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Postcolonial Directions in Education

Focus and Scope

Postcolonial Directions in Education is a peer reviewed open access journal produced twice a year. It is a scholarly journal intended to foster further understanding, advancement and reshaping of the field of postcolonial education. We welcome articles that contribute to advancing the field. As indicated in the Editorial for the inaugural issue, the purview of this journal is broad enough to encompass a variety of disciplinary approaches, including but not confined to the following: sociological, anthropological, historical and social psychological approaches. The areas embraced include anti-racist education, decolonizing education, critical multiculturalism, critical racism theory, direct colonial experiences in education and their legacies for present day educational structures and practice, educational experiences reflecting the culture and 'imagination' of empire, the impact of neoliberalism/globalisation/structural adjustment programmes on education, colonial curricula and subaltern alternatives, education and liberation movements, challenging hegemonic languages, the promotion of local literacies and linguistic diversity, neo-colonial education and identity construction, colonialism and the construction of patriarchy, canon and canonicity, Indigenous knowledges, supranational bodies and their educational frameworks, north-south and east-west relations in education, the politics of representation, unlearning colonial stereotypes, internal colonialism and education, cultural hybridity and learning in postcolonial contexts, education and the politics of dislocation, biographies / autobiographies reflecting the above themes, deconstruction of colonial narratives of civilization within educational contexts. Once again, the field cannot be exhausted.

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DOING SOUTHERN THEORY: TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE KNOWLEDGES AND KNOWLEDGE PRACTICES IN/FOR EDUCATION

SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

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KEYWORDS Southern theory, postcolonial, decolonial, alternative knowledge practices

Southern theory in and for education

Debates have been under way for some time over the very nature of 'foundational knowledge' in many social science disciplines. At the core of the debates lies the collapse of the universalist premises of disciplinary knowledge. Many scholars have exposed the highly provincial nature of what has been considered 'theory' and its exclusive process of knowledge production which centres largely on the institutions in the global North (Alatas, 2006a, 2013, Chen 2010; Connell, 2007, 2014, 2015; Mignolo, 2011; de Sousa Santos, 2014). For instance, modernity, the central concept in sociological theorizing, has long been conceptualized as a peculiarly Western social phenomenon, disconnected from its underside, coloniality (Bhambra, 2007; Go, 2013). These critiques have shown how the uneven flows of intellectual influence and the intellectual division of labour, which designates the West as the source of 'theories' and the Rest as 'data mine,' underpins the contemporary geopolitics of academic knowledge. Raewyn Connell's (2007) *Southern Theory: The global dynamics of knowledge in social science* from which this special issue has taken its cues, has both

initiated and emerged out of these ongoing critiques of the state of academic knowledge and its processes of production on a global scale.

Building on Connell's *Southern Theory* and others' decolonizing knowledge projects, this special issue aims to explore the implications of these alternative knowledge projects for education scholarship. Education, as one of the 'applied' or 'subordinate' disciplines in social science and humanities, is always attentive to the intellectual trends in more established disciplines such as philosophy, sociology and anthropology. And yet the emerging debate over *Southern Theory* in these disciplines, generated partly by Connell's (2007) work, has resulted in little impact so far on educational scholarship, although there are some exceptions (Hickling-Hudson 2009; Singh 2010, 2015; Zhang, Chan & Kenway. 2015). *Doing Southern Theory* contributes to reversing these trends by positioning Southern Theory at the centre of theoretical and methodological debates in education scholarship. More importantly it suggests positioning education at the forefront of Southern Theory work by acknowledging that Southern Theory is essentially a pedagogic project.

Indeed, the significance of this special issue lies partly in the fact that we view Southern Theory as a fundamentally pedagogic project. This is because Southern Theory requires us to take up a role as a 'teacher' in relation to fellow researchers both in and outside education. That is, it involves inviting others to take the risk of venturing into the unfamiliar intellectual world that sits outside the academic centres of the 'West' so as to broaden their epistemic horizons. Second, Southern Theory is pedagogic in that education scholars can play a leading role. The ironic consequence of the institutional vulnerability of education as an 'applied' field of study is that it has become more open to different intellectual work and pedagogic traditions outside the West. For instance, much of the scholarship on critical pedagogy in the English-using academia has drawn considerably from the rich intellectual tradition of popular education in South America (see Apple, Au & Gandin, 2010). The continuing scholarly attention given to non-formal education work in South America—including Cuban adult literacy campaigns (Boughton 2010; Hickling-Hudson, 2011) and the alternative educational movement of

Brazilian landless workers (Tarlau 2013) both of which are informed by Paulo Freire's writings—testifies the existence of long traditions of learning from the South in critical scholarship of education.

But it is not just within the radical tradition of education scholarship that learning from the South has long been practiced. Even quintessentially Western education thinkers have learned from non-Western philosophies and pedagogic traditions. For instance, the considerable intellectual influence that John Dewey received during his two-year visit to China, and which subsequently shaped his thinking (Wang, 2007), testifies to the long history of transcultural learning in Western education scholarship, though oftentimes the intellectual influence from 'elsewhere' is not explicitly acknowledged by such Western education thinkers. Perhaps the field of comparative and international education is an exception in this regard as many scholars explicitly use their knowledge of non-Western pedagogic traditions to broaden the discussion of teaching and learning in the West (e.g., Cave, 2007; Hayhoe, 2007; Lewis, 1994). By recognizing and building on this rich tradition of Southern Theory work in education scholarship, this special issue attempts to reposition the field of education at the forefront of this alternative epistemic project.

Hence, this special issue does not merely discuss moral, ethical and empirical imperatives for learning from the South. Rather, it aims to put Southern Theory to use—hence the idea of *doing* Southern Theory, in order to explore alternative research methodologies in and for education. But of course there have been some, if not many, attempts to do Southern theory in education scholarship. For instance, Michael Singh (2010, 2015) has developed an innovative knowledge exchange project at the University of Western Sydney, Australia where Chinese and Indian higher degree research students' knowledge of intellectual and pedagogic work is fully utilized as a source of education theory development. Likewise, a group of Asian education scholars at Monash University, Australia (Zhang, Chan & Kenway. 2015) have drawn upon Kuan-Shin Chen's (2010) *Asia as method: Towards deimperialization* to develop alternative, Asia-focused methodological approaches to education research. This new education scholarship, produced in Australia, has highlighted

both the possibilities and challenges of doing alternative knowledge practice in education research on the basis of the epistemic critique of Northern theory that Connell and others have initiated. The fact that researchers based in Australian institutions have been driving this southern theory work in education is significant to our special issue, which has been put together by a group of education researchers based in an Australian institution. This special issue embraces as a useful epistemic resource the contradictory location of Australia—aptly described by Connell (2007) as 'a rich periphery country' (see Takayama, 2016).

While *Doing Southern Theory* builds on such emerging scholarship on Southern theory in education produced in Australia, it also attempts to extend the existing discussion further. Our work begins with an explicit recognition that doing Southern Theory in and for education poses some questions for both education and southern theory. For example, we could ask: What does Southern Theory 'do' for education? What new ways are made thinkable about what education 'is' or what its purposes are? How might 'doing' Southern Theory in education change its practices and education research? How does Southern Theory change the possibilities for conceptualizing education? How does it change what education might become? Perhaps 'doing' Southern Theory might offer resources that help rearrange how educators (and education researchers) think about knowledge and the institutional and political practices that are involved in its production.

Additionally we might ask how would doing southern theory in, and for, education change Southern Theory itself? What does education 'do' for Southern Theory and how would the former influence the latter? To engage with these questions creates the need to think seriously about what education 'is,' or what it was 'before' its 'contact' with Southern Theory. Here we would make the point that education is not just that which is done in schools (or other education institutions), and maybe education is not done in these places at all. From this point of view Southern Theory might help us disarticulate education from the places in whose names it is done- by offering resources to work to undo the hierarchical orders in which knowledge is produced.

We suggest that education needs Southern Theory as much as the other way around. We need to be attentive to how doing Southern Theory can change what education 'is' and/ or what it is 'for' and how doing Southern Theory in education could potentially reshape the way in which we understand Southern theory. Answering any of these questions posed above can be disturbing and yet exhilarating as it could open up new ways of thinking. It is always incomplete, because the process of doing so is necessarily fraught with contradictions and tensions. To honestly come to terms with such challenges arising from doing Southern Theory in education in a particular institutional context of Australia universities is what we aim to achieve in this special issue and what might set it apart from the existing research literature.

The South

Central to *Doing Southern Theory* is the notion of the *South*. A number of scholars, many of whom, if not all, are based in the Global South, have used it to intervene in the global processes of the production and circulation of social science knowledge dominated by the select institutions of the global North (Alatas, 2006a; Connell, 2007; Mignolo, 2011, de Sousa Santos, 2014). In much of this discussion, the 'South' is articulated out of the critique of the complicit relationship between the historical evolution of social science as a discipline and the processes of Western imperialism and colonialism of the 'rest of the world.' Reflecting this critique, the term South is articulated to denote the regions of the world—south of the equator—that have histories of colonial oppression and anti-colonial, post-colonial and de-colonizing struggles. 'South' is a geographical as well as temporal marker for the regions of the world that continue to live with the consequences of colonial legacy in culture, subjectivity and knowledge.

But in this special issue we are particularly interested in the epistemic significance of the notion of the *South*. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014), the South symbolizes people's suffering vis-à-vis and struggles against capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy and imperialism and *the unique epistemologies that have emerged out of them*

(emphasis added). What we see in de Sousa Santos's assertion of *epistemologies of the South* then is the epistemic privileging of the South, akin to the epistemic privileging of women in the feminist standpoint theory (Harding, 2004). Here, the South is not just a geographical and temporal but, more importantly, an epistemic marker; the South is constituted as a source of unique knowledge in that it has emerged directly out of the experience of various forms of oppression, including colonialism and the struggles against them.

Furthermore, the South is a source of 'unique' knowledge in a slightly different sense. That is, the South is defined as an epistemic location that sits on the margin, if not entirely outside, of the global hegemony of Northern modernity. It symbolizes where the global spread of rationality and empiricism has reached and yet has been intensely contested or recontexualized to such an extent that it has failed to colonize knowledge production (de Sousa Santos, 2014). Hence, the South is positioned as a location where different knowledges continue to be produced and practiced enabling those in the North to understand the limits of Northern knowing. That is, it is a critical epistemic resource with which those in the North can unlearn its privilege of 'knowingness' (Hokari, 2011) or to remain epistemologically diffident (Appadurai, 2000). In this sense, the current turn to the South as a source of 'new' knowledge ('new' only to those in/of the North, of course) reflects the 'crisis' of Northern intellectual work increasingly recognized in the post-postmodern and post-positivist era (de Sousa Santos, 2014).

But there is something more to be said about the notion of the South. That is, it is an inherently relational, oppositional and hence political concept. It is a concept that relies strategically upon the artificial binary division of the world—the North and the South which are in and of themselves colonial constructs—in order to expose the uneven global power relations which perpetuate the existing inequalities both in material wealth and cultural and intellectual influence. It is a relational concept in that both North and South need each other in order for them to mean anything. The South is an inherently oppositional term in that it serves to generate an imagined sense of commonality among those who oppose the cultural and economic dominations of the powerful countries and globalised corporations of the

North. Indeed, the concept has generated considerable political momentum as witnessed in the success of World Social Forum meetings over the last decade, and now it is gaining momentum in intellectual domains. All of this is despite the fact that the dividing line between the global haves and have-nots does not neatly correspond to the equatorial line.

Hence, it is important to recognize that our use of the term *South* is strategic. We are using it as a heuristic device— a temporary, imaginary point of enunciating—that we recognize contains the seeds of its own possible destruction. It is self-destructive because, when unreflectively used, it dangerously erases internal relations of domination and subordination within the South and ignores the existence of the South within the North. The South-North binary upon which the term rests could also prevent us from exploring the global relational aspects of various forms of oppression that cut across the South-North binary (Go, 2013). These issues suggest that doing Southern Theory requires us to be highly vigilant about the kind of politics of knowledge we inevitably participate in with our assertion of a Southern perspective. Crucially, the tensions and paradoxes of doing Southern Theory have been underexplored in the existing literature about Southern Theory (Connell, 2007, Singh, 2010, 2015; see Takayama, 2016).

'Sources' of Southern Theory

In this special issue we follow Raewyn Connell's idea of four sources of Southern Theory: 1. Indigenous knowledge, 2. Alternative universalism, 3. Anti-colonial knowledge and 4. Southern critical engagement with Northern theories. These are in no way mutually exclusive, discrete or static categories. Rather, we see them as a set of heuristic devices that guide our thinking and overall direction of this special issue. They are particularly useful as they remind us of the distinctive epistemic contribution that the Southern Theory project aims to achieve, helping us differentiate our work from the usual critical scholarship in education that tends to rely heavily on Northern theoretical constructs and their particular articulations. While we use these four categories as an overall framework of the special issue under which five articles are

assembled in the follow pages, we also acknowledge that often times the articles often draw upon more than one source of Southern Theory.

According to UNESCO (2015) local indigenous knowledge refers to the understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings. For Indigenous peoples in many parts of the world, local knowledge informs decision-making about fundamental aspects of day-to-day life. This knowledge can be related to a cultural complex that encompasses language, systems of classification, resource use, social interactions, group rituals and spirituality. Many Indigenous scholars in education have explored these indigenous knowledges as a source of new insights with which to rethink current conceptualizations of teaching and learning in schools and research methodology (e.g., Martin, 2008; Smith, 1999).

But the notion of Indigenous knowledges has been appropriated not just to refer to Indigenous people's knowledge but also to the knowledges produced by non-Indigenous people. According to Syed Hussein Alatas (2006a), there is much indigenous knowledge 'hidden' in various parts of the globe. Intellectual work produced in South East Asia and the Middle East has been largely ignored by academics both in the West and the East because of the presumption of inferiority and irrelevance to the current Western-dominated model of academic knowledge development. In *The Myth of the Lazy Native*, Syed Hussein Alatas (1977) highlights how indigenous knowledge was treated by the colonial administrators, especially in Southeast Asia. It was considered as inferior and irrelevant, compared to the Western knowledge production by the colonial masters. Syed Farid Alatas's (2006a, 2006b, 2013) recent scholarship recognizes such 'indigenous' knowledges as a source of social theories, as seen in his extensive volume on influential Islamic scholar Ibn Khaldum's writings (Alatas, 2006b, 2013). In our special issue, Aaron Sigauke's article that explores contemporary implications of the indigenous Southern African concept of *Ubuntu,* and Vegneskumar Maniam's explication of implications of Islamic scholar Ibn Khaldun's work for education scholarship, fall into this category.

The second source of Southern Theory is alternative universalism. According to Connell (2015), alternative universalism in the context of Southern Theory refers to the systematized body of scriptural, philosophical, and historical knowledge developed over centuries outside the Judeo-Christian civilisational influence. For example, in the context of the Indian subcontinent, the local knowledge which was produced by scholars from Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism can be explored and debated far more widely as an alternative source of educational thoughts. The various sects or traditions of Hinduism, upheld by those following the way of life Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism, are also worthy of investigation, as are the two major teaching branches of Buddhism, the Theravada and Mahayana (Rahula, 1978). In the Middle East context, the knowledge produced by Muslim scholars, especially from the different Muslim sects such as Sunni, Shia, Sufi, Kharijiyyah, Ahmadiyyah and Mahdavia, have hardly been recognized as a legitimate source of knowledge in and for education, despite that each one of these sects has contributed significantly towards the development of Muslim scholarship including education (Rane, 2010). The religious knowledge of other minorities from the Middle East—for instance the Baha'i faith, Yezidism, Zoroastrianism, Samaritans and Druze—can also be explored systematically from an academic perspective (Maadad, 2009). Further study into all these different sources of Eastern religious knowledge would surely enrich the field of social science. From the education perspective, it would provide a source of alternative knowledge to compare with the Indio-Christian and Muscular-Christianity orientation of Western education which currently dominates so much of Western and Eastern education systems (Mangan, 1987). In this special issue, Siri Gamage's article that looks closely at the Sri Lankan Buddhist intellectual tradition illustrates the value of this approach, as does the aforementioned article by Maniam on Ibn Khaldun.

The next two sources of Southern Theory are closely interrelated and yet some noteworthy differences can be discerned for our heuristic purposes. The third source of Southern Theory is anti-colonial knowledge; the body of knowledge that has emerged directly from anti-colonial struggles. Many of the anti-colonial leaders/intellectuals from Africa and Asia—such as Amílcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon,

Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Memmi just to name a few—continue to influence contemporary critical social analyses today (see Chen, 2010). Some of these writings constituted the intellectual basis of what is later known as postcolonial theories, while anti-colonial politics of the earlier generation has been transformed due to the strong influence of post-structuralism in contemporary postcolonial thinking (e.g., Chibber, 2014; Dirlik, 1994). In fact, many social analysts continue to rely on these anti-colonial intellectual works to point to the partial nature of social theories developed primarily in the West which often left undertheorized the underside of Western modernity, 'coloniality of the rest' (Bhambra, 2007; see also Connell, 2007; Go, 2013). This line of analysis has been undertaken by Hickling-Hudson (2011) in education where she draws upon anti-colonial Southern Theories in disrupting received notions of education as conceptualized in the North. Paul Reader's article in this special issue, exploring the notion of place in learning, can be placed in the first (Indigenous knowledge) as well as in this camp, as it draws upon his experience of working with three generations of Antakerinja and Lower Southern Aranda men in the Lake Eyre Basin of South Australia and their insights into colonial dispossession and land enclosure.

The last source of Southern Theory Connell identifies is the knowledge generated out of Southern intellectuals' critical engagement with Northern theories. This group should include the aforementioned anti-colonial intellectuals given that all of them engaged substantially with the Western critical scholarship of their time. Perhaps, one of the most noted cases of this source of Southern Theory is the body of knowledge that has been developed in South Asia, the so called Subaltern Studies. Subaltern Studies began in the beginning of 1980s with an explicit aim of promoting the study and discussion of the subalternist themes in South Asian Studies. The principle aim was to rectify the elitist bias found in most of the academic works in South Asian Studies that ignored the experiences of those on the periphery of society. They also contested the Marxist School owing to the fact that mode of production-based narratives had the tendency to merge inevitably into a nationalist ideology of modernity and progress. Moreover, Subaltern Studies contributed to the development of neo-Marxist scholarship by identifying the limitation of Marxist work that fails to take

account of the ideologies of caste and religion as crucial factors in Indian Subcontinent Studies (see Ranajit Guha & Gayatri Spivak, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Amrita Biswas).

It is important to stress that this fourth source of Southern Theory is generated out of the practice of transnational knowledge 'transfer.' For instance, many diasporic intellectuals, including the aforementioned anticolonial and postcolonial thinkers, engaged in a form of knowledge transfer, the very process which necessarily involves a critical reassessment of Northern theories in order to make sense of the specificities of their local context. This appropriation of Northern theory could be done for the purpose of explicit political projects as pursued by anticolonial thinkers or for more pragmatic ends of national economic development as pursued by diasporic skilled expatriates. Much in the same way anti-colonial thinkers did, those diasporic expatriates engage in the process of knowledge localization through which some, if not all, begin to develop critical insights into the very presumption of 'universality' upon which much of Northern development theory is premised.

Doing Southern Theory

So what does 'doing Southern Theory' actually mean in practical terms? We propose that it entails any, or all, of the following:

1. Identifying and contesting the processes and mechanisms of academic knowledge production that sustain the uneven knowledge producing relationship both within and across nation-states,
2. Bearing witness to the consequences of the epistemic indifference of the global North,
3. Serving as a 'curator' or a 'translator' of neglected intellectual work produced in/of the South so that those discredited/disenfranchised knowledges are re-acknowledged and resuscitated; and
4. Mobilizing Southern experiences and knowledges as legitimate intellectual resources to illuminate the provinciality and parochiality of Northern knowledge.

Doing Southern Theory, hence, is inherently dangerous for the following reasons. Firstly, its explicit aim is to challenge the existing structure of knowledge production and dissemination and various institutional mechanisms that sustain it (publishing, peer review, promotion, grant, research, postgraduate supervision and teaching etc). Doing so could potentially mean that one would have to question the very legitimacy of the institutional hierarchies and mechanisms that underpin much of what we academics/researchers do. This could have dire consequences for one's professional life and career prospects etc.

Secondly, it necessarily involves navigating the minefield of politics of knowledge that pertain both within and across nation states and beyond. It forces us to acknowledge the essentially political nature of our knowledge and knowledge practice and hence to remain vigilant about the consequences, including unintended ones, of what we choose to produce (or not to produce, by implication) and how we produce it. It could potentially make our conventional intellectual work very difficult, if not impossible.

Thirdly, it is 'dangerous' to the established field or discipline, because doing Southern Theory could require us to seek alternative epistemologies that sit on the very margin of disciplinary knowledge work. It is an attempt to seek, validate and resuscitate knowledges (and knowledge-producing practices) that have been marginalized in defiance of an underpinning Northern ways of knowing.

Doing Southern Theory at a Reginal University in Australia

One of the problems of metropolitan theory—a body of knowledge typically produced in the powerful institutions of the global North—is its automatic elevation to the status of 'universality.' That is, those who produce 'theories' in the global North often ignore the temporal, geographical and cultural specificities of the knowledge they produce and problematically apply it to the 'rest of the world' (Hall, 1992). Indeed, what we know as 'theory' in social science in general is actually 'ethno-theory' (Connell, 2007) in that it is a particular kind of knowledge that has emerged out of a particular condition and hence meaningful to a specific group

of people under a given historical circumstance. Though we do not wish to take the essentialist view of knowledge and the context of its production that presumes that the relevance of knowledge is strictly contained within a given space and time of its production, we also believe that the knowledge we produce needs to be explicitly located in order for us to stay vigilant about the implicit universalist claim to which knowledge work, including this special issue itself, might subscribe.

This special issue challenges the artificial disconnection of knowledge from the very context and process of its production, and we believe that this is part of what *Doing Southern Theory* must entail. So what are the contexts and the processes out of which this special issue has emerged and how have they shaped its intellectual direction? Answering these questions necessitates some analyses of the particular institutional context within which those of us who contributed to this special issue operate today and how we have positioned our special issue in relation to it.

Neoliberal logics have fully infiltrated into the day-to-day operation of universities in advanced industrial countries. Activities previously cherished (i.e. deep thinking and reading, rigorous debate, reflection and meaningful research) in the scholarly world have been replaced with consumer-oriented, corporatization and marketization models. As such "public interest intellectuals" are [being] replaced with "commercially oriented professionals" (Lynch, 2006, p.2). This shift over the last two decades or so is evident in many Australian universities today, including institutions which employ all the contributors to this special issue.

We are surrounded by a plethora of performance metrics not only measuring but also driving particular kinds of research 'productivity.' So much so that quantity and speed now dominate the criteria against which the value of our scholarship is determined. On top of this, the success of our professional career now depends not just on how well we as individual researchers perform on the basis of these metrics, but also on how our institutions are ranked based on our collective research 'outputs.' The intense pressure created as a result of these measures has resulted in a pervasive sense of fear and anxiety in academia. This has the potential to render our intellectual work less meaningful, not just to ourselves

but to the world outside academia. The competitive pressure has also atomized academics, forcing us to act as possessive and competing entrepreneurs driven more by self-promotion than collaboration and collegiality.

This institutional context has immense implications not just for the way we produce knowledge but also to what kind of knowledge we produce. This is because the majority of internationally recognized, 'high-impact' academic journals in which we have been pressured to publish our intellectual work, are based in a handful of academic power house nations, namely USA, UK and some select Western European countries (Connell, 2014). These journals' editorial boards are virtually monopolized by those who are affiliated with metropolitan institutions, the source of 'theories,' though there have been some modest attempts to diversify the regional and cultural origins of editors and board members. The universality of Northern theories are carefully protected in such journals, as 'dangerous' knowledges are often excluded through the peer review process (Singh & Han, 2010). Hence, unless challenged, this new knowledge economy could seriously undermine the kind of alternative knowledge and knowledge practice initiated by Southern Theory.

This special issue is underpinned by our collective critique of the very institutional context described above. All the contributors, including the guest editors, currently work or have worked at the School of Education University of New England (UNE), one of the oldest regional universities located in a semi-rural town of Armidale, Australia. UNE, just like many other regional universities in Australia, has been marginalized in the emerging two tier university system where the government research funding concentrates increasingly in the so called 'Group of Eight' (G8), research-intense universities all located in metropolitan cities such as Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth, Melbourne and Sydney. The school was ranked Level 2 (5 is the highest)—'below the world standard'—by the Australian Research Council's 2012 Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA). Since then our school has recognized this poor rating as "having direct implications for funding for higher Degree Research Scholarships, particularly for the international cohort, and attracting competitive external grant income" and thus set it as a goal to achieve an ERA rating of 3 or above by 2018 (UNE School of Education,

2015, p. 14). This has resulted in termination of funding support for academic activities that bear zero value in the current ERA system (e.g., conference presentations and papers) and more push towards 'high impact' research outputs.

It was as part of this effort that the school introduced a new research structure at the end of 2013. It identified 10 (later reduced to 8) strategic research areas in our school that are "reflective of the major strengths in research performance, grant successes and Higher Degree Research student numbers..." (UNE School of Education, 2015, p. 9). Subsequently 10 research network leaders were identified around whom academic staff were encouraged to form networks and through which all internal research funding was to be distributed. This was our school's effort to closely align individual research with the school's and university's strategic priorities. All the guest editors and contributors to this special issue belong to one of the research networks, Comparative and International Education Research Network (CIERN), which one of the authors (Keita) leads.

Instead of aligning ourselves with the competitive and individualistic ethos out of which research networks were created in the first instance, we have turned the space created by the ERA-driven initiative into something that critiques it and engages us in alternative knowledge-producing practices and relationships. Since February 2014, we have pursued a series of discussions over what kind of knowledge-producing relationship we should aim for and what collective knowledge project we are to pursue. It was on the basis of this discussion that we identified Raewyn Connell's *Southern Theory* as a starting point of our collective discussion and writing project. Throughout the first half of 2014 we read *Southern Theory* chapter by chapter, workshopped each other's abstracts and then drafted papers, organized a panel at the Australia and New Zealand Comparative and International Education annual meeting in November 2014 and then hosted Professor Connell for a two day workshop in March 2015 where our manuscripts were further developed.

Most notably, our approach to this collective writing project began with the recognition of our differences over which each of us needed to negotiate. Our research network CIERN houses 11 active members who are immensely different

in research interest, theoretical, philosophical and methodological orientations and specialization in the discipline of education. We are also extremely diverse in terms of national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, with many of us born or trained overseas and bringing diverse life histories from around the world. For instance, Aaron Sigauke, born and schooled in Zimbabwe and trained in Scotland, is a social science curriculum specialist interested in citizenship education, Siri Gamage, born and bred in Sri Lanka, is an education sociologist trained in Hawaii and Melbourne with a focus on multicultural/anti-racist education, Rose Amazan, born in a Haitian immigrant family in the USA and educated in New York and Sydney, specializes in gender and development with a particular focus on diaspora knowledge and gender in Africa, Vegneskumar Maniam, born and bred in Malaysia and trained in Adelaide, has keen interest in Florian Znaniecki's humanist sociology, Keita Takayama, raised in Tokyo Japan and trained in North America, does Southern theory work from a postcolonial perspective, Stephen Heimans, raised in Cairns and a son of a Dutch immigrant father and a Australian mother, draws intellectual inspiration from post-humanist thinkers, and Paul Reader is an art-based community educator who migrated from England. Working with these enormous cultural, biographical and disciplinary differences can be exciting but also enormously challenging. It required us to spend many hours first of all trying to understand where each of us had come from and figuring out how our different interests and expertise could fit together coherently as a scholarly volume.

The challenges we faced as a group were further amplified by the current institutional context where speed and the drive for quantifiable outputs are constant pressures. But we have explicitly recognized our difference as a valuable resource for our knowledge work and agreed to accept the challenges associated with it. In so doing, we have tried to push back against the current institutional practice that privileges competition, efficiency and quantitative productivity and deliberately used slowness as "a catalyst for conducting inter-disciplinary conversations and critical research that may disrupt, lead us to think deeply and critically" (O'Neill, 2014, p.16).

The idea of putting together this special issue around doing Southern Theory was not at all planned from the beginning but rather slowly evolved, in the early part of 2014, out of a series of fortnightly meetings where we read Connell's *Southern Theory* and other cognate literature. Throughout the course of our collective work, we have explored an alternative disposition towards academic life; a change in the rhythm and pace in which academic work and the cultural practices around research and knowledge production are usually carried out. We stick to this approach as much as we could, though some were less comfortable with this approach and some left our group partly because of this 'slowness.'

Indeed, being able to slow down is a form of privilege in the institutional context typical of Australian universities today. As Martell (2014) rightly points out, "slow is not a choice or something that is in isolation from underlying structures and pressures" (p.8). Indeed, unthought out attempts to slow down can have regressive consequences, "because it excludes those that can't afford it" (Martell, 2014, p .13). We certainly do not underestimate the powerful institutional constraints that are placed upon us, nor do we ignore the fact that some of us, especially early career researchers who are still on 'probation' (Amazan, Heimans and Maniam) and casualised academic staff (Thomas and Reader), are much more susceptible to the kind of institutional pressure characterized as 'publish or perish' than those whose institutional standings have been 'confirmed.' Treanor is correct when he states in his *Manifesto for a Slow University* (2007) "that speed is in part an institutional demand, in which individuals will suffer consequences for their employment and careers if they do not comply" (cited in Martell, 2014, p.8). Hence, the consequences of trying to engage in meaningful and yet time-consuming knowledge-producing practices and relationships needed to be carefully thought out, with particular attention to the wellbeing of those who were most vulnerable in our group. This certainly created a set of tensions and contradictions that we had to work through as a group. In addition, we had to deal with various tensions that were typical of such collective work. In particular, power inequalities in terms of gender, 'race,' language and academic status have emerged from time to time, forcing us to be constantly vigilant about the implicit ways in which they could undercut the democratic culture of the network.

Despite, or perhaps due to, these achievements none of which count towards the research output metrics designed by ERA, CIERN is under pressure at the time of this writing when the newly proposed research network structure of the school suggests merging of four existing research networks, including CIERN, into one to achieve more focused research activities in our school. More focused investment into five, as opposed to eight, research networks was supposed to enhance the school's overall research output, while allowing the school to better align its research priorities with the strategic interests of the university. This special issue you are about to read was being compiled in the midst of our ongoing struggle to protect our collective knowledge work in the context of increasing neoliberalization of university where decisions made at the university's executive level are to dictate what we are to research, and where Heads of School are more keen to account themselves for auditors and accountants than to their colleagues and students (Davies & Petersen, 2005).

All these contexts and processes of knowledge production thus far discussed suggest that our approach to this special issue contrasts with the 'business as usual' in academia around compiling such a journal special issue. Normally, special issue guest editors decide upon the theme of the special issue in consultation with the journal editors and then identify and invite researchers that they know can make the kind of contribution that the editors see as suitable for that theme. In this approach the overall narrative of the special issue is, by and large, predetermined by the guest editors. There is little negotiation between the guest editors and contributors over the focus and direction of the special issue. Rejecting this conventional approach, we saw in the process of putting together this special issue something beyond its tangible output. To us, this special issue is not an end goal in and of itself; rather it is a part of the long process of putting Southern Theory in action through which we come to rethink how we relate to each other and how the relationship conditions the knowledge we produce. It was a way of nurturing trust and collegiality among us in the network so that our knowledge-producing relationship would become further strengthened. As a direct or indirect result of this, many more intellectual projects could spring out of collaboration. This special issue, therefore, embodies the kind of alternative knowledge-producing practices and

relationships that we see at the heart of doing Southern Theory in and for education.

Overview of the articles in the special issue

This special issue contains five articles that have been written by members of our research network. As we have said above, these articles have emerged out of our combined efforts at grappling collectively with Southern Theory and education. As such the editorial process we have undertaken has been collaborative (although not usually without a deal of debate), and we hope will be productive- in an intellectual, not instrumental sense that is! The articles included here are very diverse in their foci and contexts and we hope that they may stimulate thought and offer resources for, and examples of, doing Southern Theory in Education.

In order to put Southern Theory into action, all the contributors to this special issue have either drawn on the intellectual work generated in the places of their 'origins' (Gamage in Sri Lanka and Sigauke in Zimbabwe) and by intellectuals whose background has little to do with the author (Maniam's article) or built on the critical insights provided by 'others' who are marginalized from the process of academic knowledge production and whom they were fortunate enough to come to know intimately either through PhD dissertation work (Thomas) or other professional experience (Reader). Each of the contributors has made concerted effort to move beyond the Western episteme and explore knowledges and perspectives generated in the 'rest of the world' so that other education researchers can follow suit.

The first article, written by Aaron Sigauke, is *Ubuntu/hunhu in post-colonial education policies in Southern Africa: A response to Connell's Southern Theory and the role of indigenous African knowledge(s) in the social sciences.* As suggested by the title, the article responds to Connell's 'Southern Theory* (2007) where she demonstrates how African indigenous knowledge can be a useful component of 'Southern Theory' in understanding social life. His article focuses particularly on the Zimbabwean curriculum that was put in place at independence as part of the reform process- and meant to strengthen the country's new socialist ideology. The curriculum included aspects of what Connell (2007) has

presented in her book as the 'traditional African indigenous knowledge' that had been side-lined during the colonial period and is now meant to challenge that position from a southern perspective. Aaron situates his analysis of curricular policy in his own personal experience as an indigenous person of Zimbabwe who went through the education systems both during and after the colonial period. That experience has led him to ask the question: How have post-colonial governments implemented aspects of Southern Theory and how serious and genuine have their attempts been?

The second article by Paul Reader is *Knowing our place: Decentring the Metropole through place identity in the Lake Eyre Basin.* Grounded in Paul's experience of working intimately with Antakerinja and Lower Southern Aranda men in the Lake Eyre Basin of South Australia, he explores dimensions of culture, learning, power, and land enclosure raised by Connell in the chapter called 'Silence of the Lands' (2007). The argument rests on the idea that all of us have antecedents in the savannah or open woodlands where human agency once maintained a balance between primordial forest and desertification. Likewise, many of us have rural forbearers who experienced land enclosure in one form or another. Paul writes from both his personal heritage of rural English artisans and their conversion into the English working class, and the meeting of the Lower Southern Aranda Men in the 1980s. The article reveals, through a *Southern* perspective and derived from contact with three generations of Central Australians, a resilience in the face of unacknowledged land enclosure. Paul hopes that the reader can share in the tensions, the loss and grief that becoming knowledgeable of the intersections between selective colonial scientism, deeper spiritual understandings and awakenings of ecological connection, brings. In a world where most humans are now corralled in the conurbations of a global *metropole*, the article raises questions about *Northern* knowledge/ignorance systems and priorities in opposition to the *Southern* episteme that may help support alternative dimensions and explanations of life and human actions.

The third article by Siri Gamage is *A Buddhist Approach to Knowledge Construction and Education in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) in the Context of Colonisation and Southern Theory.* In this article Siri looks at Sri Lanka's Buddhist intellectual tradition

and its contribution to knowledge construction in the face of expanding and resourceful colonial language and education. The article highlights the extent to which societies like Sri Lanka had their own, long standing intellectual traditions and knowledge production methods as well as concepts, theories, approaches and formulations that enabled the consideration of human existence, its change, and various dimensions of self and society. More specifically, based on the writings of one such intellectual, David Kalupahana, the paper firstly highlights key elements and concepts of the Buddhist intellectual tradition such as sensory data and perception process, dependent arising and theory of causation, concept of non-substantiality (*anitta),* ego consciousness and prejudices, conception of society and moral life based on Buddhist ethics and values. Secondly, Siri elaborates on the nature of an alternative, contemplative education based on non-attachment and self-awakening in place of the currently dominant rational-empirical education that perpetuates self-centeredness and constructed identities. This alternative education, argues Siri, is based not only on knowledge and skills but also on attitudes and values suitable for a sustainable future of the humanity. In sum, Siri's paper demonstrates how intellectuals in the global periphery subjected to colonial domination and education based on a modernist paradigm can circumvent the obstacles and pressures emanating from such dominance to formulate different world views, foundational scholarship and education while being critical of the dominant paradigms of thought simultaneously.

The fourth article by Vegneskumar Maniam is *An Islamic Voice for Openness and Human Development in Education: The Relevance of Ibn Khaldun's Ideas to Australian Teacher Education Programs Today.* Connell (2007) in her discussion of Southern social science theories considers Ibn Khaldun's contribution to the understanding of civilisation and sociology as so rich and important that it is still relevant today. This paper builds on Connell's introduction to Ibn Khaldun's work by first reviewing his ideas of education in the *Muqaddimah* and then investigating the extent of their contemporary relevance, for example, in teacher education programs today in Australia's multicultural society. Ibn Khaldun was a Muslim scholar born in what is now called Tunisia, North Africa, in 1332. His writings, which

encompassed history, philosophy of history, sociology, education and pedagogy, are best exemplified in his greatest work, the *Muqaddimah,* written as an introduction and commentary on his universal history. Ibn Khaldun provided a long and detailed discussion of the concept of education and pedagogy in Chapter Six of the *Muqaddimah.* In this chapter, he offered his views on teaching and learning issues which have their counterparts in today's classrooms. After reviewing his key ideas around education, Vegneskumar looks at the nature of curriculum in current teacher education programs in Australia and proposes the inclusion of Ibn Khaldun's ideas as a way to develop a more inclusive teacher education vis-à-vis Islamic communities in Australia.   Our last article, *Challenging understandings of adult learning with Southern Theory: Recognising everyday learning through a critical engagement with Northern theories* by Eryn Thomas attempts to practice Southern Theory through a critical engagement with Northern theories around learning, adult learning, adult education and related fields. Despite the strong influence of the South American tradition of adult literacy education, the field of adult education, increasing redefined as 'adult training and development,' is dominated and shaped by Northern based adult learning and related theories that in her view privilege formal learning over other forms of learning. Revisiting her own PhD research project on everyday learning now with the Southern Theory lens, Eryn attempts to provincialize the key aspects of a selection of relevant Northern theories about adult learning. Through this critical engagement, she develops a 'patch-worked' theoretical framework that is more capable of recognising and responding to the localised everyday learning and knowledge from the research participant's lives. She concludes that such critical engagements with Northern theories are required to highlight their implicit localisations and challenge their reifying tendencies.

We hope that you enjoy the special issue and that the ideas presented herein will stimulate your desire, and enhance your alibility, to do Southern Theory work of your own in education.

Acknowledgement

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UBUNTU/HUNHU[1] IN POST-COLONIAL EDUCATION POLICIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: A RESPONSE TO CONNELL'S SOUTHERN THEORY AND THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN KNOWLEDGES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

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ABSTRACT In chapter 5 of her book Southern Theory: The global dynamics of knowledge in social science Connell (2007) demonstrates how African indigenous knowledge can be a useful component of 'Southern Theory', an alternative to Northern Theory, in understanding social life. In addition to the cases that Connell cites, a number of African states in their post-colonial era have attempted to incorporate indigenous knowledge(s) from their societies as part of educational policy reforms to counter what has been regarded as colonial pro-western ideologies. In Southern African states 'Ubuntu/hunhu' (literally meaning 'being human') became a central philosophy for education in society. This paper traces this notion of Ubuntu/hunhu as it has appeared in Zimbabwean curriculum reform from the time of political independence in 1980 when the notion was invoked to strengthen the country's new socialist ideology. In so doing, it takes a self-reflective approach to the discussion of Ubuntu/hunhu. As an indigenous person of Zimbabwe who went through the education systems both during and after the colonial period, this topic is of considerable personal significance to me. Discussing the topic based on my experience invalidates the usually scholarly discussion where the researcher aims for emotional 'detachment'. Ubuntu/hunhu is a philosophy that shaped who I was as a child in Zimbabwe and continues to underpin how I see myself in Australia, the country of my current residence. Weaving my personal

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[1] **Ubuntu** is a Zulu and Ndebele native language word while **hunhu** is my native Shona language word. They both mean the same thing. If you travelled to South Africa and the Ndebele region of Zimbabwe you would use **Ubuntu**; in the Shona region of Zimbabwe where I come from you would use **hunhu.**

narratives of village socialisation and formal western schooling throughout the discussion, I explore the following questions: How successful have post-colonial governments been in implementing aspects of Southern Theory; and can we do without Northern Theory, especially in this age of globalisation?

Introduction

Raewyn Connell's (2007) *Southern Theory* calls upon us to seek knowledge produced outside the Northern metropolis as an important intellectual resource. Her call challenges the 'business as usual' in social science where the South serves as a 'dare mine' for theoretical development and refinement which take place primarily in the Northern metropolis. Positioning '*Southern Theory*' as an alternative to '*Northern Theory*' (see also Hickling-Hudson in Coloma 2009, p.365 – 375), Connell identifies four sources of *Southern Theory*: 1) Indigenous knowledge, 2) Alternative universalism, 3) Anti-colonial knowledge and 4) Southern critical engagement with Northern Theory (see Introduction to this Special Issue).

This paper explores the notion of *Ubuntu/hunhu* as a case of Indigenous knowledge, that is, 'the understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings' (UNESCO 2015; see Introduction); important for indigenous people in decision-making processes and interactions in their day-to-day lives. Indeed, in Southern Africa post-colonial governments have attempted to reform education policies with a view towards including African indigenous knowledges or philosophies considered relevant to their societies in contrast to colonial policies viewed as hegemonic and oppressive. For example, as transitional markers of change, Tanzania promoted *Ujamaa* (self-reliance) or African socialism (Ibhawoh & Dibua, 2003); Zambia had humanism (Oliver, 1981) and Zimbabwe promoted scientific socialism (Shizha & Kariwo, 2011). However, arguably some of these are still regarded as foreign ideological labels not sufficiently indigenous to these societies. In addition, these and other post-colonial governments in the region (South Africa and Mozambique, for example) attempted, in one way or other, to model social

reforms on the basis of the philosophy of *Ubuntu/hunhu,* an African Bantu philosophy regarded as being capable of meeting both the individual's and community needs locally and beyond.

Ubuntu/hunhu philosophy has long been discussed among academics and other writers in the Southern African region. Some writers on post-colonial policy reforms in Southern Africa, for example Hapanyengwi & Makuvaza (2014); Mungwini (2013); van Binsbergen (2002); and Pearce (1990), believe that *Ubuntu/hunhu* is one of the most relevant philosophies for African societies in general and that this should be central in post-colonial policy reforms in education. Drawing on and extending such African literature further, this paper recognises *Ubuntu/hunhu* as a rich intellectual resource not just for African societies but with possible global relevance. In so doing, it aims to challenge the knowledge hierarchy that Connell (2007) and Syed Al-Alatas (2010) problematise; in many colonised states colonial powers and academics have considered indigenous knowledge inferior and irrelevant to western knowledge production.

To someone who has grown up with the philosophy of *Ubuntu/hunhu* in my childhood and much of my adult socialisation in Zimbabwe, this topic is very close to my heart. For me, a discussion of this Southern African philosophy cannot be pursued without invoking memories of the times when I was a child and a teacher in a village where *Ubuntu/hunhu* permeated my personal and professional life. Hence, I have chosen to take a self-reflexive approach to the subsequent discussion and analysis. I will weave my recollections before, during and beyond my days of Western schooling into the subsequent discussion and analysis of *Ubuntu/hunhu* in Zimbabwe. Standing back and reflecting now from this distance in time and place would enable me to critically examine some experiences I rarely questioned because I was then immersed in the situation (Denscombe, 2002, p.170). Reflexivity is a process that allows me to "look beneath the surface of events, analyse, evaluate, inform and draw conclusions" (Reid, 1993, p.305).

My discussion makes a series of moves briefly outlined here. Firstly, I will start with the discussion of my personal experiences in Zimbabwe where *Ubuntu/hunhu* was deeply ingrained in my village life. Through this personal account,

coupled with scholarly literature, I will develop the conception of *Ubuntu/hunhu,* or what it means to be 'human or being human', from an African indigenous point of view. Then I will move on to review the debate about Indigenous knowledge within which my subsequent articulation of *Ubuntu/hunhu* as a Southern African indigenous philosophy will be situated. These preliminary discussions serve to contextualise the subsequent analysis of the attempts by the post-colonial Zimbabwe government at incorporating *Ubuntu/hunhu* in education reforms. Based on suggestions from various writers, and in spite of the apparent policy failures and inherent limitations of *Ubuntu/hunhu,* I will still call for the need to incorporate important implications of *Ubuntu/hunhu* in the education system of Zimbabwe. In the last two sections, I will reflect upon the position of *Ubuntu/hunhu* in a globalised knowledge society, while debating whether or not *Ubuntu/hunhu* can offer educational promises beyond its indigenous context of Southern Africa.

Before proceeding however, it is important to recognise the kind of politics of knowledge that my discussion participates in, the contradictory politics of knowledge associated with doing Southern Theory. Here, George Sefa Dei's (2011) view on African knowledge is pertinent: "Africa is a community of difference consisting of diverse cultures, traditions, religions and languages" (p.2). Dei cautions us about the danger of generalisations when talking about African indigenous knowledge. Indeed, the identification of a particular indigenous concept out of many as 'the' African indigenous philosophy can become a hegemonic project. *Ubuntu/hunhu* can be appropriated to erase the internal struggles within, or to reinforce the existing unequal power relations based on gender, 'race' and language within the region or in a given African country.

It could be appropriated to erase the existence of multiple, and often contested, intellectual traditions and worldviews, including those developed by the marginalized groups. While being reflexive of this homogenizing tendency of a pan-African philosophy, my intent in this paper is to save the notion of *Ubuntu/hunhu* from its highly politicized history of appropriation and reclaim it for explicit educational and political ends. I argue that it is a concept that can serve pedagogic purposes for the Global North (Atlantic North),

while at the same time helping to achieve justifiable social ends in Southern Africa and beyond.

The term 'post-colonial' comes up several times in this discussion. Subedi & Daza (2008) have noted the many interpretations sometimes associated with this term. They add, "...the term post-colonial...has generated much misunderstanding and confusion...it is a contested term associated with premature end of colonialism, a salutary reminder of the persistent neo-colonial relations" (p.1) (see also Rizvi in Coloma, 2009; Lavia & Mahlomaholo, 2012). While acknowledging this wider debate over the term, in this discussion I will use post-colonial purely in its historical sense as a geo-political concept describing countries that did away with colonialism to move to an 'after' (post) colonial position.

My experiences and conception of *Ubuntu/hunhu*

Ubuntu/hunhu in Rhodesia: A brief socio-economic and political background

Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia where I was born, grew up and attended school, was a British colony from 1896 until independence in 1980, with a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) break from 1965 to 1979 when Britain refused to recognize white minority rule in the country. It is during this UDI period that the country's land was divided into Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) or Native Reserves for indigenous Africans on one hand, and European areas for settlers on the other. The former, where indigenous people were crowded, were agriculturally unproductive because of arid soils and an inhospitable climate compared to the latter.

This information is important for the discussion of *Ubuntu/hunhu* because these conditions tended to reinforce a sense of unity among indigenous people of different tribes; a unity resulting from a shared social, cultural and physical togetherness in an environment of racial and socio-economic discrimination. Even at the peak of the independence struggle when villagers were forced into barbed wire fenced "protected villages" (Moorcraft & McLaughlin, 2008) indigenous Africans continued to worry about *Ubuntu/hunhu* for their children and taught each other, the old and young, what it meant to be 'human' (*Ubuntu/hunhu*) within and beyond their communities. This is perhaps why Kay (1970) had this to say:

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...by comparison with western society members of the African society are closely bound into a network of groups by bonds of kinship, by affinal relationships and membership of clan or tribe. Membership of such groups confers privileges and security but it also involves obligations and responsibilities (p.82).

Part of these responsibilities and obligations was the need to teach *Ubuntu/hunhu* to young people like me by any adult member of the community. This is the environment in which I was born, grew up and attended school.

A young boy's experiences of ubuntu/hunhu at home and village community

The teaching and learning about *Ubuntu/hunhu* was part and parcel of my everyday life both in the village and at school, a primary mission/church school a 'walking' distance of some kilometres away from home. As Kay (1970) notes, being born in the village means that you are a child of the village community, you are related to every member of the group. Besides your family, village members are responsible for your up-bringing in terms of who you become, the human qualities expected of you by society beyond your family and local community. *Ubuntu/hunhu* is about "who you are because you belong to a community': "It describes the significance of group solidarity...It is a concept of brotherhood (*and sisterhood*) and collective unity for survival. A man (*or woman*) can onlybe a man (*or woman*) through others....ubuntu stands for personhood and morality" (Mbigi & Maree, 1997: pp.1-2, *italics: my addition*).

In the village there was no policy document on *Ubuntu/hunhu*. It was and is still a lived experience that is informally passed on from one generation to the next. So, as young people, we used to be taught 'how to behave and be responsible' towards family members, community members, friends and strangers - even those who did not belong to your 'racial' group. In fact, I distinctly remember some white settler farmers close to our village who had made efforts to practice rudiments of indigenous culture and who were addressed by indigenous totems by their 'surnames' – a sign of respect in accordance with *Ubuntu/hunhu* tradition. Everyone is your relative: brother, sister, mother, father, uncle, etc. All these also had a responsibility to discipline you if you misbehaved. It is a shared responsibility bringing up children. We had a

responsibility towards those who were younger than us; to bring them up as expected by the community. We also looked up to those older than us to guide us in all that we did (they were our 'brothers and sisters'). If you were described, in my dialect, as "*mwana asina hunhu*" that meant you were a child who lacked *Ubuntu/hunhu* qualities. You were a disgrace to your family, community and nation (*nyika*). That would also be important in determining your future social relations, for instance in marital matters, as people would be keen to know your status in terms of *hunhu/Ubuntu.* Mbigi and Maree (1997) correctly note that the solidarity spirit of *Ubuntu/hunhu* helps forge new individual and group alliances transcending parochial ethnic cleavages that often characterize societies where people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds live together. This is the way I grew up and how I conceptualise *Ubuntu/hunhu.*

Indigenous knowledge(s): African Bantu *Ubuntu/hunhu* philosophy

Concepts of Indigenous knowledge(s)

George Sefa Dei (2002) defines indigenous knowledge(s) as encapsulating the common-good-sense ideas and cultural knowledge of local peoples concerning everyday realities of living. This is relevant to my experiences described above. These knowledges or ideas are part of the local cultural heritage and histories, referring to the cultural traditions, values, belief systems and worldviews that, in any indigenous society, are imparted to the younger generation by community elders. Dei points out that such knowledge constitutes an indigenous informed epistemology. It is a worldview that shapes the community's relationships with surrounding environments, a product of the direct experience of nature and its relationship with the social world. Indigenous knowledge constitutes not only the social aspect of the lives of indigenous people, but also what they know about their physical environment and how these two (social and physical) interact for the benefit of both. Illustrating this is my experience as a young boy with my friends, in which we were always reminded of the need to be respectful of some areas within and around the village during hunting, fishing and child games. Indigenous knowledge is crucial for the survival of society; it is

knowledge that is based on cognitive understandings and interpretations of the social, physical and spiritual worlds. It includes concepts, beliefs, perceptions and experiences of local peoples and their natural and human-built environments. As pointed out above, it is important to note that *Ubuntu/hunhu* is not just about the social world but also about the relationships that develop between the social and natural worlds. It is knowledge of processes and relationships between these two worlds – the natural and social.

However, Roberts (1998) provides a slightly different view of who the owners of indigenous knowledge can be. For instance, he sees the term 'indigenous' as referring to knowledge resulting from long-term residence in a particular place; knowledge "...accumulated by a group of people, not necessarily indigenous, who, by centuries of unbroken residence, develop an in-depth understanding of their particular place in their particular world" (Roberts, 1998, p.59). This means, depending on how long they have resided at a particular location, people may, in the end, develop a deep knowledge of that particular place, how to relate with the physical world around them; a knowledge and relationship that is specific to them and to their environment. In the case of my country, Zimbabwe, this would imply that colonial settlers who have had generations there since 1896 can also claim *Ubuntu/hunhu* as their 'traditional/indigenous' knowledge.

With reference to Aboriginal indigenous knowledge in the context of Australia, Castellano (1999) identifies three broad aspects of knowledge relevant to the discourse of all indigenous knowledges: 'traditional knowledge', which is what he says is inter-generational knowledge and is passed on by community elders to younger generations; 'empirical knowledge', which is based on careful observations of the surrounding environments (nature, culture and society); and 'revealed knowledge' which is provided through dreams, visions and intuition (the spiritual world). Dei (2002) lists a number of what he calls characteristics of indigenous knowledge(s): they are personal/personalized, meaning there are no claims to universality; trust in knowledge is tied to integrity and the perceptiveness of the 'speaker'; orally transmitted (for example, as is Australian Aboriginal spirituality); and their sharing is directly related to

considerations of the responsibility in the use of received knowledge.

According to Dei (2002), indigenous knowledge(s) are experientially based, that is, they depend on subjective experiences and the inner workings of the self to generate social interpretations, meanings and explanations. They are holistic and relational, meaning that such knowledge(s) relate the physical to the metaphysical realms of life. They connect economic, cultural, political, spiritual, ecological and material forces and conditions. Indigenous epistemologies are grounded in an awareness and deep appreciation of the cosmos and how the self/selves, spiritual, (known and unknown) worlds are interconnected. The dimension of spirituality in indigenous knowledges provides the strength and power in physical communication. Indigenous knowledge(s) are expressive and narrative and are metaphorical in the use of proverbs, fables and tales. Indigenous people view communalism as a mode of thought, emphasizing the sense of belongingness with a people and the land they share. It is grounded in a people and a place. It is this last bit of Dei's details about indigenous knowledge that I find most appropriate to the discussion of *Ubuntu/hunhu* as indigenous knowledge.

To what extent can *Ubuntu/hunhu* be regarded as indigenous knowledge?

van Bisbergen (2002) notes that *Ubuntu/hunhu* has become a key concept evoking the unadulterated forms of African social life before the European conquest.

> ...Africa, which the force of Atlantic North (*Western ideas/Global North: my addition*) hegemony has for centuries relegated to the periphery of global social, economic, and cultural life, proudly and defiantly declares that it possesses the spiritual resources needed to solve its own problems even though the latter were caused by outside influences — and recommends the same spiritual resources as remedy for the ills of the wider world beyond Africa (p.5).

Ubuntu/hunhu as indigenous knowledge is that philosophy which creates a moral community, admission to which is not necessarily limited by biological ancestry, nationality, or actual place of residence. This links with my reference to settlers in my country Zimbabwe and appears to support Roberts (1998) views above in that participation in

this moral community is not viewed as a matter of birthright in the narrower, parochial sense. If birthright comes in at all, it is the birthright of any member of the human species with the right to express concern about conditions under which her or his fellow-humans must live, and to act on that basis. This moral community consists of people (not just Africans) sharing a concern for the present and future of a particular local or regional society, seeking to add to the latter's resources, redressing its ills, and searching its conceptual and spiritual repertoire for inspiration, blueprints, models, encouragement in the process (van Bisbergen, 2002, p.6).

Several other writers have expressed similar views about *Ubuntu/hunhu* (see, for instance, Hapanyengwi & Makuvaza, 2014; Mungwini, 2013; Ramose, 2003; Pearce, 1990; Mudzamba, 1982). Generally, *Ubuntu/hunhu* means that:

> A person is a person through other persons (Shutte, 1993, p.46).

> To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others in its infinity variety of content and form (Louw, 1998, p.3).

Perhaps one of the best descriptions of *Ubuntu/hunhu* as indigenous knowledge comes from Desmond Tutu who, as Chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), described it as:

> ....the essence of being human. It speaks to the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours. I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness, it speaks about compassion. A person with *Ubuntu* is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share. Such people are open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole. They know that they are diminished when others are humiliated, diminished when others are oppressed, diminished when others are treated as if they were less than who they are. The quality of *Ubuntu* gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them (Hord & Lee, 2008, p.26).

This discourse was appropriate to a South Africa of that time as it was moving from a system of racial apartheid to democracy. Arguably the discourse would be just as relevant to other societies but its exact 'fit' would be partly dependent upon local factors at any given time. In my country, Zimbabwe, the Presidential Commission Report (1999) describes *Ubuntu/hunhu* as, "being human in the fullest and

noblest sense" (p.61), while Venter (2004) says *Ubuntu/hunhu* is evident in a person who is "caring, humble, thoughtful, considerate, understanding, wise, generous, hospitable, socially mature, socially sensitive, virtuous and blessed" (p. 150). *Ubuntu/hunhu* stresses reciprocal and ethical responsibility that flows from interconnectedness and common humanity: that is, communalism as opposed to individualism. It is a philosophy that represents a traditional African conception of the moral and political community. Its central values are reflected in the way people conduct themselves. It is that familiar picture of traditional social relationships in which people help each other and commit themselves to the common cause without permanently looking to their personal benefit (Mungwini, 2013). It advocates the "interdependence of persons for the exercise, development, and fulfillment of their potential to be both individuals and community" (Battle, 2009, p.3). The "individual identity is replaced with the larger societal identity and collective unity will see to every person's survival" (Shizha, 2009, p.144).

These views show that *Ubuntu/hunhu* is about human conduct in relation with others. "A human being is a human being through other human beings; human being only exists and develops in relationship with others" (Venter, 2004, p.152) or, in my indigenous language, "*Umuntu ngubuntu ngabantu*". As a philosophical thread of African epistemology, "*Ubuntu/hunhu* focuses on human relations, attending to the moral and spiritual consciousness of what it means to be human and to be in relationship with others" (Swanson, 2007, p.55).

There is a more political reading of *Ubuntu/hunhu* when considered from the perspective of the anti-colonial South. Here *Ubuntu/hunhu* is an essentially oppositional perspective whose tenets are against violence, greed and individualism that are alienating, exploitative and internal to colonialism and neo-colonialism (Hwami & Kapoor, 2012). "The greatest strength of *Ubuntu/hunhu* is that it is indigenous, a purely African philosophy of life" (Venter, 2004, p.152).

However, in spite of these many positive comments, and with reference to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in post-apartheid South Africa, van Binsbergen (2002) cautions:

> *Ubuntu* may serve as a liberating transformative concept (*in the first*

place: my addition) in the hands of those who wish to build the country, but it can also be wielded as a mystifying concept in the hands of those who, after the post-apartheid reshuffle, were able to personally cross over to the privileged side of the huge class divide, without being over-sensitive to the wider social costs of their individual economic and status advancement. This process is widely noticeable in South Africa today. It is what people euphemistically call the 'Africanisation' of that country's economic and public sphere. Those using the concept of *Ubuntu* do so selectively for their own private gain (p.18).

Doing *Ubuntu/hunhu* in education in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe

Colonial era

Kay (1970) makes an interesting point about the resilience of 'tribal ways of being' that survive Westernisation. "Tribal society, in fact, has proved to be conservative and has demonstrated a remarkable ability to absorb the impact of western society without losing identity" (p.82). Part of that absorption of Western impact happened in education in colonial Zimbabwe. As young people growing up in colonial times, my friends and I kept the *Ubuntu/hunhu* teachings that had been built in us in the villages. However, we were also adventurous and were encouraged to learn what the western society brought: from settlers and missionaries who seemed to sympathise with us. We went to mission/church schools. These were the only schools available to black Africans as the colonial government did not provide public schools in Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs). In the over 90 years of colonialism different racial groups experienced legalised differential treatment based on race and colour. This was true in all sectors: political, social and economical (Chung & Ngara, 1985).

Like other service sectors in the country segregation was the mainstay of white supremacy in the education system; glaringly reflected in its division into European Department of Education for white, Asian and mixed race ('coloured') children; and the Division of African Education for black children. Mission/church schools catered mostly for the African children but had to follow policies set by the colonial government. Because they were located in the TTLs missionaries saw it appropriate to informally include aspects of *Ubuntu/hunhu* in the mostly Eurocentric curriculum.

However, this was not official and therefore not examined, as there was no policy on it. After all, the Christian religion was supposed to be about 'building a human being to be human', whether as a child or adult. Most teachers were indigenous Africans who had also been taught and learnt *Ubuntu/hunhu* during their days as youths in the villages so it was easy for them to informally teach this social/cultural expectation of the community.

I moved from one primary school to another and later from secondary education to teacher training and finally to university level. There were, however, times I felt the tensions and contradictions between what and how I learnt through *Ubuntu/hunhu* at home and what and how I learnt Eurocentric ideas at school. Western schooling stressed individualism (you were graded by ability through written examinations and tests, copying from a friend was forbidden and punishable, competition was terrible if you were in the high ability class/stream; and so on). This was and is still contrary to my experiences of *Ubuntu/hunhu* at home which encouraged sharing of ideas and resources. It became worse when I 'moved up the ladder' of western schooling – physically moving away from home and spending a larger part of the year at the mission boarding school, learning 'to be Western'.

Western education, my people thought, would perhaps some day take me abroad: to America where our missionaries came from, to the United Kingdom(s) who had been our colonisers, or even to Australia where the colonisation of indigenous people like us, we read about from history books (some of these books were biased in favour of settler versions, now I realise). Going abroad would equip me with the power to challenge the colonial conditions we were living in, so my people thought; however and sadly it also meant challenging my *Ubuntu/hunhu* upbringing.

I trained to be a teacher during that colonial era and taught in mission schools in rural communities.

Teaching at mission schools meant teaching the same western values I had learnt during my schooling – individualistic tendencies that were contradictory to my *Ubuntu/hunhu* upbringing. Teaching at teacher education level also meant training teachers to teach the same individualistic values I had been taught and had also taught at high school. However,

each time I went back to the same villages where I was born and grew up I kept learning and teaching *Ubuntu/hunhu* informally as in the past though at times I had to re-learn what was expected of me as a young person. Today, as in the past, I see *Ubuntu/hunhu* as relevant in all educational activities.

Post-colonial Zimbabwe: *Ubuntu/hunhu* in a scientific socialist ideology

At independence in 1980 Zimbabwe introduced scientific socialism as a guiding ideology for the new government in place of the colonial capitalist ideology generally viewed as discriminating against the indigenous population in almost all aspects of social life. To avoid retributions, a number of policy changes were made in most areas including education. However, like in the colonial era, there was and still no official policy document on *Ubuntu/hunhu* as a separate subject in the curriculum. This relates to the current call for *Ubuntu/hunhu* in education from communities and academics. Today, more so than in the colonial era, *Ubuntu/hunhu* is integrated and informally taught in various areas of the curriculum at various levels. At independence a positive discrimination approach in education was adopted; many schools were built in areas neglected during the colonial era, especially rural areas (TTLs); a number of teacher training colleges were established; and opportunities for university education were open to all. Since the majority of teachers would teach in rural communities it was and is still expected that all teachers are familiar with and respect *Ubuntu/hunhu* principles in terms of how they relate to students, to each other as teachers and to their communities. I experienced that transition from colonialism to independence and, as a teacher in both eras, witnessed a number of curriculum changes at independence. However, there was still no formal policy on *Ubuntu/hunhu.*

The need for *Ubuntu/hunhu* as the guiding philosophy in the reform process in Zimbabwe was recognised by a number of writers; for instance, Samkange & Samkange (1980, inside front page) points out that: "Zimbabwe has an indigenous political philosophy which can best guide and inspire thinking in this new era of Zimbabwe. This philosophy

or ideology…exists and can best be described as *Hunhuism* or *Ubuntuism.*"

In the education sector, and as part of the reform process at independence, government introduced a number of subjects in the curriculum which included Education with Production (EWP), Education for Living (EFL) and Political Economy. These and others were meant to address the country's political, social and economic developmental needs (Zvobgo, 1999) and to get students to learn about socialism, the new political ideology (see Sigauke, 2013). However, for various reasons, including lack of teacher support, these were withdrawn from the curriculum. Since then a number of other subjects have been added to the curriculum (see Sigauke, 2013, p.240). However, none of these subjects can strictly be described as incorporating *Ubuntu/hunhu* indigenous knowledge except in some aspects of local languages that were and are still taught as part of the curriculum. This is in spite of the fact that one of the objectives for reform in education was/is to: "promote values of patriotism and *ubuntu* philosophy through citizenship education" (Sigauke, 2011, p.2).

The battle of ideas between the ideologies of Western political economy and indigenous governments of a non-capitalist persuasion set important limits to reforms from western to indigenous policies and actively constitute part of the Western hegemony. It is also worth mentioning here that at some point between 1990 and 2000, and largely because of the negative outcomes of the socialist ideology as defined by Western standards, cost recovery measures in the form of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) were suggested by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) and were adopted by the Zimbabwean government. This amounted to a complete reversal of the socialist programme put in place at independence. ESAP had a negative toll in a number of areas including the education system which again went on to rely on the Atlantic North in areas such as curriculum content, examination centres (Cambridge, London, AEB examination boards), resources (manpower, materials, funding), qualifications and teaching methods/approaches. This meant that the position of *Ubuntu/hunhu* in the curriculum had to be side-lined, as it was not formally regarded as one of the core learning areas.

This displacement raises a number of crucial, but difficult to be sure about, questions.

I was teaching at high school when the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) was introduced. The school was part of a big mission institution: a primary school, secondary school, teacher training college and a hospital that also trained nurses. The institution served people from all over the country. After the introduction of ESAP you could see the shock and desperation when patients and primary school children were now being asked to pay fees and there were resource shortages in most social service areas including my school. ESAP and the government minister who headed the economic planning and development ministry (he had been working for IMF before getting this post) were given derogatory local names by the public; names that reminded people and government of the hardships they were going through. To me this was a contradiction to the socialism we had been promised and which we had briefly experienced; a turn back to the neo-political persuasions of the west (IMF, World Bank, and others).

Were failures of these policy shifts (including the ultimate collapse of reforms and the lack of inclusion of *Ubuntu/hunhu* in the curriculum) a result of the political/ideological contradictions? What does the above suggest about the irresistible nature of hegemonic structures imported from the Atlantic North in what Silova (2015, p.2) refers to as the "post-socialist transition to Western liberal democracy or neo-liberal free-market capitalism"?

Post-colonial era in Zimbabwe: A return to the Atlantic North?

In spite of the above policy (re)-shifts towards capitalist tendencies I and other writers still make calls for the incorporation of *Ubuntu/hunhu* philosophy as a guide on social behaviour in the economy, politics and other areas of life especially in education. *Ubuntu/hunhu* should become the central guide for policy formation and a strategy of resilience and resistance against neo-liberal individualism. Samkange & Samkange (1980), for instance, have summarised some of what I think would have become *Ubuntu/hunhu's* positive political contributions to an independent Zimbabwe if this

philosophy had been officially recognised in education.

As Gade (2013) points out "…*Ubuntu/hunhu* has not had a marked influence on politics in the new Zimbabwe" (p.31). In fact, I want to agree with Mungwini (2013) who notes that the only marked political influence of *Ubuntu/hunhu* is that it has been used to benefit those in political positions of power. At independence this value of forgiveness (*Ubuntu/hunhu* and reconciliation) was used to pacify people and prevent them from demanding a just reparation. They persuaded, in the name of *Ubuntu/hunhu*, the general public to forgive those who used to oppress them.

This same strategy was employed in South Africa at independence to pacify the general population. There appears to be some justifiable suspicion that the new leaders could have been fighting a factional class war and once they gained entry into that class they had to make the peasants content with what they had by calling on reconciliation in the name of *Ubuntu/hunhu* to avoid any more problems; and reminding people of their unique quality of humaneness. In Zimbabwe today the very same people are being asked to ignore their 'relentless love and ability to forgive' (a feature of *Ubuntu/hunhu*) and to reclaim what is their own: the land, but now with much more disastrous consequences, and again for someone's political survival (Mungwini, 2013, p.783).

As is the case elsewhere in Africa in general, education in Zimbabwe has been and is still a true child of modernity especially given its acceptance of the liberal ideology. Notwithstanding government claims to the contrary, there is ample evidence within the country's constitution, its education system and life in general that the country is guided by ideals rooted in the philosophy of liberalism. Schools in Zimbabwe are teaching students to transform themselves into autonomous and aggressive competitors. Competitive individualism makes it difficult to implement demands of traditional morality like *Ubuntu/hunhu,* communalism and cooperation (Mungwini, 2013, p.775). I agree with Hapanyengwi and Makuvaza (2014) who propose the adoption of *Ubuntu/hunhu* as the philosophical foundation for post-colonial education in Zimbabwe: "*Hunhu* would provide the values that would guide Zimbabwean education. It has the greatest potential to restore human dignity and respect for other human beings. We are not arguing that *hunhu* be one of

the aims or goals of the education system, but that it should be the foundation" (p.6).

As Venter (2004) rightly observes at some point in Zimbabwe after independence there was a relapse into philosophies operative during the colonial era which, contrary to African beliefs, went on to entrench individualism and emphasised individual separatedness from other members of the community. This is contrary to the *Ubuntu/hunhu* African philosophy which stresses the "essential unity of self and other, self and the entire Kosmos" and "being-human-together" (Foster, 2007, p.47). Most schools in Zimbabwe have continued to follow the colonial model of education. What is needed now is an education unique to the Zimbabwean circumstances, an education inspired by the philosophy of *Ubuntu/hunhu*, an indigenisation of the curriculum through infusing Zimbabwean content in the form of events, rituals, prayers and other issues (Horton, 1982; Mudzamba, 1982). This is because, as Kaulemu (2004) observes, people no longer seem to know how they should relate to each other as human beings since dehumanisation seems to characterise their daily existence. This is all evidence of the lack of *Ubuntu/hunhu* in our daily lives.

Ubuntu/hunhu is based on the view that the source of morality is society itself. You do not educate your child for yourself alone. At school the headmaster is the eye of the parents and the teacher stands in place of the parents and all the above stand in for society. Professional teachers like me, who may or may not be part of the particular community of the school, are expected to take up and extend the role of an adult or elder in the community by teaching, among other things and in the traditional way, *Ubuntu/hunhu* (Samkange & Samkange, 1980). The concept of *Ubuntu/hunhu* is strongly reinforced by, as well as oriented towards, a collectivist social morality (Pearce, 1990). Young children are expected, therefore, to always display *Ubuntu/hunhu* (personhood). But, as Pearce (1990) observes, teaching *Ubuntu/hunhu* at the classroom level in a neo-liberal free market capitalist society may bring up contradictions in terms of traditional and modern values:

> In the classroom where *Ubuntu/hunhu* is practiced we do not expect, therefore, to find children challenging their teachers or even spontaneously asking questions or initiating discourse. A 'good' child does not question adults but tries to imitate the moral

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model and learn the moral rules held up to her. The moral framework of *Ubuntu/hunhu* generates a pattern for the transmission of all knowledge: a body of socially accepted beliefs transmitted intact by adults to unquestioning children (Pearce, 1990, p.157).

Reflecting on the current situation on the modernity factor, Pearce (1990) comments further that:

If *Ubuntu/hunhu* entails the transmission of traditional culture, teachers will increasingly find themselves fighting a losing battle, for there is little meaningful which remains of that culture in this period of increasingly rapid social change and, perhaps, social disintegration (p.147; and *globalisation: my addition*).

Post-colonial era Zimbabwe: A call for *Ubuntu/hunhu* in Citizenship Education: Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training

In 1998, the government of Zimbabwe, through the country's president, established a commission whose task was "to inquire into and report on education and training in Zimbabwe" (Presidential Commission, 1999, p.i). As part of its Terms of Reference, the commission was instructed to "inquire into and report upon the fundamental changes to the current curriculum at all levels so that education becomes a useful tool for character and citizenship formation" (Presidential Commission, 1999, p.349). Character formation implicitly meant individuals who had qualities associated with *Ubuntu/hunhu*. This is confirmed by the Commission itself in its recommendations when it says teaching rights, duties and responsibilities is important because

These should be part of a person with genuine and acceptable *hunhu/Ubuntu*…a good human being, a well behaved and morally upright person characterised by qualities such as responsibility, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, hard work, integrity, a cooperative spirit, solidarity, hospitality, devotion to family and welfare of community (Presidential Commission, 999, p.62).

Teaching *Ubuntu/hunhu* in education is a means of addressing what the Commission describes as

Moral decadence in society, loss of discipline and sound human, cultural and religious values; a crying need to overhaul the entire education and training system in Zimbabwe; to develop a Zimbabwean philosophy of education system that promotes a citizen with *Ubuntu/hunhu* (Presidential Commission, 1999: p.349).

The Commission goes further to describe problems in schools

and society as:

> Vandalism, violence and indiscipline in our schools and society are a result of lack of values, relevant ethics, morals, individual and collective responsibilities for protecting property and valuing human life. This is reflective of that *hunhu/Ubuntu* which is currently lacking in society and the formal education process (Presidential Commission, 1999, p.349).

The Commission adds: "The philosophy should, among other things, spell out the type of person that the education system should produce in order to promote a successful nation. The product of the proposed education system should be a product who has morality and ability to learn from the philosophy of *Ubuntu/hunhu*" (p.33). This was the first time an official call was made for *Ubuntu/hunhu* to be one of the central guiding principles for education in Zimbabwe. The Commission further observed that the absence of a coherent philosophy of education such as *Ubuntu/hunhu* manifests itself in the products (graduates) of the education system itself who demonstrate a lack of moral focus, respect for other people, and are intolerant and corrupt. This is also observed in the ways people conduct business and the practice of politics. There is a general lack of moral integrity and focus among the populace. There are very high levels of intolerance of other people's views that differ from our own resulting in attempts to deny these citizens the human right to make independent decisions on social, economic, political and cultural issues that affect their lives, the Commission notes.

> These recommendations were put forward as guidelines for a proposed citizenship education programme in the curriculum, (which never took place). The recommendations, it was believed, would tackle problems that the Commission said were prevalent in society, especially among young people. *Ubuntu/hunhu* would be the solution to these problems, the Commission suggests. Sigauke (2011) however, raises possibilities for underlying or hidden ideological motives on the call for *Ubuntu/hunhu* in citizenship education, given the country's politico-socio-economic context that seemed to have shifted policy formulation towards capitalist tendencies.

Ubuntu/hunhu dilemma in a globalised knowledge society

The position of indigenous knowledges in this age of globalisation is a central theme in Connell's (2007) book, '*Southern Theory*'. Other writers, Ramose (1999) and van

Binsbergen (2002) have also expressed similar concern about the future of *Ubuntu/hunhu* in an age of globalisation. Ramose (1999) notes, and I agree with him, that the globalisation process, towards which the modern world is increasingly drawn, is about the ascendance of a market-orientated economic logic of maximalisation, in which the value, dignity, personal safety, even survival of the human person no longer seem to constitute central concerns. This process is reinforced by the Global/Atlantic North's post-colonial drive for political and cultural hegemony. While African societies have suffered greatly in this process their lasting value orientation in terms of *Ubuntu/hunhu* holds up as an alternative in that it advocates a renewed concern for the human person. This alternative, Ramose argues, is already applied in the peripheral contexts of village kin groups in Southern Africa today. It is also capable of inspiring the wider (*global: my addition*) world where it may give a new and profound meaning to the global debate on human rights and other global issues. However, the value orientation of the village has tended not to be within easy reach of the globalised urban population that has become numerically dominant in Southern Africa. Outside contemporary village contexts, in urban areas for example, *Ubuntu/hunhu* is only selectively and superficially communicated to the population at large. The globalisation process is largely to blame on this (Ramose, 1999).

I have a different view regarding the village contexts which Ramose (1999) says still hold *Ubuntu/hunhu* values. Contemporary Southern Africa, including its rural villages, is in fact among the various products of globalisation. Today the majority of village inhabitants of Southern African countries, Zimbabwe and South Africa for instance, are so effectively exposed to products of globalisation (global technologies of information and communication, for example) such that they are no longer in any direct contact with the values, beliefs and images of the traditional/indigenous village knowledge, *Ubuntu/hunhu.* They all have to (re)-learn the values, beliefs and images of the village *(Ubuntu/hunhu)* more or less from scratch because the globalisation process has affected them all.

However, in spite of the above observations, even among the more globally oriented urbanised populations, the same

urban people "hide niches of village life that are characteristic of *Ubuntu/hunhu*" (van Binsbergen, 2002, p.15). Village cultural and religious practices seem to be going into hiding especially among urban populations — these practices and values exist only underground and are not publicly articulated within the globalised urban space. *Ubuntu/hunhu,* as a model of thought, has to take on a globalised format in order to be openly acceptable to, and displayed by, the majority of modern Southern Africans and beyond. It is unfortunate and ironic that many identity constructions outside the Atlantic/Global North today, including *Ubuntu/hunhu* in Southern Africa, seem to be seen in that light, that is, the need to take a globalised format. Further, in order to succeed and to be taken seriously, they need to be put in the format stipulated (even imposed) under Atlantic/Global North hegemony.

Ubuntu/hunhu can be a tool for transformation in a context of globalisation. For instance, van Binsbegern (2002) makes the following observations which I believe are relevant to *Ubuntu/hunhu* in a globalised knowledge society. Firstly, *Ubuntu/hunhu* constitutes a form of symbolic empowerment for the people of Southern Africa who fought to attain majority rule and cast off the yoke of the Global/Atlantic North's cultural and symbolic, as well as political, military and economic dominance. *Ubuntu/hunhu* offers the appearance of an ancestral model to them, a model that is credible and with which they can identify, regardless of whether urban globalised people still observe ancestral codes of conduct or not; and regardless of whether ancestral codes are rendered correctly or not. Secondly, *Ubuntu/hunhu* can be effective because it is appreciated as an African thing from the heart of Southern Africans. In times and places of conflict as in my country Zimbabwe *Ubuntu/hunhu* was used by the new political leaders to introduce an unexpected perspective (reconciliation) just like Nelson Mandela did through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The value of *Ubuntu/hunhu* as a governing guiding principle has also been reflected in a South African Foreign Policy White Paper: *'Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu: Final Draft'* (13 May, 2011) and other policy documents.

But the implications of *Ubuntu/hunhu* can go well beyond the Southern African region. In fact international scholarly communities have started paying attention to this

concept and use it as a guiding principle by which to question the instrumentalist view of education that dominates the Global/Atlantic North. For instance, the 2015 Annual Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Conference held in Washington D.C. has had, as its theme, the following title: *"Imagining a Humanist Education Globally: Ubuntu!"* (*www.cies2015.org)*. Details of issues covered during the conference resonate with the need for the globalisation of *Ubuntu/hunhu* and an *Ubuntu/hunhu-inspired* education that is transformative and empowering for all humanity. The conference theme recognised that, generally, while education has been viewed as an instrument for reproducing certain inequalities, even a carefully designed colonial education that was intended to subordinate colonized peoples in different parts of the world, ended up producing critical thinkers and activists who questioned and helped to topple formal colonial domination. This is what my village people wished would happen when they sent us to school.

Concluding remarks

The question raised at the beginning of this paper concerns the position of *Ubuntu/hunhu,* as an indigenous knowledge system or way of being, in what Connell identifies as *Southern Theory.* Throughout this paper I have tried to demonstrate that *Ubuntu/hunhu* philosophy can be a viable alternative guiding philosophy in many areas of social life including education not just in Southern Africa where it originates but beyond. In addition to various examples drawn from my own experiences this view was further supported by various writers cited in this paper and recommendations from policy documents such as the (1999) Zimbabwe Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training and the South African Foreign Policy White Paper (2011).

I have suggested that education that embraces *Ubuntu/hunhu* as its central philosophy could facilitate the process of deconstruction of the prevailing modernist epistemologies in formal schooling. An education that is directed by the philosophy of *Ubuntu/hunhu* has the potential of regenerating space for positive social change in the current dominance of neo-liberal logics in education and social reform. The growing scholarly attention to this Southern

African philosophy in education, of which I see this article to be part of, attests to the possibilities of an *Ubuntu/hunhu-inspired* education that embodies a philosophical, pedagogical and curricula framework that is emancipatory, cultured, transformative, localised and empowering for all humanity globally.

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Postcolonial Directions
in Education

KNOWING OUR PLACE: DECENTRING THE METROPOLE THROUGH PLACE IDENTITY IN THE LAKE EYRE BASIN

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ABSTRACT Grounded in the experience of working on a community based heritage survey with Antakerinja and Lower Southern Aranda men in the Lake Eyre Basin of South Australia, during the 1980s, some hidden dimensions of knowledge and education are explored through three different epistemes. A deeply personal investigation of what may be lost and recovered from what Connell (2007) has suggested is a "silence of the land" is undertaken. Land enclosure and power exercised quietly to abstract, colonize and concentrate resources is inseparable from northern theory. All humans have an ancestry in the savannah or open woodlands where human agency once maintained a place within ecosystems. Many have rural forbearers who experienced land enclosure in one form or another. Decentring fragments are used to construct a fabric from rural English working class ancestry, childhood learning and art education, three epistemes, and the connections the Men and their family histories. This decentring weakens Northern theories from the peripheries. The reader is invited to share the tensions, the loss and grief, deeper spiritual understandings, awakenings of Christian and ecological connection and consider the validity colonial scientism and urban curriculum from a Southern Theory perspective. Now that most humans are corralled in the conurbations of a global metropole, the reader may also wish to question the fallacies of civilization and whither a globalized urban world is heading.

KEYWORDS class-identity, indigenous, curriculum, adult-education, cultural-education, environmental-education, land-enclosure, urbanization, southern-theory

First decentrings: local, Northern, Southern thinking

Places far away (physically, psychically) from the urban centres -*the Metropoles* of the global economy- hold insights and knowledge completely contrary and inexplicable in urban living. In this article, I want to discuss the kinds of decentring that took place through learning in peripheral environments, observations of my childhood, in, and as, artistic, post-structural events and among people whose connection to the land has been cut or silenced through urbanization, abstraction, creation of class and the transfer of power and resources to elites. A *Northern*[2] orientation recruits education to this transfer. The fabric of learning from the periphery reveals a resilient hidden world, one implicated in Connell's 'The Silence of the Land' chapter from the book *Southern Theory* (2007). I intend to show, that no matter how destructive the forces of a *Northern* hegemony may be, there exists an alternative, liberating, view emanating from this silence.

A *Southern* shift in my thinking and sensibilities began or perhaps I should say developed, through meeting and working with men of Lower Southern Aranda, Wangkangurru and Antakerinja descent, in the 1980s. Their countries form part of the western catchment of the Lake Eyre Basin, Australia, however their knowledge and access to land had been subject to the kinds of historical silencing, or misrepresentation, as identified by Connell (2007). I learned that these men kept the remains of a body of male-restricted lore (the Law), which also contributed to a different silence through careful transmission and guidance in education and learning of younger men.

Throughout this article I will be referring largely to "the Men" and "the Law" ignoring women's roles and the matriarchal status of older women. My time with the Men in central Australia reveals that a 'Silence of the Land' was not only inscribed on their life histories but also on my own and probably most people who can trace a rural family history.

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[2] Italics are used where geographical terms refer only to epistemic locations or a North/South binary. Northern in this context, may also be understood as Western in some cases.

I went to work in their country, initially as a community development worker in 1980, and later in 1982 and 1983 coordinated a community based heritage project. It was through this project that I fully recognized the Men as teachers, both of each other, and of myself. I am not writing about an Australia indigenous theory, although theoretical aspects arise from time to time. Indigenous literature cited here serves two functions, as a conventional means of supporting premises, and more importantly, as heuristics to reveal publically available aspects of the Law. Over time, senior Australian indigenous Lawmen have publicised aspects of the Law, which others may be reticent to discuss in such a public way. I avoid detailed use of anthropological texts which could otherwise reveal or damage extant practices, still contested in the region under discussion. A persistent question was "What to do?" – "How to maintain or avoid the Law?" These were recurrent questions among the Men in the 1980s.

The *Northern* silence, identified by Connell (2007) is constructed through the objectification of place and the alienation of the native population from it by various colonizing mechanisms. Recognizing this silence reveals the deeper underpinnings in the manipulation of land, economics and social injustice. New theories are required to overcome the impact of silence and the way it continues to sanction dispossession. Recognizing different epistemes, I argue and hope to show, can lead to fresh explanatory power, new directions for our actions and a re-evaluation of the world around us.

Connell (2007) makes four main points in relation to the country and people that are relevant to the discussion here. First, disempowerment arises through the erasure of place and identity. Connell cites Dodson saying; "Removed from our lands, we are literally removed from ourselves" (Connell, 2007 p.195). Forced or coercive migration, what might be called "out-migration", of the Men and their descendants from traditional country is an important feature of this silencing. Second, there is the creation landed gentries as a means of colonial administration. In the Lake Eyre Basin, this has been largely through the cattle industry, known as pastoralism in South Australia. The large holdings, individual pastoral leases, that are tens of thousands of square kilometres in

area, are now largely unpopulated. Third, there are the historic, often violent land clearances, and the construction of class. Lastly, there is a progressive justification of land transfers and false title. All result in confusion and knowledge recodification by *Northern* thinking.

Anthropology, has been at the centre of *Northern* recodification in the Lake Eyre Basin. Gillen and Spencer (1899,1903) were perhaps the first to construct Social Darwinian explanations for the decline of the 'native' justifying the legal fictions of occupation (Echo-hawk, 2010). Since the 1990s, however, anthropology has advanced Native Title claim processes and corporate identity of native title representative bodies. Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) legitimating non-indigenous use of successfully claimed indigenous land also rest on this work. These processes have further muted the legitimate voices of place, replacing them with Northern abstract concepts of ownership. Abstraction hides what is really happening to land, how elites protect their land interests while colonizing others' places, habitat and bodies.

To overcome such abstraction and silencing Connell suggests 'Sinking roots into the mud of particular landscapes' (2007, p.206) and the application of "dirty theory" 'theorizing mixed up with specific situations ... [to] maximize the wealth of materials that are drawn into analysis and explanation' (2007, p.207). Law, (2004) also looks towards the messy nature of social science data and its inscription, as a more honest approach to recognizing subject's knowledge.

For educational research, examining poorly fitting or messy experiences also allows theory-building outside the established *Northern* episteme. 'Building a Red Dirt Curriculum' (Tjtayki, Minutjukur and Osborne, 2013) exposes the potential hegemonic influence of *The Australian National Curriculum*, simply by emphasising place and the importance of deep spirit in indigenous learning- ignored in the dominant pedagogy. This 'red dirt' argument is for 'The root of the tree' and the growth from the seed and the spirit that need to be developed. This represents a serious epistemic shift from seemingly utilitarian public schooling, which a national curriculum attempts to standardize. "Red Dirt" reintroduces wonder, relatedness, and otherwise disregarded practical metaphysics. Here then, local people are promoting new

theory grounded in place, one already influencing more remote education.

Outside of Aboriginal-controlled lands such epistemic challenges and approaches to schooling have historically been contested and dismissed. Schooling becomes part of the rationale in the submerging or silencing of land in the *Northern* traditions of education. I come back to the issue of education toward the end of this article.

In terms of form, I write this article as a series of decentring fragments, anchors or nodes in a fabric of understanding- against the requirement for a rational-making linearity of form and argument. This may make the text difficult to read as a linear exercise, but hopefully it will offer points of departure in weaving a broader fabric.

Another decentring: spanning space and time?

Using what has been local for me, in my childhood and with the Men and their descendants, I want to discuss the relationship between peripheral and metropolitan sensibilities, including what is relevant to schooling, but situated mostly outside schools.

My experience draws on a geographical- temporal spanning- from what is close to the heartland of the colonizers' domain, the English Midlands, to the colonial periphery- the Lake Eyre Basin, where colonizers' effects are evident in the extreme.

Ecologists, economists, theologians and even pastoralists, such as Sidney Kidman, have long identified the environmental disasters which colonization, industrial power and hegemony have wrought (Idriess citing Kidman 1936; Carson 1962; Slusser 1971; Schumacher 1973, 1977; Jensen 2006; Higgs 2014; Klein 2014). No remedy, no abandonment of the *Northern* project has resulted, instead the disasters are exported even wider as an extension of hegemony. A *southern* episteme, explored through dirty theory, grounded in place and emanating from the Men, may assist surfacing the silenced land and places humans inhabit today. Aware of different epistemes, metropolitan, neo-liberal and other abstractions can be jettisoned, as their centrality and explanatory power wane.

The grounded or dirty nature of my learning and inquiry includes a story of my earlier life-experience, how one inquirer/artist/development worker evolves, meet the Men, and comes to understand life through occupation of a liminal space between the archaic and dominant epistemes.

Connection to place and indigenous knowledge play important roles, in both the dispossession and continuing resilience, and may prevail when the surrogates replacing natural habitat in a consumer-society ultimately fail. The knowing that results, is a woven substrate. Here I touch on some nodes, or intersections in this fabric. These epistemic differences in indigenous learning are also important for others who may be alienated from the living world, or disorientated through the exercise of power, and application *Northern* theories and practices, such as neo-liberalism.

North-south centring in my early years

To understand my receptivity of the Men as I encountered them in a colonial context it is important to understand the wefts and warps constructed in my early years and education. My own background is also situated against various dimensions of Connell's chapter made in the connection to Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* (1966). Leaving my own country, eager to work and live in different cultures and to recognizing different forms of knowledge, can partly be explained as an attempt to overcome class construction in the search for something more real or even more supernatural.

I was born in Warwick, less than 2 miles from the Midland Oak, a tree my grandfather valued as marking the very centre of England, although there may be no strong mathematical justification for such a view. There was no university at Warwick, Ed Thompson was yet to complete his foundational text or take up a post in the university to be later constructed. Class-consciousness in this place was highly nuanced, a safe conservative parliamentary seat, where voting conservative provided its own identity as a better class of person even among automotive workers and the long-declined former middle-classes. Perversely, in teenage-hood, Thompson represented the alternative, yet newly revered establishment voice. As rebellious adolescents, 'we' shifted left politically

while drinking underage in Warwickshire pubs. As young art students we were taught about "The New York Scene"; we gave expression to "The Free Society", promoted over the Iron Curtain, and across Europe-part of the propaganda to contain socialism (Stonor-Saunders 1999). Socialism seemed an irrelevant concept in a welfare state at that time. The working class were not the children and women of the 19th Century; they were skilled, but rapidly deskilling artisans, in the motor industry.

My paternal grandfather, of whom I knew little, was a former wheelwright with Jaguar. My maternal grandfather, while employed as factory worker, with a company producing fire-pumps and race-car engines, still resisted industrialisation of his soul. His ideal world was the rural Gloucestershire of his childhood. He found places to teach me about birds' eggs, while lamenting the loss of hedgerows in the onslaught of industrialized broad-acre farming. Despite the 1950s being the most equitable period in modern British history, class "education" in this urban *metropole* created hidden barriers to confidence, wealth acquisition and its equitable distribution. *Northern* privilege and identity were the right to be seen as a valued worker, a member of a society generously advancing civilisation in even the most 'barbaric' places. Like my conservative voting parents, I believed inequality was the price paid for the privilege of being located at the centre of a world painted pink by the British Empire. As teenagers, we derided and sometimes questioned American imperialism, but not our own submission to British class and power. I concealed an internal rebellion against the Protestant work ethic while simultaneously uncritically accepting *North* and *South* as First and Third World with the addition of a slothful, romantic and Catholic southern Europe. My identity remained inherently duplicitous. The counter-culture "revolution" (Bell's "Counterfeit Revolution" 1976,) and 1967, the year of "Flower Power" submerged, or prevented, any critical challenge to classed identity or place entitlement, on my part.

When I look back however, a *North/South* binary was already geographically inscribed on my primary school's playing field, as well as in my sense of place and social world. Geographically north was All Saints Church, High Church of England, almost Catholic in its symbolism. The church

provided the only "high art" I knew, paintings, plaster statues and woodcarvings. My memory collides an old and new vicar, very pious, nose in the air, footless beneath his frock, gliding by us upper-working-class children as if on a cushion of air; we who were still there, not even to be seen or heard, despite the racket of lunch recess on fine summer days.

A Modern vicar subsequently sought a new church. The old church, sponsored by early industrialists, intended as a civilizing tool for the new workers was now physically and perhaps spiritually destabilized by World War II bombing. Throughout my teenage years and for many years after, lack of post-war patronage ensured that, once levelled, the church site would remain vacant. This physical and symbolic act of demolishing the church, broke the connection to my forbearer's religion too, and almost replaced it a Modern scientism, had it not, at the same time, spawned a deeper sense of mysticism and longing for a more spiritual world.

The playing field's southern boundary, a long hedge and broken-fence, bounded the Grand Union Canal, "the cut" as it was locally known. Speaking to me from the early industrial revolution, coal-hauling narrow-boats would ply the waters, with their "low art" of roses and castles, painted buckets and paraphernalia. The canal was always out of bounds, marginalised. The coal haulers, from "The Black Country" were gypsies, or so I came to believe. As children, we were deeply suspicious of them, but they seemed friendly and would always wave, unlike the vicar. Across this boundary lay *The South.*

Geographically and epistemically north, middle-class Sunday school taught love (that was never practiced) and service as the route to unreachable salvation. The hidden message remained; working class people and their entertainments were never going to be admissible to Heaven, never the less, we should try to be good. Beyond the southern boundary, I felt love practiced with a smile, by the untouchable on passing narrow boats. Heaven and Hell, good and evil, helped inscribe class on our growing beings. Looking back, in school and Sunday school, childhood behaviours seemed always measured and calibrated against a dual standard of Social Darwinism and an industrial Protestant work-ethic, well-explored by Thompson (1966). Class-consciousness, etched on my young being would, eventually

help me interpret class in the wider colonial construction. I remain mystified that north, south and class were so clearly demarcated on my junior school playing field. I cannot help but see a connection to my continuing search for a deeper spiritual liberation from class. I think I would have benefitted greatly from a red-dirt curriculum. As it was my friends and I were clearly writing our own curriculum in the liminal spaces and boundaries of our world, and my grandfather, through presenting the natural world, had opened the door to such spaces.

Under such conditions, valuing both knowledge and sensibility, I chose to enter art school, recognizing in art school a path to this deeper unarticulated spiritual world where life was more than work for material survival. Abram (1996) has suggested that literacy and sensibility are mutually exclusive; literate abstract cultures are unable to respond to surrounding ecologies in the same sensible ways of pre-literate societies. It is a powerful idea that might explain why *the North* appears unable to make an ecological U-turn necessary to achieve sustainability. My grandfather provides a contrary example having sensibility and literacy. Later I would of course encounter the Men who still lived with a preliterate sensibility. With student sit-ins and revolt against conventional teaching, art education in 1968 made its leap into post-structuralism. When I entered undergraduate level at Leeds a year later, we were offered the world, (Literally, handed a globe, without further comment as the only stimulus or project in what would be an entirely self-directed curriculum for 3 years) art education was re-creating, challenging the *Northern* episteme. For a brief period, painting and galleries were an aside to this artistic remaking of the world. Only later would the Thatcher/Saatchi era reinstate a narrow view of art as industry, a search for the sublime (White 2009). My capacity for visual syntheses of multiple knowledges and post-structural entrepreneurship would eventually positon me as a community development worker within the Lake Eyre Basin. I had developed the capacity for challenging preconceptions and underlying premises, constructing the new in undefined spaces. I would have to interpret and navigate the space between how the Lower Southern Aranda were trying to teach me about the world and the way the world wanted to teach, or demolish their place and identity through urbanization and assimilation.

Centring on welcome for a purpose

In 1980, eight years after graduating from art-school, the Hawke Labor Government, was working to 'improve' the plight of Aboriginal people through Aboriginal Land Rights where it could, and elsewhere through funding community development. In South Australia, under a Liberal Government, the cattle industry dominated every aspect of remote community life. Placing a federally-funded community development worker at Oodnadatta, pioneered the Commonwealth's initiative for Aboriginal Affairs in the region. Under principles of self-determination, I was officially employed by the Oodnadatta Aboriginal Housing Society (OAHS), which I soon discovered had not actually properly met for some years, because the generally acknowledged chairperson, Sidney Stewart[3], was serving time in jail. I got the job as there were few candidates for the post and eventually I was deemed the only suitable person who was prepared to go.

Meeting with small groups of indigenous people in the main street, where many spent their days, I received an informal orientation into Lower Southern Aranda placenames, and the names of edible animals (mostly in Antakerinja/ Yankunytjatjara language). This discussion of place and animals moved progressively towards more private conversations, of the "Tukurpa" or "The Dreaming" in settler English. Community development was going to be a work in progress for a long time, but under the Men, I would learn later, the land continually recreates itself from the ancestral life forms that inhabit the region. They looked towards continuity.

South Australian Liberal government officials believed the Aboriginal population would follow service provision to the opal-mining town of Coober Pedy with withdrawal of state services at the closure of the railway. In contrast the Commonwealth policy of "self-determination" had already supported Aboriginal land-rights 200km to the North West.

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[3] Men of standing are mentioned in this article by name, A period of "Kunmanara" has been observed. It is now recognized that these educators and customary law holders deserve recognition for their parts played in educating *Northern* academic writers, rather than anonymity afforded research participants. In some texts and records Sidney Stewart is also known as "Stuart" although most of his close relatives choose the "Stewart" spelling.

Lower Southern Aranda descendants were clear; they had always lived around Oodnadatta and were not about to move away. This became the general voice of the Oodnadatta population expressed to government agencies. That the OAHS members might be able to organise and were motivated to take on the running of a community, was not evident until many weeks later.

The Men

Then one day, I was invited to an impromptu meeting of men. While being led to the meeting, the acting-chairperson wanted to know if I was a Christian. It was a difficult question to answer for someone raised with Sunday school, materialism and who later cultivated a Buddhist spiritual interest while in Asia. I didn't know and still do not really know the significance of the question, other than at the time I took it to reflect strongly the need to enquire as to my capacity for ethical commitment and truthful behaviour. Perhaps however the question was also to discover whether I held an appreciation for spiritual ways, or alternatively harboured a concern I might be offended by what was about to be revealed. At the meeting the men made clear their position. They had "a story, a big story, right from Uluru to Lake Eyre" and they wanted the land back to which the story gave them title. They were asserting the Tjukurpa, handed down knowledge of creation and all that ever existed, and ever would exist. Seeing the impending handing back of land to the Pitjantjatjara, their position was clear; "We speak English. We work hard in the cattle industry. How come the Pitjantjatjara, who do not speak English and who sit-down all day, get their land back first?" I recognized an element of mimicry in the question; they were not criticizing their Pitjantjatjara brothers, as such, more repositioning the pastoralist outcry, which regularly sought to class non-pastoral workers as lazy natives. It was an impossible question to answer at the time, but clearly tied to the political representation of Aborigines in colonial ideology as simultaneously valueless, and only real or legitimate when dark-skinned, primarily speaking a language other than English and carrying spears. For these men the centre of their world was Uluru, or places closer to home, not Canberra, Adelaide, London or New York. Over the next 3 years I would learn of a landscape and places of deep cultural significance,

including a point only metres from where we first sat-all was connected.

In stark contrast to the unstated, but funded urbanising community development intentions of government sponsors, The Men expressed a clear alternative vision. They wanted the land back. The cattle stations had developed within this place, but a migration out of their country to town had been progressing incrementally since settlement. Changes in the cattle industry, such as from sheep to cattle in the 1950s, pressure for children to attend school in the 1960s, cheap Japanese motorbikes reducing the need for a large workforce, demands for award wages, and now pastoralist perceptions as the threat of land rights, all worked towards continuing land clearance and informal land enclosure. Such enclosure, was enacted through bluff, misplaced accusations of trespass and sometimes implied threat of firearms to discourage further visitation to traditional country.

The SA Government passed a radically reduced bill to establish the Pitjantjatjara Lands in March 1981 - later expanded to Anangu Pitjantjatjara-Yankunytjatjara (APY Lands). This facilitated a place for the survival of the Law, but outside the Lands, across the rest of the arid zone of South Australia pastoral interests were further entrenched with the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act (1989). The Act reduced vehicle, horse and camel access, camping near water resources and provided a form of rolling tenure for the cattle industry. The previous bluff of trespass became real. There had always been duplicity in management of the pastoral lease system. Few of the Men felt they could freely travel across country, despite their rights of Aborigines to hunt and camp already written into every pastoral lease. On some cattle-stations, the managers would police this entry clause based on what they recognised as "station families", warning off other presumed interlopers and strangers, with the result that fewer and fewer traditional indigenous activities remained on pastoral leases.

In manipulating government intentions, I recognize now that we conducted a kind of Freirean community development. The heritage work too resided partially within the radical paradigm of adult education (Freire 2000). The Men were bonded by the older legacy of the Law and its ancient practices. We could not visit stone arrangements, rock-holes

and other sites without being fully attentive to the power of these places and their implications for being.

Keeping open the liminal creative space, resourcing the Men from the sources of funding from heritage grants was always going to be difficult. Eventually the dominant episteme would reassert itself. The double-edged sword of community development would continually swing back to assimilation. *Northern* thinking would require publication of data, a handing over of heritage to the State. *Southern* thinking positioned the Men as authorities, determining who would receive knowledge and how it would be transmitted. Before any knowledge could be transmitted to the State, there needed a process for return of land. The post-structural space could not remain open. I was uninterested in working outside such a space, in an assimilative mode. The state's response was to fund a different researcher and reinstate settler/anthropological (*Northern*) perspectives.

Decentring 2014

Invited to return in 2014, to renew acquaintances with those I had known, to share knowledge with a younger generation, and perhaps help in restarting what was perceived as a stalled development process, I discovered two generations of The Men were nearly all dead, mainly the result of poor health and living conditions in town. An Australian High Court decision in 1992 known as Mabo 2, subsequent Australian Native Title legislation, and various precedent-setting cases (especially *De Rose v State of South Australia* [2013]) resulted in a "consent determination" strategy in South Australia. Various claimants (who bore little relationship to those with standing in The Law and the Tjukurpa in 1983) had negotiated Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) with the State of South Australia and other parties. As a result, mining, pastoral and other land users have achieved certainty of tenure, severely constricting the common law rights of native title holders. The creation of Native Title Representative Body Corporates (RBCs) created a legalistic system, well beyond recognition of the kind of rights the Men had understood. As Connell expressed it; 'For a while, there was a new burst of optimism about land rights and reconciliation in Australia, though that has been systematically closed down by the neoliberal government since 1996' (2007, p.201)

The survival of The Law in the APY Lands produced new generations of *wati* (initiated men), and as the Men predicted, their grandchildren were among those that kept these traditions alive. A diaspora has since resulted, with families distributed across Central and South East Australia. From these various points, the same question remained strong; "How to get back on to country and maintain the Tjukurpa in the twenty-first century?"

Decentring Epistemes and Narratives

Southern theory does not necessarily assume the existence of any epistemes other than the dominant scientific episteme, in which social science is contextualized. The events and changes in the Lake Eyre Basin, however, need to be considered against competing and sometimes complementary epistemes, evident in the way the Men had acted in the world. These epistemes lead to particular narratives and in turn policies, actions and the exercise of power. Three distinct epistemes contextualizing knowledge in the Lake Eyre Basin can be identified. Scientism, the belief in the power of science, and necessity of scientific conduct is the first. It is science that is used and abused within the Northern hegemony. Appeals to science have been made by mining and petroleum resource companies through environmental impact statements, other assessments, public relations materials and reports. Botanist turned anthropologist Baldwin Spencer who worked with the Aranda (Arrente) and discussed also the Arabana (most likely Wangkangurru and Lower Southern Aranda forebears) as a dying race, cast his work as science, although his photography and sound recordings could just as easily be considered artistic constructions (1899/1903).

The personal impact of experiencing ceremonies never became a subject for written reflection and publication, instead a feigned objectivity cast his subjects as unfit species in terminal decline consistent with social Darwinian theory. In contrast Carl Strehlow, a German missionary, portrayed indigenous society and behaviours quite differently, but such views would prove inconsistent with the Anglophone "scientific" silencing work taking place. (Strehlow J. 2010; Spencer 1899). Health reports were consistent with this work, and also cast in the scientific narrative (Basedow 1926). Despite repeated droughts, vermin plagues, siltation of waterholes, economic arguments continuously focused on the

primacy of cattle or even goats where sheep and cattle were unrealistic, as justified occupation by the colonizers, whereas indigenous land-use, was automatically held by 'science' to be in terminal decline.

Eco-Christianity might be a good label for the second episteme. The foundational work of missionaries became tempered by a pragmatic acknowledgement of Aborigines, their bushcraft and ultimately indigenous beliefs that intersected with Christian teaching. John Strehlow (2010) explores at length the unfolding lives of his grandfather and other missionaries at Killalpaninna, East of Lake Eyre, Hermannsburg in Central Australia, and the difficulties of reconciling Lutheran Church requirements with the isolated experience of remote mission life. Indigenous Christians and other contemporary Christians (for example Bookless, 2009) have sought to grapple with Biblical views of life, land and environmental issues. Christian beliefs sat in stark contrast to Social-Darwinism leading instead to creation of safe havens for Aborigines among Christian or superstitious pastoralists, missionaries, and others who did not subscribe to a Social Darwinist, demise of the 'blacks' or 'natives'.

Eco-Christianity reconciles ecology and Aboriginal beliefs with Biblical Creation; accepting Christ and salvation, as alive here and now – a reconciliation of the Holy Spirit and ecology – perhaps even akin to the same spirit of which Tjtayi spoke in 2013. Early Christians operated with a "common purse" economy. Such sharing is recognizably similar to sharing within indigenous gerontocracies.

The Tjukurpa, a traditional Aboriginal worldview provides the third episteme and this requires much greater consideration for its influence on life in the Basin, resistance to settler perspectives, the alien nature of schooling and urban-devised pedagogy. Morton drawing on Japaljari, Palmer and many others describes it this way:

> The core meaning of Altyerre [Tjukurpa] in Arrernte [Aranda] lies somewhere else [beyond dreaming], in the idea of ongoing creation of the world and all that it contains. Altyerre, Jukurrpa and similar terms are fundamentally cosmologies, although they may have other meanings as well. ... When Aboriginal people allude in English to the complete field of ancestral precedent, they speak not so much of the Dreaming, but of 'the Law'. The Law governs the world of all Creation It encompasses not only the rules and regulations by which people live, but also the laws of nature.

> Without the Law, nothing would exist or persist. … By the same token, the Law is everywhere, binding the whole world together in a systematic way. … It is in effect, a First Cause, a synthetic principle to which all minor causes are subordinate. While manifested through the material world, it is not in itself a material entity. It has been described by anthropologist T.C.H. Strehlow (1971) as 'eternal, uncreated, sprung out of itself'. (2005, p.197)

This was very much how The Men saw it when we conducted the community based heritage survey (Reader 1983). We recorded songs and stories of place, sometimes having a strong correspondence to CSIRO environmental zones. The Tjukurpa appeared to be how the world is created, a geology-geography—ecology-sociology-nature, continuously in a state of becoming, explaining a set of relations between, ancestral beings, who we are, what created or influenced in the landscape, and what we may anticipate to find within it. There is a high degree of respect in these relationships and entities. At particular places the names of ancestral agents are often spoken in whispers. Particular people carry these stories and relationships, which create a homely sense of knowing our place. Knowledge is passed on through progressive revelation, originally through increasing levels of initiation, traditionally involving different aspects bodily inscription, cutting and scaring "cicatrices" (Spencer 1899; Basedow 1903; Strehlow 1947).

Decentring Learning

One contemporary indigenous educator from The Northern Territory describes how knowledge is still regulated and acquired:

> When a senior elder knows there are certain people that are limited to a certain level of education. They can talk about a story a painting but there are more deeper stories that are kept for more senior elders, And that its kept there, And that its kept there, it's a top secret stories that make a knowledge, that gives a knowledge, so that that young man, and these young men, they take that knowledge from a senior elder, by observation and participation, not by questions and answers, see? So if I ask a question I am cheating. I have to be and reach that knowledge that this elder has, then this elder can say "very well" you have succeeded. So there are levels that you cannot go beyond except through your own destiny or your own education and the cleverness that is within you. (Guyula 2015)

Strehlow (2010) argues that knowledge in this system was not fixed, but in fact a careful process of deceit maintaining a

gerontocracy, however, it may not be so much maintaining gerontocracy as managing, tagging versions of stories transmitted by different lines.There has also been progressive loss and transfer into non-indigenous forms of knowledge. Hercus (1994) recognised one of the primary reasons for disclosure of stories to linguists and others by her informants was a recognition that many stories were already lost. Loss of language is also impacting on transmission of knowledge.

Tjukurpa or Ularaka, as it is known in the Arabana Native Title determination, (Finn 2012) provides an important orientation with significant explanatory power when relating to a living landscape, inter-species relationships and a lived reality remote from places of *Northern* influence. Spencer (1903b) noted a correspondence between Rain ceremonies and following rain; animal increase ceremony and encounter with the species. In the 1983 heritage survey, I experience two similar correspondences between visits, performances and encounters with totemic species in the following days. Cattle industry pioneer Sidney Kidman paid performance bonuses for successful rainmaking (Idriess 1936; Bowen 1987). Where rain is nearly always a blessing, semi-humorous conversations about the possibility of rainmaking are still broached between pastoralists and former indigenous employees.

This relational dependence between life and land, underpins a practical knowledge too; the bushcraft so significant to survival of both individuals and communities, including pastoral stations and missions, for during at least the first hundred years of colonial 'society'. Abrahm's argument that declining sensibility to the living landscape arises with the development of abstract literacies is relevant here (Abrahm,1996). Most of The Men were barely literate, but strong in their relational knowledge with the landscape. Among the next generation, those who were literate through some schooling, sometimes retained good relational knowledge of the ecology, but those who were most knowledgeable in this regard, often claimed low literacy, having spent much of their time working on stations, or living in the APY Lands. Knowledge of the Tjukurpa is integrated with well-honed observational skills and sensibilities, backed up by strong reasoning capabilities, working seamlessly to inform day-to-day survival in the land and also stock management.

Today, this differentiation in knowledge and knowledge transfer are increasingly recognized, with land custodians explaining the difference and restorative programs being developed for remnant languages. (Guyula 2015).

It is hard to fix just how this heightened sensibility is implicated in orientation and survival. What I learned from The Men and The Lake Eyre Basin during the community heritage survey is difficult to identify. Whatever it was, and however I learned it, in 1984, as a result, I chose to walk alone from the Spencer Gulf to Oodnadatta a distance of over 500Km to fulfil my continuing inquisitiveness about places in the region- it was almost a self-test of what I had learned.

Decentring Vocational knowledge

"Bushcraft"- what today might be called traditional or ecological knowledge- can be seen as knowledge applied from the Tukurpa. Indigenous men, "Aboriginal Stockmen" and "trackers" provided foundational education for missionaries, explorers, and bush entrepreneurs (Gregory 1906; Idriess 1936; Bowen 1987; Ruhen and Williams 1997; Strehlow 2010). During the heritage survey, travelling widely with Darby Gilbert, an Antakerinja man and lay preacher, added significantly to my access to this relational world, in which all three epistemes informed everyday experience of what would otherwise have remained vast and remote open spaces.

In times past, before moving to town, the Men had worked hard in the cattle industry. They did so largely in return for a basic respect and acknowledgement of their skills, together with rations and some pay mostly spent in the station store, or shared "in town" on holidays.

The oldest of the Men, understood "boundary riders" as a euphemism from the days before fenced leases; potentially dangerous work conducted alone, or in pairs, to "encourage" unbranded cattle (cleanskins) from as far as practically possible beyond the theoretical boundary "back" into the territory of the Boss's lease. Fortunes were made and lost through this basic policing of multiplying herds. As with many other aspects of pastoral occupation, the legality of practical actions on stations were highly questionable, yet largely dismissed out of hand when called into account (Idriess 1936; Bowen 1987). Between The Men and cattle-station bosses, there appear to be few if any disputes over entitlement to

country. There is a widely accepted protocol in remote areas for people in general to avoid such conflicts because of the inevitable need to support one another in times of difficulty.

In the summer downtime of the cattle industry, ceremonial rights were accommodated, at least until the 1960s, when it became difficult to reconcile traditional and station life with authorities' increasing demands for children to attend school.

At this point in time it is difficult to assess the current state of bushcraft outside the APY lands and also state of the ecology related to knowledge holding. The number of men and women who have experienced living on country in their youth is contracting. Until recently there have been few opportunities to transmit knowledge through visits to country, for the now large diaspora living in urban settings.

Decentring Schooling

Young men have continued to learn in this environment, but it has not been without significant difficulty in maintaining time on country. Sidney Stewart had seen the threat of schooling intervening in the fabric of family relationships the 1960s. Moving to town and curtailing The Law - ceremonial business on the stations - was the solution to preventing children being stolen away from their families by government.

When I arrived in the early 1980s, a community welfare worker was taking responsibility for enforcing school attendance. A hostel provided institutionalised care for the indigenous children of station workers and others, so that they could attend school.

Sidney did not appear to have foreseen the permanence of the move off country, or the pervasive impact of alcohol on the post-school urbanising population, or upon himself. We talked at length about ways to reverse this dispossession, but I was not hopeful at the time.

On average The Men I met 30 years ago had lower levels of English literacy than young people at Oodnadatta today. In saying; "We speak English", the men took pride in what was their second language. They spoke indigenous languages, some including archaic forms used in ceremony. In the 30 year intervening period the use of Lower Southern Aranda, like Wangkangurru before it, has declined. Today there are

only a few speakers of these languages, despite increasing population and introduction of Arabana-Wangkangurru to some South Australian schools (Wilson and Hercus 2004).

Maintaining dual pedagogy inside school and outside school has remained almost impossible. Internet now reinforces global demands as well as stimulating local identity. Yet a "red dirt curriculum" remains an aspiration as Tjtayi attests. Culture is important. The voice of "locals" in respect to remote education and culture has been well explored by Guenther and others (2014, 2015), and that work is not inconsistent with what I have also learned through conversations in this region.

Knowing our place and decentring the *Metropole*

The phrase "Knowing our place," offers two opposite emphases on power. The first is homely and welcoming; 'let me tell you about OUR Place", it can be complete with knowledge of food plants and animals, as provided by God or as a result of ancestral husbandry. The second emphasis is class-orientated and oppressive; if we belong to lower orders we really need to "know our place"; to follow human authority. It is telling that the British aristocracy and gentry not uncommonly have place names as family names, Acton, Lancaster, York and Windsor for example; while Saxon names, some predating the Norman conquest are often occupation identifiers, such as Smith, Reeder, and Thatcher. Place is one important source of identity, agency and power, and can be closely related to the ability to determine the kinds of knowledge admissible in the construction of identity.

The tension between these two forms of knowing place was very much apparent in my experience of working with this resilient group of men during the 1980s, and with their relatives and descendants, 30 years later. On the one hand, the Men would be considered former "Aboriginal stockmen" or ringers or whatever other appellation settler society would give them. What they knew about cattle and the land was generally not on display when confined to town. Outside of town, even by a few metres, these men of Antakerinja, Aranda and Wangkanguru descent became something quite different. They displayed not only cattle industry skills and bushcraft, but many ceremonial rites of senior *wati*, well documented in anthropological texts, but which I will not describe here in

deference for those who continue to practice the Law. (Strehlow 1947; Basedow, 1903; Gillen & Spencer, 1899). The Men's knowledge, constrained both by the Law, and by colonial oppression, stayed with them waiting for fresh opportunities of expression.

A Freirean model casts the dominating pastoral industry as an oppressive settler force, however this interpretation may be modified by the close personal relationships between the men and pastoralists, with whom they shared so many prior experiences. Some of these relationships were buried by time, as well as by the changing pastoral conditions and indigenous Law protocols. The high rates of incarceration by police - usually related to alcohol, domestic violence in town, and retribution for perceived breaches of The Law - remained a legacy of power, interrupting movement and indigenous occupancy of land. The hegemonic overlay of pastoral industry (1860-1960), with its ration economy as a measure to replace native grains and plant foods, created the terms for survival or death. From 1980 with the introduction of land rights to the North West, the closure of the railway, and the increasing influence of mining exploration, this world continued to transform. Throughout the early Twentieth Century, traditional place knowledge had underpinned the difference between success and failure for the emerging settler enterprises; however, the places remain, and with them the potential of succession under The Law. This place knowledge is grounded in the Tjukurpa, as Morton explains:

> If a totemic being is said to have created a particular place, that place, or 'sacred site' cannot be separated from the ancestor, and people refer to it in personal terms as 'him' or 'her'. Clusters of such sites coalesce to form estates or 'countries' held by particular family groups who likewise see themselves as consubstantial with the ancestors. Hence a threefold identity between people, places and ancestors. (2005, p.198)

As a result, there remained the continuing contest for power through a liberatory form of learning both for The Men and for myself. I don't think I fully understood, the position of The Men in 1981 when they declared their interest in having the land back. In part they were complaining that the rules of the game had been changed. In the ascendency of the pastoral industry, cooperating with "white" managers, being deferential, and playing the role of Jackie (serf) to the Boss (Master) in public, balanced an undisclosed respect for the

role of The Men who kept the industry viable. APY Land Rights destroyed these hidden relationships.

Over time, the shift in perspective has led me to reconsider my own learning and education. How I was educated through this contact, and how different educational perspectives may be generated as a result, is significant, not only for remote Australia, but for sustainability and environmental justice more generally.

Being and learning in such places can generate different views of *the Metropole*, its agents and activities. Attempts to provide conventional urban schooling in remote settlements is a tenuous bridge to globalization that Red Dirt curriculum is challenging. The classroom will always sit in stark contrast to the rich experience of the dunes, gibber-plains, springs and creeks, where real things live. It is here that Dodson's remark takes full impact. Dispossession of land is actually dispossession of ourselves.

The experience of living and working with The Men drove this home. I experienced "country" so strongly in the Basin that it causes me to question what had happened in my native Warwickshire and Gloucestershire. Why as a teenager, could I feel the weight of dispossession without knowing exactly to what I should be entitled? This is very different to Marxian alienation. It is not about capital and a means of production, but about missing relationship, belonging in place, power and fairness in our dealings with each-other and the living world of which we are part.

My grandfather and the Men, grandfathers of a current generation of parents, shared a reverence for trees. Whether it was a 400 year oak in the leafy English Midlands or a desert remnant indicating a more sylvan age in the Basin, it was not the tree itself that was important, but the connection that links all present with each other, the living habitat and its origins.

Only a small shift from such sensibility leads into the second episteme. Eco-Christianity lives with "Emanuel" – God with us - almost as tangible and connected in remote open spaces as the desert God of Abraham, John the Baptist, and perhaps of Carl Strehlow. This is not the abstract, distant God of Thompson's millenarian industrialists offering delayed gratification. There is a spiritual connection, we are 'in this

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world but not of this world' (John 15:19). 'eternal, uncreated, sprung out of itself', as Morton cited above. Our bodies return to the earth, (Genesis 3:19)

From the commonality of these connections we can return to the scientific episteme for a falsification of the industrial economy. The production of consumer surrogates, iPhones etc. packaged goods and cars provide class identity supplanting real human and living relationships. Provided on extended supply chains there is an increasing potential for imminent collapse.

On the Macumba pastoral run in 2015, just ten people, employees and contractors of the pastoral company, are supposed to manage and maintain a lease area of over 11,000 sq. km. for the benefit of shareholders. An indigenous population of around 350 was estimated on the lower Macumba and Kallakoopah by Lewis (1875). Out-migration, in addition to early killings, were is a direct consequence of colonization and contemporary economics. Macumba is the absolute periphery, calling out of the silence for new sensibility and renewed human agency within the ecosystem.

The Metropole engenders subservience, limits to what we can understand through received abstract concepts; but, at *the periphery* we can become so emplaced, centred and related, that knowledge of our knowledge doesn't matter – abstraction is subsumed by vision and imagination by the weft and warps of life's fabric, the pattern of ourselves coming to the fore, within the geography.

Urban curriculum in rural and remote education remains of contested cultural relevance. The global dimension of the Internet means that significant understanding of gaps and opportunities for communication between *the Metropole* and *the periphery* may be closed, even if by somewhat restricted by bandwidth. It is easier to succumb to the pull of the Metropole, take up online gaming and gambling than it is to monetize local cultural production and conservation efforts. For some in the current generation Christian hope remains the strongest foil against urban degradation in remote towns. As government service provision is withdrawn in favour of online services, local community is in danger of becoming more austere, and ironically, the pressure to gravitate to urban centres becomes greater, just when the

communications and technology arrive which could support a more diversified remote economy.

Sitting on any of the Basin's dry watercourses, where access points to subsurface waters are critically few and far between, what theories really matter? The heritage project in the 1980s enlivened a very different fabric of being. Revisiting in 2014 and contemplating how these connections influence in my life, I see this enlivement not so much as an anchor to specific places, as to importance of placement, understanding dispossession and alienation. The silence of the land identified by Connell (2007), is one that liberates global capital from local responsibility; the silence is created through policy "deafness" or blindness, ignoring or destroying inconvenient observable realities, such as natives with indigenous rights. Rationalisations, such as Social-Darwinism, or "global economy" help silence the observable. Urbanised and dispossessed we exchange the homely "OUR place" for alienation, loss of identity, becoming instead, subjects classed by others. The moral being present in non-scientistic epistemes is ignored and subservience to supposedly amoral, but often evil purposes are demanded instead. The *Metropole's* urban denizens are derived from rural and remote out-migrations and their offspring, from rural Gloucestershire, from rural China, and even small populations of the Lake Eyre Basin. They represent successful resource transfers to and by the masters, the land-gentries, who seek to outrun the ecological consequences through the liquidity of their abstract actions.

Observing "the whitefella" in the landscape, The Men's forebears in the 1920s and 30s had anticipated the colonizing behaviour, likening it to rat plagues which, having eaten out all, simply collapse (Farwell 1950; Bowen 1987). In the *Metropoles*, climate change and other impending ecological catastrophes can receive no action, and such inaction is marking the progressive demise of civilization. Urban concentration resembles the rats on Naryilco station, which in their thousands dived into the last remaining water-tank (Idriess 1936, p.110). Without *Southern Theory* educational and other policy-writers will struggle even more in writing curriculum relevant in the periphery, or even curriculum relevant to their own survival.

Perhaps it is time just to sit and observe changes in the fabric, including phenomena so insignificant and remote, yet so intricately interwoven that no one thread can be removed without escalating repercussions in the broader design. Such things are beyond simple linear explanation as *Northern.*

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A BUDDHIST APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION AND EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA (CEYLON) IN THE CONTEXT OF COLONISATION AND SOUTHERN THEORY[4]

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ABSTRACT This paper examines knowledge construction and education informed by Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) and their subordination to Western knowledge construction and education during the British colonial period. Taking the writings of a bilingual Buddhist scholar-philosopher on Buddhist concepts, approach and theory as the basis, the author considers how they can be used for transforming contemporary education characterised by self assertion and self actualisation. The author is critical of the rationalist-empirical approach to education advocated and adopted by modern social sciences. As an alternative, the paper presents details of virtuous form of education based on Buddhist values, ethics and contemplation capable of addressing issues facing individuals and societies.

KEYWORDS Southern Theory and Buddhism, Buddhism and education, Buddhism and Sustainability, Buddhist worldview, Mindfulness in education

Introduction

This paper investigates what the Buddhist intellectual tradition, which is considered as a source of knowledge and wisdom in Sri Lanka, reveals about humans, society, reality, self, perception and existence as well as their implications on

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[4] An earlier draft was presented at the 42nd annual conference of the Australian and New Zealand Comparative and International Education Society, Brisbane, Australia.

alternative educational practice. It introduces selected Buddhist concepts that shaped the mainstream knowledge paradigm and social organisation, institutions, community life as well as social imaginary in the country[5]. The illustrations in the paper are useful for identifying features of Buddhist discourses that can have implications for postcolonial and post-modern education. The ideas discussed can be useful for alternative education based on values that are commensurate with the manifold needs of contemporary society.

The paper offers a reasoning about human suffering and its continuities-discontinuities as well as a methodology based on Buddhism to develop wisdom that can help in a path to liberation, happiness and fulfillment on a sustainable basis. It is a path mapped out by the Buddha based on sensory and extra sensory knowledge, understanding and insights generated via deep self-analysis and reflection to be sustained through personal commitment, individual and collective human endeavor. It claims to produce inner harmony and enlightenment through non-competitive efforts of individuals and groups that enable them to look for meaning in life beyond what is defined for us by dominant forces – whether they are the market, the media, modern education systems, dominant knowledge production and dissemination mechanisms, or other agencies on different missions. Buddhism provides a logically consistent and complex but inter-woven set of propositions enabling human beings to achieve intellectual emancipation and control of mental energies so that their physical pain and suffering are understood for what they are rather than for what they are not – as commonly assumed.

The Buddhist intellectual tradition and knowledge production methods in Sri Lanka were subjected to significant stresses during the European colonial period, in particular the British period. They sustained these stresses by creatively and critically engaging with the Western languages and knowledge systems on one hand and sustaining the traditional methods of knowledge production in the face of modernity by dedicated Buddhist scholar monks on the other. In the process, a

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[5] *Theravada* Buddhism is one of the two schools which 'claim the authority of the Buddha for their propositions' (Carr, B. & Mahalingam, M.1997, p. 303). The basic sources of this tradition are the texts of the Pali *Tripitaka*, compiled during the first century BC' (Jackson, R.J. 1997, p. 325). The other school is called *Mahayana.*

religious modernization and a national revival process occurred paving the way for political independence of the country in 1948. This brought about further changes in the way knowledge was produced and the Buddhist intellectual tradition was maintained.

The paper highlights the connections as well as contrasts between Buddhist thought in Sri Lanka and those of the metropole. It provides an illustration of Connell's view that 'the hegemony of metropolitan knowledge does not obliterate all others' (Connell, 2007, p. xi) and shows that it is possible to undo any erasure of experience and knowledge from the periphery resulting from colonisation by employing the tools embodied in Buddhist thought. Southern Theory, details of which are presented by Connell (2007), provides a framework to explore alternative knowledge systems in the global periphery that are useful for the conceptualization of non-Western social science and education and the erasure of knowledge that took place in the global periphery as a result of colonization and the embedding of modernist paradigm of thought and action. In the next section, Connell's views are briefly stated.

Connell and Southern Theory

Connell (2007) uses *Southern Theory* to call attention to 'periphery-centre relations in the realm of knowledge' (p. viii). But doing Southern Theory ought not to be limited to this aspect only. She explains two important aspects of doing Southern Theory. The first is to comprehend the way modern social sciences have been contributing to the reshaping of societies in the global periphery. The second is for societies to develop self-understanding on their own terms, through their own intellectual traditions, analytical approaches, concepts and theories (Connell, 2007, p. vii). She claims, 'the hegemony of metropolitan knowledge does not obliterate all others. Alternative ways of thinking about the world certainly persist. But they are readily marginalised' (Connell, 2007, p. xi). She cites examples of the contestation and the manner in which intellectuals in the global south also exercise agency (Connell, 2007, p. 219). More importantly, she says 'the relationship with metropolitan knowledge in these cases also involved a critical distance: a willingness to challenge metropolitan

formulations, or to judge when to leave a certain theoretical position' (Connell, 2007, p. 223).

This paper makes a particular contribution to understanding the second aspect of doing Southern Theory as explained by Connell (2007), i.e. self-understanding of Sri Lanka's Buddhist intellectual tradition in relation to colonisation and modern knowledge construction processes. As Southern Theorists anticipate, this task requires engagement with and contestation of metropolitan knowledge and theoretical formulations while maintaining a critical distance and shifting the focus from 'modern' to 'alternative knowledge paradigms'.

British Colonisation and its Impact on Buddhist Intellectual Activity: Role of Bilingual Intelligentsia

This section provides details on (a) the origin and development of Buddhism and Buddhist education in Sri Lanka, and (b) the role of Buddhist clergy, English educated intelligentsia and the bilingual intelligentsia in knowledge production and dissemination in order to provide a sense of the historical context.

According to the Sri Lankan chronicle *Mahavamsa*, the son of Emperor Asoka in India, Arahant Mahinda came to Sri Lanka with the message of Buddhism in 246 B.C. and the King *Devanampiyatissa* was impressed with the message of Buddhism delivered by Rev. Mahinda and converted to Buddhism. Since then, Buddhism received royal patronage through the centuries and spread in Sinhalese society including its beliefs and practices pertaining to agriculture, medicine, trade, healing, education, inter-personal relations and the core values. Learned monks in temples engaged in teaching, learning and reflection. Buddhist monasteries such as *Mahāviāaraya* (late 3rd century B.C) and later *Abhyagiriya* (2nd century B.C) founded with royal patronage became two centres of excellence mentioned in the historical records. Gradually, 'temples came to be established in each village and town, which became centres of learning for the priesthood as well as the male part of the population amongst well-to-do families. Apart from Buddhist teaching, students learned languages – i.e. Sinhala, Pali and in the case of priests,

Sanskrit – as well as astrology, medicine, and so on' (Gamage, D. T., 2010, p. 396).

The knowledge production and intellectual activity in the country during the pre-European colonial period was closely associated with the system of government, temples and the monks (*Bhikkus).* According to Obeyesekere (1984 based on Amunugama, 1973),

> The bureaucratic and political system under the Sinhala kings, had a network of office holders and scribes which spread from the centre (king) through the nobility (*adigars* and *dissavas*) down to provincial chiefs (*ratemahattayas*) and finally down to the village level (headmen). The monastic system (*Sangha*) also had an organisational structure moving from the major monastic centres through regional and provincial centres to the village temple and its priests (p. 72).

This system encountered significant changes during the European colonisation period (1505-1948), in particular the British period (1796-1948) having an impact on Buddhist education and maintenance of Buddhist scholarship[6]. In comprehending these changes and their impact on education, one has to be conscious of the Buddhist revival that occurred during the 19th century as well as the schools established with the assistance and encouragement of the Buddhist Theosophical society and *Mahabodhi* Society (see Gamage & Setunga, 2010, pp. 412-413).

The introduction of English education in the British colonial period resulted in the dislocation of the existing hierarchies of educated intelligentsia in the Sinhalese society. They formed 'into two water tight compartments; an English educated upper-class elite and a Sinhala speaking, middle and lower middle class intelligentsia' (Obeyesekere, 1984, p. 72). The predicament of Buddhist clergy, who were a part of local Sinhalese intelligentsia but excluded from the English education system, was quite turbulent and distressing. Their activities went through a period of decline and revival in the 19th century as a response to the changes introduced by the British colonial government, missionaries and others active in the economic and social spheres. As a result of losing state patronage and the expanding influence of Christianity and

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[6] In 1815 the British captured the Kandyan kingdom with the support of Sinhalese nobility who had been frustrated with the rule of last Nayakkar king Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe. Until then, British administration was limited to the maritime provinces of Ceylon.

mission schools, the Buddhist clergy retreated into remote rural locations. They kept alive the Buddhist intellectual and literary tradition among the rural intelligentsia (the school teacher, *ayurvedic* physician, astrologer, village headman, rural landowner, etc.).

Buddhist clergy considered themselves as the guardians of the country's language, culture and religion when they were being undermined by the forces of westernisation and Christianity (Obeyesekere, 1984, p. 73). English educated Sinhalese were generally known as Westernised, Anglicised elites.

During the early stages of colonisation, the Sinhala aristocracy 'had already held office under the Portuguese and Dutch and realised the privileges an English education would confer' (Obeyesekere, 1984, p. 73). Those considered as '[t]he English educated elites of the British period were the sons and daughters of the Sinhala aristocracy especially of the former maritime provinces and of an affluent new entrepreneurial class' (Obeyesekere, 1984, p. 73). This group also included the English educated intelligentsia. Its knowledge of Sinhala language was poor due to assimilation and members came from the Sinhalese aristocracy as well as the upper middle class[7].

The large masses of people in the island depended on Sinhala speaking intelligentsia, including Buddhist monks, for their intellectual pursuits around the time of independence and afterwards. However, after the independence, the Sinhala-speaking intelligentsia were kept securely outside the centres of political and economic power for a period of almost a decade' (Obeyesekere, 1984, p. 74).

The English educated Sinhalese intelligentsia who contributed to the intellectual life were 'the scholars, scientists, social scientists, doctors, lawyers and university teachers whose fluency and command of English gave them ready access to the larger world of scholarship and thereby enabled them to make a significant contribution not just in a Sri Lankan context but in many cases as theoretical contributions to their specific disciplines' (Obeyesekere, 1984, p. 86).

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[7] See Roberts, M (1982).

Second group, the bilingual intelligentsia, played a significant role in the early decades following independence in 1948. They were the product of the revivalist nationalist and Buddhist educational movements of the twenties, who were different in character and outlook from their English educated predecessors. Being fluent in two languages, this new generation received their education in Buddhist schools in the English medium and had access to university education. They were able to compete with the westernised elites in most employment fields (Obeyesekere, 1984, p. 78)

This new intelligentsia was able to span two cultures while proving to be the agents of modernisation 'percolating new ideas, attitudes and values, through the press and the literature to the larger society' (Obeyesekere, 1984, p. 79). With the emergence of a bilingual intelligentsia the older intellectual groups did not disappear completely (Obeyesekere, 1984, p. 82). David Kalupahana, whose work I examine later, was part of the bilingual intelligentsia. He started his academic career at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.

In the formal academic life at the University of Ceylon (later Peradeniya) where the medium of instruction was English until the 70s, the scholarly work was dominated by Western education and metropolitan knowledge production. This was a result of the academic staff receiving postgraduate training in countries such as Britain and U.S.A. leading to a sharp division of knowledge production process in the university. The Sinhala-Buddhist realm of knowledge production was sustained by a dedicated group of academics that were bilingual and/or multilingual in the faculty of Oriental Studies, which was later absorbed into the faculty of Arts. Many of them had obtained formal training and qualifications in oriental languages, history, literature, and religions with emphasis on India and Sri Lanka on one hand and Western knowledge and methodology of social sciences and humanities on the other. In other faculties, Western science including medicine, technology and professional/disciplinary knowledge, was embedded in teaching, research and publications.

In the academic life of the university, Western-oriented academics labeled as 'traditionalists' those who based their scholarly work on Indology, Buddhism, Sinhala language, art, culture, literature, Eastern history, archaeology etc. Those

who used Western philosophy, social science, and humanities disciplinary knowledge predicated on Western science, technology and other fields were considered as 'modernists'. Respective academic discourse also reflected this division. An example is the academic discourses on development pertaining to post colonial, underdeveloped societies in the 60s and 70s[8].

With the expansion of the University system, in particular the upgrading of two former *pirivena* - centres of learning for monks - to be universities in 1959 and the establishment of Buddhist and Pali University in 1982, the production of knowledge in relation to Buddhist scholarship increased. As a result, there is a substantial body of texts written in Sinhala and English representing Buddhism and associated theories, concepts, methods and the ethical dimension. Anthropologists and sociologists have also contributed to the analytical study of Buddhism, though with an emphasis on rural religious beliefs and rituals at the empirical level rather than in textual analysis.

Thus due to colonization, science, technology, social sciences and philosophy emanating from the global North have reshaped Sri Lanka's education system and knowledge products in line with the requirements of Western European societies and USA. However, according to Goonatilake (2011), Sri Lanka had a long intellectual tradition that stuck to Buddhism's explanation of human behaviour. Indeed, the Buddhist intellectual heritage includes elements of science, psychology, and philosophy. They have been taken seriously in Western disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, and science also (p. 11). The work of Buddhist scholars like Kalupahana and the Buddhist epistemology, theories and concepts assist us to understand Sri Lanka's philosophical and religious heritage on its own terms.

Kalupahana (1933 - 2014) was a bilingual intellectual who was literate in Sinhala and English languages. He possessed a knowledge of Pali, Tibetan, Chinese, and Sanskrit also. His scholarly contribution has been to the comparative and critical understanding of Buddhist philosophy and theory, including its signature conceptions and approach to human being, individual-society relationship, theory of knowledge,

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[8] See Hennayake, N (2006)

human perception and its relationship to phenomena, and the ethical dimensions. The key Buddhist conceptions that he dealt with include topics such as human experience, existence, change, human society, morality and path to human liberation. His work embodies an analysis relating to *Theravada* Buddhism and critical evaluation of Western philosophical ideas and concepts.

In addition to his knowledge of Buddhist texts, Kalupahana had a fair grounding on the historical, cultural and social context of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. He devoted his academic life to counter Western philosophical assumptions on individual and society, the factors that sustain these or subject them to change, as well as the necessary foundational thoughts for dealing with them from a Buddhist perspective. We can consider his writings as embodying elements of Southern Theory. Next I look at his writings and selected Buddhist concepts from *Theravada* Buddhism to show the value of Buddhist epistemology as an alternative knowledge paradigm helpful in understanding the underlying features of human existence and human emancipation. In this task, I rely mainly on Kalupahana's paper titled *Buddhism and Society in Sri Lanka: A comparative Study* presented to the 7th International Conference on Sri Lanka studies in Canberra in 1999 and his other publications.

Critique of Western Philosophical Conceptions

Kalupahana (1999) examines a range of conceptions constructed by Western philosophers about society that he considers as dominating 'a major segment of humanity but with unfortunate consequences' (p.1). An example given is science. Kalupahana (1999) identifies two fundamental ideas embodied in Western philosophical tradition: 1. The true-false dichotomy and the fact-value distinction. He says, 'Philosophers as well as social scientists have often remained faithful to these ideas' (p. 1).

Referring to British philosophers who adopted an empiricist standpoint, he claims that as for the scientists, 'discovery of truth was completely dominated by the search for objectivity and certainty' (1999, p. 1). Yet it 'undermined several important facts relating to human life' (1999, p. 1) such as the devaluation of moral discourse, highlighting of the

individual giving rise to 'the popular Western view of the absolute independence of a person, this being its conception of liberty', and 'the empiricist emphasis on the true-false dichotomy and the reliance on the particular rather than the universal in determining what is true or real' (1999, p. 1). He says, 'while the empiricist tradition that claimed to have followed the method of science generally tended toward the recognition of the reality of the particular or the individual, the rationalist tradition moved in the direction of highlighting the universal or the social' (Kalupahana, 1999, p. 2). Kalupahana questioned how European sociologists such as Durkheim and Comte 'who wanted sociology to be an exact science, banished psychology' (Kalupahana, 1999, p. 3).

Concepts from the Theravada Buddhist Tradition

In the following pages, I look at selected Buddhist concepts based on Kalupahana's writings in order to show how the Buddhist approach/Perspective could contribute to Southern Theory in terms of a distinctive knowledge of self and society based on human experience. Kalupahana's paper (1999) provides a discussion of the 'major contribution of the Buddha toward understanding the foundations of human knowledge, conception of a human person, society, morals and freedom' (p. 3). In doing so, Kalupahana makes reference to a range of Buddhist textual sources.

Human Experience: the basis of Buddhist theory

Kalupahana (1987) observes that to the Buddha, any theoretical explanation of the individual and society is to be based on the nature of human experience. Buddha's early discourses make it clear that 'sensory experience is the basis of all human knowledge and understanding' (Kalupahana 1987, p. 9). In fact, the Buddha did not show interest in discussions 'relating to a theory that has no basis in sense experience' (1987, p. 9). Kalupahana (1987) describes this as the perspective of a radical empiricist who is 'compelled to admit the impermanence and non-substantiality of all human experience' (p. 11).

Kalupahana (1976) states that Buddhism 'is empiricistic and anti metaphysical and that it does not accept anything

which cannot be experienced either through senses or extrasensory perception' (p. ix) Buddhism helps us to understand the constitution of things, the elimination of craving (*rāga, tanhā*) and grasping (*upādāna*) (p. xiii). The Buddha rejected any ultimate principle like the individual 'self' (*atman*) or the universal reality (*loka* = Upanisadic *Brahman*). This 'was based on the fact that any such ultimate reality, which was recognized as non sensuous, indescribable, and transcendental, is also metaphysical' (Kalupahana, 1976, p. xiii).

Human Conception, Perception (sensory and extra sensory) and Knowledge Types

Human conception plays a main 'role in the evolution as well as the dissolution of social and political institutions' (Kalupahana, 1987, p. 11). According to *Samyutta Nikaya,* a Buddhist text, human conceptions relate to 'what is seen (*dittha*), heard *(suta)*, thought (*muta*), cognized (*vinnata*), achieved (*patta*), sought *(pariesita)*, and reflected (*manasa anuvicarita*). It is conceptual knowledge about physical as well as non-physical objects achieved through human experience, which is important. Buddha however warned against the 'reification of such objects moving far beyond the limits of human experience' (Kalupahana, 1987, pp.10-11).

Kalupahana (1976) explains that 'for the Buddha, one's knowledge and vision is a natural, not a supernatural occurrence. His claim was of a threefold knowledge (tisso vijjā) pertaining to the extra sensory knowledge: 1) retracognition (the ability to perceive one's own past history), 2) clairvoyance (the knowledge of the deceased and survival of other beings who wonder in the cycle of existence), and 3) knowledge of the destruction of defiling impulses' (p.19)[9]. These three are considered as most important among the six types of higher knowledge, the other three being psychokinesis (power of will), clairaudience (faculty of perceiving sounds at a distance), and telepathy – ability to comprehend another's mind (1976, pp. 21-22).

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[9] For more on these see chapter 7 in Kalupahana (1987)

Sense Data and Perception Process

Buddha recognised the validity of sense perception. 'Sense data (*phassa or Sanna*) are the primary sources of our knowledge and understanding of the world...Man has been conditioned to interpret what he sees, hears, feels, and so forth' (Kalupahana, 1976, p. 20). However, sense perceptions can mislead a person.

Theory of Causality (Patichchasamuppāda)/Dependent Arising and the Twelve Factors

In this section, I narrate Buddha's interpretation of causality based on Kalupahana (1976). The Buddha rejected the existence of a substantial self. The middle way adopted by him to explain human personality is 'dependent arising' or *Patichcha Samuppāda.* It includes twelve causal factors in a sequence where the presence of one leads to another. Buddhist scholars describe this as the theory or formulae of causality[10]. All phenomena in the universe including human personality are subjected to this theory.

Buddha explained causal relations and causally conditioned phenomena, including human personality, without any metaphysical assumptions. He thus formulated an empiricist theory of causality to explain life process, how the individual experience happiness or suffering, and other phenomena in the universe. Buddha discovered uniformity in causally conditioned phenomena and relations. 'While individual instances of causal happening were verified on the basis of experience, sensory and extra sensory, the uniformity of the causal law was reached through inductive inference based on these experiences' (Kalupahana, 1976, p. 29).

As memory fades over time, even knowledge of the past is based on inductive inference. Knowledge of the future can be had only through inductive inference. 'Thus experiential knowledge (*dhamma ñāna*) consists of knowledge of causally conditioned phenomena as well as the causal relations (*patichchasamuppāda*) of the present and partially of the past' (Kalupahana, 1976, p. 30). In my view, *patichcha samuppāda*

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[10] This is also known as *Conditional Genesis.* According to this, by using twelve factors 'the whole existence and continuity of life and its cessation are explained' (Rahula, 1978, p. 53).

has deep meanings to education of the individual and his/her mental dispositions conditioned by not only the sensory data but also their distortions.

In Buddha's application of this formulae or theory to the human personality (and life process) ignorance *(avijjā)* heads the list. It creates dispositions *(sańkhāra)* or mental formations, which in turn condition one's consciousness *(viññāna).* Consciousness in turn determines the psychophysical personality (*nāmarūpa).* It conditions six senses *(salāyatana)* which in turn create contact *(phassa).* Contact leads to feeling *(vedanā)* –pleasurable, painful, or neutral. 'Depending on the nature of the feelings, there arises craving *(tanhā)* which is generally considered to be threefold: desire for sense pleasures *(kāma),* for existence *(bhava),* and for nonexistence *(vibhava).* Craving is the cause of grasping *(upādana),* as a result of which the process of becoming (*bhava)* is set in motion. This stage represents again the end of a life span and the beginning of a fresh one' (Kalupahana, 1976, p. 32).

According to Kalupahana (1987), Buddha's 'view that all experienced phenomena are dependently arisen or are related events dissolved the sharp dichotomy between the particular and the universal' (p.10). Moreover, it 'enabled the Buddha to accommodate a variety of factors generally excluded by the absolutist and essentialist accounts of individual and society' (Kalupahana, 1987, p.10). Change is a keyword in Buddhist philosophy.

In my view, this theory of personality can explain the accumulation drive in the modern global capitalist economy and neoliberal education whose aim is to create ever more increasing efficiencies in terms of human capital and greater returns for educational organisations. Similarly, the human trait of domination-subordination that drives individuals and groups to exercise power over others, in particular those who are vulnerable, could also be explained by this theory.

Conception of the Permanent vs. Non Substantiality

Kalupahana (1987) believes that Eastern and Western transcendentalists had emphasised that 'the conception of the permanent and incorruptible is a necessary condition for explaining the flux of experience' (pp. 9-10). But the Buddha

has argued against this assertion. Utilising the doctrine of non-substantiality (*anitta*)[11], Kalupahana (1987) explains that the Buddha's doctrine of non-substantiality (*anitta*) aims to deconstruct fossilised relations and entities (p.10). This concept of non-substantiality is a Buddhist principle that distinguishes it from other religious explanations of continuity and change in human life. The Buddhist views of human experience and sensory-extra sensory conception are important principles of Buddhist worldview. They are the basis on which Buddhism critiques other worldviews.

Prejudices, Subjective Attitudes, Ego Consciousness and Reflection

Subjective prejudices play a significant role in one's understanding or perception of truth. For instance likes (*ruchi*), dislikes (*aruchi*), attachment (*chanda*), aversion (*dosa*) confusion (*moha*) fear (*bhaya*). These 'prevent one from perceiving things as they are' (Kalupahana, 1976, p. 19). For right understanding (*sammā ditthi*), the Buddha explained two sources, 1) the testimony of another (*parato ghosa*), and 2) proper reflection (*yoniso manasikāra*) (1976, p. 20). The testimony of another should be verified in the light of one's experiences to arrive at the truth, as testimony alone could be either true or false. 'Proper reflection involves both experience and reflection or reasoning. Thus the Buddha recognized experience, both sensory and extra sensory, and reasoning or inference based on experience as sources of knowledge' (Kalupahana, 1976, p. 20).

Kalupahana (1976) reiterates Buddha's view that the intrusion of the ego consciousness fashions the entire process of perception with obsessions. Obsessions such as craving (*tanhā*), conceit (*māna*), and dogmatic views (*detthi*) are the result of ego intrusion. Subjective attitudes interfere with sense perceptions and distort them (e.g. likes and dislikes). The process of meditation and the development of extrasensory perception are, in a way, directed at eliminating these subjective prejudices' (1976, p. 21)[12].

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[11] In the popular usage in Sri Lanka, *anitta* or *anitya* is translated as impermanence.

[12] For a diagrammatic presentation of sensory and extra sensory perception, see figure 1, in Kalupahana (1976, p 3).

Conception of Society: Mutual Self-interest and Human Desire

According to Buddha's view, '[s]ociety is neither an aggregate of separated individuals nor an objective and universal reality unperceived by human consciousness' (Kalupahana, 1999, p. 7). As observed by Kalupahana, 'if the normal human person constitutes simple self-interest, explained in terms of dependent arising, society is no more than mutual self-interest' (Kalupahana, 1999, p. 7).

'In contrast to the Brahmanical theory of the divine ordering of the four classes', Kalupahana adds that the Buddha explained 'the evolution and dissolution of society', (Kalupahana, 1999, p. 7). Kalupahana (1999) contends that, '[t]he discourse relating to the origins (*Aggañña Suttanta*) is the Buddha's response to the Brahminical caste system' (p. 7). Society is subjected to three natural disabilities or diseases (*ābādha*): Desire (*icchā*), hunger (*anasana*), and decay (*jarā*). According to Buddhist theory that recognises mutual self-interest or collective human interest as the definition of society, human desire can be the most potent cause of social ill.

Kalupahana (1999) emphasises that for the scientific sociologist, this is merely a psychological factor having no relevance to the evolution and function of society. For the Buddha, the effect of greed on the social life of human beings is devastating. It is the 'disease of mind' (*cetasika roga*) that can destroy the moral fabric of society (p. 7).

After building his argument based on Buddha's teachings, Kalupahana (1999) makes a very important point. Referring to the two extremes of possessive individualism philosophy founded on absolute self-assertion and self-negation embodied in self-mortification (foundation of absolute altruism), Buddha's belief was that '[i]t is the middle way between these two that constitutes the moral life and which contributes to a healthy individual and society' (Kalupahana, 1999, p. 8). This is to be understood in relation to the conditional arising of self and impermanence or non-substantiality described earlier.

Moral life based on Buddhist Principles and Ethics

The fundamental perspective required for moral life is that a human person is not absolutely independent but dependent. This was part of the Buddhist social and cultural experience in Sri Lanka. Egoism, self-centredness or possessive individualism did not figure in the lives of Sri Lankans (Kalupahana, 1999, p. 11). Buddhism provides causal explanations to moral, social and spiritual behaviour (see chapters 5, 6, 7 in Kalupahana, 1976). Kalupahana (1999) contends that 'the doctrine of causality or Dependent Arising (DA) provided a solid theoretical foundation to 'the moral principles that served as the backbone of a healthy society' (p.11).

Kalupahana (1999) elaborates on moral life based on dependence between individual 'self-interest' and the society with 'mutual self-interest' (p.11). It provided the foundation for the tank and *dagaba* culture in Sri Lanka (Kalupahana, 1999, p. 12). It also nurtured art in temples and certain rituals associated with worship (pp. 11-13). Such a moral life replaces 'life based upon the belief in rewards and punishments' (Kalupahana, 1999, p. 12) with virtuous life.

These articulations of Buddhist concepts and theory relating to human experience, sensory knowledge and its distortions, non substantiality and conditional genesis of self and the moral life etc. can help us to conceptualise an education based on virtuous rather than short-term individual self interest. It is to be noted that the Buddhist concepts as discussed earlier and principles of analysis are different from the empiricist, positivist perspective characteristic of metropolitan social sciences that were ingrained in Sri Lanka's first university during the British colonisation period and subsequently spread into others. Bilingual scholars such as Kalupahana attempted to navigate the Western world of social sciences and philosophies on one hand and highlight the core analytical concepts and methods in the Buddhist philosophy on the other.

Buddhist Concepts and their Implications on Alternative Form of Education

Thus far the paper presented a series of Buddhist concepts and theory of causation as well as how they influenced in the

formation of moral life and a particular kind of society based on mutual self-interest in Sri Lanka. In this section, I discuss the implications of such concepts and corresponding practices to visualise an alternative form of education based on the views of other Buddhist scholars. This can be an important aspect of the knowledge construction and dissemination process pertaining to Southern Theory, especially its applied dimension.

According to Bodhi (1998), when discussing education based on Buddhist principles (*Dhamma*), educators have to determine the ideals of education (p. 2). She says that the Buddha held up five qualities of a model student, whether monk or layperson, i.e. faith, virtue, generosity, learning, and wisdom (Bodhi, 1998, p. 2).

Bodhi (1998) believes that education should be aimed at the development of positive virtues such as kindness, honesty, purity, truthfulness, and mental sobriety. The task of education is 'to draw forth from the mind its innate potential for understanding' (p.1). Education informed by Buddhism 'aims at a parallel transformation of human character and intelligence, holding both in balance and ensuring that both are brought to fulfillment' (Bodhi, 1998, p.1). To this end, 'the practical side of education must be integrated with other requirements designed to bring the potentialities of human nature to maturity in the way envisioned by the Buddha' (Bodhi, 1998, p. 1). Such an education must instill values. However, the commercialisation of education and the economic order designed to drive maximum profits are major problems in achieving such a goal.

Buddhist scholars, social scientists and philosophers have also discussed several problematic aspects of currently dominant education and social science knowledge while identifying certain remedies based on Buddhist principles and how to apply Buddhist principles and practice in disciplines. Some of these are outlined below:

Firstly, there is a perspective difference. De Silva (2014a) explains the difference between education informed by Buddhist thought and the currently dominant model of school education, which emphasises 'rational and sensory knowing' (p. 3). Here 'the rational involves calculation, explanation, analysis, sensory lives of observation and measurement.

Together these form the rational-empirical approach that has set the standard of knowledge across disciplines' (De Silva, 2014, p. 3). Drawing inspiration from Buddhism, De Silva proposes contemplative and transformative education of which the primary aim is not information gathering or seeking quick answers (De Silva, 2014, p. 2). Instead, getting immersed in the question is a major part of it. Buddhist approach to education is focused 'on the experiential, self-reflexive and the contemplative dimensions of learning' (De Silva, 2014, p. 3). Insight meditation (*vipassana*) is a 'unique dimension of Buddhist contemplative practice' (De Silva, 2014, p. 3).

Secondly, the emphasis on socially and culturally constructed 'identity' in social sciences has been called into question by the Buddhist concept of non-self. Questions arise about the identities constructed by family, culture and society, their permanence and grasping or clinging by individuals and groups. According to Waldron (2008), social scientists are suspicious of the appearance of things and look beyond or behind them to disclose their hidden structures (p. 2). In this sense, when we look at the identity construction process, 'we must ignore or repress our own involvement in its construction' (p. 2), and 'take identity as a given, something independent, substantial, even sacred' (Waldron, 2008, p. 2). However, when viewed from a Buddhist perspective, there is no autonomous identity. 'Nothing in the world has an isolated existence: all things exist in relation to each other and are interdependent' (Shen & Midgley, 2007, p. 182). Here the Buddhist concepts of dependent arising of phenomena, including self and causal relations discussed by Kalupahana in previous pages, are relevant. Individuality and identities are transient as any other phenomena. They are vehicles for achieving something else, not the ends.

Waldron (2008) clarifies that 'it is our misguided attempts to protect and sustain such constructed identities that lead to the preponderance of suffering caused by human actions' (p. 3). Buddhism promotes selflessness and non-attachment to identities constructed by sensory processes rather than attachment to individuality or self-centred identities. This difference has high educational relevance in postcolonial societies where a crisis is emerging between modern social scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge on the one hand and between Buddhist concept of

self/identity and postcolonial identities constructed by globalising processes on the other[13].

Immergut and Kaufman (2014) propose Sociology of No-self by applying Buddhist social theory to symbolic interaction. They argue that the 'self-other dualism organizes a reality in which the self is in competition with others in order to secure rewards and avoid costs' (p. 269). The key difference between sociology and Buddhism is that the former stops at the dualism between self-other and 'leaves us with a threatened self' (Immergut & Kaufman, 2014, p. 270). However, Buddhism 'deconstructs the self-other dualism and conceives a nonthreatened, no-self' (Immergut & Kaufman, 2014, 270). They explain the Buddhist concept of 'interdependence' or 'dependent co-arising' as 'specific series of psycho-physical causes that lead to the formation of human perception of self and reality' (Immergut & Kaufman, 2014, p. 272). Together with interpretations presented by Kalupahana previously on concepts like *Patichcha Samuppāda,* non-substantiality, and sensory perception, we can see how the self is constructed from causes and conditions rather than a product of an innate essence.

Immergut and Kaufman (2014) recognise some of the common themes in sociology and Buddhism such as impermanence and social change; dependent arising and the social construction of reality; and suffering and inequality. The paper explains some of the efforts made by Buddhist scholars to synthesize sociology and Buddhism and those by sociologists to explicate Buddhist sociology.

Thirdly, Buddhist concepts and practices have been applied to various fields. Ideas on a range of topics important to resolve human problems in the modern world have been proposed in disciplines such as management, psychology, development, conflict resolution & peace, counseling and therapy, caring for patients, and sustainable development. For example, Toh (2012) shows that empathy arising from compassion and loving-kindness toward other human beings and the universe can address root causes of ecological crisis while reducing the suffering of other human beings. In his view, '[a]ction to save the planet and humanity will not be

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[13] For a discussion on how the social sciences, in particular sociology, in South Asia were constructed by the imperial powers of Britain and USA and the resulting crisis, see Gamage (2016 forthcoming).

effective and sustainable unless grounded in mindful understanding and analysis arising from critical and empowering educational processes' (Toh, 2012, p. 65). Toh also makes the point that engaged Buddhists provide helpful insights and strategies to promote education for sustainable development (ESD). Accordingly, '[e]ngaged Buddhist initiatives affirm that 'development' needs to be mindful of the goal and processes of inner cultivation that transcends attachment to or craving for unlimited possessions' (Toh, 2012, p. 64). Toh provides examples of specific initiatives that complement sustainable living with Buddhist teachings from different parts of the world.

Chansomsak and Vale (2008) provide further information about the Buddhist approach to culturally sensitive sustainable education including a school design based on Thailand experience. They emphasise a paradigm shift from the currently dominant worldview towards an ecological one where 'the ecological system is viewed as an overarching whole' (p. 36) that includes human beings and other life forms. There are also multiple applications of Buddhist concepts such as 'self' and ' mindfulness' in the field of psychology, emotion, and human well-being. In this regard, De Silva's published work (2014b) on Buddhist psychology and counseling can be useful. Riner (2010) makes useful observations on similarities and differences between Buddhist psychology and invitational education.

Fourthly, questions arise about the distinctions made by educationists between 'cognitive'-as relating to the brain - and 'affective' - as relating to the heart. 'No such dichotomy exists within Buddhist thinking: there is rather something which is whole and complete and which does not give primacy to one rather than the other' (Miller, 2007, p. 2). Miller (2007) points out that '[t]he primacy of mind and reason has dominated western thinking since the (European) Enlightenment, resulting in the relegation of the heart and emotions to a lower order' (p. 2). But real learning should be transformative and it changes us- our hearts and minds. Miller emphasises the importance of emotional and spiritual intelligence and the Pali word *chitta* when considering the Buddhist educational approach (Miller, 2007, pp.1-2)[14]. She argues for equal emphasis in our schools for the acquisition of

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[14] Miller translates *Chitta* (*sita* in Sinhala) as mind and/or heart.

knowledge and skills on one hand and the development of attitudes and values on the other along with emotional and spiritual intelligence. In the Buddhist perspective on education and learning, Miller shows the importance of four *Brahma Viharas* (mental states): 1. *Metta* (loving kindness), *Karuna* (compassion), *Mudita* (Sympathetic joy), and *Upekkha* (equanimity). These are qualities opposing the egoism and possessive individualism that Kalupahana discussed in relation to moral life based on Buddhist principles and ethics.

Fifthly, Buddhism's contribution to critical education can be significant. Scholars often quote *Kalama Sutta* where Buddha says not to believe anything because of tradition, because someone told so, or written in a text but to convince oneself about the true nature of a phenomena or another's view by critical examination. In this regard, Flores's (2014) examination of the different approaches of Buddhism and critical social sciences plus the grounds for mutual enrichment is a useful one. Shen and Midgley's (2007) discussion of the similarities between Buddhism and Critical Systems Thinking (CST) is a similarly useful one. They contend that in both of these fields, 'existing inequalities of wealth, status, power and authority are not regarded as fixed and permanent, and the status quo can be challenged in order to bring changes to the future' (Shen and Midgley, 2007, p. 180). Shen and Midgley further point out that people having freedom to create own futures in Buddhism connects with the emancipatory dimension of CST and discuss the meaning of ten Buddhist concepts in relation to the development of a Buddhist Systems methodology.

According to Bai (2005), Hattam explores the common ground between Buddhism (Tibetan variety) and Critical Social Theory. One common ground in the Buddhism and critical social theory is their commitment to human liberation. In Hattam's view, Buddhist meditation practices can be read as 'technologies of self (Bai, 2005). Hattam's book (2004) should be of use to those interested in the implications of Buddhism to critical social theory.

Sixthly, we can explore the Pedagogical Implications of Buddhist thought. In an education informed by Buddhist thought, it is wisdom more than knowledge that is to be realised through mental training in calm and insight. 'In this task, learning and wisdom are closely interwoven, the former

providing the basis for the latter' (Bodhi, 1998, p. 2). Bodhi (1998) emphasises that students 'must acquire the spirit of generosity and self-sacrifice (*caga*), so essential for overcoming selfishness, greed, and the narrow focus on self-advancement that dominates in present-day society' (Bodhi, 1998, p. 2). Cooperation is better than competition and 'our true welfare is to be achieved through harmony and good will rather than by exploiting and dominating others' (Bodhi, 1998, p. 2).

This exploration of Buddhist theory, approach and views in relation to education thus provides us insights into its unique contribution as well as the contrasts with dominant education paradigm. The latter is based on self-advancement constructed with the influence of modernist thinking, market forces and individualistic values rather than mutual self-interest. What does all this mean for teaching and learning practices in the classroom? In the next section, a practical exercise aimed at the development of an observational self is presented based on De Silva (2014a).

Mindfulness based Schema for the Classroom

According to De Silva (2014a), '[t]o overcome the impact of impulses, reflex actions and even subliminal desires, the mind has to protect itself by the growth of spontaneous moral and spiritual practices' (p. 6). As Nyanaponika (1986) has explained, development of a non-violent attitude towards oneself and others is a key virtue of mindfulness. De Silva (2014a) explains the virtues of contemplative/Mindfulness-based therapy as well as contemplative emotional training for professionals that can reduce negative emotion and promote pro social responses. De Silva (2914a) presents a miniature model to control anger also.

De Silva (2014a) has proposed a schema for the classroom based on mindfulness-based skills. Buddhist concept of mindfulness 'as *sati* is just moment-moment awareness, knowing what you are doing in the moment' (De Silva, 2014a, p. 6). It is important to bridge the 'observational function of mindfulness and the direction towards wisdom' (De Silva, 2014a, p 6). The first step in this schema is stopping and slowing down to make the mind alert and deferring actions. Second step is to develop a capacity to see our inner selves leading to the development of tranquility and

inner stillness. 'Gradually several components of meditative tranquility emerge: calmness, concentration, firmness and the reduction of multiple objects' (De Silva, 2014a, p. 6). The intention is real awakening that comes with training and morality.

There are other publications available on school reform from a Buddhist perspective both in the Asian context and elsewhere (see Gates, 2005). Gates (2005) talks about the loss of community, personal alienation, and the need for improving schools through reform. Buddhism offers a philosophy rich in conceptual and technical discourses good for community based educational reform. In this task, community should replace the goal of individualism.

Conclusion

This paper considered the way knowledge production by the Buddhist clergy in Sri Lanka was affected by the British colonization process, the emergence of an English educated class of intellectuals followed by the emergence of bilingual intellectuals in the first university established in the country. It then considered Buddhist concepts and their meanings as illustrated by Kalupahana, a Buddhist scholar-philosopher who acquired knowledge of both Buddhist and Western philosophical assumptions and conceptions.

The delineation of Buddhist concepts by Kalupahana highlighted several key dimensions of Buddhist framework of thought. For example, taking human sensory experience (and perception built on this) as the basis of any theoretical explanation of the individual and society while considering reasoning or inference based on experience (and perception) as sources of knowledge. Buddhist way of middle path is one between the two extremes of possessive individualism and self-negation. Virtuous life rather than one based on rewards and punishments is considered the ideal in Buddhist way of thinking. Instead of the rational-empirical approach currently dominant in education, a contemplative and transformative education is considered as suitable for the contemporary society.

The role of ego consciousness in distorting or fashioning perception and using meditation to eliminate subjective prejudices and obsessions and to understand causally

conditioned phenomena and causal relations occupy an important place in Buddhist thought. Possibility of gaining extra-sensory knowledge is also discussed while emphasising Buddhist way as the middle way. As Edelglass and Garfield (2009) state, insight is an important quality necessary for liberation. It 'is an anti-dote to ignorance, but liberation also requires the overcoming of attachment and aversion, which is achieved through the cultivation of moral discipline and mindfulness' (Edelglass & Garfield, 2009, p. 7). A distinction is made in Buddhist thought between the nature of reality and apparent reality.

The conceptual expositions by Kalupahana about Buddhist doctrine (*dhamma*) examined in the paper have made a distinct contribution to the discourses on 'human existence' and 'experience' as the foundation of 'perception' and the categories or theoretical formulations that construct knowledge about who we are, what we are, where we are going, and what we ought to do and how in the context of Buddhist philosophy. The skill that Kalupahana displays in his writings on Buddhism is not only the deep understanding of Buddhist intellectual tradition found in the texts but also his ability to find corresponding ideas, concepts and formulations in western philosophy and to some extent social sciences while subjecting the latter to critical scruitiny.

The work of Sri Lankan Buddhist scholars during the British colonial period and after, including those of Kalupahana, then can be considered as instances of Asian scholars speaking to the West in the English language. Such exercises have influenced the way the study and practice of Buddhism was undertaken in Europe and America. As pointed out by Blackburn, Lopez (2002) provides relevant information on this theme. His 'anthology offers voices from colonizing and colonized Buddhist arenas, and is especially strong as a resource for thinking about which interpretations of Buddhist textuality and history were exported from Asia to Euro-America' (Blackburn, 2010, p. 2). K.N.Jayatilleke's work (1963) on Buddhist theory of knowledge is also a valuable source.

Implications of Buddhist thought for alternative education discussed in the paper provide clues for contemplative education based on self-awakening instead of the currently dominant education based on rational-empirical

approach. Empathy arising from values such as compassion and loving kindness can not only reduce human suffering but also contribute positively to sustainable development and culturally sensitive, sustainable education. Furthermore, an alternative education can be formulated on values such as selflessness and non-attachment rather than attempting to protect and sustain constructed identities reducing the human suffering caused by identity conflicts and notions of threatened self. Buddhist concept of dependent co-arising is helpful in the realization that the self is constructed from causes and conditions that are interdependent and subject to change. An alternative education focused not only on the development of knowledge and skills but also the attitudes and values such as the four *Brahmaviharas* (mental states) discussed earlier, cooperation than competition and wisdom (*pannā*) is shown to be desirable for the world to address its current challenges. The paper showed that the schema for the classroom developed by De Silva (2014a) based on mindfulness skills can be used to achieve holistic education goals.

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AN ISLAMIC VOICE FOR OPENNESS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION: THE RELEVANCE OF IBN KHALDUN'S IDEAS TO AUSTRALIAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS TODAY

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ABSTRACT Raewyn Connell in her discussion of Southern social science theories, considers Ibn Khaldun's contribution to the understanding of civilisation and sociology as so rich and important that it is still relevant today. This paper builds on Connell's introduction to Ibn Khaldun's work by first reviewing his ideas of education in the Muqaddimah and then investigating the extent of their contemporary relevance, for example, in teacher education programs today in Australia's multicultural society. Ibn Khaldun was a Muslim scholar born in what is now called Tunisia, North Africa, in 1332. His writings, which encompassed history, philosophy of history, sociology, education and pedagogy, are best exemplified in his greatest work, the Muqaddimah, written as an introduction and commentary on his universal history. Ibn Khaldun provided a long and detailed discussion of the concept of education and pedagogy in Chapter Six of the Muqaddimah. His classification of knowledge according to classical Islamic tradition is a valuable guide to the range of sciences in existence at that time. He also provided his views on teaching and learning issues which have their counterparts in today's classrooms. The latter part of this paper looks at the nature of curriculum in current teacher education programs in Australia and considers the development of a more inclusive approach in relation to Islamic communities in Australia. Such a move could result in Ibn Khaldun's ideas on education being incorporated into teacher education programs in Australia.

KEYWORDS Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah, Teacher Education, Civilisation and Sociology

Introduction

In her book *Southern Theory* (2007) on the global dynamics of social science knowledge, Raewyn Connell included a discussion of the medieval Islamic scholar Ibn Khaldun and his early ideas on what is now regarded as the discipline of sociology. Following her definition of 'southern theory', Connell argued that Ibn Khaldun's writings could be categorised as an expression of 'alternative universalism' (Connell, 2015). By this, she meant that Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on research methods and the importance of justice and human rights in society, may be applicable to human beings and human societies everywhere, even though they had originated in the southern part of the geographical binary of knowledge development that she described.

In this paper, the focus is on investigating whether Ibn Khaldun's writings on education can also be regarded as having universal significance. This approach involves two stages: first, a review of what Ibn Khaldun had to say about education, mainly in Chapter Six of his greatest work, the *Muqaddimah* and second, an investigation to ascertain the extent of the applicability of his educational ideas to teacher education programs, specifically in Australia. The underlying question guiding this research was: What aspects of Ibn Khaldun's ideas on education, written in medieval times from the Islamic perspective, are relevant to teacher education programs in contemporary multicultural Australia?

To appreciate the full significance of this research question, it is necessary to acknowledge the existence of Islamic communities and schools in Australian society today. According to the most recent census statistics, the Islamic population in Australia totals close to half a million (476, 300), representing 2.2% of the Australian population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Almost half reside in New South Wales, with the remainder spread over other states. In the case of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, which are Australian territory, the total population is made up of Malay Muslims (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013; Jupp, 2001). Most significantly, almost 50% are under the age of 25 (Hassan, 2009), a great many of whom would therefore be in schools or further education institutions. Given the presence

of Islamic communities as an integral part of Australia's multicultural society, the research question has more immediate and pointed relevance. However, for Ibn Khaldun's educational writings to be of universal significance, they would need to be demonstrated as relevant to mainstream society, as well as Islamic communities, in Australia.

The approach adopted in this paper is to introduce Ibn Khaldun and his educational thoughts and then to explore the possible significance and relevance of his ideas for Australian teacher education programs today. It aims to achieve these goals through a detailed, descriptive account of this great Islamic intellectual/scholar who has been unrecognized in the mainstream English-language education scholarship. The descriptive approach adopted in this paper is intended to invite other researchers to appreciate some of his thoughts and then to utilize them for their own analyses of education. Furthermore, the approach is well suited for dealing with writings produced in a different historical, religious and cultural context and assessing the extent to which the ideas expressed have a universal human significance that transcends the particular context of their 'origin.'

The Life and Works of Ibn Khaldun

Ibn Khaldun, or to give him his full name outlining his family background, Waly al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan Ibn Khaldun al-Maliki al-Hadrami, was born in 1332 to an influential Sunni Muslim Arab family in Tunis (now Tunisia), North Africa, in the time of the Hafsid Empire. Ibn Khaldun's ancestors belonged to a South Arabian clan called the Kinda, originally from Yemen, but they settled in Seville, Andalusia, at the time of the Arab conquest of the Iberian Peninsula. Some detail of his family background helps to provide an understanding of the context in which he grew up. Among Ibn Khaldun's ancestors, Kurayb is well-known for revolting at the end of the ninth century against the early Islamic dynasty called the Umayyads, centred in the Spanish city of Cordoba (Robinson, 1996, pp. 26-27), and establishing an independent state in Seville. It was recorded that Banu Khaldun, Ibn Khaldun's great-grandfather, was a prominent political leader in Seville. However, Ibn Khaldun's grandfather and father withdrew from

political life and joined a mystical Sufi order. His brother, Yahya Khaldun, was a historian who wrote a book on the Abdalwadids[15] dynasty (Alatas, 2007; Alatas, 2006; Fromherz, 2011; Ibn Khaldun, 1958b; Samarah, 2011).

According to Syed Farid Alatas (2006), at an early age, Ibn Khaldun started to learn the Holy Quran[16], Maliki jurisprudence[17], Hadith[18], poetry and the theosophy of Sufi mysticism. At this early stage, his father was the most influential among his teachers, introducing him to Sufism[19] and encouraging him to think independently (Ibn Khaldun, 1958b). His later education was more diverse; he did not study in one institution but did so under any teacher who was willing to take him (Alatas, 2012). His family's high social status enabled Ibn Khaldun to study with the best teachers in Maghreb. The most important of these teachers was Al-Abili, a great scholar in the areas of logic, mathematics and philosophy. Al-Abili did not believe in the idea of formalised, institutionalised education, as found in what was called the Madrasa system[20], nor did he support state control of educational institutions. At a later stage, Al-Abili's ideas on education and educational institutions had a major influence on Ibn Khaldun's ideas on the subject, especially pedagogy (Ibn Khaldun, 1958b).

Because he had not been trained under the accepted Madrasa system of that time, Ibn Khaldun was not indoctrinated through its strict control of knowledge, teaching

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[15] Abdulwadids: Abd al-Wadids, or the Zayyanids, were a Berber Zenata dynasty that ruled the kingdom of Tlemcem, an area of north-western Algeria from 1235 to 1556 (Al-Azmeh, 1981).

[16] The Holy Quran is the central religious text of Islam that Muslims believe to be a revelation from God. Muslims believe the Quran was verbally revealed by God to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel gradually over a period of approximately 23 years (Ibn Khaldun, 1958b; Maadad, 2009).

[17] Maliki jurisprudence is religious law within Sunni Islam founded by Malik bin Anas (Maadad, 2009).

[18] Hadith are the collections of the reports of the teachings, deeds and sayings of the Islamic prophet Muhammad (Maadad, 2009).

[19] Sufism is a mystical belief and practice that emerged during the Umayyad period. Sufism emerged as an important and developed practice during the subsequent Abbasid period as an approach to knowing God through intuition (Al-Azmeh, 1981).

[20] Madrasa is a place of study like an Islamic school or college (Fealy & Hooker, 2006). Robinson (1996, p.312) defined it as a 'college whose primary purpose was to be an environment for transmitting Islamic knowledge'. Islamic Colleges in Australia are not of this type since their registration depends on them following what is now the Australian National Curriculum, but some Madrasa schools are still found in countries like Malaysia.

and learning styles. Al-Abili introduced Ibn Khaldun to mathematics, logic and philosophy, through the study of the works of Islamic scholars like Averroes, Avicenna, Razi and Tusi. Surprisingly, Ibn Khaldun also spent considerable time reading Plato, Aristotle and the works of the Stoic philosophers. This wide-ranging exposure to Islamic philosophy and classical Greek and Roman writings inspired both his academic pursuits and his penchant for critical, rationalist inquiry. It was Ibn Khaldun's career in royal politics, however, that provided him with a unique perspective and real life insights with which to critically analyse history, authority and social change (Alatas, 2007, 2012; Ibn Khaldun, 1958b; Pushpanathan, 2013; Samarah, 2011; Wheeler, 2011).

At the young age of 20, Ibn Khaldun received an offer from the ruler of Tunis, Abu Ishaq II, to serve in his court as an administrator. With his adventurous nature and enthusiasm to explore, Ibn Khaldun moved to the principality of Morocco named Fez. He was appointed as the secretary of the state to Sultan Abu-Inan of Fez, where he was appointed as the secretary of the state of Sultan Abu-Inan. After a brief period in Fez, Ibn Khaldun moved to the Straits of Gibraltar. Here he experienced his first major responsibility when he was elected to be the Fief-Holder of the Sultan of Granada. The Sultan of Granada also sent Ibn Khaldun on a political mission to meet Pedro (Peter), King of Castille. However, after this adventurous mission and various other political conflicts, including one with the Vizier in Granada, Ibn Khaldun lost interest in such a political role. After trying other positions, he found himself eventually expelled from Spain in 1374. It was in North Africa at the fort of Qilah-Ibne-Salamah that Ibn Khaldun completed his most famous work, the *Prolegomena-Muqaddimah*. According to Ibn Khaldun, he finished writing the *Muqaddimah* in November 1377 but kept on reworking it until shortly before his death (Alatas, 2012; Cheddadi, 1994; Fromherz, 2011; Ibn Khaldun, 1958b).

From 1382 (Irwin, 1996, p. 35) Ibn khaldun lived in Cairo. In the remaining twenty years of his life, he had the opportunity to put his ideas on education into practice by lecturing in the various religious colleges in that city. It seemed that his approach to teaching appealed to students. According to Mussallam (1996, p. 165) 'students flocked to his lectures'. Moreover, because of the success of his teaching,

Ibn Khaldun incurred 'the jealous hostility of local Egyptian scholars' (Irwin, 1996, p. 35). Eventually he was appointed to the post of chief justice, before he died in peace in 1406 in Cairo (Alatas, 2012).

Ibn Khaldun's scholarly works include various manuscripts and books, the most prominent of which is the *Muqaddimah,* which is known as the prolegomena, or introduction, to the *Kitab al-Ibar wa Diwan al-Mubtada wa al-Khabar fi Ayyam al-Ajam wa al-Barbar wa man Asaraham min Dhawi al-Sultan al-Akbar* (Book of Examples and Collection of Origins of the History of the Arabs and Berbers). His first book*, Lababu I-Muhassal fi usul al-din* (The Resume of the Compendium of the Science) is a commentary on the theology of ar-Razi[21], which he wrote at the age of 19 under the supervision of his teacher, al-Alibi, in Tunis. A work on Sufism, *Sifa' u I-Sa'il,* was composed around 1373 in Fez. While at the court of Muhammad V, Sultan of Granada, Ibn Khaldun completed a work on logic, *allaqqa li-I-Sultan.* The autobiography he wrote was entitled, *Al-Ta'rif bi Ibn Khaldun wa Rihlatuhu Gharban wa Sharqan* (Biography of Ibn Khaldun and His Travels East and West)(Alatas, 2012; Alatas, 2006; Fromherz, 2011; Ibn Khaldun, 1958b; Rane, 2010; Tjandrasasmita, 2006).

This brief historical overview of Ibn Khaldun's life and writings provides a basic understanding of his personal education and scholarly work. The next section focuses on the educational ideas found in the *Muqaddimah.*

Basis of Ibn Khaldun's Educational Thought

In Chapter Six of the *Muqaddimah,* Ibn Khaldun discusses his thoughts on education under three headings: The various kinds of science; The methods of instruction; The conditions that obtain in these connections'. These ideas do not represent a fully developed philosophy of education, but rather can be seen as his reflections on teaching approaches which he considered were important for encouraging students to learn well. His writings were developed from two sources. The first was his own personal, diverse learning experience,

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[21] *Muhammad Ibn Zakaria Razi* was a Persian polymath, physician, chemist, philosopher and important figure in the history of medicine (Fealy & Hooker, 2006; Ibn Khaldun, 1958b).

which had proved positive, enriching and lifelong through his travels, but had never involved attendance in any of the formal Madrasa colleges. Rosenthal, in his introduction to the English edition of the *Muqaddimah*, suggested that 'much of his material and many of his best ideas Ibn Khaldun owed to his teachers, fellow students and colleagues must have contributed greatly to his knowledge' (Ibn Khaldun, 1958a, p. IXXXV). The second source of his ideas were his observations of teaching in the Madrasa classes which he had visited in the many places he had lived in. He had formed a very poor opinion of such teaching and of the negative experience of learning it engendered for students.

According to chapter Six of the *Muqaddimah*, the educational system of any society should be formulated according to its ideology. Ibn Khaldun strongly advocated that every Muslim man and women should know the Holy Quran and Sunnah[22] and follow the guidance of Allah, as taught by the Holy Prophet. 'Instructing children in the Quran is a symbol of Islam. Muslims have, and practice, such instruction in all their cities, because it imbues hearts with a firm belief [in Islam] and its articles of faith' (Ibn Khaldun, 1958b, p. 300). Such a fundamental religious principle makes Ibn Khaldun's educational writings particularly appropriate in Islamic communities.

The Classification of Knowledge by Ibn Khaldun

The classification of knowledge in the context of Islam, as set out by Ibn Khaldun, provides a good historical understanding of the production of knowledge and classification of science in existence at the time. In Islam, the sciences are considered as one and as belonging to a hierarchical order. Ibn Khaldun explained their classification into two groups, the first being the philosophical sciences, which were based on the human ability to think. This involves the ability to solve problems, construct and counter an argument, and develop methods of systematic observations based on human perceptions.

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[22] Sunnah is the way of life prescribed as normative for Muslims on the basis of the teachings and practices of the prophet Muhammad and interpretations of the Islamic holy book, the Quran (Maadad, 2009).

Examples of philosophical sciences provided by Ibn Khaldun included

> Science of logic, physics, celestial and elementary bodies, zoology, botany, chemistry, minerals, atmospheric science, seismology, psychology, medicine, agriculture, metaphysics, mathematical science, geometry, arithmetic, music and astronomy (Alatas, 2012, p. 83).

The second kind of knowledge, which Ibn Khaldun referred to as traditional science, is derived from the authority of religion through the process of revelation. Although the human intellect has a role in traditional science, the basic character of knowledge remains unchanged, in the form in which it had been revealed. The examples he provided were

> Science of the Quran, science of the Arabic language, lexicography, grammar, syntax and style, literature, science of prophetic tradition, jurisprudence and its principles, speculative theology, Sufism and science of dream interpretation (Alatas, 2012, p. 83).

Although Ibn Khaldun recognised the existence of a third source of knowledge in magical science, which included 'sorcery, letter magic, alchemy and talismans' (Alatas, 2012) he did not include this in his discussion of education, because such knowledge was forbidden by religious law.

This explanation of education at the beginning of Chapter Six of the *Muqaddimah* provides the basis for Ibn Khaldun's perspective on various other education and teaching-related issues. His classification of knowledge, based on the Islamic education context, is particularly relevant and important (Ibn Khaldun, 1958b).

Ibn Khaldun's Views on the Wider Significance of Education

In his discussion of the nature of education and its significance for individuals and society, Ibn Khaldun's ideas can be seen to have a wider applicability. He emphasized, for example, the importance of education in developing the individual's power of thinking and reasoning. In his view, the 'ability to think' was what distinguished 'human beings from animals' and enabled them 'to obtain their livelihood [and] co-operate to this end with their fellow' human beings. To prove an advantage to people, Ibn Khaldun believed that education should develop social and economic efficiency in individuals

so that they could be usefully absorbed into society. It should also bring happiness into the lives of people.

From personal experience, he believed travelling was an important way to keep on gaining knowledge and extending personal education through learning from various scholars around the world (Ibn Khaldun, 1958b). This openness to new ideas and the possibility of on-going interaction and discussion with teachers were important elements in his thinking about education. In his view, 'human beings obtain their virtues either through study, instruction and lectures, or through imitation of a teacher and personal contact with him. The only difference here is that habits acquired through personal contact with a teacher are more strongly and firmly rooted' (Ibn Khaldun, 1958b, p. 307).

Ibn khaldun's educational thought can thus be seen to be centred on the personal benefits which he believed a good education should provide for its students, not only in the period of schooling, but throughout their lives in their openness to new ideas and experiences. His basic argument was that education should include social and moral, as well as intellectual learning to bring out the potential within human beings through developing character and building personality, together with the capacity for reasoning. The value and importance of these educational ideas of Ibn Khaldun are not confined to medieval times or to Islamic societies (Ibn Khaldun, 1958b).

Teaching and Learning Styles

Ibn Khaldun had a definite view on teaching and learning, especially in relation to learning capacity, memorisation, the curriculum and teacher strictness. He was a keen observer of the relationship between education and society and believed that education had multiple objectives. Based on his observations of the way students learn best, Ibn Khaldun considered the following principles important for a good education. Firstly, he believed that the order in which subjects are introduced determines success in learning outcomes. He also believed that an abundance of scholarly works constitutes an obstacle to learning. The proliferation of handbooks providing abridgements is detrimental to learning. The study of auxiliary (i.e., non-basic) science knowledge

should not be prolonged. Severe punishments should not be meted out to students (Ibn Khaldun, 1958b).

Ibn Khaldun also had strong views on methods of instruction for learning. According to him, teaching only becomes effective when it proceeds slowly and in stages. The main stage in this process, according to Ibn Khaldun, is that the teacher should begin with the introduction of the basic principles of the subject. Secondly, the teacher should observe closely the student's ability to grasp what has been introduced. At the third stage, the teacher should repeat the material for a second time, instructing at a higher level. Instead of a summary at the end of the lesson, the teacher should provide full commentaries and explanations. In this way, the student's grounding in the discipline becomes deeper. The teacher may then take the student through the subject material another time, dealing with all vague, obscure or complicated matters (Alatas, 2012; Ibn Khaldun, 1958b).

Ibn Khaldun believed that effective instruction required this threefold repetition. From his observations, he could see that many teachers, especially in the Madrasa school context of that time, were ignorant of this method. Such teachers introduced students to complicated scientific problems for which students were not yet ready. Students, especially at a young age, were only able to gain an approximate and general understanding of complex problems (Alatas, 2012; Ibn Khaldun, 1958b).

Ibn Khaldun also advised on issues relating to severe punishment, especially as used in the Madrasa colleges, and its failure to help students in their learning process. In his view, punishment, especially harsh treatment, would encourage students to feel more oppressed, become increasingly lazy, or become dishonest and likely to break the rules more often. In the same section, he also discussed student teacher interaction and relationship, which he believed strongly was an important factor in a student's learning process. Ibn Khaldun said that the relationship between teacher and student should be based upon love and understanding. Teachers needed to understand each of their students' individual learning abilities and work with students closely, according to the stages he outlined in his method of instruction for learning (S. Alatas, F, 2012; Ibn Khaldun, 1958b; Tjandrasasmita, 2006).

The Curriculum

Ibn Khaldun had a strongly critical view of the manuscripts and textbooks used in the Madrasa colleges and other schools in the Muslim world at that time. According to him, most of these manuscripts and textbooks were full of long explanations and complicated terminology, which made it difficult for students to understand the actual content. Furthermore, they did not provide any opportunity for students to develop their independent thinking. At the same time, he advocated religious instruction as the cornerstone of the curriculum because it helped students build good character and good habits. Another important aspect in the curriculum highlighted by Ibn Khaldun was clear thinking. He believed that logic enabled a person to think and analyse critically. Learning mathematics was important because it sharpened mental skills and increased the power of reasoning. Ibn Khaldun also emphasised learning languages because this helped students study different subjects more effectively. In addition, he considered that professional and vocational subjects needed to be included in the curriculum along with academic study (Alatas, 2012; Ibn Khaldun, 1958b; Samarah, 2011; Wheeler, 2011; Wolf-Gazo, 2010).

In relation to the learning of languages, Ibn Khaldun considered that any language should be learned in a natural way, recognising that competence does not come immediately but gradually. He believed that language competence could vary between speaking and writing skills and that it was not necessary to precisely apply the rules of grammar and syntax. However, he insisted that learners should gain proper competence in any language they were learning (Samarah, 2011, p. 1525). This was important so that the purity of each language could be maintained and passed onto succeeding generations without being distorted by other languages and dialects as a result of lack of knowledge and understanding. According to Versteegh (1997, pp. 332-340), Ibn Khaldun was particularly concerned to save the Arabic language from such corruption (Cooke, 1983; Ibn Khaldun, 1958b; Samarah, 2011; Smolicz & Secombe, 1989; Tjandrasasmita, 2006).

Ibn Khaldun's Educational Ideas in the Contemporary World

Connell's *Southern Theory* (2007) challenges us to consider how far Ibn Khaldun's educational ideas are considered relevant and important today. To investigate this question, evidence of the inclusion of Ibn Khaldun's educational ideas in contemporary documents on curricula and course outlines in social science programs, in various parts of the world, particularly those related to teacher education, were sought. Mention of Ibn Khaldun and his ideas were found in sociology, economics and philosophy courses being used in a number of universities and higher educational institutions and some Islamic Madrasas (Fealy & Hooker, 2006; Hassim & Cole-Adams, 2010; Kania, 2014; Rawat, 2014; Tjandrasasmita, 2006).

In fact, a number of contemporary scholars' works on Ibn Khaldun's educational ideas have been used as the basis of this paper. Three of these, coming from both Muslim and non-Muslim societies, are worth mentioning. In the book *Ibn Khaldun: Life and Times*, Allan James Fromberg (2011) discusses Ibn Khaldun's personal educational background and experience from an historical point of view. An Arab scholar, Abdesselam Cheddadi, has written much on Ibn Khaldun's educational ideas, particularly in his most popular work, Ibn Khaldun *A.D. 1332 - 1406/A.H. 732 - 808* (1994). Another important and very detailed discussion of Ibn Khaldun's educational ideas can be found in the book by Syed Farid Alatas (2012), entitled *The Makers of Islamic Civilization: Ibn Khaldun.* The chapter 'Ibn Khaldun on Education and Knowledge' provides an in-depth explanation of key ideas from the *Muqaddimah.* None of these works, however, has considered the inclusion of Ibn Khaldun's educational ideas in teacher education programs, either in Muslim or non-Muslim societies. While consulting documents on teacher education programs, I found no evidence of Ibn Khaldun's education ideas being included in teaching or research. Although there may be some institutions in Muslim countries using his ideas in teacher education programs or in day-to-day teaching, no reference materials were found to demonstrate this.

Curriculum in Teacher Education Programs in Australia Today

We can consider more closely, as examples of contemporary curriculum for teacher education trainers, two textbooks regarded as important in the Australian context. These are *Key Concepts for Understanding Curriculum* (2009) by the late professor Colin March and *Curriculum Construction* by Laurie Brady and Kerry Kennedy (2014). March's first chapter explains what the curriculum is by going back to Greek ideas for the origin of the Western view of the curriculum, referring particularly to the ideas of Plato and Aristotle. No attempts are made to consider Eastern ideas such as those originating with Confucius (Starr, 2012), Rabindranath Tagore (Pushpanathan, 2013), the philosophy of Ubuntu (Grange, 2011) or Buddhist scholars (Rahula, 1978). In particular, from the perspective of this paper, Ibn Khaldun's ideas from the Islamic tradition are not mentioned. Khaldun's emphasis on the importance of developing student's thinking and reasoning skills, his criticism of textbooks with long explanations and complicated terminology and his conviction that learning should be a positive and happy experience could well contribute to contemporary curriculum ideas about developing cognitive skills and critical thinking, and ensuring that learning contributes to the students' sense of well-being. The inclusion of such diverse perspectives is one way of acknowledging the cultural diversity of students in Australian schools today.

Inclusive Curriculum for Islamic Communities in Australia

Some recognition of this principle is evident in Brady and Kennedy's (2014) book, particularly in their chapter on values for Australian students. After considering the Melbourne Declaration's statement (Ministerial Council on Education, 2008) on the need for students to became active and informed citizens and the subsequent 'National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools' (Department of Education & Training, 2005), they discussed at some length the need for values teaching in an Australian curriculum to take account of values shared by all Australians alongside values specific to minority groups such as the Muslim communities[23]. Their

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[23] Communities: it is important to use the word 'communities' since the Islamic faith includes among its believers people in culturally different societies, such as

discussion highlighted some of the issues faced by those who are Muslim Australians and provided strategies for teaching intercultural understanding, social cohesion and social inclusion.

It could be argued, however, that the best way of demonstrating the inclusive values of Australian society would be to include the ideas of an Islamic scholar like Ibn Khaldun in the course curriculum. His advocacy of travel as a means of gaining knowledge about other people and their cultures and extending personal education would seem to be most appropriate in this context.

Ibn Khaldun's principles of proper language learning are also relevant in the Australian context. School administrators and teachers in all systems need to be aware of the role of Arabic as the language of the Quran, the holy book of the Islamic faith. At an early age, many Islamic children learn Arabic in addition to the language at home. The modern Arabic spoken in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq today is different from the sixth century Arabic of the Quran; Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Uighur, for example, have their own particular language (or languages) for use in everyday life in the family and community (Jupp, 2001). This means that for many Islamic students in Australia, English is their third language. Teachers need to understand and take account of this in their classroom teaching.

The importance of such an inclusive approach to the teacher education curriculum in Australia has been highlighted by Bowering and Lock (2007). They claim that this is needed if Australia is to be serious about adopting a more internationally oriented, rather than Eurocentric, curriculum. This is particularly relevant to Islamic communities in Australia which have a high proportion of young students and are establishing an increasing number of their own independent Islamic schools.

Almost 90% of young Muslims attend local state schools (Welch, 2013), where they are most likely to be taught by non-Islamic teachers, very few of whom have had the chance to gain an understanding of Islamic religion, its various cultures and educational values. However, independent Islamic schools

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Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iran, Iraq, India, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan, as well as the Uighur communities of north west China (Jupp, 2001).

are also growing in number. They often employ non-Islamic teachers to cover key subjects in the Australian curriculum, but they also seek to employ imams as religious specialists who have Australian teacher education qualifications (Jones, 2012). Thus, there are two areas of need in relation to teacher education programs in Australia: Both state and Islamic schools have a need for mainstream Australian teachers who have the knowledge and understanding to be culturally responsive in teaching Islamic students in their classes. At the same time, there are teacher education students of Islamic background who have indicated that they would like more of their own cultural knowledge incorporated into the context of their courses (Bowering & Lock, 2007).

Such an approach to curriculum has the potential to see Ibn Khaldun's educational ideas incorporated into teacher education programs in Australia. This would be in line with the 2011 statement of Malcolm Turnbull, now prime minister of Australia. In his comments on Islamic schools in Australia, Turnbull pointed out that Islam was an ancient religion with a tradition of great scholarship. In his view the contribution of Islamic scholars to contemporary maths, science and medicine needs to be acknowledged and celebrated in Australian schools, the education system as a whole and society at large (Turnbull, 2011).

Conclusion

The discussion of Ibn Khaldun's educational philosophy and classification of knowledge, as well as his ideas about teaching and learning and the curriculum, has revealed that the issues he was discussing in terms of the Islamic world of the 14th century are remarkably similar to that of present times, which are still critical in the very different, globally oriented educational environment of the 21st century. In this sense, his writings on education can be seen to have a universal significance – across centuries and across cultures.

Yet this paper shows that the name of Ibn Khaldun and an awareness of his contribution to the philosophy and practice of education are to be found only among isolated pockets of scholars. These are either specialists in the medieval Arab world of learning or scholars in Islamic universities, who have been reinterpreting the significance of

Ibn Khaldun's educational writings in relation to their contemporary world. By contrast, in countries of the Western world such as Australia, there is no evidence of Ibn Khaldun's educational ideas being included in teacher education programs. Is this comparative neglect of Ibn Khaldun in the current educational theorising of the Western world the result of the geographic binary described by Connell, where Ibn Khaldun is regarded as a scholar from the South, largely ignored by Orthodox academic communities of the North? Or is it pertinent to also take account of the cultural and linguistic differences which have contributed to Ibn Khaldun's exclusion in the contemporary world? Today, the conceptualization of learning is centred predominantly in the nominally Christian, mainly English speaking Western world rather than the Islamic Arabic speaking world of the South, as it was during the Middle Ages (Wolf-Gafo, 2010).

A consideration of some aspects of curriculum to be found in two textbooks commonly used in teacher education programs in Australia pointed to the possibilities of developing an inclusive approach to curriculum. This approach would seem to be particularly appropriate in plural societies like Australia where a growing number of immigrants are swelling the Islamic communities. Within an inclusive curriculum, knowledge of Ibn Khaldun's educational ideas would be seen as important for two groups of students. Those of Islamic background would have part of their cultural heritage recognised in the curriculum of Australian schools, in a way which could positively affirm their identity and place in Australia. Equally, all other Australians, regardless of cultural background, would be able to understand the important contribution of knowledge which the Islamic communities bring to Australian society as a whole and be more inclined to adopt positive attitudes toward them (Smolicz, 1999).

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CHALLENGING UNDERSTANDINGS OF ADULT LEARNING WITH SOUTHERN THEORY: RECOGNIZING EVERYDAY LEARNING THROUGH A CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH NORTHERN THEORIES

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ABSTRACT This article is an example of doing Southern Theory through a critical engagement with Northern theories around learning, adult learning, adult education and related fields that help to exclude and erase non-dominant forms of learning such as everyday learning from theory, practice and policy. Adult education and learning play conflicting roles both supporting the maintenance of social inequality and at the same time working to challenge this and promote equitable access to resources and opportunities for marginalised groups around the globe. The field is however often dominated and shaped by predominantly Northern based adult learning and related theories that help to privilege mostly formal learning over other forms of learning, including everyday learning through what Connell (2007) calls erasure. This article focuses on a research project that investigated everyday learning and relied on a critical examination and active modification of key aspects of a selection of relevant Northern theories. This critical engagement produced a "patch-worked" theoretical framework that, I propose is more capable of recognising and responding to the localised everyday learning and knowledge from the research participant's lives than the original Northern adult learning theories. It is argued here that such critical engagements with Northern theories are required to highlight their implicit localisations and challenge reifying tendencies. Furthermore it is suggested that such critical engagements can allow once limited theories to be put to more effective use in localised contexts to help address localised needs globally.

KEYWORDS Adult education; Adult learning; Everyday learning; Southern Theory

Introduction

The linked fields of adult education and learning are active in diverse contexts around the globe. As will be shown below, these fields have and continue to play at times contradictory roles in the maintenance of social inequality within and between countries, as well as challenging these inequalities and supporting marginalised people, learning and knowledges. The policies and practices of adult education in different contexts are however also shaped and influenced by theories of adult learning. While there is a long history, especially within postcolonial nations, of popular and radical adult education that aims to empower marginalised people, adult education practices and policies around the world are also dominated by what Connell (2007) calls "Northern" theories of adult education from Europe, the UK, Northern America and Australia for instance. These Northern theories predominantly focus on and favour particular types of learning that occur in some (northern) and formal contexts and effectively help to ignore and devalue the rest of the learning that takes place in people's lives everywhere else.

This article is a Southern Theory based examination of a research project into everyday learning that was forced into a critical examination of these mostly Northern theories. This examination was required to develop a theoretical framework that was capable of recognising and then working with the learning that was being uncovered from the research participant's stories. The article will firstly discuss the complex roles of adult education and learning in both the North and the South and then highlight the erasing tendencies of many of these dominant Northern theories of adult education. The article then moves to overviewing the research project itself. Firstly the article will examine the methodological need to critically engage with and then modify a specific selection of Northern theories of adult learning and education to produce a patchworked (Sfard, 1998) theoretical framework. The article then proceeds to demonstrate the use of aspects of this developed framework. Excerpts from the research findings are used to illustrate the potential for such a framework to contribute to the ongoing development of Southern Theory based understandings of adult learning, in particular the capacity to better recognise, and therefore

include a wider range of localised everyday knowledges and learning in diverse contexts.

Southern Theory and Southern thinking: some challenges

This work is guided by key concepts from Connell's work, Southern Theory (2007), that challenges the privileging of knowledge produced in the global North and the marginalising of knowledge produced by those of the global South. Connell's work is part of a broader Southern paradigm within sociology and the social sciences that seeks to broaden the base of sociological knowledge making to include, recognise and utilise knowledges produced from the epistemological peripheries of the South, most often countries still experiencing the effects of European colonisation (for instance see Connell, 2007; Rosa, 2014; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; and Selvadurai et al, 2013; Bhambra, 2014; and the compilation edited by Patel, 2010). For Chakrabarty (2000, p. 5), this privileging of 'Northern' knowledge can be seen with Indian social scientists engaging with the ideas of long dead Europeans as contemporaries, while only engaging with the ideas of long dead Indian thinkers, theorists and researchers as historical artefacts. This concern is echoed by Santos (2014) who argues that northern or western universalising concepts such as modernity are weapons that, according to Rosa have been used for "domination by forcefully refusing any possibility of coexistence with other forms of knowledge"(Rosa, 2014, p. 853). As Rosa continues, "social forms and formulas scattered across the globe have been left on the fringes or simply disregarded as significant experiences" (Rosa, 2014, p. 853). For Connell, the Northern based social sciences

> (P)icture the world as seen by men, by capitalists, by the educated and affluent. Most important, they picture the world as seen from the ... countries of Europe and North America – the global metropole" (Connell, 2007, p. vii).

In order to counter this privileging of universalising Northern or metropole based knowledge, one of the key goals of these Southern approaches is the decentralisation and diversification of knowledge production to include and recognise a range of knowledges and theories from the mostly colonised and subjugated parts of the world (Selvadurai et al, 2013). A fundamental aspect of this project is a focus on who

produces the knowledge and theory, and whose experiences and understandings are represented within this knowledge (for example see Connell, 2007; Santos, 2014; Mignolo, 2000; and Rosa, 2014). As will be discussed shortly, these issues are inherently connected with the theories, policies and practices of adult learning and education around the world.

Before shifting to discuss adult learning experiences and the impacts of Northern Theories on what can be recognised to be learning, there is a need to clarify how some key issues around Southern Theory are addressed and used within this article.

The north-south divide suggested by Connell (2007) and the wider Southern paradigm is constructed here as an epistemological and socio-political divide more than a geographical separation. This is due to two key reasons. On the one hand there is still significant debate about the attribution of boundaries of geographically southern countries such as Australia. For instance, Connell depicts Australia as being on the periphery, or within the South as a result of Australia being colonised by the English (2007, p. 85-86). Connell also argues that knowledge production process in Australia for instance match the dynamics of the production of social science knowledge in the South where local social scientists focus on work coming out of what she terms the "metropole" (2007, p. 217–8). This Southern location for countries like Australia becomes less clear when, however, one considers Selvadurai et al, who use an East/West split and associate the periphery more with developing nations who are still experiencing the repercussions of having been colonised. Mignolo (2011) extends this argument to

> being part of the West takes you out of the Global South, even if you are as far south as Chile or Argentina. And of course, Australia and New Zealand (Mignolo, 2011, p. 184).

What emerges from these different perspectives is that these concepts of the North/South and the divide between them are less geographical than epistemological, political, economic, historical and social in nature, and that they are highly contestable and fluid. Additionally, it also becomes apparent that the North-South divide does not have to be mutually exclusive nor dichotomous when one embraces the concepts of the north in the south and the south in the north (Connell, 2007). A key concern within this is the question of who

produces knowledge in different locations. For Rosa this raises the issue of internalised colonisation within Southern Thinking (2014). While Connell argues for the recognition of knowledges and theories from the mostly colonised south, Rosa points out that "the majority of the social scientists (the dominant producers of theoretical knowledge) of the South have little or no contact with local or endogenous forms of social knowledge" (Rosa, 2014, p. 862). This article then recognises that power is not just divided between countries and regions, but also within them. These issues are significant in the examination of the uneven and often conflicting roles a range of adult education theories and practices play across and within both the South and the North.

Adult education around the globe

Adult education is a highly contested, often paradoxical and problematic field both for the global South as well as the global North in three main ways. Firstly, adult education has been and continues to be used as an instrument for emancipation *and* the maintenance of existing inequalities and oppressive relations in both the South and the North. Secondly, concepts of adult learning and education that emanate from the epistemological North mostly equate and therefore focus on and privilege learning within formal education. This narrow focus on formal learning excludes, negates and ignores other forms of learning and knowledges developed from other contexts. Thirdly, this over-focus on formal learning separates learning and knowledge from other areas of people's lives including their communities and environments.

Historically, as well as currently, a range of proponents see adult education as an instrument of emancipation for marginalised and disenfranchised peoples in different parts of the world. For instance one of the key contributors to adult learning and education theories – Paulo Freire (for example see 1970, 1993) who worked with marginalised communities in South America is from the epistemological and political South as defined earlier. His work and ideas however have been adopted to achieve similar purposes by various researchers and practitioners around the world. More specifically, in countries from the socio-political South- most

of which have experienced European colonisation, adult education has been seen as a key strategy for challenging underdevelopment and other consequences of colonialism, for example Nyerere's focus on adult education in Tanzania (Mhina & Abdi, 2009).

Education has also been seen as an entry way into the dominant political and economic systems of power for indigenous communities, especially the leadership (Semali & Kincheloe, p. 7- 8). In addition, adult education that supports "people's rightful claim to indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing" is seen to be able to "deflect some of the historical realities attached to colonial induced, long term disturbances and destructions of people's ontologies, ecologies and overall life management systems" (Abdi & Kapoor, 2009, p. 10). Within the socio-political North, adult education also played an important role in supporting the development and emancipation of working class peoples for instance during industrialisation in the United Kingdom through the support of working class literacy development and the widespread dissemination of radical tracts (Merlyn, 2001).

At the same time however, adult education has also been and still is today used as an effective tool for the maintenance and reproduction of existing social, economic and political inequalities. On one level, Torres (2004) points out that there are essentially two separate systems for adult learning around the globe – the lifelong learning approach of universal adult learning engagement for rich countries and the reliance on adult basic education as the sole instrument for addressing adult illiteracy in poor countries. Jules elucidates how in the Caribbean this is the result of policies that focus on universal primary education and elitist secondary education leaving adult education as a very low priority (Jules, 2013, p. 360). Hickling-Hudson (2007) adds to this Caribbean perspective when she outlines the way that the different literacies and the purposes for which they are taught in adult learning programs work to reinforce social stratifications. Abdi and Kapoor (2009) further contribute to this argument with the acknowledgement that, especially in countries that suffered colonialism, adult education is still strongly connected with the use of education by colonial powers as a key tool of subjugation of native populations (p. 5). This is often continued today in some countries where the

education systems, including vocational education, are still dominated with content and values derived from the colonising country (Goura & Seltzer-Kelly, 2013). More generally, Kapoor connects modern day globalisation with both economic and cultural imperialism. He argues that globalisation is a derived if differentiated continuation of the earlier Northern colonialist subjugation of the rest of the world and implicates the operations of International Financial Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank with continued oppression and dispossession of subaltern peoples (Kapoor, 2009). Kapoor (2009) also notes however that many of these subaltern peoples also stubbornly refuse to disappear, despite these continuing onslaughts.

In Northern contexts continuous adult education and training is also often used as a tool to primarily ensure workers are flexible and multi-skilled and are able to support increased productivity for their employers and countries (for instance see the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). While this lifelong learning may provide some mechanisms for social mobility and inclusion through better employment prospects, it can also be seen to entrench existing disadvantages in some countries like Australia where education is increasingly becoming a user-pays system, so that only individuals who can already afford extra training gain any potential benefit from the system.

Northern Theories of Adult Education and their impacts

As discussed above, understandings and the practices of adult education and learning are shaped by a range of theories and practices from around the globe. On the one hand, some researchers and practitioners, mostly from the South (including within geographically Northern countries) have attempted to use adult learning as a means of emancipation and support for disempowered and marginalised groups.

On the other hand however, adult learning and formal adult education practices around the world are dominated by theories from the epistemological North that overly focus on learning within formal institutions such as schools, colleges, universities and training institutions. This has led to a situation where learning is most often equated with formal education, and learning that does not occur in these few

contexts is ignored, devalued and excluded from practice, policy making and research, or to link to Connell's (2007) phrase, simply erased. Abdi (2012) argues that this has been used historically to support colonial subjugation by assuring the "supremacy of European languages and epistemologies" as well as "the horizontal inferiorization of African worldviews, epistemic locations, styles of expression and forms of description (2012, p. 2). In addition, Abdi points out that "the whole knowledge and learning traditions of oral societies were derided as backward, ineffective and unacceptable" (2012, p. 2). This sidelining of knowledges and learning from colonised peoples is still occurring today under what Santos describes as "abyssal thinking" that is characterised by the "impossibility of the co-presence" (Santos, 2014, p. 118) of other realities or knowledges such as "popular, lay, plebeian, peasant or indigenous knowledges" (p. 119). As Santos (2014) argues, these forms of knowledge "vanish as relevant or commensurate knowledges because they are beyond... the simple binaries of Western scientific thought" (p. 119).

This exclusion of other knowledges and learning by Northern theories of adult learning also occurs within Northern contexts. In these countries too, not only is this learning devalued, made invisible and excluded, but so too are the people who rely heavily upon it because they do not have access to learning through formal institutions. As argued in my research,

> Firstly, only recognising and rewarding formal adult learning provides economic and social benefits to people who can successfully access and complete such formal learning, including being able to meet the increasing financial costs of the learning. However, for the groups of people who are already economically and socially marginalised, accessing formal adult learning is difficult, and the result of not accessing or completing formal adult learning is further social and economic disadvantage and marginalisation. (Thomas, 2014, p. 13-4).

In addition to excluding and devaluing learning from other contexts, these dominant and narrow Northern understandings of adult learning and education also contribute to the separation of learning from other areas of people's lives, including from their communities and local environments. As a function of colonial subjugation, this "imposition of alien colonial education and ways of knowing" has detached "native people...from precolonial educational

systems" that derived from and "reflected their histories, cultures, languages and actual needs" (Abdi, 2012, p. 2-3). This process of separation still continues in a number of countries today where Northern based education has little positive impact for people where it is taught out of context from local indigenous lives, as well as traditional knowledge, learning and value systems (e.g. Abdullah & Stringer, 1999, p 144). Furthermore, even for those from the North, this separation of learning from life contexts leads to the atomisation of people into specific discreet roles such as worker, learner, community member and family member that then fails to be able to recognise any multicontextual learning within and from people's lives.

Overview of the research

Brief overview of the study

In between 2011 and 2012 data was collected from six people living in regional NSW using semi-structured interviews to capture snapshots of their everyday lived experiences. The research was the major part of a doctoral thesis undertaken at the nearby regional university. Specifically, the research set out to explore the learning that arose from and through these people's everyday lives as a source of valuable and important learning. The term 'important' was used within the research to denote learning that has meaning and consequences for the people experiencing the learning. Used in this way, the term 'important' connects with Connell's (2007) notion of "dirty theory" by recognising local definitions and contexts. At the same time the term's usage actively undermines hegemonic Northern notions of knowledge and learning. As well as seeking to identify the learning that comes from people's everyday lives, the research also looked for how learning from different aspects of people's lives interacted, and what the impacts of everyday learning were for individuals, the people around them and broader society.

The people who participated in the research were already known to me in different ways and were invited to participate because I thought they would have interesting stories to tell about their lives. As a brief summary, here are some details about the six people interviewed: four were women and two were men; the youngest was in their thirties

and the eldest was in their sixties; two were born in a country other than Australia; one identified as Indigenous; two learnt English as a second or third language; three had experienced domestic and/or sexual violence; five had experienced or observed violence; two left secondary school illiterate; two worked at the university; two were farmers; and two were employed within community welfare programs.

The collected data was transcribed and then analysed in a range of different ways that was ongoing throughout the research process. As part of this process, each interview/transcript was developed into a chronological narrative that summarised key life events and drew out evidence of learning from those events.

These six constructed narratives were used to assist with my ongoing analysis. In addition the six narratives were also included in the final thesis as interludes between the theoretical chapters. This was my attempt at presenting each person's experiences and learning to the reader in as a holistic and complete way as possible before abstracting and dissecting them in the later analysis chapters.

This data was used alongside existing research – mostly from the UK, Europe, North America and Australia. However, the limitations of this literature meant that much of the research work was focused on trying to work out how to situate the data within the current approaches to adult learning, and in addition to try and forge closer connections between them. One of the outcomes of my thesis was the development and use of a patchworked or piecemeal theoretical framework of/for adult learning that is more capable of identifying, capturing, analysing and understanding learning from the research participant's everyday lives. This patchwork theoretical framework came together around four dimensions of adult learning that had emerged from both the data and the literature. These four dimensions were: recognising adult learning; the demarcation and segregation of adult learning; where learning occurs; and the outcomes of learning. The theories that were used and critically modified within the section on the recognition of adult learning will now be explored in greater depth.

Critical engagement with the Northern theories

Firstly, the work focussed on here draws on and brings together elements of existing research and theoretical frameworks, much of it from the Northern metropole. Some of this Northern theory was helpful to me, especially those aspects that were from a critical tradition. Predominantly, I took permission from Feminist Standpoint theorists such as Smith (1997, 2004) to not be a slave to existing theories and concepts, but instead, to start my investigation with the lives of everyday people. This is significant as the ideas of this group of connecting standpoint theories have fundamentally sought to question power relations within given contexts, give voice to often silenced standpoints and learn from, not just about, these non-dominant lives and perspectives (also see for instance: Harding, 2004).

Conversely however, much of the other mostly Northern literature, research and theory engaged with through the research acted to restrict understandings of adult learning, where it occurred, and what was produced from it. Instead of being directed by this mostly privileged knowledge, I have attempted to, as I show below, to engage with the literature critically and utilise aspects of it in new ways to develop a patchworked theoretical framework (Sfard, 1998) for adult everyday learning that is more capable of responding to and understanding the range of learning from the research participant's everyday lives.

Within the early stages of the literature review it became apparent that much of the literature focused on a range of specific areas of learning. These included the formal provision of education and training, as well as learning for and at work, and what learning was considered to be, for instance. As the data collection and analysis progressed, it became clear that most of the individual research contributions, models and approaches either did not address everyday learning, or were too narrow in their focus to adequately encompass it.

As a result of the limitations of the Northern literature, a major stage in the research work involved the critical examination of this dominant research around adult learning that included lifelong learning, informal learning, workplace learning and everyday learning. Instead of just reviewing and adopting this literature, a critical examination was used to

identify which aspects of it act to dismiss, ignore or exclude the everyday learning of the research participants. It was found that many of the approaches in the literature were restricted by a limited conceptualisation of learning (for example see Sternberg, 1989); or by a specific focus on a particular learning context such as formal learning or the workplace (for instance, see Eraut, 2000; Marsick, 2009; Marsick and Watkins, 1990, 2001; Conlon, 2004); or through normative based judgements about what could be considered to be worthwhile or valid learning (e.g. Smith, 1999, 2008). I will now discuss two examples of these limited approaches, and illustrate the ways that they did at times connect but more often did not connect with the participant's everyday learning and how these limits were responded to.

The first example of these limited research approaches is the work of Eraut (2000). Eraut compiled a complex and thorough typology of what he terms non-formal learning that spans across a range of learning from implicit learning, through to reactive learning and on to deliberative learning. For my work this began to provide a range for the recognition of different types of learning that few researchers except Schugurensky recognised. Schugurensky (2000) also developed a full and broad typology of informal learning that had similar ranges and roughly aligned with the categories of Eraut. There are however two key differences between the two typologies.

Firstly, Eraut includes a temporal element to his work that adds an extra dimension to understanding the connection between past, present and future experiences, expectations and learning. Secondly, while Eraut adds extra depth with the time factor, he also actively sets limits to the desired applicability of his work to learning within and about professional work and particular types of learning within that specific contextual frame. These include the recognition of learning that leads to "significant changes in capability or understanding" (Eraut, 1997, cited Eraut 2000, p. 12) and learning that is associated with "non-routine aspects of a new task or encounter" (Eraut, 2000, p. 12). Schugurensky (2000) on the other hand leaves his typology open to unspecified contexts, providing examples from different learning contexts to demonstrate his ideas. The constraints of these individual approaches can be seen with aspects of the stories from one of the research participants, Jaimie.

A major part of Jamie's life has involved bringing up children, and developing the knowledge and skills to do this well. As she says

> *I've had a career in children... Twenty years of children.*

Jaimie's choice of words is important here. She is talking about how she learned to be a mother in her everyday life, from her early days looking after her younger siblings and onto having and bringing up her own children. Jaimie recognises that she learnt most of this informally as she went.

> *when it came down to having my first child, you kind of get thrown in the deep end because there's stuff that you don't learn at school.*

and

> *I've gone on to have a lot of kids and I'm certainly different now with my last child than I was with my first. And I think that's through experience and understanding the difference, for example, between a baby's cry. That they cry for different reasons. And you can hear it. None of their cries sound the same. But that only comes through experience. And I didn't know that for my first, but when I went on to have my second child, you can pick the differences between the cries.*

Jaimie is also talking about how, twenty years after having her first child she is now applying that informal everyday learning in paid employment supporting a range of people such as the young parents of new babies and teenage girls at risk of leaving school. This paid employment started with Jaimie in a teaching assistant role with no formal qualifications. Over time and with formal training and accreditation Jaimie has gone on to being a teacher in her own right, although on a casual, non-permanent basi s.

Firstly, in this situation, using each typology on its own within the author's intended usage, neither typology would thoroughly capture the span and time dimensions of Jaimie's learning across her range of learning contexts. When modified and combined together however, Eraut's time dimension and Schugurensky's openness and breadth are able to establish a broad field of what can be recognised as learning across different types of learning in an unrestricted scope of contexts.

Secondly, Eraut's restrictions on what learning his model focused on is indicative of the restrictions created by the normative values and judgements used by many Northern authors in deciding what is to be considered valuable or worthwhile learning. Hager and Halliday (2009) take a similar

approach in their arguments about the role and nature of informal learning in professional work practice when they cite Beckett and Hager in talking about the need for learning of the "right kind" (Beckett & Hager, 2002, p. 114, cited in Hager & Halliday, 2009, p. 30).

The problem with these normative values of learning as they are applied in adult learning research, theory and practice is that they actively work to valorise some forms of approved learning while excluding and devaluing other forms of learning and knowing. As discussed above, this has had, and continues to have devastating effects for many people around the world. In Jaimie's situation, the informally learnt knowledge and skills that she has been applying in her paid work would not have been recognised by many Northern models of adult learning because it occurred across a number of life learning contexts, not just in or for the workplace for example. In addition, Jaimie's learning, especially as a young teenaged mother, would not have conformed to the various normative conditions of approved learning. In a wider context, this issue of the normative valuing of some types of learning is an example of Connell's (2007) conceptualisation of how Northern theories act to erase other knowledges, learning and ways of knowing.

These examples of the type of restrictions that were encountered with the Northern theories demonstrate the critical nature of engagement with them throughout the research. Firstly I did not accept any suggestion of potential universalism within these theories. Each theory is applicable to specific contexts and frames of reference including specific types of learning within particular types of paid work that are most likely to be found in some parts of the world and not others. Secondly I 'disobeyed' some of these author's intents and used their work in different ways to establish better connections with the localised contexts and knowledges of the participants. This refusal to reify Northern theories sits closely with Connell's idea of "dirty theory" where "theorising ...is mixed up with specific situations" (2007, p. 207).

This interruption of hegemonic Northern theories and practices is also enacted through the structuring of the research thesis. Essentially, each participant's interview/transcript was developed into a chronological narrative that summarised key life events for each person and

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drew out evidence of learning from those events. These six constructed narratives were initially used to assist with better understanding the themes and issues emerging from the data. However, the six narratives were then also included in the final thesis as interludes between the early theoretical chapters. This was an attempt at presenting each person's experiences and learning to the reader in as a holistic and complete way as possible before abstracting and dissecting them in the later analysis chapters.

Including the developed six participant narratives into the thesis was an attempt to literally create space for and privilege the words and experiences of these people.. Firstly the staggered positioning of the narratives as interludes was aimed at disrupting the dominant theoretical flow within the thesis. Secondly, the privileging of the participant's experiences created an opportunity for the words of these people, many of whom had been silenced in different aspects of their lives, to speak back to and interact with the dominant theoretical understandings of learning. Thirdly, this practice can be connected to the idea of minimising the erasure and loss of these people's experiences through the process of academic writing (Thesen, 2013, p. 1), while also challenging the norms of gatekeeping practices (Blommaert, 2005, p. 77, cited in Thesen, p. 6) and "centring organisations" (Thesen, p. 6).

Additionally, in the words of the editors of this special edition–this approach acted towards "interrupt(ing), (disputing) and defy(ing) Northern 'methodological 'business as usual'" (Takayama, Heimans, Amazan & Maniam, Introduction, this edition). This disruption of dominant theoretical flows and the inclusion of often marginalised voices can be seen to support Southern paradigm goals of the recognition of knowledge produced on the periphery and challenge the dominance and hegemony of Northern approaches by creating and clearly showing that there are spaces for different understandings of adult learning within and amongst the powerful theories from the North.

Significance

One of the key outcomes of critically modifying the Northern adult learning theories outlined above was the development and use of a patch-worked theoretical framework that was

used alongside the collected data to analyse both the data *and* the existing Northern theories. This framework was, in the first instance, able to recognise the broad range of everyday learning experiences across multiple contexts and practices coming from the participant' s stories that had previously been hidden. Secondly, the developed framework assisted in analysing and making meanings of those experiences in new ways, on the one hand helping to identify the roles that everyday learning can play in both supporting existing inequalities and oppression, as well as surviving and challenging them. On the other hand, as noted before the findings also helped to create space for these experiences to directly speak back to Northern theories. Below are some key examples of the significant findings of the research made available through the critical engagement with the Northern adult learning theories.

All of the participant's stories are localised and situated within life experiences

The instances of learning that were identified from the data in my research arose directly from the lived experiences of each of the participants. These included stories about learning how to be a mum, about being the migrant (or "wog") child in an Australian school and community; growing up amongst intergenerational trauma; living in the midst of interfaith community violence; how to get by without being able to fully read or write; and living while fighting cancer, to name just a few. This means that the areas of knowledge under discussion were produced by each of these people and is highly situated and connected to the various contexts within which they lead their lives. By choosing to focus on this level of learning, the research works at the level of "local being" as opposed to "concepts and categories claiming universality" (Smith, 1997, p. 114). From a Southern Theory perspective, this approach aligns with the work of Selvadurai et al, (2013) and Connell (2007) that argue that the influence of universalised Northern based theory and practice needs to be challenged by "localizing knowledge" (Selvadurai et al, 2013, p. 97). In Connell's words, this concept becomes "dirty theory" (2007, p. 207): theory that is grounded within local contexts, practices and knowledges.

Some of the participants have been marginalised

Out of the six people who contributed to this research, two can be clearly seen to have reasonably privileged positions within Australian society. Both of the participants are white men who are over 50 years of age. One holds a permanent senior position at a university while the other is the current owner of the family sheep farm. On the other hand however, every participant identified at least one experience of learning a subordinate social place within a localised context through abuse, violence or conflict. Several participants can be seen to have experienced being devalued and marginalised within these local contexts and broader Australian society for significant periods of their lives.

This process of learning one's place involved one participant learning her relatively low position in the localised hierarchy of the school playground. This was based on Carmen coming from a different ethnic background from the rest of the children and physically standing out from them with her darker skin colour. The following excerpt has Carmen discussing what she experienced being a migrant – what she colloquially calls a "wog", during her primary school years, and details her attempts to stop the abuse by trying to assimilate and be more physically like the children around her.

> *I remember being the wog kid and it was horrible. You got bashed up for it. Wash the blackness off your skin. I used to take the scouring brush, the metal one... Try and wash the blackness of my skin til my skin bled. And it was just so hard. Like you had to be spat on regularly and stoned. People would throw stones at you. (Carmen)*

Another participant, Rose, says that she learnt early on that her place as an Aboriginal woman was based around

> *...you find someone, you settle down, you have kids...*

and

> *...he (can) do whatever he wants to you... (Rose)*

Rose remembers that she accepted this because that is what she saw in the lives and families of the people around her –

> *...that's all I knew...,*

> *...that's what you see, you don't know anything different and you live like that. (Rose)*

This level of learning her position within her family and social groupings was further reinforced by Rose learning that Aboriginal people were given less status than non-Aboriginal people from her shortened time at school where

> *...if you didn't show any potential within that classroom, us as Aboriginal people we were put in the back...and basically we were left to ourselves. The teacher never really tried because you go back into the 70s, going back into that era, and the only time that we were ever acknowledged is when the sports carnivals come...*

> *So they brought the black kids from the back and then we went... we were the leaders, we led our school to victory, and then back in the back again. So I went right through without learning to read or write.*

This final excerpt shows Rose's marginalisation within Australian society, and quite specifically the role that formal education institutions played in silencing her and pushing her and her knowledge to the edges. This is a strong symbolic representation of my argument of the role that formal adult education systems have also played in the devaluing and ignoring of people's everyday informal learning more generally.

The participant's everyday learning generated important social knowledge

These excerpts are also significant examples of important knowledge about society that was produced from these people's everyday lives and learning. At the level of the individual, these excerpts provide powerful stories about the experiences of people surviving violence and abuse in their personal lives. However, these experiences did not happen in social or historical vacuums, but in the contexts of broader social, economic, political and historical relations and processes. For instance, in Rose's story, it is clear that she has also developed a strong understanding of her wider social positioning as an Indigenous woman within Australian society, especially in relation to her experiences with formal education.

Within the research, analysis was partly underpinned by feminist standpoint theorists such as Smith (1997) and Harding (2004). This analysis showed that the processes of participants learning their places in the worlds around them are firmly rooted within broader social positioning processes

based on axes of inequality including gender, race and class. With this connection, Carmen's experiences of schoolyard bullying can also be seen as Carmen being socially positioned within broader Australian society through her everyday experiences based on race. As Smith argues, the life experiences of disenfranchised or otherwise marginalised people, including women, can be seen to cut "the sociological cake differently from the traditional concepts of state, capital, formal organization, mass media, discourse and so forth" (Smith, 1997, p. 115), thus providing unique and vital understandings about society.

Using Connell and Rosa it can also be seen that this everyday learning is an important source of knowledge about society. At its most fundamental level, this everyday learning is localised and situated knowledge, which, as argued above is a key concern of authors such as Connell (2007) and Selvadurai et al (2013). In addition, this form of knowledge production fits with Santos' "notion of the South (that) is explicitly associated with alternative forms of knowledge for the social sciences" (Rosa, 2014, p. 853).

Conclusions

This article has presented and discussed a research project as an illustrative example of doing Southern Theory through literally "undoing" (Heimans, personal communications, April 2016) and then redoing Northern theories of adult learning and education. It has been demonstrated that critical review and evaluation of the dominant literature can reveal the restrictive mechanisms that contribute to the erasure of knowledges and learning through limited focus and the use of normative judgements of what learning can be, for instance. This article has also illuminated the potential of critical modification and adaptation of these Northern theories to develop a more responsive theoretical framework that is more capable of recognising, and then working with diverse experiences of learning in a wide range of life contexts. Lastly the article has then shown that doing Southern Theory in this way is not based on a dichotomous choice between North and South, but an attempt to find ways to make Northern theory more capable of engaging with experiences and learning from

the South, and attempting to reposition these marginalised knowledges more centrally.

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CONFERENCE REPORT

BORDER/S

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ABSTRACT   The main purpose of the Conference was to start a debate about studies and research relating to the circulation of the different forms of knowledge in the Mediterranean Basin, in order to build tools for planning, managing and evaluating territorial actions able to produce a positive impact on the Europeanization and on the perception of Europe by the citizens. All this can not but go through radical analysis of the concept of "border".

RIASSUNTO   La Conferenza ha avuto come obiettivo l'avvio di un confronto su studi e ricerche relative alla circolazione delle differenti forme di sapere del bacino del Mediterraneo. Ciò al fine di costruire strumenti per la progettazione, la gestione e la valutazione di azioni territoriali in grado di produrre un impatto positivo sull'europeizzazione e sulla percezione dell'Europa da parte dei cittadini. Tutto questo però non può non passare che attraverso un'analisi radicale del concetto di "confine".

KEYWORDS Border, Europe, Knowledge, Mediterranean, Policy

1st Annual International Conference – ICSR Mediterranean Knowledge
Border/s – 26th-28th October 2015, University of Salerno

The International Centre for Studies and Research *Mediterranean Knowledge* has just been established at the University of Salerno. The ICSR focuses on the Mediterranean as a place where several forms of knowledge, sociality and

culture have developed, met and clashed - a "liquid" border, in constant movement, which has generated a large part of 'Western civilization,' but which has also been a place of fierce confrontations.

A number of institutions have joined the ICSR. These are the Universities of Huelva and Seville (Spain), Porto (Portugal), Palermo and Salerno (Italy) and Malta, besides the *Institut Catholique de Toulouse* (France), the Cread (*Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Développement*) of Algeria and the Academy of Fine Arts of Naples.

The Conference *Border/s*, held at the University of Salerno, from 26th to 28th October 2015, has been the first important initiative of the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge*.

The main purpose of the Conference was to start a debate about studies and research relating to the circulation of the different forms of knowledge in the Mediterranean Basin, in order to build tools for planning, managing and evaluating territorial actions able to produce a positive impact on the Europeanization and on the perception of Europe by citizens in Europe and the rest of the Mediterranean. Against any metaphysical approach, ancient and modern, which attempts to immunize the human experience, the Institute seeks to address the urgent need to open a permanent space for debate and reflection in the field of human, philosophical and the social sciences. At the University of Salerno this is in keeping with the guidelines for research proposed by the Department of human, philosophical and educational sciences (DISUFF - *Dipartimento di Scienze Umane, Filosofiche e della Formazione*). It is this department which was instrumental in establishing the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge*.

The aim is to encourage and inspire thought that eschews pointless paralyzing identity issues and to be open to the articulation of knowledge on the basis of a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach. Scouring a terrain ranging from the human-social field to the economic-legal one, the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge* focuses its attention on the valorization of the cultural heritage, legacy of thought, traditions, ethical, moral and religious values, and Mediterranean languages in a manner that lies at the furthest remove from an exclusionary and immunizing border policy.

The Conference, supported by the highest research institution in Italy, the National Council of Research (CNR - *Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche*), was of great scientific value and international importance, thanks to participation of speakers coming from six countries (Portugal, Spain, France, Malta, Algeria and Italy).

Border/s was opened by the formal greetings by the Rector of the University of Salerno, prof. Aurelio Tommasetti, and by the Director of the DISUFF, prof. Natale Ammaturo. Later the Director of the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge*, prof. Emiliana Mangone, presented the initiative and its purposes; eng. Paolo Rocca Comite Mascambruno outlined the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge* website (www.mediterraneanknowledge.org).

The opening session, chaired by Daniela Calabrò, centered on the Lectio magistralis 'Illimite', delivered by leading contemporary Western philosopher, Jean-Luc Nancy – a philosopher whose talks and writings have for years been engaging with the definition of concepts such as "community", "democracy", "border".

Session I was chaired by Luc-Thomas Somme, Rector of the Institut Catholique de Toulouse, and focused on the subject, *Moving Away from Borders? Between Economy, Society and Development*, with talks by Mohamed Benguerna, Pier Virgilio Dastoli and Folco Cimagalli and presentations by Marco Letizia, Giuseppe Masullo and Massimo Siani.

Session II, held on 27th October, was chaired by Giuseppe D'Angelo, conference co-convenor and professor of philosophy at the University of Salerno, and focused on the subject *The Paths/Roads Leading to Borders. Between Language, History and Myth*. Rosaria Caldarone, Angelo Cicatello, Mar Gallego, Bernard Callebat, Andrea Salvatore Antonio Barbieri, Girolamo Cotroneo and Jorge Martins Ribeiro presented their reports, followed by the short speeches by Erminio Fonzo, Mariarosaria Colucciello and Luca Scafoglio.

The chairperson of Session III, *Beyond Borders: Between Knowledge, Culture and Art*, was Andrea Bellantone, who introduced the reports by Anna Milione, Stefania Perna, Biancamaria Bruno, Alessandra Migliorato, Carmel Borg, Peter Mayo and Dario Giugliano, as well as the short reports

by Giovanni Tusa, Valentina Mascia, Massimo Villani and Annamaria Giarletta.

All sessions were attended by a large audience, composed mostly of students and professors of the University of Salerno. At the end of each session, debates and discussions arose not only among the speakers, but also, and most importantly, among the participating audience members.

The Conference, moreover, provided the occasion for the first meeting of the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge* scientific committee. *Border/s* concluded with the round table *Imago Europae/Vulnus Mediterranei*, held on 28th October and introduced by Emiliana Mangone, professor and main convenor of the conference. The other participants were Laura Balbo, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Padua, Italy, and former Minister of Equal Opportunities; Corrado Bonifazi, Director of the Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies-National Research Council (IRPPS-CNR - *Istituto di Ricerche sulla Popolazione e le Politiche Sociali-Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche*), Italy; Maurizio Falco, Vice-Prefect, from the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of Interior, Italy; Lucia Luzzolini, member of the Central Service for the Protection of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (SPRAR – *Servizio centrale per la protezione di richiedenti asilo e rifugiati*); Roberto Cortinovis, from the Foundation ISMU (*Iniziative e Studi per la Multietnicità*), Italy; Aldo Masullo, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University "Federico II" of Naples, Italy; Massimo D'Alema, President of the Foundation *Italianieuropei* and former Presidente del Consiglio (Prime Minister of Italy) and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Thanks to the involvement of political-institutional actors and to the authority of the participants, the round table proposed some responses and reflections for confronting the current dramatic situation of the Mediterranean Basin. The need for debates resulting in concrete proposals for action is urgent, given that the Mediterranean sea has been turning into a watery grave for thousands of hapless migrants from Africa and elsewhere, victims of mass exploitation, desperate to reach the shores of Europe with a view to living a better and more dignified life.

The ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge* plans to publish, in

the coming months, some books containing the ideas and the reflections that arose at the Conference. Hopefully some of these will be reviewed in the spaces of this journal.

The hope is that a new and fruitful dialogue may start, in order to make border/s a place from where one veers towards the implementation of decisive and non-deferrable political strategies.

Postcolonial Directions
in Education

REVIEWS

Books and other publications

Book Review

Caitlin Janzen, Donna Jeffrey and Kristin Smith Eds. *Unravelling Encounters. Ethics, Knowledge and Resistance under Neoliberalism.* Waterloo Canada, Wilfred Laurier Press, ISBN 978-1-77112-125-5, 2015, 292 pages.

Sarah Ahmed's (2000) work on encounters is the source of inspiration for many of the chapters in this book which owes its origin to a workshop held at the University of Victoria, BC, Canada in 2012. These chapters provide nuanced views on encounters between different people in different contexts in Canada and beyond (including foreign contexts, such as Seoul, for Canadian migrant teachers). They reveal the nature of the encounters from a postcolonial perspective, many exploring the ethical bases of these encounters in the context of the all pervasiveness of the market and therefore neoliberalism. In the words of the editors, in their introductory chapter, this volume draws on "Ahmed's conceptualization of the encounter as a productive entry into an analysis of ethics in the classroom, in social activism and in the helping professions." (p.3)

This book brings together different groups of people from different areas of specialisation, including social work, literary studies, anthropology, sociology and international development. They provide understandings of different facets of neoliberalism, as it impinges on work in different sectors, and the encounters across difference that it conditions. For instance, who does it include in and exclude from the notion of citizenship it carries forward?

Echoing some of the sentiments expressed in various chapters, I would argue that this raises the perennial critical pedagogical question: who encounters whom and from which position [of privilege or subalterneity]? It also raises issues regarding how one connects with other people in this encounter. Furthermore it sheds light on the tendency to sanitize the history of violence that has characterised earlier encounters between different people, especially violence with regard to ethnic cleansing, colonial settlement and dispossession, sexual repression and other forms of oppression. These issues are raised in the book which also indicates how these histories of colonialism, genocide and slavery are overlooked within contemporary discourses around citizenship and human rights. They are said to embody a white-centric, settler-colonial view of the world and marginalise those who do not fit this paradigm.

There are chapters which posit that seemingly progressive reactions and advances regarding previous states of oppression (e.g. Nazi-fascist domination in Europe) speak a language of emancipation and liberal democracy which remains exclusive of a variety of others who were (e.g. ruthlessly violent Western, including Nazi-fascist, colonialism in Africa and elsewhere) or are still racially otherised. Even nostalgia for and mourning of social welfare gains of the past are often characterised by these forms of eclipsing and historical amnesia. What are the tensions involved in working in different settings (e.g. bathhouses with their sexual encounters, among others, and the racialised AIDS discourse to which they often give rise)? Great contradictions characterise the encounters with people in this and similar contexts, positioned as 'other' on sexual and ethnic/racial grounds.

These questions and issues emerge as one reads through the various chapters, the introductory and individual contributions by the three editors and those written by the other eight authors involved. All authors are ensconced in Canadian academic institutions from both the 'Anglophone' and 'Francophone' contexts, a very problematic labelling of contexts given that they represent the earliest settler-colonial split in Canadian society. It still makes its mark today, obscuring the huge range of ethnic/racial differences which have characterised the country thus far.

This division has certainly obscured the presence of indigenous (First Nations) populations of Canada and the nature of encounters between them and colonising white settler others. There have been pacts and breaches throughout Canadian history. This history is marred by violence of a physical and symbolic nature but is frequently, as elsewhere, sanitized in a variety of displays, not least those we often encounter in museums, provincial or otherwise. This has resonance for countries beyond the scope of this book; Australia and New Zealand immediately come to mind. The issue of writing history and national narratives calls into question the nature of knowledge that is exalted in Western institutions and continues to be advanced in the contemporary Neoliberal scenario which limits Western understanding of the complexity of human encounters tackled in this volume.

The book calls throughout for the still urgent need to move beyond ethnocentric knowledge to learn from other knowledges that have been marginalised by colonialism and the market. We read, in the Afterword, that they are marginalised by the "'economy of credibility' that turns repeatedly and exclusively to the same European-derived canon of ideas and authorities." (p. 274)

The call is for those limited to a Eurocentric body of knowledge to begin to 'shut up and listen' to those whose minds and bodies are inscribed with centuries of colonial violence and who have their own valid knowledge to offer, often painful but also potentially more emancipatory than the 'official' white settler one. This subaltern knowledge is often born of one's connecting with the 'web of life' that sees people *rooted in* rather than being separate from and superior to nature. This knowledge and view of life is at odds with the Neoliberal vision of all things on earth being objects of consumption to be exploited in accordance with the rule of the market.

A process of unlearning and learning is key to the development of healthy encounters through which one can aspire to collectively resist and transform colonial legacies, while, at the same time, valorising social and bio-difference. Some of these legacies are embedded in or transcend neoliberalism that is not simply a type of economic policy but also very much an ideology for producing a particular kind of

subjectivity (Sotiris, 2004, p. 319) which, as indicated by authors in this book, is characterised by self-interest, self-censorship, competition and being governed at a distance (governmentality). Governmentality and 'colonial logics' can easily constitute a strong feature of the University-community encounters, given specific treatment in one of the book's chapters.

The volume touches on all of the above issues and more. In my view, there should be a follow up to this initiative which can take the form of a genuinely international forum around the subject. *Postcolonial Directions in Education* can provide a suitable platform for this.

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