The Worlding of Higher Education: From the Corporate Digital University to the University of Global Citizenship and Social Justice

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last three decades higher education has become increasingly international in orientation, driven by the search for new customers and new markets.[1] While it has become commonplace in this environment for higher education (HE) consultants to talk about this period in terms of VUCA or an age of 'Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity', the values defining the 'corporate' or 'neoliberal' university appear to have been highly successful at reproducing themselves, often in the face of a now substantive and sustained academic critique.[2] The corporate university's ability to extend its reach has been particularly evident in the UK higher education sector where universities from the Russell Group to post-92 institutions have established satellite campuses across Asia and the Middle East to boost their local and global brand presence. A significant proportion of their income now derives from international students' tuition fees and UK universities regularly draw on the prestige afforded by world rankings to advertise their courses and promote the quality of their brand in a sector that is worth around £5 billion to the national economy each year.

While becoming 'world-class' is a clearly stated aspiration of UK universities, the term incorporates several tensions. On the one hand, becoming 'world-class' is identified with preparing students for their role in the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the global digital economy. On the other hand, focusing primarily on cognitive skills risks marginalising the importance of others that promote international skills such as multiculturalism or foreign languages. To address global challenges that now matter to everyone in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world, the use of non-cognitive skills and competencies

appears to be equally important.[3] According to Knight 'internationalisation' has attempted to incorporate both of these tensions, and this is evident in her influential definition of the term as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education".[4] A further definition offered by de Wit, Hunter, Howard and Egron-Polak suggests that internationalisation aims to "enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society".[5] While Knight's definition mentions interculturalism and de Wit's emphasizes the contribution to society, these aspects have been routinely marginalised as economics has become the true measure of internationalisation's return on investment. Indeed, the term has become synonymous with an opportunity for generating foreign income in a landscape distinguished by increased levels of competition, brand management, international talent recruitment and strategic positioning.[6]

The internationalisation of UK and other educational systems around the world has been enabled by and driven by advances in digital technologies. Underpinned by powerful discourses associating digital education with 'innovation', 'enterprise' and 'entrepreneurialism', its primary role has been the preparation of students as workers. Digital educational technologies have likewise been central to neoliberal discourse in the field of pedagogy, though it is clear that they have often derived from technologies that were designed with business rather than education in mind;[7] learning analytics is the latest in a long line of high profile examples of this phenomenon to gain traction in the sphere of education[8]

The expansion in student recruitment associated with internationalisation has been couched in terms of an inclusive, widening participation agenda that aims to substantially increase the number of students involved in higher education, particularly in relation to the highly selective elite institutions, thus aiming to empower them by providing more consumer

choice.[9] More recently this sometimes overly evangelical discourse has been received with more scepticism, as digital technologies have been associated with the dark underside of tech company activities related to misinformation, user profiling, enhanced surveillance and the mis-selling of private and confidential data.[10] Research has also called into question the link between higher education, meritocracy and social mobility, given the significant amounts of personal debt accrued by students and the non-graduate level jobs many students actually obtain when they complete their course.[11] The technologies that connect us also peddle online hate, cyberbullying and fraud, and where Western technologies have been produced or used in the Global South and Asia, they have led to questions about the legacy of colonialism, digital waste, the exploitation of labour involved in technology supply chains, the use of conflict minerals, ethics dumping and top-down rather than co-participatory research methodologies.[12]

The initial hype surrounding the emergence of massive open online courses (MOOCs) in 2012 was yet another example of an international innovation which aimed to transform the educational landscape. While it was positioned as a widening participation innovation, research now indicates that these platforms tend to attract already privileged demographic groups, rather than enabling the expansion of knowledge and cultural capital to educationally disenfranchised or marginalised students.[13] MOOCs may have amounted to an attempt to disrupt education under the guise of open access and inclusivity, while others suggest that they were a proxy for the financial reorganisation of education that is increasingly sought by private educational technology companies.[14]

The international expansion of education, and in particular of online education, also requires greater understanding of the types of academic labour which support it. Research suggests that internationalisation has led to increased levels of casualisation as a result of the normalisation of short and/or fixed-term contracts that often do not include benefits, making

many staff the academic equivalent of Uber taxi drivers who provide a flexible source of dispensable workers.[15] As much as the COVID-19 pandemic in the Spring of 2020 has led to the swift adoption of remote teaching and learning in universities worldwide, overcoming decades of apparent resistance or scepticism in a short period of time to online learning, it has also served a valuable purpose by amplifying the deeply rooted socio-economic, racial and gender inequalities that shape educational opportunities in the UK and around the world.

In addressing this complex socio-economic context, this chapter examines the ways the COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to reflect on the internationalisation of higher education over the last thirty years of neoliberal digital education reforms and to consider if this moment represents an opportunity for a progressive change of direction or the likelihood of more continuity with pre-pandemic economic and educational norms. While we constantly hear the need for a 'recovery' to pre-pandemic levels of 'normalcy', does this risk returning to forms of growth-led globalisation and internationalisation that created or at least contributed to the cause of the pandemic in the first place? While internationalisation and the search for 'world-class' education has opened up systems around the globe for dialogue, it has been guilty of doing so for primarily economic reasons based on a growth model of development, and often at the expense of sustainable social and environmental justice.[16] In this vein the chapter examines an alternative, non-essentialising vision of the *worlding of higher education* in place of internationalisation, based on global citizenship, which views higher education as a community-driven process of critical partnership between knowledge and the world, in which it is positioned as a public good shaped by critical pedagogy, values-based learning and social justice.[17] *Worlding* is here understood as a type of "sustainable citizenship that joins learning to living in right reciprocal relationships to the worlds of others (and things)".[18]

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON NEOLIBERALISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The emergence and consolidation of what has variously been called the 'neoliberal' or 'corporate university' has been replicated around the world in powerful ways, driven by massification, internationalisation and employability.[19] While the academic literature on neoliberalism has proliferated, the term has also become increasingly hazy and difficult to define. For some it is too broad and has lost all specificity; for others it precisely captures the characteristics of early twenty first century global capitalism, the culture of conspicuous consumption, and its promise of unfettered global growth and development. While research on neoliberalism suggests that it is a problematical term, often because it risks aggregating many complex variables and becoming an "unproductive smudge"[20] that is "complex, messy, and not easily defined",[21] following Saunders and Ramirez I will use it here to recognise that its "varying definitions … reflect the broad reach of capitalism within our world, the uneven development of capitalist projects, and the meaningfully different and changing material contexts" in which it operates.[22]

Neoliberalism often presents itself as a reaction against a monolithic state and 'culture of experts'.[23] Harvey describes it as "a theory of political economic practice that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade".[24] It subjects everything to the natural order of the market and views collective action as misguided and as a restraint on the potential of the individual. In fact, there are many ways in which neoliberalism is statist in outlook, as while it may appear liberal at the top of the socioeconomic hierarchy, it often manifests as punitive for individuals at the bottom, whose sole objective becomes how to adapt to the culture of competitive market forces. Although the origins of neoliberalism are typically associated with an economic critique that became prominent in the late 1970s, the term can be traced back to the end of the 1930s as a response to the collectivism identified with communism and

Nazism. Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*[25] and *The Constitution of Liberty*[26] were key texts that developed ideas related to unfettered free markets and the assumption that a large state approach to economic intervention will always be inefficient. These ideas gained traction during the late 1970s and manifested themselves in the Thatcher-Reagan governments in the US and UK throughout the 1980s and in China and the former Eastern Europe in the 1990s and early decades of the New Millennium. Rejecting both the ideas of a large state or a state that does not interfere, as in the case of classic Liberalism, neoliberalism sought to regulate markets to make them function fairly, pitched against the wider background of encouraging competition and consumer choice. While for the left only the state can enable social justice, the right wish to move responsibility from governments to individuals. The move to introduce academies and free schools in the UK and to limit the role of the state are further examples of this trend in educational policy.

In higher education, successive reforms in the UK have positioned students as consumers who pay tuition fees to purchase products which are ranked in national and international league tables.[27] To stimulate this market, tuition fees have been substantially increased and maintenance grants for poorer students gradually withdrawn. This concentrated the minds of academics, students and parents to view higher education as a direct route to training and employment and to require a tangible return on their investment. The market for students was further enforced through the removal of the cap on numbers each university could admit each year, a policy which further introduced new levels of competition between elite, mid and lower ranking universities, thus enabling higher status institutions to attract more students with lower grades. These changes to the market have produced falling enrolments for universities at the bottom of the rankings, and as a result, greater casualisation of academic staff on temporary contracts has been put in place to meet fluctuating demand.[28] Research suggests that a culture of lowering entrance grades and rising internal grade

inflation has been an inevitable result of these changes at the same time as increasing levels of bureaucratisation related to quality assurance have been introduced.[29] Courses have become more professional in terms of their skills orientation and there has been a greater emphasis on credentialization which in turn causes students to re-evaluate the worth of non-STEM and non-vocational related degree programmes, especially those in the Arts and Humanities.[30] This has come at a cost for academics too, as it has reinforced a culture of audit, measurement, performance management, customer feedback and increased the burden of administration for individual teaching and research staff.[31] Increased performance management has led to increases in the incidence of mental health problems such as anxiety by both staff and students.[32]

The arguments outlined above are not new. In fact, they are all too familiar as the critique of neoliberalism in higher education has led to a significant body of academic work spanning several decades. While the arguments have been well-rehearsed at length in academia and the popular educational press, neoliberalism's grip on higher education in the UK appears to have strengthened rather than diminished. These increased levels of academic production demonstrate how the neoliberal economy has been equally adept at assimilating oppositional academic critique, pushed by the logic of 'publish or perish' and the need for academics to 'chase publications' and boost their 'H-Index' to remain competitive in the world jobs market.[33] Knowing about the most pernicious elements of neoliberalism is one thing; doing something effective outside of the academic mode of production of lectures and publications, it appears, is something quite different, and strategies to translate ideology critique into socioeconomic and political structures to challenge inequalities have proved more easily said than done.[34]

The neoliberal re-engineering of universities has led to a focus on the production of 'useful' knowledge aligned with the importance of employability as a measure of an

educational institution's success and effectiveness in teaching and research. The national framework for evaluating teaching, a counterpart to the REF or Research Excellence Framework which audits research outputs, research environment and impact, has led to the similarly entitled Teaching excellence framework or TEF. Within this framework, teaching excellence is determined by the percentage of graduates securing employment six months after graduating, and no observation of actual teaching is included in the process.[35]

In this context, knowledge is no longer sought after for its own sake but exists to be consumed and valued due to its significance in the global marketplace. This vision replaces the notion of the university as a public good, in which institutions are created to contribute to and sustain a democratic public sphere characterised by free speech and criticality.[36] In its place an audit culture risks transforming universities into factories that provide workers and academics are positioned as facilitators of knowledge, defined as useful to the performance of the economy, and whose value is evidenced through customer satisfaction surveys that students complete annually.[37] Increasing market pressures on universities means that they have to compete with similar institutions and the audits are used to provide customers with indicators to inform their choice of products. The discourse of higher education has changed accordingly, substituting 'universities' with 'providers', 'courses' with 'products', and 'teachers' with 'facilitators' of knowledge. With it has come a culture of new managerialism and in recent years the increasing use of big data and analytics to benchmark and measure its effectiveness. Repositioned as feeder institutions for the digital economy universities need to demonstrate their entrepreneurial spirit in terms of how many start-up businesses their graduates can develop. In this endeavour they have become institutions transferring pragmatic knowledge and skills development, typified by the newfound dominance of business schools.

This totalising instrumentalism risks losing the sense of wisdom and wonder that also accompanies the development of knowledge. While universities have opened themselves to the world stage, driven by the rhetoric of world-class universities and rankings, they have lost the wonder that the internationalisation of universities might have brought them. The diminution of the Arts and Humanities within a model of knowledge based on immediate use-value has been a consequence, as has the newfound totalising obsession with data and quantitative forms of measurement, and far from universities benefiting from the internationalisation of education, this lack of wonder and the search for wisdom, may in turn impoverish the race for innovation and excellence.

In engaging in internationalisation, forsaking singular ideas of universities rooted in their native traditions and communities, they have gained a new sense of precarity in the global market, and lost the sense of wonder that belonged to an earlier stage in their historical development. The emergence of students as customers within a massified system has consolidated their position as depersonalised spaces overseeing business transactions. Indeed, consumerist relationships have had a potentially negative impact on how students deal with innovative, difficult or risky forms of pedagogy, which may not fall within expected parameters. This is likely to be even more relevant at low status and financially poorer institutions such as the post-92 universities, where students' financial investment is the same, but the outcomes may lead to less cultural and economic capital.

Likewise, around the world we have seen the incorporation of universities, endless restructuring and mergers with employment providers, and the emergence of vocational and career focused universities. An ever-expanding higher education market has also coincided with a change in the economic model of funding. Whereas the public sector universities were associated with common purpose and public good, private forms of higher education tend to emphasise the financial outcomes of the process to justify increased student tuition and

capital investment in infrastructure and new buildings under the umbrella of 'the student experience'.

The turn toward the innovation and impact agenda in UK universities has been allied to the need to solve 'real-world' problems through the use of 'real-world' research. It is not the case however that all such problems can be solved by relying purely on a technical and cognitive skills-based approach. Addressing such complex and difficult problems requires academics to be more than mere service providers and students to be more than mere information consumers. As a service provider academics may quickly lose value and respect from their students as their relationships are shaped by a utilitarian orientation. The growth in the market for privatised tuition has likewise reinforced the return on investment model in which teachers are focused on maintaining rates of student satisfaction by passing examinations and thus their goal is not public service, but merely financial need.[38] In internationalising the university, we may in fact be erasing local and community traditions in favour of a global discourse that undermines students' ability to appreciate ethics, history and aesthetics. This instrumental approach alone cannot readily solve difficult and complex global problems, but instead, reinforces the intractable complexity that we will continue to experience as ineffable or unfathomable.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND NEOLIBERALISM

Digital technologies have played a key role in the emergence of techno-capitalism, which is underpinned by the search for 'continuous improvement' and 'excellence' and provides a primary role to economists and management entrepreneurs. Though digital technologies have been positioned to provide university academics with the feeling of increased control, they also provide management with real-time data analytics that aim to quantify the student experience without paying attention to contextual factors that influence learning. From a marketing perspective they entice students with the latest gadgets, and from a rankings

perspective they provide examples of an institution's investment in resources for students.[39] In this context, an academic's disciplinary objectives are replaced by the need to demonstrate allegiance to an institution's mission and strategic objectives.

While digital technologies have been variously positioned as a response to the digital generation of students, as marketing devices, or as integral to the digital skills required by students to get a job, the last decade has also seen the steady emergence of more criticism and scepticism of this discourse.[40] Surveillance techniques evident in the use of large technology companies such as Facebook and Google have underpinned this wave of criticism, as it is recognised that user information and data may be disseminated to other private commercial ventures to aid profiling.[41] Increasingly digital skills curricula refer not only to how to use technologies for good but how to prevent them being used for misinformation and include more emphasis on the responsibilities universities have to teach students about the sometimes unexpected and intended ways in which data are collected and used. While the digital agenda is often aligned with empowerment, it is equally clear that empowerment must also mean adopting a critical and sceptical approach to how digital technologies are increasingly being used in education and society. Learning to use digital technologies then, also means thinking about the ethics of use in an age in which data are being sold, often without students knowing about it and areas such as artificial intelligence and the role technology in climate change are becoming increasingly important.

In the pedagogical sphere, digital technologies are underpinned by a logic of technical determinism. While they are sold under the banner of 'innovative' practice, they are in fact quite conservative in the educational space, as indicated by virtual learning environments, which have not significantly developed since they were first introduced. The use of digital technologies in education dates back the use of home computers to replace mainframes in the 1980s, gradually becoming an indicator of social capital and social change, as technology

became increasingly important in industry through the use of automation, analytics and robotics. Higher education became an important source of training and employees for the labour market, as the new digital economy required a new skilled labour force in engineering, digital technologies and computer science. New managerialist discourse has sought to rationalise and create demand for this approach through the identification of a so-called 'digital generation' of students who need to be taught in new ways and who require new literacies.[42] The growth and allure of Silicon Valley start-ups and designer lifestyle products has made technologies popular as much for their cultural and symbolical capital as for their use value in education. Sitting behind apparently 'neutral' systems such as virtual learning environments and anti-plagiarism software is often the impulse to collect large amounts of student data, but these systems have rarely been designed from the teacher or student perspective. Digital technologies are not neutral; they are political, and the daily work of academics and students has been changed by digital practices in fundamental ways which now require careful consideration and critique.

EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN AN AGE OF DISRUPTION

A growing amount of research over the last decade has focused on global citizenship as an alternative to the neoliberal forms of education described above in which students and academics are positioned as consumers.[43] This movement has gained support from UNESCO which identified global citizenship education as a strategic focus of its flagship education programme and an important integral element of the UN General Secretary's 2012 Global Education First Initiative.

As we have seen, neoliberal policy documents in the field of education increasingly refer to a competency, training and employability agenda, but there is also evidence of how this has been broadened out to include a wider skillset. Definitions of global citizenship have been strongly connected with 'cosmopolitanism', given that the Greek translation of the latter

means 'world citizen', but both terms have been contested and it is evident that both have political dimensions. According to Smith et al. global citizenship is a "moral and political commitment to the values and responsibilities held within the global village and thus global citizens respond to global issues and tragedies accordingly through political communities".[44] Similarly, Smith et al's study identified a central role for education in promoting the values of global citizenship: "individual education and global citizenship suggests that individuals who have completed greater levels of education … are more likely to identify themselves as global citizens relative to their less educated peers".[45] Indeed, in place of the sole emphasis on economic integration which can lead to higher levels of nationalism, they argue that "education is the key to overcoming the fear of the Cultural Other, increasing global mindedness, and identifying as a global citizen".[46]

Davy calls global citizenship more of an approach to learning than a bolt-on "addition to the curriculum"[47] which consists of three key elements, including knowledge and understanding of global issues, critical thinking skills, and an understanding of pluralism. Critical thinking is central to the tradition of critical pedagogy as it encourages international mindedness in which the teacher is positioned more as a *difficultator* rather than a facilitator of 'easily' consumed knowledge, as her role is to problematise accepted knowledge rather than merely to reproduce it.[48] According to Wright, critical pedagogy of this type is characterised by four key aspects[49]. It is *experiential* in that it involves the critical process of questioning received information and *self-questioning* of normalised assumptions. This questioning process is *transformative* in that it aims to reconfigure inherited value systems. And critical pedagogy emphasises *new approaches* to learning based on the acknowledgement of shared perspectives.

As a rejection of the narrow instrumental logic, global citizenship education has been allied with civic engagement practices, aspects of social responsibility, social justice, care for

the environment, inclusivity and equity in education, and sustainability, as well as a pivot towards values-based approaches involving wisdom, respect, tolerance, and responsibility.[50] Through the internationalisation agenda, programmes promoting the mobility of students have been used as a proxy for citizenship education, but they have not often been aligned with ethical responsibilities.[51] Rather than represent only one side of this discussion – corporate cosmopolitanism or social responsibility – is it possible to embed notions of global citizenship that combine the best of both? The questions cut to the heart of how universities position themselves in the global era, how they combine the traditional notion of the public good with the idea of ethically minded citizens understood locally, nationally and globally, and how they do so in the wider context of their complex relationship with economic globalism. Rather than merely educating students for their chosen career path, Vertovec and Cohen[52] outline a notion of 'transformative cosmopolitanism' as a way of developing a type of 'intellectual thinking' which they describe as a process of appreciating the interconnected aspects of globalisation from a variety of different angles, including the social, ethical, environmental and cultural, as well as the economic and technical dimensions. In this way it may be possible to balance the competing corporate and ethical dimensions of the contemporary university by emphasizing the importance of values-based education and students' responsibility to engage with this form of techno-social criticality. This would mean challenging the insistence on a disciplinary mindset and measuring and quantifying outcomes in a totalising and reductive fashion.[53]

Relativistic epistemologies tend not to promote engagement with values-based education emphasizing tolerance and multiculturalism; on the contrary, they may promote inaction and complacency. Lilley, Baker and Harris[54] argue that while there is little evidence of universities at present upholding their ambition to educate global citizens, it remains a university responsibility. In this vein they identify the role of the 'thought leader', who

"acting beyond the role of corporate CEO and within a global citizen mindset" has the "potential to reinvigorate the societal potential of universities, and promote values-based education" and support "organizational processes, and pedagogical practices directed towards educating ethical thinking global citizens as well as skilled professionals".[55] We have seen that technology plays a vital role in the reproduction of the neoliberal digital economy. But it needs to be harnessed to enable students to identify as global citizens by facilitating communication across different disciplinary and national contexts, promoting ethical forms of design education, committing to open agendas, data literacy and transparency.

The COVID-19 crisis has led to considerable discussion about the vision for post-pandemic higher education and the role of online education within it. It seems clear that a more interconnected world may be prone to more crises, whether from the return of more virulent forms of the virus or through climate change and other disruptive socio-economic events on a global scale. There may be shorter intervals between disruptive events that take place on a scale that threatens human survival and in turn there will be less time to prepare and take action.

The pandemic has led to remote forms of online teaching driven by the technology rather than by approaches informed by coherent pedagogy. While constructivism is much touted as the approach to underpin these emergency measures, it is worth recalling that constructivism was a theory developed in the 1930s, long before digital technologies emerged. The turn toward remote forms of online education nevertheless poses important questions, but it does not address the deeper question of what the most appropriate form of pedagogy is for an age of global disruption and 'wicked' problems. Wicked problems are defined as those that are intensely difficult if not impossible to solve because they involve many interdependent factors and a rapidly changing context. Rather than produce an

instrumentalist vision of project-based learning focused purely on knowledge and skills, we require a more holistic approach to counter them as Hansen argues:

> To 'solve' wicked problems in organisations of super complexity and in an age of uncertainty requires innovators, scientists and professionals that have a sense for the existential and ethical dimensions. Some 'wicked problems' might be mastered … through bringing in new unexpected expert knowledge and a decision-making that is guided by a trans-disciplinary field of professionals as well as politicians and lay people from the public domain.[56]

An understanding of wicked problems and global challenges reveals that they require truly global cooperation, a conclusion which puts universities in a strategic position to draw on their interdisciplinary strengths to leverage collaboration. Internationalisation has put universities in a position from which to advocate a strategy of action based on the importance of global skills and global knowledge. While internationalisation has been driven as we have said above by economics, in order to address and solve new global challenges, teaching and learning focused on global citizenship will have to become increasingly important in the age of environmental disruption.[57]

Mobility may be one part of this envisaged new curriculum, but the skillsets to enable teachers and students to engage with these new problems should be central to new forms of cross-curricular and cross-cultural competencies. Cross-curricular means cross-disciplinary, decentring the privileged perspective on any one approach, methodology, subject area and competency to make teachers and students much more aware of local and global contexts.

Project-based learning is one area that has developed to meet this challenge. As the organising and structuring principle of the curriculum, project-based learning engages students with real-life problem-solving situations and use a variety of disciplines in order to produce a solution, including engineering, science, maths, the humanities and languages.[58]

Through this approach students can experience studying abroad, internships and the co-mingling of a variety of disciplines to solve problems in their local communities and/or in the wider world through telecollaboration and other forms of digital communication to facilitate multinational virtual teams.[59]

Global citizenship programmes have proliferated in recent years with some taking the path of corporate skills, social skills and/or advocacy.[60] The corporate emphasis is in line with neoliberal approaches to higher education as preparation for work. This doesn't need to be an either/or approach however, and programmes can prepare students to work in corporations through the development of corporate and social skillsets. The grand global challenges of the age of disruption require an interdisciplinary approach to climate change, the pandemic, sustainability, inequality and socioeconomic disadvantage. In order for this to work, the principles of global citizenship education need to be integrated into every module rather than be positioned as a standalone discrete programme.[61]

The alternative vision of education then, aims to position universities to work in closer dialogue with the public sphere and impact agenda through civic engagement activities.[62] It also engages the university community in a research agenda and involves finding solutions to grand challenges by underlining the importance of the university space as one that engages its students and stakeholders as partners in critical reflection. This metaphysical dimension trumps the reductive insistence on universities as mere job training centres or skills agencies. Addressing grand challenges can not only be accomplished through digital skills, however, but by acquiring the existential skills that enable students to reflect on how to live well, how to age well, and how to die well. Thus acting in the world (what skills do I need), based on what knowledge (what do I need to know), is related to a much more fundamental question about what gives purpose to my life, and thus in the current age, it

provides the upper hand to epistemology on questions of being or ontology in a market-driven economy.

Through the influence of globalisation many universities have grown too big, too quickly and are now dependent on their world reach rather than their own domestic markets, a fact that exposes them to significant financial risks as COVID-19 has shown. Solving the problem of Covid-19 is not purely a technical issue but one that requires us to reflect on the interdependency of our being-in-the world. The virus has led to deeper questions that require us to also reflect on the neutrality of the new normality. Students and teachers must reclaim this sense of living 'beyond certainty' for only that way can the university forsake its narrow vocation within a neoliberal economy.[63] Educational institutions do not merely replicate the existing social order; it is also their responsibility to question it. This process must re-engage with uncertainty and wonder, and the ability as Keats said, to have negative capability, in order to live with uncertainty[64].

Barnett[65] distinguishes between the Heideggerian meanings of the term ontic (meaning common sense and pragmatism) and the ontological (meaning epistemological). Rather than seeing them as opposed, they share in common the need to be joined by a reflective process. As Hansen argues, "The pragmatic and scientific explaining-seeking How- and Why- questions should not be confused with the phenomenological 'How-the-phenomeon-shows-it-self-question' or the philosophical and existential 'Why-question'. This kind of contemplation is evoked through an existential philosophical approach as well as an aesthetic one".[66] The society-oriented approach to higher education and innovation underlines the importance of a 'missing dimension', namely, one connected with 'meaning, ethics and being'. Likewise, Hansen's approach to 'wonder labs' is based on the need to solve problems by acknowledging the "required phenomenological and existential reflections in those different contexts" to give voice to a "new kind of metaphysical university".[67] This is a form

of cross-curricular pedagogy that does not pitch one side against the other, sciences against humanities, but draws on the different aspects of their dimensions. Hansen calls this the "re-enchantment of the university", in which these often opposing disciplines aim to achieve a balance in order to make an argument "for why radical and meaning-driven innovation in higher education can be nurtured by an ontological and possible also pre-ontological wonder".[68]

Since their inception universities have been shaped by public and private discourses in the form of the church, the state, and latterly the neoliberal market and global economy.[69] Across this landscape we have seen how the vision of universities has moved from a preoccupation with a values-based approach to learning and knowledge for its own sake to a concern with knowledge for employment. The pendulum has swung too far in this direction and we need to consider the role of universities for delivering education for sustainable development[70] in a world increasingly vulnerable to its own interdependency, and as De Vita and Case suggest, to rediscover education as "a social service that puts intellectual and moral welfare above profitability and which, therefore, can neither be driven by economic considerations nor be fulfilled by market forces".[71]

CONCLUSION

Neoliberal globalisation has deeply affected the landscape of public higher education in the UK as in other parts of the world over the last three decades. This is apparent across several areas and reflected in the growing requirement for efficiency and accountability in teaching and research, as well as increasing global competitiveness, accreditation and promotion of credentials. Research on neoliberalism has been more in evidence in areas such policy, quality and institutional management rather than in teaching and learning or digital education, and more research needs to engage in critical work in these areas.[72] While internationalisation has been foregrounded as a potential solution to marketisation discourse, its promise has been

all too readily assimilated by it and adapted only in a rather piecemeal way through 'infusion' approaches.[73] In seeking to address this imbalance, we have argued that global citizenship should not be interpreted as an excuse for the current hegemony of neoliberalism but become an area worthy of further development as an alternative space. Global citizenship education can be seen as an intervention dealing with the grand challenges of the Anthropocene era, such as migration, inequality, sustainable development, climate change, changing demographics, globalization, developments in technology and artificial intelligence.[74] Each presents areas of international strategic concern and requires a collective, cross-disciplinary and cross-national response. As we look around our pandemic world it is worth remembering other periods that experienced similar disruption and we need to educate young people to possess a mindset to enable them to deal with disruption, even constant interruption and uncertainty, which will characterise much of this century.

The *worlding* of education along global citizenship education lines positions learning as a process of

> design (of things, events, solutions, communities, identities, futures, etc.) within a supportive community of practice and a range of meaningful contexts in which learners have productive agency to co-create the worlds in and around them.[75]

It also seeks to challenge the 'role distortion' involved in making academics subservient to their fee-paying customers, by positioning students as

> leaders of change who take the initiative to solve complex problems (including education, health, quality of life, and environment) using design thinking in-interaction- with -technology- and stories. Learners are actively engaged, individually and collectively, in a design cycle of questioning, investigating, prototyping, evaluating and refining … Encouraging experimentation, sensible risk taking and moderate uncertainty … offers potential for: (1) "unshackling the conditioning forces" … that prevent learners from seeing beyond the status quo; (2) practicing a worldy criticism that doubts and challenges what is taken for granted; and (3) developing better informed and more meaningful relationships between selves, others and things.[76]

When interpreted in this vein the worlding of higher education can make us more aware of the fragile spaces we inhabit, and more open to the dangerous consequences of ever greater

economic interdependency. Global citizenship education should not be interpreted as an apology for academic complicity with the discourse of neoliberalism nor as a way of avoiding the dissatisfaction with the commercialisation of universities. At best it can be seen as a "door to potential educational reform".[77]

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