how to interpret and portray various (possibly diverging) realities and identities. Using Lyotard's concept of *performativity*, I elucidate how post-secondary education is a space in which social values and norms are present and should therefore play active roles in modifying how these spaces are enacted.

This thesis is dedicated to my brother, David DesRoches, who is on his own learning path.

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Introduction

Post-secondary education is being reduced to an economic end. Future employment and monetary gains are being valued over educational frameworks that engage with diverse identities and value outcomes which are not purely material, on both systematic and individual levels. The field of critical pedagogy has uncovered, explored, and discussed how education is currently being viewed as a very limited, narrow, project. As Kincheloe articulates, “the dominant culture’s conversation about education simply ignores questions of power and justice in the development of educational policy and classroom practice (2004, p. 99). Critical pedagogy has also uncovered the ways in which educational institutions create their policies and curricula to serve specific ends; these ends are manifested in the perceived goals of education, the attitude that teachers, students, and other stakeholders have towards what education is and what it means to be educated. Many critical pedagogues (McLaren, 2005; Kincheloe, 2004; Giroux, 2001; Aronowitz, 1993) provide meaningful analysis of how neo-liberal globalizing processes have worked to ideologically and systematically reduce educational experiences in North America to no more than training programs. Implicit in this analysis is the fundamental loss of freedom for students. As Peter McLaren (2005) argues, “The commercialization of higher education, the bureaucratic cultivation of intellectual capital... have garnered institutions of higher learning profound suspicion by those who view education as a vehicle for emancipation” (pp.24-5). Post-secondary education, then, is guilty of submitting to norms defined by economics rather than by social or political values. Critical pedagogy has outlined the major trends to which post-secondary institutions have succumbed and also what the repercussions of this have been on students in terms of

personal identity. However, my issue with many of the texts dealing with critical pedagogy is that while the analysis is rich and provoking, there seems to be less of an emphasis on solutions than with engaging with the problems. Also, critical pedagogy lies within a Marxist framework; I argue that this framework is limiting in terms of acknowledging the nuances of oppression in reference to identity. For these reasons, I argue that by using discourse as a tool, these dire realities might be weakened. The changes that have been imposed by economically inspired ideologies in the field of education in the past twenty years have been detrimental. However, these shifts need not be permanent and through critical discourse analysis this impermanence is made explicit.

Objectives

My objectives in undertaking this research include narrowing down, for the purpose of demystifying, certain key concepts in the field of education; these include, but are not limited to, globalization, neo-liberalism, identity, and academic space. These concepts will provide the skeleton of this work. The elucidation of these concepts will enable me to make connections between how global processes affect local spaces and vice-versa. A second objective is to demonstrate how education, despite economic and political interventions, remains an empowered realm. The questions that guide this research are:

1. How have globalizing processes transformed post-secondary education in North America and how might these same processes (increased connectivity, fluidity) enable the shifting of these transformations?
2. How might the use of discourse facilitate agency in the classroom by acting against globalizing processes? To answer these questions I will undertake a qualitative study of literature within the fields of education, political studies, cultural studies, and philosophy.

In this text, I will explore the connection between the concepts that relate the fluid nature of globalizing processes of education and then relate them to the field of education.

Due to space constraints, the concept of false nostalgia will not be explored within the parameters of this paper. A discussion of false nostalgia could have enriched this text because it would sway the reader away from the fallacy that education in North America was 'better' in the past, thereby implying that it is 'worse' now. False nostalgia can be related specifically to neo-liberalism and the transformations it has imposed on education. Many texts deal with these shifts with a(n arguable false) nostalgia for the way that education 'used to be.' I have attempted to avoid this by underlining the fluidity inherent in education, thereby focusing on how the dominant educational *ethos* is continually shifting.

I will situate this work in a post-structuralist/ post-foundational framework. This framework actively attempts to deconstruct the meta-narratives, which have been imposed by the discourse of the Enlightenment. The discourse of the Enlightenment has instilled strict divisions between categories such as I/thou (self/other), rationality/emotion, public/private. Post-structuralism favours an integration of these divisions for the purpose of achieving equality. My paper is grounded in post-structuralist thought because I am interested in understanding how a more equitable educational framework might be achieved through the breaking down of these divisions. I attempt to illustrate how the Dominant discourse (neo-liberalism) has imposed a standard of economic rationality on educational spaces. Using a Foucauldian lens, I will examine how competing discourses might be negotiated to create intersubjective spaces rather than ones that perpetuate the oppressive structures founded in the Enlightenment.

My thesis will be organized into four chapters, not including the introductory and concluding chapters. In the first chapter, I illustrate that the binaries often used to conceptualize globalization: Globalization from Above or from Below; ‘we’, ‘they’; ‘haves’, have-nots’; ‘North/West’; ‘South/East’, are simplistic and even redundant in attempting to understand globalizing processes. I then discuss how globalization should be understood, in terms of complex connectivities, and as a set of forces based in capitalism proper. Using Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of *de-territorialization* and *rhizome*, I illustrate how globalizing processes have emerged from a particular time and place but that they have surpassed traditional categories such as economics, politics, media. Simply put, I hope to emphasize the profound and complex shifts that globalizing processes have reinforced and their direct, inextricable relationship to capitalism.

In the second chapter, I examine some of the definitions of discourse that exemplify various perspectives on how to contextualize and analyze discourse. I adopt the Foucauldian framework that views discourse as encompassing more than mere language, but rather as a body of knowledge in a particular time in history. Discourse, according to Foucault, enables or disables speaking about certain topics, or committing certain acts. Using Foucault and Norman Fairclough’s analyses, I explore the roles that hegemony and ideology play in educational settings and how the use of discourse might counter these processes.

In chapter 3, Neo-Liberalism and Education, I examine how neo-liberal agendas and education intersect. I begin by depicting the contested beginnings of neo-liberalism and go on to describe the imprint that neo-liberal policies have made in not only economic but political and cultural realms. Finally, I define the ‘knowledge economy,’ a

pinnacle component of neo-liberalism/globalization. The knowledge economy provides an explicit example of how neo-liberalism has seduced North America with promises of how it will bring increased freedom into people's work. However, as I illustrate, this has proven to be a fallacy; the effects of the knowledge economy have privileged economic gain over individual freedoms. I use the concepts of abundance, speed, and finally Lyotard's *performativity* to illustrate these points.

In the final chapter, Defining Educational Space, I employ Hannah Arendt's and Henri Lefèbvre's theories on social space to create a definition which intertwines the two. Briefly, social space can be defined a space which lies between the private and the political spheres; it is therefore shaped by each of these spheres. It is also a fluid construction, one that is perpetually shifting according to transformations occurring within the private and the political. Spaces are often conceived as microcosms of dominant power structures, but are not necessarily bound to this label. Educational spaces or sites (classrooms) are no exception in this regard. However, I argue that they are distinct insofar as they provide the ideal venue for questioning, critique, and even shifting the dominant power structure that has created and/or defined it.

The crux of my argument is to firstly demonstrate how the dominant discourse creates the illusion of single, homogeneous, and static reality. In this reality, people are viewed as means-to-an-end, whose worth is determined by their ability to produce and to contribute economically. I dispute that this reality is the only one and that it is non-negotiable. Following this, I argue that through the recognition of multiple discourses (and consequently subjectivity), educational institutions have the power to discredit the authority of the dominant discourse.

Chapter I: Understanding Globalization(s)

In order to enhance the transformative potential embedded in the processes of globalization, it is necessary to expose the latent tendencies of globalization, which reflect the hierarchies of power within the global political economy.

Robert W. Cox, 1996.

In this chapter, I lay down the framework within which I articulate globalization and globalizing processes as a web of interconnections that is in perpetual flux. I also explore how these processes have emerged from within the capitalist ideology. Finally, I illustrate Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *de-territorialization*, (the concept of capitalism re-creating images of capitalism). *De-territorialization* reconceptualizes our traditional notions of how spaces, while they may appear to have fixed purposes and possibilities, have the potential to be transformed.

Globalization is often understood as a conglomeration of many networks, (dominated by neo-liberal economics) which come together to form a worldwide process of cultural, political, and technological homogenization (Conway & Heynen, 2006; Stromquist, 2002; Stiglitz, 2002). Much of the literature deals with how globalizing processes instill inconsistencies and contradictions in modern social life. However, these explanations only deal with large-scale impositions and adjustments. These include how Western nations dominate the South. These might also include narratives of how, due to globalizing processes, the privileged have solidified their authority, while the 'have-nots' are relegated to further marginalized social and economic positions. As Conway and Heynen (2006) argue,

Neoliberal capitalism's particular feat since its emergence in the 1980's has been to increase social divisions, widen the economic gap between the very rich and the very poor, centralize authority for the management of corporate and financial

capital, elevate “soft capitalism” to a position of unassailable influence in global financial affairs, give monopolistic/oligopolistic privileges to smaller and smaller group of highly corrupt practices . . .

(p.227)

Simply put, these theories suggest that globalization imposes a framework of worldwide categorization; that different nations, communities, and socio-economic classes are subjected to dramatically different effects from globalizing processes. This understanding of globalization argues that the West benefits more than the East; that the North dominates the South. These polarized narratives provide only summary accounts of how these processes have and continue to effect the population in each of these categories. Most of the explanations of the effects of globalization over-generalize and thus ignore the complexities of the effects on social groups, individuals, and nations in developed and the developing countries. For example Conway and Heynem’s text outlines how Globalization from Above can be counterbalanced by social democracy, or Globalization from Below. However, the binary construction of the processes of globalization is not an adequate representation of the several realities of globalizations.¹ The following section will outline Globalization from Above and from Below. This outline will reveal why these constructions are inadequate in portraying the many realities, experiences, that globalizing processes have imposed.

¹ Globalization will henceforth be referred to in the plural because, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, the processes of globalization are many and exist on many levels; the experience of these processes are diverse and can therefore should not be referred to as a singular entity.

Globalization from Above

Globalization from Above refers to the grand narrative of globalization, describing its major trends and patterns (Singh, Kenway, Apple, 2005, p.3). Globalization from Above deals with its processes in economic terms: free trade, tariffs and subsidies, structural adjustment etc. This entails viewing globalization as a singular, non-negotiable, and arguably ‘natural’ manifestation of the global capitalist system. This perspective focuses on macro-level progress with a primary interest in strengthening economies. The rationale is that a strong economy brings prosperity at every level, in all social strata, worldwide. Eminent economists Joseph Stiglitz and Andrew Charlton (2005) argue that, “the notion that trade –free trade, unencumbered by government restrictions—as welfare enhancing is one of the most fundamental doctrines in modern economics, dating back at least to Adam Smith (1776) and David Ricardo (1816)” (p.12). According to proponents of Globalization from Above, the notion of ‘fair trade’ is embedded in the concept of ‘free trade.’ Smith and Ricardo’s notions of ‘*laissez-faire* economics’ and ‘comparative advantage’ respectively, discouraged government intervention in trans-national trading. This hands-off approach would allow each country to profit from their own natural and human resources, through commodification and re-distribution. It contends that all nations, through their own diverse resources would thrive economically. The underlying assumption in Globalization from Above is that neo-liberal ideology is effective, both politically and economically, across the globe, thereby creating a hybrid body that considers the needs of the economy and those of the state as being the same. Singh, Kenway, and Apple (2005) argue, “While the state and the market are typically understood as being distinct but interdependent, neo-liberal globalism liquidates any distinctions between politics and economies, creating a state/market formation” (p.3).

The division between the economic and the political spheres are relinquished in favor of hybrid system that places no distinction between the two.

Globalization from Below

Globalization from Below can be understood as a counter-force or a retelling in human terms of Globalization from Above; it can also be seen as a series of critiques. It contests the conviction that neo-liberal globalization is a necessary, naturally occurring, process. Brecher, Costello, and Smith (2000) write, “It [globalization] was caused by people acting with intent-seeking new economic opportunities, creating new institutions, trying to outflank political and economic opponents” (p.1). Globalization from Below, therefore, makes explicit the experiences of globalizing processes in the lives of those who are not winning, those ‘have-nots’ who, due to globalizing forces, have become more indebted, less employed, more disempowered, or all of the above. Globalization from Below focuses on the particular, or micro levels: individual people and specific locations. These particularities are explored with the intent of proposing a narrative that provides an alternative to the grand, sweeping, generalizations that often omit local realities and the human consequences of political and economic, i.e., the often profound adjustments that globalizing processes have inflicted upon marginalized individuals and groups.

Globalization from Below deals with the contradictions between the portrayal of the advantages to policies that do not distinguish the needs of the economy from those of the state and peoples’ experiences of these policies. Research in this respect is interested in how factors such as citizenship, class, gender, race and religion play key roles in how people perceive and live-out globalizing processes. A person’s decisions, identities, and

roles cannot always be reduced to economic motives. Globalization from Below explores other factors that may have significant influence on people's experiences in the world. Brecher, *et al* (2000) argues "Often what looks like a single movement from one perspective appears as a collection of interacting movements and organizations from another" (p.89). Globalization from Below, then, deals with the profound fragmentation, splitting, inequalities, and unequal social/political/ and economic playing fields. It denies that 'globalization' can be conceived of as a unified process. Furthermore, it questions how those who have been the most victimized by these processes and enacts the most effective strategies to counter these processes.

Clearly, whether one has a strong adherence to one of these camps over the other is heavily dependent on the political camp in which one is situated; the right being associated with Globalization from Above while Globalization from Below is influenced by a left-leaning spirit. These camps, taken individually, are entirely too simplistic to forge any understanding of how the many layers of globalization have come about as well as how they have been, and continue to be, manifested in modern social life. Just as these 'camps' promote two separate spheres of reality, the theories that emerge from them are equally as divergent. Max Pensky (2005) has alluded to how these antagonistic political ideologies manifest themselves within the academy:

Theories of globalization... are multiple and discordant, reflecting not only the mutual indifference of various disciplinary projects within the contemporary academy but often incommensurate theoretical axioms and methodological assumptions as well.

(p.1)

Given the complex and multidimensional nature of globalizations' processes, it is understandable, and to some extent, necessary that various theories present different facets of the phenomenon. These facets are often presented as ultimate explanations of the various phenomena and processes of globalization regardless of how multifaceted the processes of globalization actually are. Yet, it is necessary to recognize that each individual (just as each nation) *acts on* as well as are *acted upon* by Globalization(s) from Above as well as from Below. I call this intersubjectivity. Any theory that does not recognize this intersubjectivity fails to recognize and appreciate the profundity of the many layers involved in the processes of globalization. These processes cannot be reduced to the simplistic binaries of 'we' and 'they', nor of 'winners' and 'losers'. To understand globalization realistically and profoundly, one must see these processes in terms of connectivity. Globalization, understood in terms of this connectivity, refers to "the rapidly developing and perpetually densening network of interconnections and interdependences that characterize modern social life" (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 2). "Modern social life" is bound up in fragments, which are highly visible and ever-present. Culture is a space in which these fragments are reflected and connected. Culture is affected by globalization while also affecting the *course* of globalization. A mutual, fluid, transformation thus occurs. Connections understood as an increasing reliance on outside structures and the increased rate of social life (speed) play fundamental roles in not only how contemporary culture proceeds, but also how this proceeding is perceived. I will briefly discuss Tomlinson's notion of complex connectivity to elucidate this point.

Tomlinson's Complex Connectivity

The discourse surrounding globalization depicts metaphors of increasing global contact. Some of these discursive tools include, 'global village,' or 'global neighbourhood.' These metaphors respond, or make reference to, the reality of "increased flow of goods, information, people and practices across national borders" (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 2). This 'flow' also deals with modes of transportation, media, and wireless communication systems. In other words, that which is 'flowing' is tangible and non-tangible, it dwells in the realms of both structured and unstructured. 'Flow,' is therefore dual edged in that it reinforces the illusion of proximity while producing actual connections between people, countries, nation states, and economies across the world. Proximity, or connectivity, engages us in the conversation of globalization; the role of globalization theories are to delve into this conversation, unraveling the implications, the tensions, the narratives, as well as the images involved.

Related to the idea of 'complex connectivity' is multidimensionality, or multidisciplinary, in an academic context. Through the changed perception of borders, limits, and categories, the connective forces that globalization has introduced have broken down, or fragmented, many traditional categories.

Web of Interconnections

The notion of globalization's interconnective nature is pervasive in the literature dealing with the cultural consequences of globalization. Stromquist (2002) states, "Being multidimensional, globalization touches economic, technological, political, and cultural dimensions" (xiii). As Barry Smart (2003) argues, the economic processes of globalization are reflective of Marx's analyses of the wide-ranging effects of market economies and mass consumption. However, this web is clearly not limited to the

economic realm. Globalizing processes have promoted significant technological advancement, activated a pervasiveness of mass media, and fostered the emergence of Non-Governmental Organizations, each of which has caused significant shifts in the experience of humans across the world. As Arjun Appadurai (1996) illustrates, the current global economy has reached such a profound level of complexity due to its disjunctured nature; the globalized economy is connected to, and defined by, political as well as cultural movements (p.33). This conglomeration functions as a network of globalizing forces. Appadurai argues that the effects of globalization cannot be understood in terms of classical economic theories dealing solely with 'core' and 'peripheral' (2004; 1983) but that the many effects are manifested culturally and in multifaceted ways. In an attempt to explain these manifestations, Appadurai (1996) outlined a framework, which consists of what he understands to be five core facets of cultural globalization: ethnoscapas, mediascapas, technoscapas, financescapas, ideoscapas. Appadurai (1996) explains that the suffix *scape* elaborates the fluidity and the ever-evolving shapes of each of these categories (p.33). In other words, a *scape* can be briefly outlined, explored in various contexts and in combination with other variables; however, it is understood that this exploration will not provide final solutions or definitive explanations. *Scapes* dwell in the realm of perpetual exploration.

Each of Appadurai's *scapes* focuses on one facet of how people are experiencing globalization. *Ethnoscape* refers to the migration of people across borders whether it is for a better quality of life, travel, or political necessity. This normalized and perpetual movement has created a 'shifting world.' *Technoscape* points out technological movement and its ability to move, at high speeds, past boundaries that had previously

been impenetrable. The most obvious and meaningful example of this was the Internet which has made information available at lightning speed and made communication to people across the globe exceedingly accessible. *Financescapes* depicts the increasingly complex flow of money and assets throughout the world. Appadurai described this flow as “mysterious, rapid, and difficult” (1996, p.34). *Mediascapes* and *Ideoscapes* are closely related in that they each deal with images, ideas, and symbolism. Appadurai argues that in *mediascapes* there is only a slight distinction between advertising and news. This line is blurred due to the overlapping of images and the corporate influence over the media. *Ideoscapes* deals with dominant political ideologies and those ideologies that counter them. Although these scapes merge together to form new identities as well as new ways of life, they are based in realms that once remained distinct from one another. Globalizing processes reform, and therefore reinvent, these categories. In the following section, I demonstrate how the processes of globalization have emerged from Western capitalism and how, just as in capitalism, it has reshaped our experiences of modern social life.

Arjun Appadurai (1996) argues, “All major social forces have precursors, precedents, analogs, and sources in the past” (p.2). The processes of globalization cannot be separated from the rise of capitalism. As David Harvey (2000) argues in his text, *Spaces of Hope*, capitalism has a history of manipulating, reinterpreting, destroying, and building space. From a historical perspective, the concept of globalization has long been present in capitalism. It can therefore be argued that one cannot live without the other, that the two are mutual. In terms of how capitalism molds space, Harvey (2000) concedes that it “builds and rebuilds a geography in its own image” (p.54). In other words,

capitalism shapes the terrain, geography, space, into what it deems necessary and most useful. What is 'useful' in the eyes of capitalism is, of course, what is productive, or can be commodified. A space modified by capitalism can be anything from a forested area depleted of its resources to an art gallery to the injection of billboards into public cosmopolitan areas. Space can also be defined in terms of the global economic positioning of a nation. North America, for example, occupies a very different geographic, cultural, and economic space than a non-industrialized nation in the South. In terms of economic wealth and cultural imperialism, North America maintains a position of power over many nations in the South; power dynamics, therefore, play a large role in defining and characterizing a space. However, as was discussed above, broad-based generalizations of the potentials (or the lacks) of a space (or a population) are not useful in coming to terms with the complete picture of these realities. Therefore, in a globalizing world spaces should be seen as constructions which are the result of the intermingling of *scapes* as well as power structures. Post-secondary institutions exemplify how spaces are made up of many *scapes* while also embodying many of the dominant, competing, social and political values. Viewing globalizing processes in these terms reinforces the idea that no space, anywhere, is cemented in terms of its meaning, its purpose, or its possibilities. This conception of space allows us to see past the profound fixity that capitalism has imposed on humans, and societies, worldwide. The following section will explore Deleuze and Guattari's depiction of how capitalism has created (and continues to create) the images which attempt to fix capitalist ideology as the only plausible reality.

Deleuze and Guattari (1977) argue that capitalism creates a continued flow of *deterritorialization* or, movement (re)creating space. Inherent in this flow, they argue is a sense of homogenization. According to them,

Capitalism is inseparable from the movement of deterritorialization, but this movement is exercised through factitious and artificial reterritorializations.

Capitalism is constructed on the ruins of the territorial and the despotic, the mythic and the tragic representations, but it re-establishes them in its own service and in another form, as images of capital.

(p.303)

The opening up of space for critique, then, can be limited by the inability of individuals and institutions to step away from the representations present in this space; critique is enabled by an understanding of how capitalism has remolded and/or reshaped space, thereby denying its power to (re)construct reality. The opening up of space for critique involves the ability to see past the illusions that capitalism creates. It allows for a revisiting of the past as well as envisioning realities for future possibilities. The re-establishment of representation alludes to more than a simplistic exchange of one set of symbols for another, but refers to how the symbols of globalization have been entrenched not merely since the rise of neo-liberalism in the 1980's, but rather since, as Harvey (2000) argues, the arrival of Columbus on the North American front. These symbols, then, are not simply deconstructed, set aside, or looked past. The symbols of capitalism are larger than life; they constitute the lens through which we understand our politics, our poems, ourselves. Capitalism (now used interchangeably with globalization(s)) does not

descend like a blanket, covering each territory equally; capitalism is manifested in both implicit and explicit ways and touches each individual differently.

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the *rhizome* elucidates globalization's birth and multifaceted, complex, growth. A *rhizome* was described as a bulb, which sprouts many shoots. These shoots are neither homogeneous in their form nor their direction. In fact, the very concept of the *rhizome* is premised on the multiplicity that emerges from homogeneity. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) state, "Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a *rhizome* can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or the root, which plots a point, fixes an order" (p.7). The *rhizome* provides a means of visualizing globalizing processes, their transformative powers of multiplication. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) further this by adding that the *rhizome* "has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle from which it grows and from which it overflows" (p.12). The core is not present. It cannot be understood in terms of genealogy because its offspring are so varied, so widespread, and so complex. In this sense, understanding globalizing processes as a *rhizome* helps to convey the diverse and perhaps senseless directions that these processes have taken. Harvey's argument, that globalization began with the landing of Columbus on North American soil in 1492, provides a narrative of how the West began imposing its capitalist ideals. However, as much as this narrative provides a historical timeline of capitalism's invasion and as much as it elucidates how political structures have shifted, it does not account for the prevailing explosions of technology, migratory cultures and the strong lending/borrowing culture between nations. The capitalist influence on globalization is, in this sense, the bulb of the *rhizome* but does not account for the shoots that spring from it. These shoots constitute

the ‘ever densening’ networks of social, political and economic flows. Globalizing processes, for the purposes of this paper, are to be understood as having been born out of a specific time and place, having grown past the parameters of their inception, and finally taking on lives of their own. Thus, while their causes may be linked to a specific time and place, they remain much more complex due to the multifaceted ways in which they have manifested themselves.

In this chapter, I outlined three major components of the processes of globalization: the interconnective nature of globalizations, their relationship to capitalism, and finally, how they can, and do, manipulate spaces to conform to capitalist agendas. This elucidation of globalizing processes serves as a basis and an entry point to a discussion on how educational spaces are products of these processes and of how they might be empowered through the acknowledgment that the dominant discourse is not the only version of reality which exists.

Chapter II: Discourse

Every discourse, even a poetic or oracular sentence, carries with it a system of rules for producing analogous things and thus an outline of methodology.

Jacques Derrida

Definitions of discourse have, and continue to, evolve. In *The Discourse Reader* (2006), Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland list a few definitions that have been used in attempts to pin down the meaning or meanings of discourse. Some of these include: “The study of discourse is the *study of any* aspect of language use” (Stubbs, 1983, p.1, cited in Jaworski and Coupland, 2006: 1).

Brown and Yule, on the other hand, argued:

[T]he analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs.

(Brown and Yule, 1983, p. 1, cited in Jaworski and Coupland, 2006: 1)

For Norman Fairclough (1992),

Discourse *constitutes* the social. Three dimensions of the social are distinguished – knowledge, social relations, and social identity – and these correspond respectively to three major functions of language. . . Discourse is shaped by relations of power and invested with ideologies.”

(p.8, cited in Jaworski and Coupland, 2006: 1)

Michel Foucault (1990) argues that, “Indeed, it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together” (p.100).

The interpretations of discourse, therefore, vary considerably. These variations have evolved over time and also vary according to the ideological perspective of the author. The difference between Stubbs' articulation of discourse as being 'the study of language' and Fairclough's telling of a study that involves how languages effect, articulate, and motivate the social world are distinct in that the first takes on a more methodological, scientific, and/or removed perspective of discourse. The latter views discourse as the study of language is its interactions with the social world. Jaworski and Coupland (2006) argue that our understanding of discourse has evolved from that of Stubbs' to that of Faircloughs' due to the overall shift in epistemological perspectives that have occurred in the last thirty years. This shift, they argue, might be viewed as a "weakening of confidence in traditional ways of explaining phenomena and processes a radical questioning of how people, (including academics), come to appreciate their social and cultural environments (p.3). Language, its uses, and the study of it are now understood to be politicized, fluid, and transformative rather than neutral and static.

In the context of this paper, I will discuss discourse in the Foucauldian sense. While it is an oversimplification to suggest that Foucault's use of discourse was stable, I will use his general framework of discourse to understand how it works in educational settings. I will attempt to outline the Foucauldian conception of discourse. I will then discuss the relationship between hegemony and discourse to finally explore what role(s) education has in questioning, dismantling, and transforming dominant discourses.

The Notion of Discourse in the Foucauldian Framework

Foucault uses discourse to describe a body of knowledge, how it emerged historically, and its impacts on current societies in terms of dominating power structures.

His process includes deconstructing some of the primary disciplines within the social sciences. Academic disciplines have been used to label the distinct bodies of knowledge and to indicate how they are studied in institutional environments. Discourse is also used to describe how these ‘disciplines’ act as socially dominant forces that have dictated many of our basic notions of normalcy. Foucault focuses on academic and scientific disciplines such as history, sociology and psychiatry to understand how these fields of study had been instrumental in the categorizing of both acts and people. Foucault uncovers how binaried oppositions (such as normal/abnormal) create social hierarchies. Foucault’s analysis attempt to understand how institutions (such as hospitals, churches, and schools) maintained social power and/or control by upholding the values of ‘normalcy’ and ‘morality.’ McHoul and Grace (2002) argue, “Fundamentally, then, Foucault’s idea of discourse shows the historically specific relations between disciplines (defined as bodies of knowledge) and disciplinary practices (forms of social control and social possibility) (p.26). His analyses were not entirely engaged in the deconstruction of these disciplines *per se* but rather in their limitations, their impacts, and also the possibilities.

Foucault’s position on the functions of discourse, unlike the positions seen earlier, is that certain institutions, such as prisons, social practices, and sexuality (as I will explore below) can only be perceived in terms of normal/abnormal practice. Certain social norms have been so engrained, inculcated, that it is nearly impossible to think outside of these constructions. Foucault’s work attempted to show how many of our basic assumptions about the social world are, in fact, constructions and not, in fact, an immutable reality. While it may be argued that Foucault’s work deconstructed without

replacing, or building, it is through this liberation of our most basic ideas that we may begin to question, critique, and build anew. McHoul and Grace (2002) qualify, “A ‘discourse’ would then be *whatever* constrains – but also enables- writing, speaking, and thinking within such specific historical limits” (p.31). These limits, which once appeared to have been an incontestable reality of modern social life, have been manipulated, molded, and transformed; this fluidity not only effects how we can understand our histories but also how we choose to act upon our future. Let me illustrate this through Foucault’s examination and exploration of the discourse of sexuality; how it became something to be monitored and penalized. The key question that Foucault (1990) raised in this respect is:

For was this transformation of sex into discourse not governed by the endeavor to expel from reality the forms of sexuality that were not amenable to the strict economy of reproduction: to say no to unproductive activities, to banish casual pleasures, to reduce or exclude practices whose object was not procreation?

(p.36)

One of the ways this new discourse worked was through institutional means. According to Foucault,

Through the various discourses, legal sanctions against minor perversions were multiplied; sexual irregularity was annexed to mental illness; from childhood to old age, a norm of sexual development was defined and all the possible deviations were carefully described; pedagogical controls and medical treatments organized;

around the least fantasies, moralists, but especially doctors, brandished the whole emphatic abomination.

(Foucault, 1990, p.36)

The seventeenth century, according to Foucault, harnessed a regime of control over sexual acts that was articulated through various institutional controls. These controls were initiated by the Catholic church which sought to maintain an authority on sexual reproduction but also on the lines which distinguish right from wrong, moral from immoral, socially acceptable from socially unacceptable. This example is but one of many in which Foucault attempted to uncover the ways in which we still think and talk about certain actions. This uncovering illustrates how these prohibitions (or limitations) have ideological roots and most often, political agendas.

Foucault makes an important distinction between big ‘D’ Discourse as a dominating force and many small ‘d’ discourses that compete to actively reshape the dominant Discourse as well as each other. This distinction was primarily based on how the discourse of the Enlightenment has been internalized into the Western tradition. Sara Mills (2004) summarizes Foucault’s argument: “... *discourse* as a whole, which is the set of rules and procedures for the production of particular discourses, and *discourses* or groups of statements themselves” (p.55). In other words, the dominant Discourse frames the groups of statements that are being uttered, however, those utterances continually shape and refashion the Discourse itself. A group of statements constituting a discourse can be similar, having equal institutional power or coming from coinciding ideological/political positions. However, these similarities are not always present. Discourses are in a continual process of competition over meaning fixation. As Mills

(2004) argues, “Foucault himself is less interested in statements in and of themselves than in the way they coalesce into discourses or discursive formations and save some of their force from such groupings” (p.56). The whole, then, forms a *Gestalt* in that it is greater than the sum of its parts. Big “D” Discourse is influenced by diverse, possibly competing, small ‘d’ discourses. For Foucault, where these discourses diverge is not as important as the unity that they form; difference within the contextual framework does not destroy it but rather expands it to be more inclusive. Foucault’s, *I Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother: a case of parricide in the 19th century*, provides a counter-narrative, or alternative account, of how disciplines (or fields of knowledge) are constructed and then relate to institutions which embody the Dominant discourse. It also describes the ways in which these institutions place people in categories to which specific power dynamics are ascribed (Foucault, 1975, p. xi).

Discourse produces big ‘E’ Events. Small ‘e’ events are everyday happenings that shape human experience or which at the very least impact the way in which we perceive the world. Foucault (1970) argues that the task of discourse is,

. . . is to show how things in general can be given to representation, in what conditions , upon what ground, within what limits they can appear in a positivity more profound than the various modes of perception.

(p. 336)

Experiences are limited insofar as their ability to be spoken, to be spoken to.

The small ‘e’ events can and often do, go unnamed, unspoken. The unspoken nature of these small ‘e’ events does not imply that they are insignificant but rather that they have not found a voice. The very fact that these have remained unspoken is perhaps the power

that lies behind them; meaningful experiences, which remain shrouded in silence become larger, deeper, and more oppressive than those who have a means of expression.

Discourse makes those small 'e' events into Events, into experiences that can be shared, analyzed, critiqued, and most importantly, acknowledged. As Sara Mills (2004) states, ". . . discourse also constructs certain events and sequences of events into narratives which are recognized by a particular culture as real or important events"(p. 48). The Holocaust, and the many texts dedicated to preserving the memory of those who perished (as well as the events that lead up to these deaths) present us with an example of how discourse preserves cultural archives.

Norman Fairclough adopts a Foucauldian use of discourse to explore more contemporary issues such as globalization/capitalism and neo-liberalism through a framework called textually oriented discourse analysis (TODA). This method of studying discourse takes a linguistic framework and applies it to the social realm using sociological and/or philosophical tools. The practice of analyzing discourse, according to Fairclough, is greatly affected by surrounding social and cultural values. Although Fairclough's strategy differs from Foucault's, his dedication to formalist forms of discourse analysis, he argues that this does not detract from its ability to observe language use with a critical gaze (Fairclough, 1989). In an interesting twist on Foucault's position, Fairclough argues that reality itself is the ability to acknowledge and understand the presence of competing discourses in modern society. Fairclough (2006) contends, "Discourses are partial and positioned, and social difference is manifest in the diversity of discourses within particular social practices" (p.151). Language has a genealogy in that it emerges from very specific social, political, and economic circumstances. It should,

therefore be acknowledged for its history and the consequent glimmers of bias. In Faircloughs' work, there is no question that certain discourses do maintain a dominant position over others. His work is, following Foucault, is premised upon the understanding that many competing discourses do exist and must, therefore, be explored. In the following section I will discuss how discourse enables the recognition of difference.

The task of negotiating difference is itself an increasing reality. These negotiations often deal with diverging identities and how they are represented in the dominant culture. An example of this is multicultural discourses and how they have been integrated into both private and government institutions in the interest of recognition and acceptance of groups who have been historically marginalized. Working across and with differences has therefore become a reality, which was simply not present a hundred years ago. According to Fairclough (2006), the negotiation of difference is a necessary part of participating in the contemporary world. It is necessary that people gain, "a range of resources for living within socially and culturally diverse societies and avoiding their dangers, including chauvenism and racism" (p.151). Engaging in competing discourses is, then, is a necessary negotiation to understand and also to play an active role in social life.

Simone de Beauvoir and the Feminist Articulation of Discourse

For both Foucault and Fairclough, it is essential that oppressions (in varying contexts and forms) be elucidated and acknowledged to reduce the power attributed to them. Without the presence of discourses launching these issues from a gray zone of felt but non-verbalized experience, oppression digs deeper. Beauvoir's articulations of the 'Other' provide a good window through which to observe how discourses compete. Her

text, *The Second Sex*, offers a meaningful example of a discourse that has been constructed which elucidates how women have been relegated to being the second sex, and the implications of this ostracism. “. . . humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being.” Later she writes, “He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other” (Beauvoir, 2000, p. 8). Beauvoir’s writing provided not only philosophical groundings for the subordinations that women had been feeling but she also provided a language to communicate these subordinations. Hansen (2000) illustrates this point,

Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* allowed women to begin theorizing about why they feel general malaise, or disorientation, in the universe. *The Second Sex* supplied its readers with a vocabulary and detailed explanations of the insidious ways in which women are made to feel inferior and inessential in society.

(p. 35)

Feminism is helpful in providing a template for how an issue (women’s equality) may be divided or even fragmented into many small ‘d’ discourses. These discourses, lying within the Discourse of equality for women, can compete, critique one another, or even stem from varying ideological and/or political dispositions. For example, since *The Second Sex* identified some fundamental issues that impede the social development of women, many other discourses have erupted, some even contesting Beauvoir’s existentialist positioning. Those discourses contend that this philosophical grounding impeded Beauvoir from conceptualizing a collective womens’ movement (le Doeuff, 2000, p. 46); her interest in *particularity* lead her to overlook the possibility of *large*

scale action. These are but small examples of how discourses collide. This competition enacts a continual play of individual discourses and as a result all discourses involved participate in a lending/borrowing culture.

Hegemony

Hegemony describes how power surrounds people, implicating them in their own oppression. The ubiquity of power dynamics (acting internally and externally on individuals) normalizes power as well as how it is actualized thereby making its effects slippery, difficult to grasp. Hegemony makes overt control and physical force less necessary because power flows in and around each individual; the consequence of this is that all social classes, races, and genders appear to be maintaining equal social status while a minority are actually in positions of power. Antonio Gramsci describes how this flow of power is not consensual in an overt way but is rather usurped by dominant social classes. Gramsci (1971) argues, “The “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is “historically” caused by the prestige and (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position in the world of production” (p.12). According to Gramsci, the general population acts unconsciously according to the desires of the dominant classes; a passive acceptance and fulfillment of these desires is what he labels hegemony.

Hegemony, as described by Norman Fairclough, (1992a) is the articulation of power, which is harmonized between economic, political, social, and ideological realms. Not only is it an integrated power that moves across cultural domains, but is pervasive in that it demands the compliance and participation of the citizens over which it has power.

Fairclough (1992) iterates, “Hegemony is about constructing alliances, and integrating rather than simply dominating subordinate classes, through concessions or through ideological means, to win their consent” (p.92). Marginalized groups are therefore active in their own oppression. This participation is, for the most part, difficult to identify despite its ubiquity. An example of how hegemony is visible in contemporary culture is when discourses advocating ‘increased security’ convince the general population that rights, such as privacy, should be surrendered. Security cameras in public places are increasingly present. We are submitting to increased security even if this measure constitutes a profound infringement on our rights to privacy. While the media is guilty of playing an important role in disseminating images and messages which perpetuate these fears we are also guilty insofar as we are, for the most part, passively accepting these messages and internalizing the fear. Hegemony is the media conveying this messages; it is a culture of unquestioning that perpetuate and also feel the repercussions of these messages.

However, hegemonic forces should not be understood as a one-way or back and forth process. Rather, they are sets of processes, which are felt in various realms of social life and at different intensities. Fairclough, (1990) illustrates this by arguing, “Hegemonic struggle takes place on a broad front, which includes the institutions of civil society (education, trade unions, family), with possible unevenness between different levels and domains” (p.92). In the example of the mass media above it is simplistic to believe, for example, that ‘the masses’ can be understood as one conglomerate whom all feel these impositions of fear (and ultimately control) in the same way. The hegemonic struggle takes for granted that some are more inculcated in their subordination than others; this is

due to longstanding power dynamics and historical oppressions that have entrenched certain populations and certain people.

Foucault's concept of the *Panopticon* is another example of the manifestation of hegemonic forces. Utilitarian philosopher and social reformer Jeremy Bentham created the blueprint for the *Panopticon*. This blueprint was initially produced as a measure of effective prison management. The defining feature of the *Panopticon* would be a tower in the middle of the prison yard. At the top of the tower would be windows through which guards could look out to monitor the movements of the prisoners in the yard. While the guards could see out, the prisoners could not see in. In a very utilitarian move, Bentham boasted that the magic of this construct was that even when there were no guards in the tower, the prisoners would have the impression of continually being watched, thereby monitoring their own behaviour accordingly. Foucault took this up as a question of surveillance and how those in power can impose a culture of self regulation and fear, and again, how this power does not necessarily have to be directly imposed from one governing body to another, but how a culture of power domination requires that all parties (both 'empowered' and 'disempowered') play a role. This practice is one that actually extends the practice of disciplinary power from one of being concrete and physical to one that permeates social life (Foucault, 1984, p.207). Based on my last two sections, discourse and hegemony have an interdependent relationship. My next section will explore this interdependence.

Hegemony and Discourse.

Ideology, hegemony, and discourse can be viewed as a matrix. They are, in many senses, inextricably linked and together form the fabric of our meaning-making

possibilities. Fairclough (1992) defines these ideologies as the, “significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities), which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination” (p. 87). It is the participation of the linguistic/symbolic realms in social and political power struggles. Ideology participates in ‘relations of domination’ by assuming a neutral role. Essentially, once a body of knowledge remains unquestioned or, more specifically, when it is surrounded by a defended culture of unquestioning, it has achieved a position of authority over other discourses. Once ideologies are naturalized or are considered to be a mere matter of ‘common sense,’ their position becomes one of dominance over other discourses. It is important to acknowledge that while this position is not fixed, it is firmly entrenched in the society. An effective indicator of whether a discourse has reached the level of ideology is whether literature, the media, policy makers, politicians and educators are willing to acknowledge that other possibilities do exist or whether this particular course is fervently defended as ‘the’ (ultimate) way in which to proceed. Discourse is paradoxical in that while it is often used as a tool for the hegemonic struggle, it can also be used a tool to dismantle this struggle. In the next chapter, ‘Neo-liberalism and education,’ I will discuss the impacts of neo-liberalism on a cultural level and more specifically within the field of education. I will describe how the knowledge economy, a product of neo-liberal ideology, has shifted how the citizens of North America perceive work while also changing our perceptions of ourselves.

Chapter III- Neo-liberalism and Education

“If the ends of higher learning are functional, what of its addressees?”
Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A report on knowledge.

In this chapter I begin by briefly describing neo-liberalism, its histories, and its impacts, including how it has been significant in education. I argue that education is a space in which the manifestations of neo-liberal ideology are felt. Neo-liberalism, the knowledge economy specifically, has transformed the ways in which we perceive knowledge and subsequently how post-secondary education is manifested. Using Lyotard’s concept of *performativity*, I will describe how education is increasingly aligned with the neo-liberal agenda, while it appears to be neutral, has very defined political and economic goals.

Neo-Liberalism

The events in history that catapulted the onset of neo-liberalism remain contested. The dramatic rise of oil prices in 1973 causing worldwide recessions and the subsequent solidification of Free Trade policies (Simon, 2002); or, the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (Duggan, 2003, p.2) have both been used as hypotheses to explain how and when neo-liberalism began to have a grip on how economies have worked worldwide.

While neo-liberalism is often defined in purely economic terms, this approach often falls short of capturing its profundity. William E. Segall (2006) defines neo-liberalism as “this century’s reiteration of nineteenth century classical liberalism with its focus on rampant capitalism and an untethered free-market economy” (p. 7). This skeletal definition provides merely a brief historical and theoretical understanding of the rise of

neo-liberalism without taking into account its messy paradoxes and dangerous hypocrisies. Neo-liberalism is best understood by exploring the cultural impacts of specific economic and political agendas. It can be explained as a set of practices, or as a set of strategies based on market values and how these strategies regulate all facets of social life. Torin Monahan (2005) argues that neo-liberalism represents a cultural disposition (p.82). This disposition can be understood as a sort of attitude toward the world, neo-liberal ideology can be seen as a ubiquitous force. This force translates into how power dynamics are solidified, how cultural struggles are suppressed, and how education is transformed. It can also be understood on a personal level, as a way of life. “Individuals who choose their friends, hobbies, sports, and partners, to maximize their status with future employers, are ethically neoliberal (Fitzsimmons, 2002, p. 3). Being ‘ethically neo-liberal’ represents an internalization of market-based values. It is through these types of attitudes that neo-liberal ideology is perpetuated and normalized. The process of normalization has prescribed a very specific template of a ‘legitimate’ lifestyle in which one’s career, home, partner, and even hobbies must reflect economic success. This lifestyle is depicted as the by the “ethically neo-liberal” life decisions mentioned by Fitzsimmons above. However, while this template is increasingly sought after, fewer and fewer people are actually able to attain the income necessary to achieve this lifestyle. This proves to be oppressive because the reality that is perceived as legitimate is increasingly difficult to attain, thus imposing a label of ‘illegitimacy’ on those who do not fulfill this prescription.

The consequences of this process of normalization have been less than beneficial for *all* social classes and categories of citizens. In fact, neo-liberalism has perpetuated

oppressive power dynamics in our social, economic, and political lives. I will focus on the means with which neo-liberal policies have been culturally negligent, limiting the realms of human experiences that are not only valued but *accepted* as legitimate. I will then explore how the knowledge economy, a byproduct of neo-liberalism, has impacted the post-secondary experience of education in North America.

Neo-liberalism has unquestionably made an impact on how economic markets affect state policies. As Stromquist and Monkman (2000) have pointed out, “The new state will be less concerned with the welfare of its citizens than the creation of legal norms that enable the protection and coherence of the market” (p. 17). For neo-liberal agendas to proceed, the state must comply with these new terms and policies. While it may appear that the state is taking a diminished role in the lives of its citizens, neo-liberalism has adjusted this role from one concerned with public services for public good to one whose primary concern is the maintaining of economic stability. Proponents of neo-liberalism argue that this ideology is a natural process that provides our social foundations, but more importantly, enables freedom. Paul Bowles, author of *Capitalism* (2007), describes economist Milton Friedman’s position: “Individuals in a market system are, in Friedman’s words, “free to choose.” And the more areas over which choice can be made, the freer we are as individuals. Government interventions in the market are seen as restricting freedom” (p.27).

However, as I will discuss below, while neo-liberalism may enable the freedom to choose, it can limit one’s ability to act upon these choices.

When discussing the relationship between citizenship and neo-liberalism, Duncan Kerr (2004) claims that, “It [neo-liberalism] sees citizenship as conferring rights of

equality on individuals. The state meets its obligation to equality by establishing a framework of rules within which free-market operations are to govern outcomes” (p. 77). In a neo-liberal framework, equality is maintained by allowing the market to rule itself and that this rule will naturally provide adequate resources for all citizens. Advocates of the free-market, such as Margaret Thatcher, believe that interventions into the market constitute an assault on the welfare state. Bowles explains, “Part of the argument against the welfare state was that it unfairly restricted the ability of individuals to purchase goods (especially in the areas of health and education)” (p.28). Despite intentions to bolster social services with the help of strong markets, neo-liberalism conveniently overlooks fundamental oppressions. As Ignatieff (2000) asserts, “the economic system may not infringe on anybody’s individual rights, but the whole machine ends up reproducing enduring types of social inequality” (p.19). Ignatieff explains this by pointing to workers who are rarely the main profiteers of their labour, while investors and owners reap the majority of financial gains. It will not be too far fetched to say that while capitalism imposed this inequity, neo-liberalism has normalized it. The neo-liberal discourse on citizenship and equality is limited in that it attempts to treat all citizens equally, but neglects to acknowledge that not all citizens have benefited from the same social privileges.

Cultural Critiques of Neo-Liberalism.

Perhaps one of the more meaningful critiques of neo-liberalism is how, on one hand, it reduces the human experience to categorized notions of identities, while on the other hand, it organizes the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ according to these distinctions. In other words, while it is premised upon categorizations as well as the creation of

hierarchies, neo-liberalism creates a façade of social equality, or at least the hope for it.

According to Duggan (2003),

Neoliberalism . . . organizes material and political life *in terms* of race, gender, and sexuality as well as economic class and nationality, or ethnicity and religion. But the categories through which Liberalism (and thus also neoliberalism) classifies human activity *actively obscure* the connections among these organizing terms.

(p.3)

While solidifying social divisions according to racial, classist, gendered and religious differences (in terms of which groups are systematically privileged), neo-liberalism advertises a society that allegedly thrives on social equality. The overt repercussions of this are obvious. People dwelling in marginalized categories do not receive the same educational, social, and job-related opportunities. The other, less overt, and possibly more dangerous dimension of this is that since these oppressions are concealed under the rhetoric of ‘diversity,’ it becomes increasingly difficult to identify and express how these negative stereotypes operate. The use of rhetoric such as ‘personal responsibility’ exemplifies this irony. Students are now being prepared for an ‘unstable job market’ in which they must continually upgrade their skills to keep up with this ‘continual flux.’ The implication of this for working class students is that unemployment due to economic instability is considered a stark reality. As Duggan (2003) pointed out, “The valorized concepts of *privatization* and *personal responsibility* travel widely across the rhetorics of contemporary policy debates, joining economic goals with cultural values while obscuring the identity politics and upwardly redistributive impetus of neoliberalism” (p.

14, italics in original). The rhetoric of ‘personal responsibility’ imposes the fallacy that if a person is unemployed (or even considered ‘unemployable’ by market standards) the responsibility lies solely within the individual to upgrade his or her marketable skills; there is no talk of why the market is so volatile. The onus is on the individual to ‘keep up’ with the changing needs of the market. The effect of this is that people who have not been successful at ‘keeping up’ are perceived as being responsible for their own dire economic state. This is an affliction that occurs most often to the working class. In this sense, people from low socio-economic brackets are put into a position of constant struggle for meaningful employment. While the market claims to have equal employment opportunities, certain people are systematically held back from enjoying these opportunities; thus, the notion of equality becomes a fiction.

Neo-liberal rhetoric, therefore, is consistent in demonstrating the possibilities for large-scale economic consolidation and advancement, which benefits some but has a negative impact on the majority. Depending on the specific positioning of power on local as well as on worldwide levels, the implications of such neglect are minute for some, noticeable for others, and catastrophic for most.

Neo-Liberalism & Education

Nelly Stromquist (2002) argues, “It [globalization] reorders fields of study according to the needs of the market, increasingly substituting those needs for the traditional search for truth” (p. 15). The curricular space within the school undergoes a shift toward market-based priorities, education which seeks out practical, or commodified, ends are infringing on those disciplines dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. Post-secondary institutions present one of the major loci in which the shifting

knowledge economy can be experienced. The tension created by this shift in knowledge creates very real conflicts and political debate within schools themselves.

Education is situated at the core of cultural (re)production. It is a hub in which all social, political and economic processes are made visible and set out to be reproduced. In his article, "Globalization and Educational Reform," Martin Carnoy (2000) maintains that knowledge (and by extension education) is the handmaiden of globalization (p.43). Two key threads that travel throughout globalizing processes are *information* and *innovation*. Working as knowledge producers, these create 'information industries', which travel internationally at high speeds. Carnoy (2000) goes on to argue that, "Today massive movements of capital depend on information, communication, and *knowledge* in global markets" (p.43). The portability of knowledge based markets and industries works well with the many processes enacted by globalization(s).

Institutions of higher learning are perhaps the most involved in the creation of knowledge, specifically the types of knowledge deemed valuable in these markets. Carnoy details the specific ways in which globalization (in its neo-liberal persona) has had a profound effect on education in the North American context. The three following items describe these effects: firstly, schools are increasingly expected to find alternative sources of funding due to dwindling governmental contributions. Secondly, due to the shift from manufacturing to knowledge production, the need for higher education is escalating. Lastly, standardized tests and a focus on math and science are facilitating the comparison of students, schools, and even nations (Carnoy, 2000, p.44). Standardized tests are notorious for claiming neutrality but are fraught with cultural bias. Similarly, Western science also claims to hold objective data when in fact scientific projects are

often products of political issues. This list is reductive in that it does not show the complexity of the shifts in education nor their genealogy. However, the list is useful in providing an overview of the most dramatic changes that have occurred (and that continue) due to intensifying globalizing processes. What is particularly interesting is how, in each item listed, there is a strong connection to knowledge and more specifically which *types* of knowledge are continually being reinforced throughout the education system. Essentially, that which can be commodified, exchanged, or made useful in an immediate and tangible way is valued. The implications of this articulation of the knowledge-economy for education can be far-reaching and devastating.

Knowledge Economy

The ‘knowledge economy’ conveys how the production of knowledge dominates the economy worldwide. Peter F. Drucker first used this term in his book *The Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to our Changing Society*. In this text, Drucker weaves the political sphere, economics, technology, and social life together from historical as well as forward-looking perspectives. As the title reveals, Drucker’s thesis was that “[T]hese discontinuities are . . . our “recent future” – both already accomplished fact and challenges to come” (Drucker, 1969, p. ix). Drucker succinctly traces the historical emergence of the notion of knowledge economy. Let me briefly outline Drucker’s articulation of ‘knowledge economy’. I will then contextualize this articulation in a contemporary framework.

Drucker (1969) predicted that in the 1970’s, “[E]very other dollar earned and spent in the American economy will be earned by producing and distributing ideas and information, and will be spent on procuring ideas and information” (p.263). Knowledge

is vital in maintaining economic productivity, stability, and strength; thereby having altered the American economy from one of goods to one of knowledge. This transformation is not a minor one. In fact, it reversed our most basic notions of productivity and (consequently) work. Whereas labouring in fields or working in manufacturing had once been considered the only legitimate forms of work, acquiring information as an economic activity is now not only valid but is encouraged. According to Drucker (1969) it is important to remember that knowledge-work does not make traditional ideas of work obsolete, nor does it delegitimize skill. Knowledge-work is not only a different skill set to acquire; the adoption of these skills invites a different lifestyle. He argues that one cannot exist without the other, that knowledge work and production are linked in a mutual relationship of dependence. The traditional division between work and knowledge² has, in a sense, been transgressed by the emergence of the knowledge economy. “The emergence of the knowledge of the knowledge economy is not, in other words, part of the “intellectual history” as it is normally conceived. It is part of the “history of technology,” which recounts how man puts tools to work” (Drucker, 1969, p. 269). Work and knowledge, then, are no longer two sides of the same coin but rather the coin itself.

The Knowledge Economy's Relationship to Neo-Liberalism.

Drucker's (1969) text is revolutionary in many ways; in a fairly accurate sense, he predicted how the economy of most developing nations would progress. Drucker's work provides an analysis of how these shifts effecting social life are relevant in a contemporary context. His depiction of how the knowledge economy has, within its

² The work associated with the realm of knowledge was limited to clergymen, physicians, lawyers and teachers.

constitution, the power to create a ‘classless’ society is optimistic at best and shortsighted at worst. At the time when Drucker wrote this text the neo-liberal agenda in its nascent state had not yet shown itself as a profoundly socially stratifying ideology. In a sense, Drucker’s text (1969) represents a thoughtful telling of the profound hope that the rhetoric of neo-liberalism sells; that everyone has limitless potential to succeed by abiding by the needs of the market. He argues,

Perhaps its [neo-liberalisms’] greatest impact lies in changing society from one of predetermined occupations into one of choices for the individual. It is now possible to make one’s living, and a good living at that, doing almost anything one wants to do and plying almost any knowledge. This is something new under the sun.

(p. 272)

The possibility of choosing, of utilizing knowledge in a self directed way, is no doubt attractive to Drucker. His words reflect the American dream, in which anyone who works hard has the opportunity and the right to succeed financially. However, this dream has proven to be not much more than a fantasy for many marginalized populations. The trust in the opportunities that the ‘knowledge economy’ can harness is, even within Drucker’s text, is limited to a specific segment of the population. This fantasy is acknowledged in his text, but only in a passing manner:

Of course, there are still limits- and not only of ability, but of wealth, of the accident of location, and certainly of race, even in the richer countries. But, on the whole, we are rapidly moving from a society in which careers and occupations

were determined largely by the accident of birth, into one in which we take freedom of choice for granted.

(Drucker, 1969, p. 274)

As Drucker acknowledges, there are 'limits' within the very structure of the knowledge economy that disadvantage some social groups. Despite the short shrift that Drucker gives to these 'limits' in the text, they have proven to systematically and socially oppress certain categories in far from passing ways. This shallow masking, or minimizing, of the very real effects that the neo-liberal ideology will foster is in fact a characteristic of neo-liberalism itself. For this reason, the knowledge economy is part and parcel of the neo-liberal ideal. I will now discuss 'speed' and 'abundance,' some key features of the learning economy. These will then be applied to education using Jean-François Lyotard's *logic of performativity*.

Knowledge Economy-Abundance.

While other markets are understood in terms of their limitations, or 'scarcities' the knowledge economy can be understood in terms of its abundance (Peters & Besley, 2006, p. 96). Other economies, such as natural resources, function in terms of eventual depletion. Information, on the other hand, is used and applied, reproducing itself to create as well as to recreate itself. In this sense the knowledge economy has caused a rethinking of how economies are perceived as well as how they are applied. Knowledge, once discovered, and made public, operates expansively to defy the normal "law" of scarcity that governs most commodity markets (Peters & Besley, 2006, p. 96). Thus, the idea of sharing is no longer associated with loss.

Knowledge Economy: Speed.

Contemporary capitalism has been labeled “fast capitalism.” Peters and Besley (2006) argue, “Speed defines the essence of finance and information capitalism” (p. 95). Virtual markets and organizations require that knowledge and information are able to circulate at rapid speeds; this permits the densening and strengthening of these networks. Rapid-paced technologies have not only opened up opportunities for international trading, e-commerce, and e-business but have also changed the ways in which the media is transmitted. Not surprisingly, educational institutions and practices have shifted to suit the needs of fast paced knowledge production. These shifts are visible in political, economic, and educational contexts. An example of this is the reality of ‘publish or perish’ currently being mandated in most North American and British universities. Implicit in this expectation is that professors will become active in the production of knowledge from a very early stage in their career. It is characterized as a decision on the part of new faculty members. This ‘decision’ determines whether or not a faculty member will maintain his or her position or, ‘perish.’ The element of speed is important to this process for two main reasons: firstly, the newcomer must assert him or herself as a serious contender in the production of knowledge early on in his or her career. Secondly, the quality of knowledge produced is less important than the quantity. It takes many years to determine the influence, or the lasting power, of a piece of writing; although longevity could be argued to be a more authentic measure of the success, immediate time constraints do not allow for this type of evaluative process. This is just one example of how the production of knowledge is often measured entirely on speed. The logics of both abundance and speed are what Lyotard labels the “logic of performativity.”

Lyotard's Logic of Performativity.

In *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Jean-François Lyotard (1989) considers the role of *performativity* in education. He submits that educational institutions have little choice but to be profoundly effected by criteria established by *performative* norms. However, as Lyotard explains, these norms are not neutral nor are they predetermined. The logic of *performativity*, in educational settings, demands that very specific questions concerning its significance (and expectations) be raised and answered.

If we accept the notion that there is an established body of knowledge, the question of its transmission, from a pragmatic point of view, can be subdivided into a series of questions: Who transmits learning? What is transmitted? To whom? Through what medium? In what form? With what effect? A university is formed by a coherent set of these answers.

(Lyotard, 1989, p. 48)

Lyotard asserts that education acts as a social subsystem, instilling ethical, political, and philosophical frameworks (or beliefs). *Performativity*, then, is crucial to education in that it plays out these beliefs, making visible how social values are being disseminated.

Consequently, the goal of higher education, specifically, is that the skills that are deemed most important for the functioning of this system are adequately transmitted. The transmission of similar goals, skills (and accordingly, worldviews) is beneficial in that it maintains cohesion necessary for the functioning of society. This transmission, in other words, (re)creates social norms and the tools necessary for perpetuating systems already in place. With this in mind, Lyotard (1989) inquires, “[I]f the ends of higher learning are functional, what of its addressees?” (p. 48).

The rhetoric surrounding knowledge-based industries gives the impression that because humans (and human driven knowledge) are their main asset, that in fact the workers maintain a high level of autonomy and/or agency in their practice. Brown and Lauder (2006) argue, “the rhetoric of the knowledge economy assumes that innovation and creativity are enduring features of the new economy but such assumptions are both static and ahistoric” (p. 329). The knowledge economy, then, assumes a seemingly neutral position when it is actually a political tool. The inherent contradictions (and even manipulations) of the knowledge economy are easily overlooked; it has been marketed as a fluid and dynamic economy enabling people great freedom in their professional pursuits. This perceived freedom, however, often comes at a cost. Brown and Lauder (2006) argue that these perceptions [of neutrality] do not account for a major component of the knowledge economy: standardization. Just as car manufacturers create a template for their automobiles, the knowledge economy is predicated upon core sets of knowledges and procedures. However, there is an important distinction between those workers who transgress established boundaries, inventing new technologies, and those who work within the parameters. While the inventors may embody the rhetoric of the knowledge economy, often it is the workers who represent the acting out of the knowledge economy.

Brown and Lauder (2006) establish that regardless how the ‘new capitalisms’ are being spun, that they are in fact products of capitalism proper. According to them,

While innovation and the exploitation of new ideas is a key aspect of today’s global economy, it is also driven by the need to standardize knowledge so that it can be rapidly processed and reproduced at lower cost and with greater

predictability than when it is in the hands and minds of highly specialized knowledge workers (experts).

(p. 330)

The rhetoric of the knowledge economy boasts ideas and people as its resource, thus implying an unlimited flow of creativity as well as flexibility. However, the realities of this economy have proven to be different from this in that while the possibility of knowledge creation is of course without limit, the structure of the economy squelches this abundance in favor of standardized procedures. The creativity claimed by rhetoric of the knowledge economy is thus a privilege provided to a minority while the majority remains within the traditional confines of capitalist production, in which production is done in a highly controlled and predictable environment.

In her article, 'Globalization and Resistance to the Market in Education,' Karen Callaghan (2004) explores how education inspired solely by globalizing processes, or market interests, is inevitably pragmatic. Education's focus on practical ends, she argues, works solely towards 'assimilating' students into the values and norms of market based ideology. This includes preparing them to cope with an unstable future as well as molding students into people who will be economically valuable. Callaghan (2004) argues, "Schools are engaged in the production and transformation of students into compliant and assimilated adults who readily embrace market-based norms and values" (p. 66). Schools are thus active participants in the *production of producers*. The skills that schools focus on most include literacy and technical skills as well as the abilities associated with succeeding in a workplace; these skills include punctuality, organization and teamwork. While is it not difficult to imagine this type of learning model in

vocational or professional programs, the social sciences have also been impacted. While completing an undergraduate course in International Development Studies, I realized how fundamentally the integration of ‘competencies’ had affected our curriculum. Skills based activities, such as oral presentations and group work, were included in the syllabus as a way of completing competencies such as ‘able to communicate orally’ and ‘works well in a team.’ In the final evaluation process, these abilities were checked off by our professor and then added to our final transcript. The purpose for this was to provide future employers with an idea of what types of ‘work related’ experiences our undergraduate education had provided. While these activities, in themselves, can be useful on their own terms, they reveal how post-secondary education, on a whole, is continually seeking to legitimize itself through the lens of market needs.

“ . . . *what, then, of its addressees?*”³

The ubiquity of neo-liberal ideology may appear to leave little room for critical thought and even less possibility for action. Patrick Fitzsimmons (2002) describes this culture, “In a neoliberal culture (as in any other), the individual is usually unknowingly implicated in creating a subjectivity that fits the prevailing political rationality” (p. 1). This is representative of hegemonic powers in that individuals act as pawns in a game whose goal is to ensure political as well as economic success. Due to the little space in which to contest dominant cultural values, it appears that people are trapped in this game, doomed to roles of subservience. However, as I will discuss in the following chapter dealing with the manipulation of academic space, the roles of spaces, as well as of

³ Lyotard, J.F. (1989). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

individuals, are never cemented. The acknowledgement of subjectivity, or the exploration of individual identities offers a means with which to see past the Dominant discourse. Patrick Fitzsimmons (2002) argues in favor of the inclusion of subjectivity into the classroom. Here, the question of educational, and therefore personal, reformation is integral. “Under the conditions of (re)form, the self itself becomes unstable as a part of this (re)forming world” (p.1). This instability is paradoxical in that it is what in one sense, cements the individual to the neo-liberal ethic while at the same time ensuring him or her the possibility of resisting the discourse. The premise is that when people are treated as objects, they lose a sense of self thereby becoming fragmented. Freire (1993) would argue that this is a process of ‘dehumanization.’ Choice is essential in reconstituting the self. To connect the fragments, to be whole, individuals must not act blindly according to the dictates of the dominant ideology. The faculty of choice must be exercised. Through the processes of education, choice can be made more present through the acknowledgment of diverse perspectives. “The autonomous chooser,” asserts Fitzsimmons (2002), “will be exercising the proposed faculty of choice with a perpetual response to the environment that has been constructed by neoliberal philosophy” (p. 3). While the neo-liberal ideology does not leave space within its framework for questioning or critique, it does not exist in a vacuum. Education can facilitate, or even enable, the role of the autonomous chooser by claiming a position of self-awareness. This awareness will respect its dual roles as facilitator and agent.

Due to the knowledge economies’ tightly knit relationship with education, its defining elements, such as standardization and productivity have, in a sense, come to define how post-secondary education is characterized and eventuates in a North

American context. As I will explore in the following chapter on the meaning(s) of academic space, education is not limited to a subjective role in neo-liberal processes. While I have discussed the large-scale impacts that neo-liberalism has had on education, it is important to remember that these effects, while substantial, are not inevitable nor are they final. Rather, the relationship between education and neo-liberalism must remain in a continued state of contestation.

Chapter IV- Defining Educational Space

*The identity of one changes how one perceives reality.
Vithu Jeyaloganathan*

Education, in a North American context, is gaining an increasing reputation for persisting as a utilitarian enterprise. What is meant by utility in this context is that education is being displayed as a ‘means to an end’ rather than as a space of questioning and/or intellectual exploration. Evidence of this is not hard to find; universities are now boasting ‘skills’ and ‘training’ in their advertising packages. Elementary schools are slowly but surely preparing students for a life of continual adaptation to an ‘unstable job market.’ These indicators show overwhelming evidence that institutions of learning are showing more and more interest in the institutionalizing element than the learning one; that schools are being defined in terms of outcomes and gains rather than as environments in which learning for its own sake is encouraged. The connection between neo-liberal economics, which have defined the dominant economic discourse for over thirty years, and education is an undeniable one.

Education is in a position that is often perceived as being subservient to political and economic ideologies; it can be understood to be at the whim of political and economic ideologies, whose only role is to maintain the values set forth by globalizing economic forces. In this chapter I demonstrate that education is a unique space in that while it is continually acted upon, it has the power to act on the forces, which so often are seen to define ultimate aims and goals of post-secondary education. Through the manipulation of space, the ways in which education is both perceived and carried out can be altered to suit interests of those wishing to use education as a political, deconstructive,

tool. This chapter will attempt to position educational space in the larger context of social space and then describe how discourse can alter the educational project within these spaces.

Defining Space – Social/ Educational

Hannah Arendt (2000) and Henri Lefèbvre (1991) have each explored how public, or social,⁴ space is constructed as well as how the meanings attached to these spaces are perceived. Also present in each of these thinkers' thought/articulation is an interest in how a space impacts human interaction and conversely how these interactions impact a said space. Essentially, each of these authors is interested in how power dynamics in politically charged social spaces are played out. While their projects are similar, there lies a subtle difference between the two: Lefèbvre adopts a more explicitly Marxist stance while Arendt approaches the concept of space from a political/ philosophical perspective. Lefèbvre articulates space as an ideological construct by arguing that it represents capitalist ideologies and agendas. Arendt argues that the public, or common, realm is unique in that it mediates the private and political spheres. I will explore each of these approaches individually and then brought together to reinforce firstly, that power dynamics that exist in social spaces and secondly, that people are not confined to objectified roles in these spaces.

Hannah Arendt on Public Space.

According to Hannah Arendt, the public realm is thought provoking, satisfying, and significant. It is in this realm that 'reality' is exposed, that ideas are exchanged, and most importantly, perspectives are altered. What is also significant about the public realm

⁴ I will be discussing Hannah Arendt's use of the 'public sphere' and Henri Lefèbvre's description of 'social space'. I will meld these concepts to illustrate educational and/or academic space.

is that, due its constant presence of diverting perspectives, it can never be settled; it is in constant flux. Arendt argues (1998), “. . . the reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself and for which now common measurement or denominator can ever be devised” (p. 57). The public sphere is therefore a hub of continued contestation, persuasion, and transformation.

Public and private (*oikos*) spheres have historically been experienced as completely distinct realms.⁵ Public life has historically been associated with exposure. There is an expectation that everything that is said and/or done will be witnessed by many people. This expectation constitutes the terms of reality; when the uncertainty of acts, desires, opinions are incorporated into the public sphere, when they are legitimated by a larger ideological landscape, only then are they deemed acceptable. Arendt (2000) labels this a process of ‘deindividualization:’ when individual experiences are transposed into a recognized social *scape* (p.199). The second characteristic of the public space, according to Arendt, is that it signifies the world itself. Public space is the performance of things common between people. Arendt asserts that this performance in the world, at the same time, binds and alienates humans.

Private life is linked to property, the ownership of things, and privacy. Also included in historical conceptions of the private sphere is a sense of limited reality (because it has not been recognized by the masses) and family life. Arendt describes the

⁵ Arendt’s theories on the Public/Private spheres are based on careful study of Ancient Greek and Roman societies. I believe that although these conceptions are derived from centuries past, that they are still relevant, and arguably dominant, in contemporary Western culture.

state of private life by depicting it as an inherently lacking sphere. Dwelling in a subjective state, *oikos* is described as the privation of the *polis*.

...to be deprived of the reality that comes from being seen and heard by others, to be deprived of an “objective” relationship with them that comes from being related to and separated from them through the intermediary of a common world of things....

(Arendt, 2000, p. 205)

The private sphere is defined as a lack due to its inability to be checked or monitored by the realities of public life. For Arendt, being “seen and heard by others” constitutes life itself. Without detracting from the importance of that which is experienced privately, such as pain, Arendt is convinced that public life is a fundamental component of our experience of the world, thus the world itself. Arendt (1998) argues, “It [the public realm] is related . . . to the human artifact, the fabrication of human hands, as well as to affairs which go on among those who inhabit the man-made world together” (p.52). Here, “affairs” refers to action. Arendt argues that action is significant because it is through action that human beings define the world.

Even as glimmers of the division of each realm remain visible in a contemporary Western context, it also becomes increasingly visible how this division has been undermined. The lines that divide are blurred and representations of the public/private constructs can be seen in public institutions, in homes, in organizing bodies, just as in individuals. In this sense Arendt’s conception of public space *embodies* the private and the political spheres. This embodiment problematizes how these constructs can and should be experienced due to their fluid, and shifting, realities.

Lefèbvre's Production of Social Space.

In his seminal text, 'The Production of Social Space,' Henri Lefèbvre takes a different, but related, approach to the construction of social space. Lefèbvre elucidates how social space is built upon, and exists according to the conditions set forth by social superstructures (political and economic globalization). However, social spaces cannot be reduced to the role of merely reflecting these structures. Lefèbvre (1991) argues that these spaces are not determined to be performed according to the policies, or values, of the superstructure.

It would be more accurate to say that it [social space] is at once a precondition and a result of social superstructures. The state and each of its constituent institutions call for spaces—but spaces which they can then organize according to their specific requirements; so there is no sense in which space can be treated solely as *a priori* condition of these institutions and the state which presides over them.

(p. 85)

These superstructures have not emerged spontaneously. Central to Lefèbvre's thought is how dominant superstructures have been carefully constructed, or produced, to secure and maintain authority. He acknowledges that social spaces are often characterized according to the superstructure that produced them but does not believe that this characterization is cemented, or must necessarily be the final determinant of the space.

Producing goods that might be exchanged for money is an integral concept in Lefèbvre's work. The questions surrounding production, "Who produces? For what purpose? How is it produced? For who?" are a means with which to unpack the socio-political and economic reasoning related to social production; the content of production

can only be encountered through the questioning of not only how the product has been produced but what the impacts of such a production are (Lefèbvre, 1984, p.68). This process of unpacking, of reconsidering the making of a space, invites varying interpretations and realities to take part in the ever-changing constitution of a space. As Lefèbvre (1984) argues, “Thus production in the broad sense of the term embraces a multiplicity of works and great diversity of forms, even forms that do not bear the stamp of the producer or of the production process” (p.68). Therefore, although the initial influence of ‘superstructures’ is undeniable when considering the making of space is not the only, or determining, factor.

In one sense, just as in the Marxist conception of the means of production, the final product cannot be separated, or viewed as being distinct from, the productive forces. In another sense, social space cannot be regarded purely as ‘products’ because they remain fluid. Lefèbvre (1991) illustrates this fluidity: “*Social spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another*” (p.86). The exchange between social spaces, then, allows for the possibility of a moving away from, or a transformation of, the nature in which it was created and that remains dominant.

The production of space is heavily related to dominant ideologies and how these serve to preserve the versions of reality that best suit the needs and interests of the superstructure. As Lefèbvre (1991) argues, these ideologies “pass themselves off as established knowledge” (p. 90). While maintaining the alleged role of subject, these ideologies relegate other influences to the positions of objects thereby denoting allusions of falsity, perception, as being contestable. In other words, social space has been

produced using a narrative, or a script, which works to maintain its permanence and its power to dictate the versions of reality that are deemed legitimate.

Although situated in different frameworks, Lefèbvre's and Arendt's conceptions of public/social space have definite parallels running through them. The first and perhaps most important, is that for each author social space is a fluid, ambiguous, and complex phenomenon. Inherent in this complexity is the certainty that it is malleable. Public/social space, having been intentionally fashioned and having undergone many political and economic influences, maintains its agency; social space is not destined to be subsumed by political and economic powers. Rather, empowerment lies within the space itself. Social space, in its malleable state, has the potential to be shaped by the interests of the people who occupy that space as much as by the superstructures that have produced it.

From Arendt's perspective, public space is not limited to an actual demarcation of land, or a specific building. From this perspective, space can be considered more of an *ethos*, a milieu, or a culture. In this case, the influences of Lefèbvre's 'superstructures' are ideological, but nonetheless present. In the context of this paper, 'educational space' is referred to as the ideological, the dominant conceptions of, as well as the discourse surrounding educational discourse. In the previous chapter, I argued that the competing conception of 'Educational Space' is that the educational project is currently being usurped by neo-liberal economics and conservative policies. Furthermore I argued that this conception is true insofar that there is much evidence that the roles and wishes of the 'superstructure' are being advanced. However, as both Arendt and Lefèbvre contend, this is not necessarily the permanent state of (public/social) educational space.

In other words, educational space is a hybrid of both the political (as defined by Lefèbvre) and the public sphere (as defined by Arendt), encompassing the many and varied issues involved in each of these. Contemporary education has, and should, incorporate perspectives that question prevailing realities, issues that pose questions concerning morality and difference. In the following section I will discuss how classrooms can be considered ‘sites;’ these represent the larger aims and goals of (dominant) social spaces.

Space/Place/Site and Education

In her text, *The Language of Sites in the Politics of Space*, Hilda Kuper (2003) distinguishes a site from a more generalized space. Sites are representative of spaces both symbolically and socially. A site constitutes a specific facet of a social space; it is distinct from other spaces. It perpetuates the symbolism attached to the space in which it dwells. “ . . . the importance of these sites is not only their manifest and distinctive appearance, but their qualifying and latent meaning (p. 258). A site can be understood as a representation of the larger societal structure from which it has been produced, as well as the web of relationships that are carried out on a day to day basis. A space constitutes a web of interrelations, social and political connections or cultural mores. The *ethos* of a site is therefore determined by the culture of the space in which it is situated. It may represent any number of connections of which the dominant culture is constructed. The power of sites is this representation of one, or several, cultural artifacts or connections, but it is also more than this; sites hold within them symbolic clout. The images, emotional attachments, and spiritual connections to a space entrench in it massive bodies of meanings, thus constructing its power.

A place of religious worship exemplifies a site, which signifies not only political, social, and cultural relationships but also embodies rich religious/spiritual traditions. As well, it represents the tensions surrounding these relationships: a specific place of worship for some, it also represents marvelous architectural and artistic feats. For others, it can represent gross extravagance. It can also represent a place of peace, solitude, or prayer. Others may see violence as being an inherent force within the institution. A place of worship, then, is a site in that it draws in the social and cultural forces surrounding it, including community, ideology and dissent.

Sites are demonstrations of space, in the same way that spaces react to larger social and political intentions. Classrooms represent sites. While space (education) can be understood as a larger realm, a 'site' (classroom) is representative of a more focused, specialized manifestation of a space. Classrooms can, and often do, act as microcosms; they internalize surrounding belief systems and act out according to these internalizations. However, space does not necessarily perform according to the structures that produced it. It is empowered to contribute to their deconstruction. As I argued in the previous chapter, it is the neo-liberal agenda that is increasingly determining how education is perceived and performed. Classrooms may act as sites in which we may question and critique the neo-liberal agendas that impose increasingly conservative values on educational space. These agendas have contributed to a general sense of powerlessness among teachers, thus leaving many to believe that the struggle in activating critical (oppositional) educational sites is futile. Education as a third, or social, space is perhaps more empowered than other social spaces due to its specific positioning; classrooms-as-sites belie a potential to take an active stance against oppressive structures.

Power/Knowledge/Education

In her text, *Education, Postmodernism and the Organization of Consent*, Elizabeth Atkinson (2003) explains how postmodern critique in education functions as a tool with which to challenge dominant discourses. Involved in this process is the attempt to unfold various truths which means the careful questioning of concepts which have been deemed 'core' in the field of education; these include the rhetoric of standards, best practice, as well as what qualifies as improvement. She claims,

My aim is to challenge regimes of truth; to make strange the certainties on which power/knowledge in education rests; and to dis-organise through giving voice to counter-discourse and to silenced texts – the organization of consent on which current educational policy and practice rest.

(p.3)

Atkinson's text makes the link between the concepts of hegemony, discourse and how these are playing out in tangible ways in the field of education. These links are not difficult to make, however, what becomes more complex is the process by which these concepts are dismantled; what emerges is a new vision of education, its implications and what it means to be educated. Progressive curriculum theory offers a substantive means of moulding, or transforming, educational processes and their implications.

Curriculum Theory- Responsibilities

Education's relationship to discourse has evoked a plethora of writing that considers the roles and responsibilities of education, policy, and curriculum. The following section will discuss how curriculum as an educational space may enable critiques of dominant discourses.

Thomas S. Popkewitz and Marie Brennan (1998) elucidate how Foucault's writing in general might allow a critical re-conceptualization of how education is carried out. For Popkewitz and Brennan (1998), Foucault's work offers an alternative to the leftist thinking that has dominated Western social thought in the last century (p.4); what makes his work distinct from other traditions is his focus on knowledge as a product of social life. These authors argue that curriculum has the potential to create spaces in which individual identities are constructed according to patterns of ideas, such as cognition and motivation. The formation of these identities has the power to construct and also divide individuals according to prescribed categories.

Curriculum becomes . . . part of a discursive field⁶ through which the subjects of schooling are constructed as individuals to self-regulate, discipline, and reflect upon themselves as members of a community/society.

Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998, p.13.

Simply put, curriculum can be used as a means of provoking a reflective process on the process of education itself. For example, a student, through learning about Foucault's theory of the *panopticon* may begin to question how his or her school has integrated procedures, which scrutinize students in their schools. Similarly, a student may also begin to question how these techniques have changed the behavior of the students, if not his or her own behaviour. In this sense, a curriculum can inject a culture of self-reflexive questioning into the process of schooling.

Curriculum theorist William Pinar's position on the obligation of education echoes that of Popkewitz and Brennan. Pinar (2004) believes that the purpose of

⁶ A space in which discourses compete.

education is to be set upon a path of discovery. This process will encompass discovering new understanding and perspectives of oneself and also about the surrounding world; this discovery will also take into consideration the contingency of the self as well as the surrounding world. He argues, “Curriculum theory is, then, about discovering and articulating, for oneself and with others, the educational significance of the school subjects for self and society in the ever-changing historical moment” (Pinar, 2004, p.16). Pinar takes a strong political stance when he refers to an education based on standardized tests and an overall ‘business-minded’ culture as a ‘mis-education’ (p.16). He advocates an education system which considers issues of gender, race, and globalization as playing important roles in what and how students learn. This belief situates Pinar in a critical camp of curriculum development. This camp seeks to undermine the traditional and oversimplified versions of human categories that the dominant discourses have long imposed on education in North America.

What binds these theorists is a dedication to promoting a culture of awareness in education. Norman Fairclough (2006) referred the importance of having an ‘awareness of discourse – an awareness of how discourse figures in social practices, an awareness that any knowledge of a domain of social life is constituted as one discourse from among a number of co-existing or conceivable discourses” (p.149). This awareness is connected to the idea of fear explored above. If a person is only ever exposed to one version of reality, a reality which is held up to be unquestionable, incontestable, a person will arrange his or her worldviews according to this reality. Often, the one version of reality that is transmitted is the one that satisfies the neo-liberal agendas described in chapter II. The ‘awareness’ that Fairclough is advocating is an acknowledgement and even

engagement with various perspectives, whether they be economic, political, or based on race or gender differences. It is crucial that the fact that there is more than one perspective that exists be made explicit for students. This acknowledgement will not only open up personal worldviews, but will alleviate the effects that the dominant discourse has imposed. Essentially, ‘awareness’ of competing discourses negates the importance, or tarnishes the sheen of a one-and-only discourse.

The need to acknowledge competing discourses in the curriculum is but one challenge that strikes education when dealing with multiple discourses. The relationship between discourse and education is not limited to education’s responsibility to insert discourse into the curriculum, but the curriculum is necessarily shaped by competing discourses. As I discussed in Chapter III – the current state of education is being transformed by neo-liberal discourses, which assert that objectivity, rationality, and, ultimately, economically sound practices to be at the core of educational practices. In his article, “Discourse, Power and Resistance in New York: The rise of testing and accountability and the decline of teacher professionalism and local control,” Hursh (2003) provides a narrative of how teachers and students alike are subject to new ideologies, and therefore practices, in their schools. He explained that the implementation of standardized high stakes tests has resulted in many already racially and economically marginalized students dropping out. Teachers also reported having to spend more time ‘teaching to the test’ and in some dramatic cases, leaving the teaching profession (Hursh, 2003, p.45). The neo-liberal discourse adheres to a rationale of accountability and maintains that the social domains require that measures be kept in place to keep up economic stability; in the case of Hursh’s New York schools (and most others across

North America) one of the realities for this discourse is the implementation of standardized tests. This is but one example of how a (dominant) discourse can transform the ethos, the goals, and the outcomes of an academic space.

Classrooms Mirror Globalizing Processes

As the previous example has demonstrated, classrooms (or academic spaces) mirror globalizing processes. Functioning as microcosms of larger social, political, and cultural norms, academic spaces provide a contained illustration of both dominant and competing discourses. This struggle between discourses is both philosophical and concrete, based on ideology and emotion, in academic spaces. The previous example of tensions occurring in New York schools indicated this struggle: the policy makers and politicians representing the neo-liberal and dominant discourse, while teachers and students reacting against this struggle represent the counter-discourses. This microcosm can be reduced to an even more minuscule level: to that of the relationship of dominance, of struggle over discourse between educators and students. Rowland (2003) illustrates this relationship:

Thus, there are two ways of thinking about learners and the teacher, just as there are two ways of thinking about the university and society. The first account privileges compliance and predictability and control; the second, contestation, novelty and freedom.

(p.18)

To understand education in a global context, or the relationship between educators and learners as falling into either one category or another provides a binaried account of

this relationship but does acknowledge that agency can, and does, exist in every level of education thus acknowledging that empowerment is present in every level.

The relationship between the university and society has, historically, been one fraught with tension (Rowland, 2003). At the same time, the university is an institution that serves society while maintaining a cool detachment, or a critical gaze of this realm. The university had been ruled by the wills of the church while at the same time maintaining a critical stance against it. Although the university has traditionally been a hub of oppositional discourses it appears that neo-liberal dogma is presenting universities with an increased pressure to comply with these mandates. The culture of compliance, as opposed to a culture of contestation, becomes increasingly prevalent. Hegemonic pressures concretize in the forms of educational policy, standardized expectations, and externally imposed rules. This process mirrors the processes of globalization discussed in Chapter 1, it reflects the complexities, the anxieties, and also the expectations that are occurring on global scales.

Identity

Questions surrounding identity are embedded in the issue of discourse. Succumbing to a single discourse diminishes ones' potential for true autonomy. Anthony Appiah (2005) considers the ramifications of taking personal autonomy seriously in a liberal political system. He argues that this "proposes as politics that regards persons as ends, possessing dignity and inherent worth. It proposes a social order conducive to some version of individuality" (p. 61). According to Appiah, individuality is a key component of achieving autonomy. Viewing individuals as means-to-an-end is directly aligned with the values of the dominant, neo-liberal discourse, which attempts to minimize the human

experience to one of production. A system which only entitles students to the discourse of production ideologically, systematically, reduces their potential for autonomy and thus freedom.

Appiah (2005) discusses liberal proceduralism as a political ideology which is ‘indifferent among a variety conceptions for the good’ (p.137). Housed in the neo-liberal discourse this ideology does not support the recognition of individualism, for example, because notions of standardization lie at its core. Appiah takes issue with an educational system that only supports a single conception of ‘the good’ because it is this system which has the ability to determine which conceptions of ‘the good’ are plausible, or even existent. Appiah argues, “To prize autonomy is to respect the conceptions of others, to weigh their plans for themselves heavily in deciding what is good for them...” (p.138). Education is responsible for presenting the variations of ‘plans,’ for submitting possibilities.

While the impact of dominant neo-liberal discourse is consequential, it is also significant for how education is actualized. What deserves, perhaps, more attention are the educational implications of neo-liberal agendas. Identity formation is an integral element of curriculum production. Defining the aims of education is different than attempting to define its objectives and goals; aims constitute a deeper analysis of the meaning(s) of education. While educational objectives or goals are more immediate and tangible, aims are long term and constitute a philosophical grounding in the general meaning of education. The questions that emerge from the process of creating curriculum include whether education should be aimed at benefiting the needs of the state or of the individual. These questions have pressing implications on students’ identity. The impacts

of education on identity are not only how students understand the social and political worlds, but also how they see themselves and their roles within society. Progressive curriculum construction works to negotiate how the self can be developed to best suit the needs of individuals who will make meaningful contributions to their state. These multidimensional aims are reflected in the opening statement of William Pinar's text, *What is Curriculum Theory?* (2004),

If public education is the education of the public, then public education is, by definition, a political, psycho-social, fundamentally intellectual reconstruction of self and society, a process in which educators occupy public and private spaces-in-between the academic disciplines and the state (and problems) of mass culture, between intellectual development and social engagement, between erudition and everyday life.

(p.15)

Education has the obligation, the responsibility, and the opportunity, to provide students with the tools of 'reconstruction.' This reconstruction must work multidimensionally, connecting the local to the global, the political realm with everyday realities. Education, then, must not be considered as merely an opportunity for skills based training because this not only reduces the educational experience, but also diminishes students' ability to participate meaningfully in the social and political realms.

Discourses have been, and continue to be, manipulated to create various ideologies and, therefore, realities. The opening up of these realities provides meaningful shifts in perception and expectation, thereby altering consciousness. What this means, for

historically marginalized groups, is that they gain the opportunity to understand the measures taken to inculcate their subjections to then “move against and beyond the very forces that shape us” (Davies, 2000, p.179).

Appiah, (2005) argues that one’s ‘life plan’ is *who one is*; it constitutes how we live in the world. This plan, according to him, should be taken more seriously than passing desires because through this plan individuality, “flows from my reflective choices, my commitments, not just from passing fancy” (p.13). The ‘life plan,’ according to Appiah constitutes how students’ view themselves. An education inspired by neo-liberal views inspires only ‘life-plans’ that are dedicated to producing for economic purposes, to fulfilling specific (politically compliant) social roles, and an overall acceptance of consumer culture. This sort of life plan is one constructed according to monetary value and economic good. What suffers in this type of lifestyle is the individual and his or her ability to make choices based on criteria, which do not fit these categories (such as emotion, empathy, artistic creation, social/political change).

Discourse/Silence/Educational Space

In her article, “Talking Cure: The Desire for Dialogue,” Alison Jones discusses how the educational space in a classroom context constitutes a space in which dialogue is essential. For Jones, ‘dialogue’ is the production of discourses:

Thus democratic dialogue is far more than an opportunity for the exchange of ideas, or gathering interesting information about other people’s lives. It is an explicitly political event because it attempts to shift the usual flow of power [the dominant Discourse] in order to un-marginalize the marginalized. Voices that are

usually marginalized –which is to say silenced – are to be centered and therefore empowered.

(Jones, 2004, p. 58)

Jones' vision of dialogue is reflective of Foucault's illustration of the perpetual play that occurs between Dominant discourses and small 'd' discourses. Firstly, the bringing in of multiple discourses in a classroom promotes the insertion of difference among the very members of that classroom. These divergent, possibly friendly, possibly hostile voices create a dynamic which initially reflects dominant power structures (where the voices of white, privileged, male students are louder than those of historically marginalized – silenced- groups) and hopefully moves past this phase into a more open and accepting phase of acknowledgment, recognition, and affirmation. Secondly, multiple discourses in a classroom take issue, deal with, and critique dominant power structures that exist on a macro level. Therefore, in a classroom which privileges dialogue there is an immediate and insistent need to question why, in this particular classroom, some students are seemingly automatically empowered to raise their voice while other students are not. Classroom dialogue works on two levels, altering the discourse of the specific class to then question how this dynamic has been instilled into larger socio-political frameworks.

However, the question remains, what happens when the 'Other', so used to remaining silent, is reluctant to voice his/her own experience? Often the language of the classroom is not the language of the other causing a profound barrier to the ideals built into the process of democratic education. Jones (2004) explains, "...those with sincere and benevolent desires for a unified and egalitarian classroom and society are likely to

identify as a threat any apparently contrary practice such as the withdrawal or active silence from some groups” (p.62). The other’s silence is taken as an affront to the dominant group who maintain an unsaid expectation that this group should want to engage as well as be engaged. Anxiety is instantly inserted into a situation that does not comply with the forms of democracy that we have become accustomed to. This anxiety is an opportunity to question whether a particular situation is actually striving for equality or whether it is maintain existing structures under the guise of democracy.

Discomforting Discourse

In their paper, “Discomforting Truths: The Emotional Terrain of Understanding Difference,” Megan Boler and Zembylas illustrate how dialogue alone is not enough to create substantial change in the perspectives and attitudes of students; for any significant transformation to occur there must be an element of discomfort. Boler’s and Zembylas’ theory of discomfort is more complex than the mere insertion of dialogue, or the exchange of competing discourses in classroom contexts because it embeds a culture in which all participants must question their own participation in implicit and oppressive structures. Hegemony is ubiquitous, inescapable. In this sense, every person is responsible for his or her own oppression as well as that of others.

The discourse of discomfort is different from that of dialogue in that it focuses on the internal, delving into how individuals experience and play out the most subtle forms of oppression. An example of the types of issues that would arise using pedagogy of discomfort is the introduction of the most commonly used expressions, which express socially acceptable fears and intolerances regarding difference. A common expression in academia which, in my opinion, represents a symbolic privileging of secularized and

Western values is the expression of 'veiling' or 'unveiling.' In many academic texts, to 'unveil' a concept is to remove the superfluous, the complicating, or the subversive to get down to its core. To unveil is generally deemed a positive activity, insinuating that a certain amount of unpacking has occurred. Conversely, to leave something veiled has negative connotations. However, the veil, for some women in Muslim cultures represents empowerment; a denial of Western capitalism which objectifies women as purely sexualized objects. Azizah Y. Al-Hibri (1999) asks, "Why is it oppressive to wear a head scarf but liberating to wear a miniskirt?" (p. 47). This question gets to the crux of how the most engrained ideas surrounding 'freedom' or 'liberation' can be challenged in terms of cultural construction. For some women, 'unveiling' is not a symbol of progress but rather of conforming to Western secularized notions of feminism. The use of this term is therefore no longer deemed neutral but up for debate.

For Boler and Zembylas, the educational process should not be a comforting one. It should be one in which our most fundamental categories of perspectives are questioned, expanded, or overturned. These categories, largely based on Cartesian notions of discrete separations between self and other, should be overturned to form new, intersubjective categories in which humans do not represent oppositions from one another, but rather that mutual recognition is constructed. The discomfort, then, arises precisely from this experience of displacing the self to facilitate, or negotiate, intersubjective views. Intersubjectivity attempts to break down the Self-Other binary and initiate a new version of the Self which incorporates, internalizes, the Other, thereby negating the original binaried dynamic. Jessica Benjamin (1988) explains, "The intersubjective view maintains that the individual grows in and through the relationship to

other subjects” (p.20). This process is a subversive one in that it negates the original separation between the two. Benjamin (1988) illustrates, “Thus the idea of intersubjectivity reorients the conception of the psychic world from a subject’s relations to its object toward a subject meeting another subject” (p. 20). Referring back to the example of ‘veiling’ and ‘unveiling,’ this reorientation require that those involved question how they view the nature of women’s choice rather than remaining within the prescribed religious and/or cultural discourse. This reorientation is necessarily a complex and ultimately uncomfortable one. However it is through this painful reconceptualization that education is most valuable.

Educational space, from Boler’s and Zembylas’ perspective, is a space in which discomfort is normalized, where students actively engage in dialogue which subverts hegemonic structures – those ways of thinking that create strict divides between the self and other, thereby oppressing each. In this instance specifically, educational space dwells in both the private and the public spheres: the private is the emotional labour or the personal investment that students must put into their own education/transformation. This demands a personal as well as a political commitment to favour the transformation and to then change personal habits which were reflective of hegemony; to eradicate the expressions described above would be one way to carry out this education/transformation. Boler’s and Zembylas’ “Discomforting Truths” exemplifies an educational space, which, through disruption and emotional labour, attempts to transform the dominant Discourse. This Discourse has historically silenced anyone who does not maintain a position in those categories deemed dominant, and has naturalized this oppression to the point where humans are unconsciously perpetuating their own

subordination. This Discourse, instilled in the Western consciousness since the Enlightenment, can only be subverted through the acknowledgment of not only its presence but its power. The Discourse of Discomfort in educational spaces, then, would normalize the unsettled, would embrace disruption, would open up a never-ending vat of difficult, discomfoting, questions.

Boler and Zembylas (2003) are specific about the definitions and limits of their pedagogy of discomfort: that it is not a radical pedagogy in which outcomes become “organized and systematized” (p.133). Rather, the pedagogy of discomfort aims at contesting existing discourses with ones that involve emotional risk and that reform our own perspectives to ultimately reform the dominant Discourse. This pedagogy involves a continued negotiation of past and progressive conventions, to best enact a discourse, which not only invites, but also creates, difference. While Boler and Zembylas maintain that this discourse is essential within the realm of education, I argue that this theory could, and should, be expanded to a Discourse of Discomfort; one which steps outside the formalized boundaries of formal education. As Arendt (2000) eloquently argues, education represents a realm that lies directly between the public and the private spheres; it cannot be limited by either, while at the same time, belongs to both. Boler’s and Zembylas’ work is limited to education, however, as Arendt has pointed out, education as a rule extends past itself into social and political spheres. Based on this, I argue that Boler and Zembylas’ theory could be transformed from pedagogy of discomfort to a ‘Discourse of Discomfort,’ using the educational arena as a launching pad. Educational space serves as an excellent forum for the integration of this discourse, however it should never be deemed to be an end-in-itself. The Discourse of Discomfort would normalize the

unsettled, would embrace disruption, and would unfold well past the parameters of institutionalized educational space.

When use of language is seen as a tool, the limits of its potential for transformation are limitless. The notions that most people have surrounding education, how it can and should be used, what it means, have been constructed by forces which legitimate and encourage education for employment's sake. The utilitarianism inserted into ideas surrounding educational space have been implemented and enforced by use of Discourses constructed by less than liberal political doctrines. However, as the difficult reality of these injections may appear to be anchored, the opposite is true. Academic space, a malleable product of social space, is made up competing discourses. A facet of the construction of this space is of course the policies and regulations created by dominant political structures. However, other facets of these spaces are created by the small 'd' discourses performed by the sites. These discourses may feed into the policies of utility, singularity, and ethnocentrism under which they have been produced. On the contrary, they may counter these ideologies through the use of subversion, through the rigorous use of small 'd' discourse not only to dismantle the construction of these spaces but in fact to achieve a state of intersubjectivity to create a space that lies outside of these structures.

Conclusion

In this paper I have explained how globalizing processes are, firstly, always multiple, and secondly, how they constitute a web of complex relationships which connect the social, political, economic, and private spheres. Globalization(s) are inseparable from the rise of capitalism and its far-reaching consequences. These

consequences include manipulating spaces to conform them to the values and goals of capitalism itself. These manipulations of spaces have had profound consequences on social and economic life but are not settled due to the continued flow of these networks.

An indispensable element of globalizing processes is discourse and its use in perpetuating certain realities over others. These realities include those which support economic development at the peril of social/welfare interests. Norman Fairclough and Michel Foucault provide insight into how discourse is more than the use of language but how it is made up of entire meaning systems; these systems dictate how we perceive dominant power structures as well as our confidence in our abilities to act upon these structures. Hegemony is an active force in squelching, or silencing, the small 'd' discourses, those who do not hold the 'Dominant' position. Small 'd' discourses and the Dominant discourse linger in a continued interplay. A culture which does not question, or critique, the privilege and power of the Dominant discourse will remain at its mercy.

The knowledge economy provides a meaningful example of how neo-liberalism has determined which careers are deemed more 'valuable.' More importantly, it has altered our basic notions of which knowledge systems are deemed relevant. Neo-liberal policies have been proven to privilege economic markets over creativity and equality. This privileging has led to a definitive shift in how post-secondary institutions proceed: those programs that 'fit into' the forms of standardized and productive knowledge are better funded and lauded as being 'worthwhile.' On the contrary, the programs that favour exploration and critique are underfunded and undervalued. Globalizing processes have also effected how education is *performed*. Jean-François Lyotard's *performativity* illustrates how education supports the transmission of social, political, and cultural

norms; the processes of globalization have imposed an interest in the transmission of economic norms on education. Each of these effects has profoundly shifted the implications as well as the actualization of post-secondary education. If students are treated as nothing more than means for economic stability, our senses of self are undoubtedly affected. Students who dwell in the Dominant, neo-liberal, discourse have less recourse to act upon, or think past this Discourse.

Hannah Arendt and Henri Lefèbvre have defined social space as a space that lies between private and public spaces. The symbols, or discourses, which define social space is therefore a continued play between these realms. I have argued that academic space is a social space in that it inhabits and is defined by personal as well as political interests. Neo-liberal policies have attempted to reduce educational experiences to ones that support only the public, or economic realm. This reduction is harmful in that it negates the value of the space itself. Classrooms act as mirrors, or microcosms, of society. The transformation of classrooms, sites, into spaces of questioning and critique shifts not only the immediate educational setting but creates a potential to alter the larger social fabric. Educational spaces offer alternative forms (and forums) of critique. This alternative reconstitutes, or replenishes, that which has been taken away through the implementation of neo-liberal ideology.

Intersubjectivity offers a means of both personal and structural, or systematic, reform. Through the acknowledgement and veneration of diverse identities, intersubjectivity injects transformation into academic spaces. Because, as we have seen, classrooms work as microcosms, the creation of intersubjective spaces has the power to

manipulate these larger, social forces. This exchange is representative of how spaces are inherently fluid and may be manipulated by both internal as well as by external forces. Discourse, viewed as a continued play of language, symbols, and power structures, allows a re-conception of realities that are seemingly cemented. Neo-liberalism, capitalism, and globalizing processes (now seen as a collective) have all enforced a certain version of 'reality' on modern social life and specifically on education. By recognizing more than one reality, discourse opens up spaces of conversation, exploration, and consequently transformation. The major contribution of intersubjective discourses in educational spaces is the inclusion of the voices that have been silenced through the dominant Discourse, the discourse of globalization.

Educational spaces are privileged because they are defined by several social and political realms. However, with this privilege comes a responsibility on the part of both educators and policy makers to ensure that, in fact, the personal as well as the economic realms are being fulfilled. In the same way that Concordia has mandated that students from all disciplines fulfill a number of credits in the arts, humanities, or social sciences, all students in post-secondary education should be given the opportunity to examine a dialogue of discourses. Encountering competing discourses broadens a students' understanding of not only their surrounding, dominant, power structures, but also of themselves. The opportunity to learn for its own sake removes the burden of constant productivity and invites an exploration of issues surrounding one's own, as well as others' identities outside of an economic framework. While the neo-liberal agenda suppresses difference, academic spaces have the opportunity to promote diversity, thereby providing a meaningful counteraction of the dominant political will.

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