International Journal of the Commons Vol. 13, no 1 2019, pp. 153–174 Publisher: Uopen Journals

URL: http://www.thecommonsjournal.org

DOI: 10.18352/ijc.929

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ISSN: 1875-0281

Feminist political ecology practices of worlding: art, commoning and the politics of hope in the classroom

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Abstract: In the paper I argue that in a world where our lives are intricately interconnected and our environments are rapidly changing, commoning produces ecological imaginaries and understandings of places that could build a sense of global commons based on mutuality, reciprocity, and relationality. In exploring commoning in the international classroom, my paper contributes to ongoing dialogues on community economies and feminist political ecology in the Community Economies Research Network (CERN), and the newly formed EU project Well-being, Ecology, Gender and cOmmunity (WEGO). In the article I first set out how I use commoning in my teaching. In section two I present my methodology, followed by section three where I present the community economies research network. In section four I present a case study of how I employ the community economies iceberg diagram in my teaching process using drawing/ art-making to create an emergent commons-in-practice. In section five I discuss the productivity of bringing community economies and commoning to a broader feminist, ecological justice project followed by a conclusion.

Keywords: Commoning, community economies, feminist political ecology, gender, postdevelopment

Acknowledgement: Thank you to the editorial team of this special issue and the reviewers of this article for their very useful and encouraging suggestions.

1. Introduction: commoning as a politics of hope

How to nurture a shared, healthy environment with others including non-human others can feel overwhelmingly ambitious given today's increasing anthropocentric environmental and social crises. It demands processes of creativity and

imagination as people learn to relate to each other with compassion and responsibility able to confront together these challenges with a sense of hope, rather than despair. In this paper I look at how commoning is about such a politics of hope in an analysis of my teaching international MA students in two courses on critical development studies in Italy and in The Netherlands. The article is based on my experiences of making art in the classroom inspired by the practices and tools produced by the Community Economies Research Network (which I explain in detail below). I analyse how students engaged in imagining new ways of living with the Earth based on their own creative self-realization and inventiveness (Singh 2017). I look at how the ideas of feminist political ecology and community economies inform my 'care-full' teaching practices which respect the students' emotions and concerns and desires for new ways of living together and with the Earth (Katz 2001; Tschakert et al. 2018; Dombroski et al. 2019).

I focus on the pedagogical practice of using drawing and art making in order to open up discussions that can foster a sense of hope and purpose to students. The courses aim to address the emotions of students who can become disaffected by the critiques of deepening economic, environmental and social crises that pervade much of development teaching which, at times, undermine student's sense that social and environmental change is possible. I have employed drawing and art as a method to open up possibilities for them to find ways to speak about what affects them emotionally disrupting binaries of mind and body, modern and traditional, expert and ignorant, poor and rich, developed and developing in order to nourish ideas that lead to responsibility and hope (Taylor 2004; Bennett 2010; Tschakert et al. 2018). In my teaching I have found the iceberg diagram of community economies (Gibson-Graham et al. 2015) very useful to open up contextual and imaginative ways of understanding local economies.¹ As shown I use the iceberg diagram and the affective dimensions of the international classroom in order to explore how thinking together in a university setting can include emotional engagements with the self and the 'Other' in international and community level economic and social development. Such exercises can help build trust and reciprocity that are vital to inclusive development processes of which commoning is one (Tschakert et al. 2018). In these teaching practices I visualize commoning as not only practices rooted in one geographical place and culture but also as an interconnected collective process. Commoning can extend a shared sense of place and a sense of shared responsibility for collective commons or worlds (worlds within one world).² The 'we' in the classroom is differentiated but at the same time can evolve as learning, knowledge production, and envisioning together translate into an evolving 'we' who can learn to care for and understand better the commons of the Earth that

¹ See. Please see the image of the iceberg (Figure 1) in http://www.communityeconomies.org/index. php/key-ideas section on 'strategies for cultivating community economies'. Accessed 20th August 2018.

² Not to be confused with the instrumentalising concept of 'global commons' put forward by the global institutions such as the World Bank (Federici 2011).



Figure 1: Iceberg Diagram. http://www.communityeconomies.org/index.php/key-ideas.

connects all of us. The 'we' is fluid in that understanding commoning as a politics of hope is about the 'we-to-be-formed'.

In the paper I argue that in a world where our lives are intricately interconnected and our environments are rapidly changing, commoning produces ecological imaginaries and understandings of places that could build a sense of global commons based on mutuality, reciprocity, and relationality (Rocheleau and Nirmal 2015, 805). In this understanding, commoning is part of new practices

of worlding that help us to build a shared political imaginary formed by a set of relations marked by cooperation and responsibility to each other, thinking and feeling with the Earth as we learn 'being-in-common' with the world (Peluso and Vandergeest 2001; Federici 2011; Escobar 2016). I use the term worlding from Escobar (2016) to describe how we create and experience different interconnected worlds—past, present and futures—human and non-human worlds, material and spiritual worlds with different practices, cultures and natures connecting them. I see the international classroom as an exciting space where this worlding can be practiced guided by concepts of social justice and ecological sustainability (Escobar 2016; Centemeri 2018).

By engaging in commoning as a worlding practice in the classroom, I address the need to face emotions and fears around climate, failings of democracies and deepening economic inequalities (Escobar 2016; Singh 2017). The discussions acknowledge that emotions and subjectivities are part of our embodied concerns about what is happening to communities and the Earth. They are closely connected to how we feel, see, understand and relate to others, places and the environment (Lugones 1987; Harcourt and Escobar 2005; Nightingale 2011; Sultana 2011; Nightingale and Ojha 2013; Singh 2017, 2018).

In exploring commoning in the international classroom, my paper contributes to ongoing dialogues community economies and feminist political ecology (FPE) in the Community Economies Research Network (CERN), and the newly formed EU project Well-being, Ecology, Gender and community (WEGO).3 I do this by exploring how community economies and commoning overlap and inform FPE concerns in several ways. FPE brings to commoning important interests around gender, power, justice, intersectional analysis and everyday experiences. It also explores the co-constitution of subjectivity and environment within historically situated intersecting webs of gender and other power relations at multiple scales. These analyses include the often less visible 'intimate' scales, such as the body and the household (Nightingale and Ojha 2013; Nightingale 2015; Wichterich 2015; Elmhirst 2018). FPE also questions existing power and privilege and posits the need to take responsibility for ongoing inequities and injustices by recognising the vulnerability of the self and others. These FPE conceptual interests feed into community economies and commoning debates around how to nurture life in common and ways of 'being in common' (Singh 2013) that connects affective more than human relations with collective governance and use of resources (Bresnihan 2015). FPE outlines an embodied politics which moves through the different spaces and scales of collective action (Nightingale 2015; Harcourt and Nelson 2015).

In the article I first set out how I use commoning in my teaching. In section two I present my methodology, followed by section three where I present the Community Economies Research Network. In section four I present a case study of how I employ the community economies' iceberg diagram in my teaching

³ See https://wegoitn.com/ for more information. Accessed 26 October 2018.

process using drawing/art-making to create an emergent commons-in-practice. In section five I discuss the productivity of bringing community economies and commoning to a broader feminist, ecological justice project followed by a conclusion.

2. Commoning, care-full teaching and drawing

In my search for the possibilities of commoning I see the need to reimagine the economy, ecology and the future as key. This is what I interpret as teaching to transgress (hooks 1994) which I do in conversation with a growing number of teachers who are part of the movement to decolonise European universities (Wekker et al. 2016; de Jong et al. 2017). In different forums, on and off line, these conversations offer both a diagnosis of the racialized, gendered colonial legacies that constitute the modern university, and provide inspiring practical examples and methodologies, and interventions in curricula and the academy (de Jong et al. 2017).⁴

I therefore look at the university from a critical point of view, not only as an elite institution of imparting learned objective truths to others, but also as a unique space that can work towards understanding and overcoming deeply felt troubles of everyday gender injustice and ecological degradation. Most of all working in an international classroom in a postgraduate institute offers the possibility to reimagine, reread and intervene in the conditions of ours and others (different) lives. Producing knowledge in this process is about creating new ways of seeing and enabling new ways of affecting the world (Russell 2014).

2.1. Care-full practices in the university

Being located in the university presents a challenge to work against a particular institutionalised social order (de Jong et al. 2017; De Sousa Santos 2017) as I imagine ways to teach and interact with students in ways that acknowledge how our lives are entwined with others in our histories of colonialism, the flows of capital and commodities and modern telecommunications and the myths that underwrite them (Routledge and Driscoll Derickson 2015). I see the university as producing possibilities for commoning in place but also as part of a digital commons made of collective cultural products as the Internet enables creative possibilities of connection which were unimaginable before (Federici 2011; Hyde 2011). Universities can open up ways to pay attention to how 'we' co-constitute the global in relation to the local by building alliances which are shaped by gendered and other political struggles in the geographical and socio-institutional locations of academe (Routledge and Driscoll Derickson 2015). The classroom is

⁴ I mention here only some of the authors with whom I work in Europe who are challenging the colonizing conditions of teaching. There is in addition a vast literature in various languages which documents colonizing-decolonizing struggles of various universities in different contexts (Wekker et al. 2016).

a unique space to explore alternative socio-ecological ways of understanding the interlinkages of ecological, social, symbolic and cultural wealth as well as affective and social relations (Centemeri 2018).

My sense of care and responsibility in teaching international students is part of an everyday practice informed and complicated by complex geographical, historical, political, economic and cultural interconnections (Madge et al. 2009). Care-full teaching with international students requires awareness of the larger discourses, power hierarchies, and social relations that shape international student experiences. As decolonial feminist Maria Lugones suggests, teaching is a 'transworld activity' where teachers need skilfulness to negotiate unfamiliar worlds knowing that students understand what is considered knowledge differently according to their histories and geographies (Lugones 1987, 105).

So, while I am intrigued by the possibilities of engaging in commoning practices in my teaching as a way to create hopeful forms of worlding, I am aware of the differences and contestations of the university classroom setting. I see my teaching as part of my politics to find alternatives: finding the 'we' in the classroom imagining alternatives that are part of our collaborative survival efforts. My teaching practice is modelled on Bell Hiooks' conception of engaged pedagogy (hooks 1994) where the role of education is to cultivate critical thinking as an integral way to confront unequal power relations. Education, then, I would argue, is a practice of commoning, a mutual learning process that challenges inequity within and beyond the classroom and which creates the possibility of an intersubjective 'we'. I aim to teach awareness of the need for honest, personal interactions, sharing doubts, fears and hopes of the social, political economic and environmental crisis we face daily. It is part of my role to create a space of sharing, trust and commitment and intersubjectivity where students and teaching engage in both the pleasure and the power of knowing (hooks 2010). Teaching in this sense is about the politics of building solidarities with others as well as the active undoing of the unequal gender power relations that shape the neoliberal university as a particular space of knowing (Bagelman and Bagelman 2016). Taking into account FPE approaches to scale, intersectionality and emotions, in the classroom means to pay attention to the tensions around the unspoken privilege of masculinity, class and whiteness in the European university setting; the way colonial pasts inform mainstream understanding of development economics; and how students' local level knowledge potentially disrupts assumptions around economic policy and environmental practice that make up global and national development policy (Rocheleau 2015; Harcourt 2017).

2.2. Drawing/making art as worlding practice

What I explore in this article are the possibilities of commoning as a process of becoming more aware of responsibilities to the Earth by using drawing in the classroom as part of a vibrant commoning process and potential worlding practice (Taylor 2006; Bennett 2010; Escobar 2016). Learning from my students, I

have seen how drawing, creating images, making their own art enables people to reflect viscerally and visually about their emotions and feelings about what is happening in their lives. It encourages students to pay attention to their every day experiences and emotions, including those in the classroom as valid sources of knowledge, and to move away from the idea that 'others are the experts' and to recognize their own knowledge and experience about economies and environmental change as valid in thinking about responses to critical concerns around environmental crises, inequalities and injustice (Healy 2014). Art is a process of creative thinking that can encourage transformative processes. As one student speaking about community murals in Mexico described it: art can be seen as 'a source of energy and a value to produce new meanings, products and services that can transform a person's life and a community' (Moro 2016, 19). In this point of view, everyone is an artist (Beuys 1979, 9). Making art can be a tool to envision ways to deal with inequalities and injustice. I confess that I took a risk to embrace this methodology as someone who does not claim in any way to make art. However, I saw the pedagogical potential of making art to promote new ecological imaginaries that breakdown old knowledge hierarchies and open up possibilities to connect with others. Drawing together, imagining together, can help peoples' understanding of their place and engagement with human and nonhuman others. Art in this way is an engaged-teaching tool that helps to politicize everyday relations.

Collective making of art in the classroom can be seen, in itself, as a way of community building and a process of commoning. Collectively making art to depict economic and environmental relations helps teachers and students to understand how humanity is living and what needs to be changing (Grosz 2011). Making art can help, like technology or science, to understand how to share resources and how to connect with other humans and to other beings living on the earth. Or, as Escobar (2016) describes it: the worlding practice of thinking and feeling with the Earth as a 'we' emerges that is focused on being-in-common. Art as a pedagogical tool can help to reconstruct knowledge and form intersubjectivities (Vaughn 2005).⁵ As Francoise Lionnet stated: 'We have to articulate new visions of ourselves, new concepts that allow us to think *otherwise*, to bypass the ancient symmetries and dichotomies that have governed the ground and the very condition of possibility of thought, of "clarity," in all Western philosophy' (1989, 6).

3. Methodology

I have engaged in several types of teaching processes around the making of art: summer schools in Italy in the community based organisation Punti di Vista (Points of View): scheduled academic sessions that are part of an MA in develop-

⁵ Note that it is not the same process as that used in interventions in development and humanitarian aid as a participatory methodology to help people to express their fears, traumas, hopes (Kindon et al. 2007).

ment studies at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam (ISS); informal workshops on FPE and decolonising the classroom with MA and PhD students; and supervision of MA and PhD candidates who use the methodology of making art with communities in their research.

The article is based on an analysis of two sets of workshops held in Italy in 2011 at Punti di Vista, Bolsena, Italy and in the sessions of an MA class at ISS in 2015 where I have used the iceberg diagram in order to encourage students to envisage other ways of seeing the economy, in a collaborative and collective process of commoning. The iceberg diagram emerges from the work of the Community Economies Collective which has inspired people 'to rethink economy as a space of political possibility' (Dombroski et al. 2019, 111).6 The iceberg diagram features in the Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming our Communities (TBTE) (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013). TBTE makes accessible ways of 'being-in-common' as part of a process that fosters emergent commons. TBTE defines commoning as the ongoing production and reproduction of commons and as key to building community economies and for negotiating ways of surviving well with each other and with other species on this planet and reclaiming resources for communities (Gibson-Graham et al. 2015). TBTE gives many examples what are 'our biophysical, social, cultural and knowledge commons' (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, xv).

The data is based on my notes taken in 2011 and 2015. The workshops involved 30 students ranging from the age of 22 to 40, 16 women and 14 men. All were international students from outside of Europe. The first was part of a two-day workshop in Bolsena, the final event of an 8 week course on development studies which I taught at La Sapienza University. The students were from North and sub Saharan Africa, South and South East Asia and were on 6 month scholar-ships funded by the Italian Government. The second was a workshop held in 2015 over two sessions of a second term course at the ISS MA in development studies where students from around 55 countries are based in The Hague for 15 months. The students are either self-funded or have scholarships from their own countries or the Dutch Government. The students were from Latin America, South Asia and sub Saharan Africa. I wrote up a short report based on my notes which were shared with the students as part of a collective reflection of the process after the completion of the courses. The sessions were not part of the evaluation process of the courses.

In writing about the processes in which I also participate, the article contributes to vibrant literature of self-reflection among feminists that looks at the authors' own situated subjectivity as feminists working in different professional and academic institutions (Ferguson 2015; de Jong 2017; Harcourt 2017; Elmhirst 2018). The authors' positionality is reflected upon as part of feminist political and theoretical projects to acknowledge how tension that is generated between the-

⁶ See http://www.communityeconomies.org/index.php/publications. Accessed 20th August 2018.

ory versus practice (Lara et al. 2017). They discuss the positionality of the author as someone speaking from the inside out, and aim to analyze relations with others by addressing personal experiences, calling attention to the emotions, contestations and power differences in transformative practices where outsiders intervene in community lives. As Tschakert et al. state: 'It is important how we comprehend ourselves, our aspirations, vulnerabilities, and limitations; in short, whether or not "we have it in us" to participate in meaningful alliances and just partnerships, navigate the many dilemmas intrinsic to development practice' (2018, 192).

4. Community Economies Research Network (CERN) and Take Back the Economy (TBTE)

The idea of teaching art as a pedagogical tool to understand diverse economies comes principally from the Community Economies Research Network (CERN). CERN is a world-wide network of researchers centred around the work of J.K. Gibson-Graham that look at diverse modes of economic engagement in order to move beyond a capitolcentric theorizing of the economy. 7 CERN's approach decentres capitalism in economic theory and questions its position as the allencompassing master signifier by looking at the myriad of existing alternatives to capitalism that feature in our everyday lives (Gibson-Graham 2006; Gibson-Graham et al. 2013). These alternative economic activities sustain livelihoods in homes, communities and networked connections, co-exist and operate alongside capitalism. They are the core means by which social, material and emotional needs are met. CERN gathers together empirical examples of community economies from around the world in order to show how diverse economies interact within 'market and non-market transactions, multiple forms of labour and remuneration, and complex arrays of systems for owning and managing property' (Dombroski et al 2019, 101). Their research aims to set out how 'particular combinations of work, exchange, production, distribution, investment and ownership' enable 'communities to survive well (rather than just survive)' (Dombroski et al. 2019, 113, emphasis in original). As a network engaged in understanding relations among societies, genders, economies and environments, human and non-human relations, CERN uses art to enable ideas of diverse economies and commoning to travel across cultures and communities in ways that overlap with an FPE's political imaginaries, awareness of scale, intersectionality, emotions and everyday lives.

TBTE is designed as a tool kit that sets out exercises that encourage the emergence of communities which can 'take back' economic decisions and practices.

⁷ I met Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson (nom de plume of J.K. Gibson-Graham) in 2004 before I joined the academe in a project which I coordinated together with Arturo Escobar. Since then we met regularly in academic and community venues. I joined CERN, and CERN members regularly visit the Convent of Punti di Vista in Bolsena, Italy. I have also been involved with CERN in an Antipodes funded project to redraw the economy including a future session in the ISS MA course.

TBTE presents commoning as a process that negotiates ways to survive well 'as we face the dual challenges of climate-changing world and the powerful pull of privatization as the best means of managing our resources' (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, 138). The making of art in communities builds on creative possibilities that can potentially produce resilience, sustain life and recognize interdependencies with human and non-human others (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, 191).

The practical tools in TBTE enable communities to explore how economic justice, environmental sustainability and local community management can be connected to 'new worlds of possibilities' (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, 15). The most well-known tool is the iceberg diagram that helps communities to reframe their understanding of the economy. As explained in TBTE: in the drawing of the iceberg above the waterline are the economic activities that are regularly reported in capitalist economy. Below the waterline are the people, places and activities that contribute to well-being (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, 11). The Iceberg diagram allows communities interested in alternative social and economic relations to acknowledge economic diversity and to explore interrelationships that cannot be captured in mainstream analysis of market or financial workings. It has been redrawn by communities around the world as they rethink ways to redefine community economies (Healy 2014).8 CERN creates a transnationally connected community network that listens to diverse practices of commoning, as images based on the Iceberg travels across cultures and among communities as part of worlding practices (Escobar 2016).

5. A case study: creating an emergent commons through drawing/making art in the classroom

5.1. Learning to connect, listen and make art together

At the workshops in Bolsena and The Hague I began by sharing my own experiences as a scholar activist, describing my work prior to academe and in particular my engagement with CERN and with Punti di Vista. The workshop in Bolsena included a tour of the grounds and a short history of the place. At ISS, I used the TBTE website to introduce them to alternatives to mainstream economics and also videos on commoning activities taking from the website as well as films such as the Story of Stuff.⁹ We discussed alternative economic practices in Bolsena linked to permaculture, transition towns and slow food movements. Students were then invited to share what they thought of international and European based movements and their own experience and situation. We reflected together on the differences and the connections among places and the way the environment, the

⁸ For example, Katrin Böhm and Kuba Szreder founders of London based 'Company Drinks' and collaborators with CERN describe how art practices contribute to making alternative economies in a draft paper entitled: 'The Artistic Universe as Iceberg or How to Reclaim Economy' (email correspondence with the authors 17 December 2018).

⁹ See the 'Story of Stuff'. Available at: https://storyofstuff.org. Accessed 4th January 2019.

economy or community was seen, paying attention to the different emotions and dynamics.

One male student from Nigeria commented: 'Waste is not the same issue for us at home, it is not about recycling, we have to deal with the rubbish sent from Europe as well as our own' (Male student from Nigeria, Workshop 2). Another male student from Kenya mentioned: 'Food and class issues are not the same, it is the poor who eat at fast food here and the wealthy people buy eco foods, at home it is only the rich that can afford to go to McDonald's and the poor eat food grown at home'. (Male Student from Kenya, Workshop 1).

We then discussed how what we did together in the workshop might be able to impact the movements and issues they were interested in and what were the hopes students had for a future that was more ecologically aware. We put on the board some of those places, expressing frustrations and hopes. Students pointed out that there were not so many groups that were engaged in both environment and social justice (or human rights). Some were interested to learn more how to bring those issues together while in Europe, and how to connect what they are discussing here when they return. As one female student from South Africa stated: 'I am planning to work in the NGO section when I go home on human rights and I think environmental issues need to be better understood' (Female Student from South Africa, Workshop 2).

After discussing their hopes, expectations and frustrations, I introduced CERN and 'taking back the economy'. In both places I linked my introduction not only to the book but also to the people writing it. Katherine Gibson and others in the CERN collective regularly visit Bolsena and Kathy has been a guest lecturer at ISS. It was important to establish tangible connections with the people who wrote TBTE and the way the book was envisaged as a tool for communities to take back the economy not only in Australia (where many of the examples are taken) but in countries in Asia, Europe and the US. I explained that the workshop was a space for students to think how to take back their own economies and they were invited to design, reimagine, rethink and redraw the economy in ways that reflected their lives back home learning from the interactions with others in the class and also with the people to whom they will return after their studies.

In Bolsena, I handed out copies of the iceberg diagram and at ISS I put it on the classroom computer screen and students were asked to discuss it in groups. After an initial round of discussions of the original picture I handed out, or put on the computer screen other images which communities have done working with CERN—such as the coconut produced in a workshop in the Pacific. I then asked them to draw their own 'iceberg', creating the image they felt was most suitable for their context and with whom they would want to share it further. I provided them with paper and coloured pens. They were given around an hour and a half to consult and make the images (see below for a description of the images). ¹⁰ During

¹⁰ I have not been able to get permission from all the students to share the images they made so they cannot be included in the article.

the drawing/art making process I engaged with each of the groups and in some I was asked what I thought and was invited to contribute to the design of the pictures. The images were then shared with the rest of the class and the session concluded with plenary discussions about how they interpreted and felt about these new Iceberg diagrams on how economies, people and environments work in different places what was in common, and what were possible processes for change.

In the Bolsena workshop, the students were divided into two groups of five students each and were invited to use not only the pens and paper but also to collect material from the gardens (not picking from trees or bushes but what was on the ground). One group created collages of stones, leaves, berries, grasses and flowers to represent the different types of economies. The objects were placed on the paper in shapes that were depicted as the globe or world which showed the Global North and Global South economies which were divided with the Global South (represented by leaves, berries and flowers) economies supporting the Global North (represented by stones and waste materials). The other group looked at diverse economies in Rome (where they were staying). They depicted the different migrant communities in Rome and all the formal and mostly clandestine informal work supporting the elite of Rome (caring for elderly, doing the shopping, babysitting), the picture was drawn of the colosseum with the building of the colosseum representing the real work and the elite sitting in the air above eating and partying on the backs of the migrant labour.

At ISS there were four groups of five students who used the pens and paper—one group did a collage cutting out images printed from the internet (in the form of a Zine which I had mentioned was possible). Within the outline of a large skyscraper, they depicted the urban economy of a European city with entertainment, supermarkets representing consumer industries and industrial production and rich men in stock exchanges featuring above the line and below women caring for babies, people labouring in factories and communities doing street art below the line. Another group drew a rural village in Ghana and how agricultural communities work to support urban communities in Accra. Another depicted a melting iceberg and all the economic activities that were creating climate crisis above and showed small groups of environmental activists trying to push the dividing line away. The last group showed colourful animals and rural landscapes (nature) below the line grey supporting industrial urban landscapes and harassed looking (mostly white) people beneath the overall title of capitalocene which student explained best expresses how capitalism has led to today's global ecological violence (Moore 2014; Haraway 2016).

In the discussions a lot of emotion was expressed, some anger and sense of loss which merged into a debate about what communities could do. The images expressed a mixture of hope and worried concern. As the students commented, the exercise made them realise how economies were not just market activities but were many other things. One student mentioned: 'I never thought working in the home was part of economic activity but now I understand women's domestic work makes possible other types of work. I thought economics was just numbers' (Female

Student from Bangladesh Workshop 1 [Bangladesh]). The concern about migrants and their social and economic vulnerability was very present in the Bolsena workshop as the students had been doing research with migrants from their national (or ethnic and language based) communities in Rome. As one student commented: 'At home I am part of the middle class, in Rome people think I am poor and a beggar. When I see men from my country cleaning car windows at traffic lights in Rome, I feel ashamed'. (Male Student Bangladesh, Workshop 1). The images of human and non-human landscapes, rural and urban images of the ISS students reflected the types of debates that many of them in the MA were engaged in. 'At ISS I have faced an existential crisis—I came here to learn how to do development now I want to undo it'. (Male Student from Colombia, Workshop 2).

The two workshops illustrated for me how drawing/making of art enabled students to visualize and recognize how their everyday knowledge of their community interactions can challenge and change the apparently unchallengeable. Through engaged pedagogical practices the students were creating their own knowledge about worlding and possibilities for commoning as a process for building solidarity and connection across national boundaries. The sharing of the images, and their everyday lives enabled them to envisage ways to build change. Their discussions of their lives and knowledge, from different social perspectives, illustrated the feminist interest in how the personal becomes political also in the classroom. The conversations led to discussions of how to build a sense of hope and regeneration as they envisaged economic and ecological transitions beginning from their own sense of what matters in their communities and how to take up responsibility for the environment and social injustice. The interest and excitement the workshops generated helped both me as a facilitator and the students as those making art to recognise how drawing can help to describe, understand and reflect on economies and the environment. To be drawing, making art together was disrupted ideas about expertise and knowledge making and shifted power relations in the classroom. Their engagement showed just how education can be a 'practice of freedom' (Bagelman and Bagelman 2016).

5.2. Reflections on using art in creating cultural forms of commoning

Using art in teaching illustrates how an emergent commons in practice can be nurtured as a set of 'generative practices that support sustenance and enhancement of life' (Singh 2017, 753). In making art collectively, the process of teaching opened up the space to find new images and possibilities for producing art/products that can explicate ethical economic and ecological encounters. It involved both the process of understanding economic and ecological relations as well as the actual making of images and objects. In addition, it looked at how to connect and communicate the processes and objects in ways that could reach others beyond the classroom. There was the hopeful sense of expanding out from the classroom in a commoning as part of an exercise in worlding: 'to transform the terms by which we encounter others with whom we share common-life. Encountering

others – through shared artistic creation, through social learning and the exchange of ideas, through organising and enacting exchanges—is the means by which we might enact other worlds' (Gibson et al. 2018).¹¹

The sense of hope and possibility was key to workshops' approach to commoning, politically and ethically, conscious of relations of power on different scales. The workshops put in practice the idea to go beyond the sense of crisis, to look forward to possibilities for change through community engagement in commoning and diverse economies (Wichterich 2015). It moves aware from the 'repeated invocation of the hegemonic power of global capitalism' which serves only 'to reinforce and reinscribe that power' (Gibson-Graham 1996). The two workshops encouraged students to explore commoning practices as an emerging, dynamic process of possibility that can be continually negotiated as we rethink our ways of being human and belonging in the Anthropocene (Gibson-Graham and Roelvink 2010; Gibson-Graham 2011).

5.3. Transnational (un)ethical practices

Using art such as the iceberg diagram in the classroom shows how complex theoretical propositions of community economies can be translated into accessible ideas that encourage people to take the economy into their own hands so that 'life giving and life shaping ecological and economic dynamics' can be 'activated by ethical choices' (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, xxiii). As part of this commoning practice there is a strong desire to create possible worlds that respect diversity and listen to others (Roelvink et al. 2015).

In the ISS workshop there was an instruction discussion about the ethics of doing art in relation to creating a community or commons (Zebracki et al. 2010). This centred on the work of Dutch artist Renzo Martens¹² who claimed to make art that could materially transform the economy of a poor community in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He founded the Institute for Human Activities (IHA) in 2012 on a disused palm oil plantation in DRC with the aim to produce an artistic project that exposed economic inequality. A cooperative of 12 local former plantation workers under the guidance of Martens, produces art works which is exhibited overseas and the profits brought back to the cooperative. The former oil palm plantation workers produce chocolate sculptures that are moulded, 3D printed and then cast in chocolate donated by Callebaut and shown

¹¹ From the Proposal to the Antipodes Foundation prepared by Katherine Gibson, Stephen Healy and Jennifer Cameron (personal e-mail correspondence 31st July 2018).

¹² The art project that made his name was a documentary *Episode III: Enjoy Poverty* (2009) (Sinnige 2017). The documentary depicts Martens journeying through DRC trying to convince Congolese photographers to exploit their poverty as a resource. He is shown coaching them how to photograph the miserable conditions of Congolese people, including encouraging them to take photographs of dead bodies, raped women and starving children. The documentary and his subsequent art projects have given him world-wide recognition.

online and in contemporary art galleries in Europe and the US.¹³ The IHA in 2017 established a Centre called 'The White Cube' (named deliberately after modernist White Cube spaces of the international art world galleries) which is envisaged as an example through which plantations that '"underwrite" the [capitalist] art world will be reversed' (Hegert 2017). Martens describes his art as a post-plantation project that provides a new ecological and economic model that moves away from colonial plantation practices (Pangburn 2017). White Cube is currently developing a longer term post-plantation project with Commonland, 'an international Dutch based private enterprise run by European nationals that restores landscapes over generations.¹⁴ Questions were raised by students about how the claims of Martens in producing the White Cube working with DRC workers and a private company Commonland differs from the idea of commoning as presented by CERN?

Martens' process of making art as a material way to address poverty raises complex ethical questions. Marten's form of art is an international intervention in Congolese peoples' lives driven by contemporary art conversations about how art often fails to disclose that the problems they want to debate are inherently present in the pieces themselves (Jeffries 2014). The interventions are embedded in power relations that reinforce racialized Eurocentric colonized economic values. Martens' art where the embodied lives of the Congolese are the objects of the art work (the models for the chocolate heads) could be seen as reinforcing the same historical colonial processes that inform social, political and economic systems that create poverty in DRC and wealth in The Netherlands. The art work produced becomes of interest to western artists and consumers because it assuages guilt as it opens up space for Congolese former plantation workers to profit from profound colonial racial, class and cultural divides—making more money selling chocolate heads than working in the plantation. But, at the same time, the process uses the global market that oppresses them and in addition, Martens is acknowledged as the 'real' artist. The project raises concerns about extractive processes as an international intervention that does not pay attention to how power operates at the everyday level between Martens and the community and in what way the community can respond systemically to build economic and ecological change. During the discussion in the ISS classroom, we debated how this making of art contrasts with the process of CERN workshops which are built on years of engagement in co-productive processes that support a creative process of commoning. We looked at questions of power among Martens and the Congolese, and how did this project respond, if at all, to the current critical political situation in DRC? What kind of worlding did such a transnational 'commonland' produce? How different was it from market-based art world and in what ways was it able to tackle economic and social inequalities?

¹³ You can buy a chocolate head on-line for 40 Euro. Information available at: www.humanactivities. org/en/shop/. Accessed 22nd August 2018.

¹⁴ For more formation see: https://www.commonland.com/en/about-us. Accessed 22nd August 2018.

6. Commoning, community economies in dialogue with FPE

Making art as a process of creating commons responds to several FPE analytical interests in terms of scale, gender, intersectionality, emotions, power and subjectivities. 15 The students' engagement drawing their own iceberg are imaginatively linking the local to the global by connecting specific practices in rural and urban places, producing an emergent commons which fosters global connections and possibilities. In addition to this learning from a community economies perspective a gendered and racialised awareness illuminated by an FPE perspective was depicted in the images and discussions on care work, migrant work in Europe, the inequalities among North and South, along with the hopeful images of community groups of environmentalists pushing away the melting iceberg image. The discussions across different country experiences, and how it was to be a non-European student in a racist landscape. In The Netherlands students described the emotional shift from being part of an educated elite to migrant people of colour. In Rome being racialised in the streets was described as one of the most negative embodied experiences for the students as well as their concern at the conditions of families living in the migrant hostels.

How the intersection of colonial past and present class, race and gender are played out in transnational projects including transnational university projects is important from an FPE perspective given the different kinds of subjectivities and related performances (Lara et al. 2017; Wekker 2015). In the exercise of drawing their economies and discussing possibilities of collective change students were actively expressing their agency aware of different meanings of economies, communities and their own agency in being able to act. They were actively constituting themselves as political and knowing agents—with expectations that their actions back home could have the potential to bring about political and economic change. This sense of agency and sense of political engagement contrasts with the DRC project where the DRC members of the cooperative were the making themselves and their lives objects for sale in the European market. The dismay of the students from DRC about the idea of selling chocolate heads led to them questioning the claims of Martens to be cleverly challenging transnational economic art practices, but rather saw it as a graphic continuation of colonial racism.

From an FPE perspective, commoning in international spaces such as university classrooms offers possibilities to take up local and global responsibilities to others through affective relations with those around you. Integral to this sense of responsibility is to look at how power intersects as people consciously aim to create new commons that transform current economic and socio-natural relations attentive to gender, race and class (Nightingale and Ojha 2013). Commoning as the students clearly depicted in their images takes into intersectional diversity, class and gendered economic activities. In the discussion about Marten's useful art, as students noted, Marten had personal access to financial and other resources

¹⁵ See editorial this special issue.

and was gaining fame from 'his' projects, but there were little possibilities for coalitions and collective action such as commoning, solidarity and connections to others among the Congolese.

Working in the classroom with images made by students broke down disciplinary boundaries around how who is the expert and what it is we need to know about our environment and economy and culture in order to bring about change. It helped students to acknowledge emotions about deep injustices and also to explore what is possible. Commoning across different places and people who had shared ideas and experiences in an international classroom setting could produce different worldings, different forms of 'we' that can continue beyond the strictures of the university and bring their embodied knowledge and new forms of political imaginaries in future collective community learning processes. The workshops illustrated how making art collectively can be part of 'care-full' teaching. Drawing together in the workshops helped us to deal with our emotions, specifically our sense of helplessness in the face of the social and environmental changes we are experiencing, fearing and living through. It helped us to rethink our sense of boundaries between our individual selves, communities and the environment. Modernity teaches that our fears and emotions are experienced in the mind due to hormones or something rational and measurable (Taylor 2004). Our modern psychic concerns can be explained by rational explanations so we feel relieved and divorced from the physical or material thing (Bennett 2010; Healy 2014; Siltanen et al. 2015). Again, the workshop experiences and my teaching practices as a part of a community that is willing to look together at how the world is changing requires helps to form a collective 'we' that can take up our common responsibility for past, present and future socio-natural encounters (Escobar 1995). My reading of Martens' useful art is also a warning about transnational practices of commoning and how interventions need to be grounded in local communities' vision of their emotions, feelings and in respectful relations with others.

7. Conclusion

In this article I have brought into conversation FPE, community economies and commoning in a study of using art to build an emergent commoning process in the international classroom context. I have explored how international classrooms can be places for pleasure, hope and change. Making art in the classroom can be one way that commoning contributes to a reinvention of shared social practices that could lead to a greater sense of responsibility for the future of all life on the planet (Singh 2017). Using the iceberg diagram in the workshops in Bolsena and The Hague illustrates how it is possible to rethink economies, environments and connections through making art that helps students to reclaim their knowledge about economic and ecological relations. Students were able to find hopeful ways to understand their everyday economies and livelihoods in a process of emergent commoning in the classroom. Such engaged pedagogy helps students to question the core assumptions of the mainstream economic development discourse

and explore values which promote life-affirming principles (Madge et al. 2009; Tschakert et al. 2018; Harcourt 2019).

Commoning, in the way I have discussed it in the article, is the politics of hope through engagement with others who share commitment for change, learning how to envision and practice responsibility and engagement with human and non-human others. I continue to practice commoning as a worlding process, and to introduce a 'sense of wonder' into the classroom (Singh 2017) in order to take 'the boundaries that circumscribe academia down, and let the real world step in' (Harper 2017, 100). The classroom, with all its limitations, remains 'a location of possibility' which demands 'an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress' (hooks 1994, 207). Given the ongoing economic, political and ecological crises confronting humanity, an 'insurrectionary imagination' is key to allow personal and political values and feelings to inform the way 'we-in-the making' understand the world around us (Routledge and Driscoll Derickson 2015, 7; Collard et al. 2018).

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