Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge

International Perspectives and Interdisciplinary Approaches

Edited by
Marlon Lee Moncrieffe

Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge

"Marlon Lee Moncrieffe's volume is ground-breaking in its scope and approach to decolonising curriculum knowledge. A stellar team of researchers have been assembled to articulate and exemplify the complex yet pertinent issues methodology and approaches. The range of issues tackled from arts-based approaches to teaching and learning, participatory methods, decolonising World Bank influence to engagement with ontological questions is innovative, refreshing and highly educative in the direction of learning to unlearn in order to relearn. This is a most welcomed volume as it expands the frontiers of decolonising the curriculum."

—Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Professor/Chair of Epistemologies of the Global South, Vice-Dean of Research in the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, University of Bayreuth, Germany*

"This edited collection provides a fresh and much needed critique of Eurocentric influences and colonial legacies in curriculum making in the Global South. It urges us to reconsider the geopolitics of knowledge within educational institutions in the Global South as well as in the Global North."

—Robert Aman, *Associate Professor of Education, Linköping University, Sweden*

"What I love about this book is that each chapter challenges us to a different way of understanding and discussing concepts e.g participatory research methods, the engagement with voices of those with lived experiences, the maintenance of coloniality through curriculum and unquestioning teacher practice. Those engaged in decolonial studies will enjoy the critical discussions and research approaches used by authors to decolonise their work from different country perspectives. Those new to decolonising the curriculum will enjoy being led through different ways of questioning, interpreting and knowing. The authors have taken great care to write in an accessible way which for me is part of decolonising the Academy. An enlightening read for all educators."

—Rowena Arshad, *Professor Emerita/Chair in Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, Associate of the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES), University of Edinburgh, UK*

"This is a much-needed collection of essays. Rooted in a thorough knowledge and understanding of key decolonial thinkers, from Fanon to Freire to Mignolo, this book highlights the need to embrace both epistemological plurality and an understanding of contextual specificity if we are to decolonise the classroom experience of young people globally. Crucially, this collection highlights the need to move beyond warm words and rhetoric, in order to genuinely, and practically, rethink pedagogical practice, thereby addressing the complex intersectional issues that perpetuate the global legacies of colonialism."

—Paul Cooke, *Professor/Centenary Chair of World Cinemas, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds, UK. Director of* Changing the Story: Building Civil Society with and for Young People

"This book provides international perspectives and examples of research attempts to decolonise knowledge and curriculum. Authors in this volume perceive "colonisation" as a continuous project which is not limited to territorial control in the past but also Western epistemological dominance that permeates throughout the globe not exclusive to formerly colonised countries. Brilliant work!"

—Thithimadee Arphattananon, *Associate Professor, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, Thailand*

"*Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge: International Perspectives & Interdisciplinary Approaches* is a timely collection of work which speaks to the importance of Decolonising as an action within international contexts. Authors in the volume use various methodologies to outline intentional strategies and approaches to disrupt colonial logic and policies embedded within institutions, and more importantly question normalised ideologies that often go unquestioned. A must read for everyone passionate about equity and social justice to work in solidarity and allyship to challenge injustice and on-going colonial practices in all its forms in our current times!"

—Ardavan Eizadirad, *Assistant Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada*

Marlon Lee Moncrieffe
Editor

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Si quieres ir rápido, ve solo. Si quieres llegar lejos, ve acompañado.

यदि तिमी छिटो जान चाहन्छौ भने एक्लै जाऊ, यदि तिमी टाढा जान चाहन्छौ भने सँगै जाऊ ।

Ukuba ufuna ukuhamba ngokukhawuleza, hamba wedwa. Ukuba nifuna ukuya kude, hambani kunye.

Si to anvi al vit, mars tou sel. Si to anvi al lwoin mars ensam ek lezot.

ไปคนเดียวอาจไปได้ไว แต่ถ้าอยากไปได้ไกลเราต้องไปด้วยกัน

Hvis du vil gå fort, gå alene. Hvis du vil nå langt, gå sammen.

Если хочешь идти быстро, иди один Если хочешь идти далеко, иди вместе.

Jeśli chcesz iść szybko, idź sam; jeśli chcesz zajść daleko, idź z innymi.

Als je snel wilt, dan ga je alleen. Als je ver wilt, dan ga je samen.

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

Contents

Notes on Contributors

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Marlon Lee Moncrieffe is a Doctor of Education and Principal Lecturer at the School of Education, University of Brighton, UK. His research expertise and leadership on Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge has been disseminated widely and internationally. Marlon was Principal Investigator for the 2019–2020 Arts Humanities Research Council Global Research Challenges Fund commissioned *Changing the Story* project entitled: 'Examining Interpretations of Civic National Values Made by Young People in Post Conflict Settings (an intercontinental comparative project between Kenya and Nepal). He was also Principal Investigator for the 2020–2021 Arts Humanities Research Council Global Research Challenges Fund commissioned project entitled: Consolidation, learning and evaluation in Kenya and Rwanda: Critical review of *Changing the Story* projects in Eastern Africa (Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge). He is a council member of the British Educational Research Association and a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching.

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1

Why Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge?

Marlon Lee Moncrieffe

Welcome, readers, to *Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge: International Perspectives and Interdisciplinary Approaches.* The contents of this book represent a unique collective global conscience, serving to contribute to a growing body of scholarly work that addresses issues of inequality in educational policy and curriculum making today.

Why Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge?

In its broadest sense, the objective of decolonisation work in education is to expose and to disrupt the ongoing processes of colonialism, identified by the uncritical cultural reproduction of Eurocentric curriculum knowledge and discourses (Bhambra et al., 2018; Moncrieffe, 2020a;

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1

Moncrieffe et al., 2020a). With a focus on the intellectual, emotional, economic and political reversal of colonial injustices, decolonisation work in education means critically assessing, contextualising and challenging the dominant viewpoint and assumptions of curriculum knowledge (Gandolfi & Rushton, 2022). Decolonisation work does this by amplifying and disseminating the knowledge and perspectives of peoples that curriculum knowledge has historically silenced and marginalised (Moncrieffe, 2020a; Moncrieffe et al., 2020a).

There has recently been a volume of activity in societies across the world which can be viewed as decolonial action, leading to an increased dissemination across academia of decolonial research and writing. This in general been in relation to colonialism and racism. For example, the 'Why isn't my professor Black?' debates in the UK (UCL, 2014), the 'Rhodes Must Fall Campaign' in the UK and South Africa (see Kwoba et al., 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018), the 'Stop calling me Murzyn' campaign in Poland (see Kubicka, 2021) and across the western world, the huge wave of Black Lives Matters anti-racism protests in 2020 during worldwide COVID-19 (see Dancy et al., 2018; Moncrieffe et al., 2020b). The latter events in the UK made clear the racial inequalities in society by the review of disparities in health care support given between white and non-white people early in the pandemic (Croxford, 2020; Downey, 2020; Godin, 2020; Gov.UK, 2020; Liverpool, 2020). This was argued as further evidence of racism in UK society and connected to their continued epistemic injustices within education, curriculum knowledge, teaching and learning (Moncrieffe, 2020a, 2020b).

The Book

The call to decolonise is not new, and neither does its origins emerge from one source in the world Gandolfi & Rushton, 2022). Where the world continues to frame people by their racial and ethnic identities against the legacies of European colonialism; and where in the world there is one dominant political ideology imposed universally as a form of cultural imperialism, this gives birth to contextualised decolonial voices and movements.

The research, theoretical, philosophical and reflective writing in this book explores, cites and positions with a multitude of decolonial theorists from across the world. This particularly with seminal indigenous and Global South writers including Fanon (1967), Freire, (1970), N'gugi Wa Thiong'o (1986), Spivak (1999), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), Mignolo and Walsh (2018) [this list is not exhaustive]. It is a fusion of these international perspectives that this book applies as a conceptual framework in examination of decolonial work in education and curriculum knowledge, giving international insight and understanding from a unique range of historical, social, political, cultural and educational contexts including The UK, Nepal, South Africa, Namibia, Australia, Colombia, Canada, Thailand, Mauritius, Poland, Russia, Norway, and The Netherlands. This book provides unique possibilities for comparative education.

Aims of the Book

With the purpose of amplifying and disseminating the knowledge and perspectives of peoples that curriculum knowledge has silenced and marginalised, this book was devised with many aims in mind including:

- To share research that centres on youth/student imaginations, voices and activism.
- To advance notions of transformative critical multicultural education.
- To examine and critique Eurocentric influences on Global South developments in education, curriculum making

Research Methods

A broad range of research methods and approaches to data collection framed by decolonial theory are applied across the chapters of this book. These include:

- Using arts-based methodologies with children and young people at the forefront of knowledge creation.

- Discourse analysis of social studies curricula and history curricula.
- Qualitative research including interviews with teachers, researchers, academic colleagues.
- Narrative reflective writing fused with theory in for advanced meaning making.

Disrupting Epistemic Power

The internationality of the research work given by the chapters of this book have produced a multitude of themes for critical analysis, in deepening an understanding on how European colonialism as the dominant epistemic power continues to permeate societies and influence the lives of cultural groups across the world. The research and theoretical analysis in this book make evident how formal curriculum knowledge is used as a power to perpetuate cultural reproduction in the relationship between the state and its people. Furthermore, how formal curriculum knowledge and the uncritical teaching and learning of this can reproduce a dominant national self-image embedded in discursive structures of National exceptionalism. What this means is that decolonising work in education faces the ongoing challenges in tackling worldwide plagues of inequality including: racism, classism, *patriarchism and sexism, all of which continue to* dominate education policies, curriculum knowledge, international research and development in education. This indeed is a huge challenge. Some approaches given to this emanating from the research work and theoretical analysis in the chapters of this book include:

- Disrupting and dismantling the discursive structures of National exceptionalism.
- Fore fronting in education and curriculum a greater value of existing epistemic currency stemming from the heritage and lived experiences of students and learners.
- Focusing on education and curriculum knowledge through the indigeneity of knowledges and approaches as providing epistemic power and leadership delivering new knowledge

- Raising the value of epistemic currency already held by young people as curriculum knowledge.

Further details and of these approaches are detailed below:

Chapter 2 has Marlies Kustatscher, E. Kay M. Tisdall, Edwar Calderón *(UK)*, William A. Evanko and Juan Manuel Gomez Serna *(Colombia)* combining to present their arts-based project with Afrocolombian and indigenous young people in Colombia. Their writing draws upon decolonial theorists including Freire (1970), Fals Borda, (2001), Mignolo and Walsh (2018), Cheney (2010) Robles Lomeli and Rappaport (2018) and Diaz-Diaz (2021) themed centrality on decoloniality in theory and in practice applied to participatory research methods collaboration for fueling empowerment, creativity and new ways to knowing through the voices and perspectives of young people. This research is presented against a clear awareness of the dilemmas of participatory methodologies becoming subsumed into global knowledge politics and research relations. The authors caution against the co-optation of participatory methodologies into processes of neoliberal knowledge production and neo-colonisation. They conclude that participatory methodologies have the potential to decolonise knowledges, yet the indigeneity of knowledges and approaches which provide epistemic power and leadership delivering new knowledge are also needed to decolonise participatory methodologies.

The use and application of arts-based methodology to research with young people in the Global South in continued in Chapter 3 and focuses on the how social studies curriculum has been constructed and developed for teaching and learning about civic values education in Nepal. Nub Raj Bhandari *(Nepal)* and Marlon Lee Moncrieffe *(UK)* draw upon decolonial theorists through the work of for example Cheney (2010); Mignolo and Walsh (2018), Savyasaachi and Butler (2014) and Cuevas-Parra and Tisdall (2019) to share their research which sought to decolonise the construct of formal civic education knowledge framed by the Nepalese social studies curriculum for teacher-led inculcation to the acquisition of young peoples' learning. The authors of this chapter share on their collaborative arts-based methods approach for teaching and learning,

in which the devising, shaping and owning of the curriculum knowledge and sharing of lived experiences and ideas are led and generated by young people, who in their various collaborations with each other, use their epistemic power to frame their own sense of knowledge and understanding of civic national values outside of the formal social studies curriculum knowledge construct. The authors state how their research project in affect was to facilitate the enactment of creative agency sourced through the value of epistemic currency already held by young people.

A similar pattern of fore fronting a high value of existing epistemic currency stemming from the heritage and lived experiences of students and learners is evident in Chapter 4 through the combined writings of Josephine Mwasheka Nghikefelwa *(Namibia/South Africa),* Frances Wyld *(Australia)* and Gina Wisker *(UK)* in decolonising the literary related doctorate. They apply a wide range of decolonial theorists and writers in this chapter, such as for example Chinua Achebe (1962), Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1998), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), de Sousa Santos (2014), Mbembe (2016), and Chaka et al. (2017) as a rationale in explaining and sharing on transforming what is possible in decolonised doctorates in terms of perspectives, voice, research and writing, and through the decolonised positionality adopted by researcher and examiner. The authors profess an enabling of indigenous voice as knowledge throughout the entire doctoral studies process as deconstructing what is largely the form and channel for white Northern Western male thinking and voices. The authors question whose knowledge has power, whose knowledge and voices should also have power, and must be included, celebrated and enabled to make overdue change, for an inclusive doctoral decolonisation process; one that questions who and what enables and effectively helps curate diverse knowledge and expression. They see that any intent on decolonising the doctorate, needs to look carefully at the choice and role of supervisors and examiners in this process.

In Chapter 5, Hyleen Mariaye *(Mauritius)* continues the thread from previous chapters in examining the theme of epistemic power and validity of knowledge given by formal curriculum constructs in Global South contexts. The writing incorporates neoliberal and decolonial theorists such as Anwaruddin, (2014), Ayling (2019) and Klees et al. (2012) in examining the external influence of the World Bank on Small Island

Developing States. This particularly where validation given to educational policy and resulting curriculum knowledge is sourced externally, enacted without critique by Mauritian educators, thus perpetuating a neo-colonial relationship. Concerns are raised in this chapter towards the World Bank's neoliberal capitalist educational discourse being applied universally in Mauritius, against what is argued for as a need to implement more locally contextualised and inclusive social reconstructionist educational policy reforms in providing epistemic equity in curriculum, teaching and learning opportunities.

Chapter 6, by Omsin Jatuporn *(Thailand)* continues new thread emerging from the previous chapter on formal curriculum knowledge as a power to perpetuate cultural reproduction in the relationship between the state and its people. The concept of 'Thai-ness' problematised in the formal social studies curriculum, in school textbooks, and through its discursive practices of power as absolute knowledge. The chapter applies the lenses of decolonial theorists such as Chutintaranond (2009), Panpothong (2015) and Arphattananon (2021) in supporting the application of critical discourse analysis as a method to reveal the discursive practices of social studies curriculum and textbooks as agentic forces of the dominant culture, which function to reinforce existing power relations, asymmetries and forms of domination. This provides basis for the author to argue for a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy as a necessary liberalisation of knowledge that can truly empower Thai people.

The chapters in this book move from the centring of Global South perspectives and contexts to those of the Global North. Still, a common thread of formal curriculum knowledge as a power to perpetuate cultural reproduction in the relationship between the state and its people is continued, through the critical analysis in Chapter 7 given by Kristin Gregers Eriksen *(Norway).* The decolonial lenses of theorists and writers such as Spivak (1999), Quijano (2000), Maldonado-Torres (2007), Loftsdóttir and Jensen (2012), Mignolo and Walsh (2018), Stein et al. (2017) and Santos (2018) are applied in this chapter to interrupt and expose the nature of coloniality apparent in Norwegian citizenship education. The author shares concerns on how coloniality is detected in the Norwegian classrooms through the reproduction of a dominant

national self-image embedded in discursive structures of National exceptionalism. For the first time in the book, we see race and racism as central to considerations of decolonial theory. In this chapter, it is the othering of indigenous Sámi, who essentialised and actively constructed as a national other through the structure and content of narratives as well as imagery, and the structuring of historical narratives in ways that uphold the immunity of the Norwegian nation state. The conclusion of the chapter poses critical questions that challenge the concept of National exceptionalism.

In Chapter 8, Zuhra Abawi *(Canada)* continues theme in exposing discursive structures of National exceptionalism with a focus on identity, race and racism by arguing that the Canadian context cannot be divorced from the settler-colonial landscape, which continues to drive policy and curricula from the early years to higher education. In examination of the Ontario context, Canada's largest and most diverse province, the author applies decolonial theorists such as Thobani (2007), Tuck and Yang (2012), Coulthard (2014) and Nxumalo and Cedillo (2017) to critique discourses of diversity in Canadian early childhood curricula by drawing on the 'discursive shift' from multiculturalism to equity and inclusion permeated by neoliberalism. The author argues that racial disparities in access to opportunities and services, such as education and childcare expose cracks in Canada's mythical narrative as a nation of equity, peace, tolerance and liberal multiculturalism.

Resistance to the discursive structures of National exceptionalism in the UK history curriculum knowledge is challenged by research evidence provided in Chapter 9 by Marie Charles *(UK)*. The thread of identity, race and racism continues where the decolonial theories of Afrocentricity in the works of Asante (2003), Mazama (2003), King & Swartz (2018) and the Africana phenomenology of Fanon (1967), Henry (2006) and Gordon (2006) are situated within a critical pedagogical lens, and a conceptual and theoretical framework for this chapter. The author argues that these are integrated and interwoven lenses to facilitate an understanding of how a change in social and learning behaviour with empowering Black identity can occur because of increased understanding of learners' affective, conative and cognitive domains. Findings from research led by the author are evidenced as a pathway to praxis

in addressing themes of identity, race and racism by decolonising the curriculum for both learner and teacher to access and engage.

Resistance to the discursive structures of National exceptionalism a useful response to this question is apparent in Chapter 10. Although the application of a decolonial perspective to the field of education in Russia has not been extensively studied, authors Kamil Nasibullov and Nataliia Kopylova *(Russia)* apply the work of social and historical theorists such as Etkind (2001), Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001), Chary and Verdery (2009) and Bhahba (2012) to consider how notions of internal colonisation through dominant Russian culture in curriculum teaching and learning can be resisted. The authors focus education on the context of the Republic of Tatarstan, where curriculum, teaching and learning is centred on maintaining indigenous identity. This can confront and challenged the colonial/imperial order of the nation state. The authors argue that studies on post-Soviet space through the lens of decolonial ideas must be focussed on ethnography of indigenous peoples, considering their rights and interests.

In Chapter 11, Urszula Markowska-Manista *(Poland)* continues the thread in examination of identity, race and racism in curriculum knowledge making. The educational practice of Polish mass schools is identified as fully oriented towards the needs of the culturally homogeneous environment. The author uses the term 'Polish-centrism' to show how this amplifies the perception of non-white Poles as being foreign and leads to contrasting them with 'typical' Poles or labelling as 'not quite Polish', despite the fact that they were born in Poland, they are Polish citizens, they are brought up in Polish culture, identify with Poland as their homeland and Polish is their first language. In this racist context, the decolonisation of education and curriculum through minority-ethnic group (non-white Polish) action is presented. Decolonial theorists such as Moncrieffe et al. (2019), Bobako (2020), Balogun (2020) and Omolo (2020) are applied in this chapter to show how educational processes of decolonising including self-empowerment in defining knowledge and narrative can equip young non-white Polish people with a voice of power for use in their encounters with racism in education and in the curriculum.

In Chapter 12, Bert Meeuwsen *(The Netherlands)* applies global theories of decoloniality including Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), De Sousa Santos (2007), Maldonado-Torres (2007), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) and Mignolo and Walsh (2018) and blends these in sharing his analogical narrative reflections with historically western philosophical perspectives such as Comenius' (1623) notion of 'Pansophia'. The aim of this eclectic approach being to provide illustration of a unique European institution's multicultural context; in its recognising the hegemony of western centric knowledge, to its absorbing with the power of decolonial method in teaching and learning fuelled by philosophical notions of self-development, including support through the professional learning community, meaning orientated reflection and the virtues of ethical leadership. The quest for institutional and personal transformation being to exhibit ontological pluralism in practice and action. This means welcoming and applying multiple ways of seeing and being, and multiple ways of knowing through the pluriverse of epistemologies that are available to all in the unique educational context.

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Decolonising Participatory Methods with Children and Young People in International Research Collaborations: Reflections from a Participatory Arts-Based Project with Afrocolombian and Indigenous Young People in Colombia

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Introduction

In projects with children and young people globally, participatory methodologies have received much critical attention (Tisdall, 2015). They have been celebrated for their potential to centre the agendas

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15

and resources of children and young people themselves and to produce knowledge collaboratively (Cuevas-Parra & Tisdall, 2019). They are often seen to remedy some of the intergenerational power imbalances between young people and adults, as well as the broader power imbalances of social research (Lundy & McEvoy, 2017; Tisdall, 2015).

Participatory methodologies have emerged from a rich history of activism and transformative education, particularly within the Global South.[1] They have been especially influential in the field of 'international development', and not without criticism (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). For those working with children and young people, participatory methodologies also align with international children's human rights discourses and legislation (such as UNCRC, 1989), which have been shaping discussions in the field for some time.

Participatory methodologies do not exist in a social vacuum but are always located within research relationships and contexts (see Brydon-Miller et al., 2011). In this chapter, we reflect on our experiences of working on a collaborative project involving Afrocolombian and indigenous young people in Chocó, Colombia, and a team of artists, educators and researchers located in different cities in Colombia and the United Kingdom. We are grappling with questions around the place of participatory methodologies in such projects:

What happens to participatory methodologies as they become subsumed into global knowledge politics and research relations?
How do these structural issues translate into relationships and methods 'on the ground'?
How are they shaped by the positionality of those involved?
How can we preserve their emancipatory potential as we work within these particular structures of power?

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[1] We recognise that the terms Global North and Global South are problematic, as they are often used as euphemisms for other, more valuing terms (e.g., 'Third World'). Some countries, such as Australia and New Zealand (geographically located in the Southern Hemisphere which may be considered as pertaining to the Global South), tend not to be included within this term. We use them here in consistency with the rest of this edited collection, and to recognise the fact that there are indeed historical relations of colonialism and exploitation across countries in the Global North and South, that continue to shape global geopolitics today.

We suggest that ongoing efforts to decolonise participatory methodologies need to be at the heart of international research collaborations, to avoid the co-optation of participatory methodologies into processes of neoliberal knowledge production and neo-colonisation. The chapter concludes that participatory methodologies have the potential to decolonise knowledges, yet particular knowledges and approaches are also needed to decolonise participatory methodologies.[2]

Participatory Methods with Children and Young People: A Critical History

The idea of participation, for childhood and youth researchers and practitioners, is firmly linked to children's human rights as enshrined in the UNCRC (1989). Article 12 (1) of the UNCRC (the right to express views in all matters that affect the child, and to have those views given due weight) is generally cited to support participation rights, alongside other articles grouped together as participation rights (Articles 13, 14, 15, 17) and the UNCRC General Comment on Article 12 (1) (2009) by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which is an authoritative interpretation of this Article.

The universal application of human rights discourses has been a contentious issue. The UNCRC has been critiqued for imposing a Global North view of childhood and youth: for example, focussing on individualised notions of rights, relying on Global North assumptions about families and communities, or enabling interventions which promote Global North norms around children's development and parent–child relationships (Ennew, 1995; Valentine & Meinert, 2009; Tisdall, 2015). Nevertheless, children's human rights can provide a key tool for social change and social justice, when their instrumentalisation considers the cultural, social and economic contexts within which children and young people are located (Vandenhole et al., 2015). A decolonial lens on children's rights, with more nuanced contextualised

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[2] This chapter was written by the 'adult' research team, and the young co-researchers have not been involved in the writing. For further discussion, see later in this chapter.

guidance on its implementation, is required to avoid it being used as a tool of Global North domination over former colonies under the guise of 'children's best interests' (Faulkner & Nyamutata, 2020, p. 83). Examples of decolonial thought are discussed further below, for example in the work of Freire (1970).

While children's human rights play a key role in contemporary discourses around participatory methods with children and young people, participatory methodologies more broadly have a long and rich history. As is the case with all theoretical concepts, the ways in which their genealogies are told are not neutral. Often framed as Participatory Action Research (PAR), participatory research approaches have emerged in the early twentieth century as a challenge to positivist social science, with the aim to achieve social transformation through collective processes of knowledge production and inquiry. They were driven by Black, indigenous and feminist scholars in different parts of the world (Brydon-Miller et al., 2011). Some often-cited early examples are Lewin (1946) in the US, Rajesh Tandon (Brown & Tandon, 1983) in India, and Swantz in Tanzania (Hall, 2005).

Writers agree on the particularly influential role of Latin American scholars in the development of PAR approaches. In Brazil, Paolo Freire's work (chiefly, his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1970) repositioned individuals not as objects of inquiry or empty vessels, but as experts on their own lives. He challenged accepted dichotomies of expert researchers versus lay communities, by developing decolonial pedagogies and processes to reverse these established relationships, and by confronting oppressive power relations through promoting 'critical consciousness'. Another key figure in the Latin American radical intellectual movements of the 1970s was Orlando Fals Borda, a Colombian researcher closely associated with the development of PAR. He contested the 'epistemological gap' between academics and grassroot communities and developed a series of interdisciplinary tools and exercises for collaborative activist research and its public dissemination (Fals Borda, 2001; see also Robles Lomeli & Rappaport, 2018). His legacy continues to shape activist research in the Global South and Global North today, particularly in the field of human rights and emancipatory education.

With their activist and emancipatory tradition, participatory methodologies have emerged as a challenge to epistemic violence and other forms of imposed knowledge transfer oppression (Spivak, 1994). However, numerous critiques have highlighted that while participatory methodologies have a strong potential to redress some of the power imbalances in knowledge production, they can also be utilised in problematic ways. Cooke and Kothari (2001) famously described a new 'tyranny' of participation in the field of international development—highlighting how participatory methodologies may reinforce existing power hierarchies, may take exclusionary forms, or may co-opt grassroot agendas while on the surface advocating a 'bottom up' approach. Furthermore, Parpart (2000) suggests that participatory approaches in development are often gender-biassed or reinforce patriarchal structures.

Others have highlighted how the wider context of research practices and relations is steeped in colonial histories that inevitably shape all methodologies and knowledge production. For example, Smith (2012) traces the 'dirty' histories of research as an imperialist project, grounded in Westerners' claims of 'discovery' of indigenous people and lands, researchers' exploitative practices, and uncritical assertions about regimes of truth and originality. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017, online) suggests that dichotomies of researcher/knower and researched/known/ 'other' continue to pervade research. He proposes that 'the process of [methodology's] decolonisation is an ethical, ontological and political exercise rather than simply one of approach and ways of producing knowledge'. This requires a critical deconstruction of Global North research agendas, practices and epistemologies, through what Mignolo (2009) terms 'epistemic disobedience'.

Decolonising Childhood and Children's Participation: Who Participates, and for What Purpose?

In its broadest sense, decolonisation aims to undo historical and ongoing processes of colonialism, with a focus on the intellectual, emotional, economic and political reversal of colonial injustices. In relation to

childhood and youth, the concept of decolonisation has been interpreted in different ways. For some scholars (e.g., Varga, 2011), the focus lies on intergenerational relationships and emphasis is placed on how childhood—as a period in human lives as well as a social construct—has become colonised by adults in various disciplinary spheres (such as education or psychology). Therefore, such perspectives call for decolonising knowledge about childhood and youth by coproducing it with children and young people themselves and thus addressing the epistemic injustices that children face (Cheney, 2010; Jiménez, 2021).

Similarly, Burman (2020, p. 104) suggests that decolonisation in the field of childhood, refers to 'liberating children from the burden of the dominant models of childhood which regulate and stigmatise them and narrate their life course'. This involves, for example, rejecting developmental notions of childhood which perpetuate regulatory knowledge of what it means to be a child or young person, often from very classed, racialised and gendered perspectives. Such dominant and universalising ideas marginalise children and young people who do not fall within these norms, both within the Global North and even more so in the Global South (Burman, 2020). Balagopalan (2019) criticises scholarly discourses that assume an unpolitical idea of 'multiple' global childhoods (which are highly normatively inflected), if these discourses do not also clearly recognise the colonial histories which led to these very childhoods and their different manifestations. Importantly, the experiences of children and young people are not homogenous, both within the Global South and Global North, and simplistic binary assumptions about Global North/South childhoods do not do justice to the complexity and interconnected power relations that frame children's lives globally, in terms of materialities, education, participation and so on.

Ideas about childhood and youth inevitably influence how participatory processes are conceived and realised. While children and young people's participation generally tends to be seen as a 'normative good' (Tisdall, 2015, p. 194), there has been some critical debate about how different types of participation are valued differently. For example, Savyasaachi and Butler (2014) highlight that typologies generally emphasise participation within institutionalised contexts (such as schools or

projects), which are ascribed more status and educational value than, say, participation activities pursued by street children in informal contexts.

On a methodological level, the childhood studies and children's rights fields have long been attuned to questions about intergenerational and intra-generational power relations, the risks of tokenistic approaches and the complex practicalities of meaningful co-production with children and young people (see for example Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; Tisdall, 2015; Lundy & McEvoy, 2017; Cuevas-Parra & Tisdall, 2019). There have also been debates in the relevant literature on *who* the children and young people are, that are routinely included or excluded within participatory projects (Emejulu, 2013). For example, there is a tendency to exclude very young children, or children and young people who are marginalised from mainstream discourses. On the other hand, some groups of children and young people are often only involved in projects about the particular focus of their marginalisation; for example, children with disabilities tend to be involved in projects about disability but are often excluded from projects on other topics (Blaisdell et al., 2021).

These debates highlight that what counts as participation and participatory methodologies, as well as how children and young people's roles in research are conceived, are firmly embedded into broader intergenerational and intersectional research relationships. In the following sections, we provide some examples of how these dynamics have played out in our project.

The Project: ¿Cuál Es La Verdad? De-Constructing Collective Memories and Imagining Alternative Futures with Young People in Chocó Through Music and Arts

Our project involved working with a group of Afrocolombian and indigenous young people, who became involved as co-researchers in the project. The young co-researchers were located in Quibdó (Chocó), a remote area disproportionately affected by armed conflict and home to

mainly Afrocolombian and indigenous populations. Quibdó's history is strongly shaped by colonialism, including the enslavement of its people through Europeans from the sixteenth century onwards, and ongoing extractive economies through international corporations (Calderón, 2018, 2021). Our broader research team consisted of two researchers based in the United Kingdom, one researcher based in Medellin, Colombia (who relocated to the UK part-way through the project), and a larger group of educators, artists and musicians from two arts-based organisations based in Medellin and Cali respectively.

The overall aim of the project was to respond to priorities identified by the young people: tensions within and between neighbourhoods (barrios), violence and armed gangs, and feelings of fear and distrust. These priorities, and our methodological approaches, were developed with a group of young people in participatory workshops which informed our funding application. While originally conceived as an in-person project using arts-based and music-based methodologies, our methodology had to be shifted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which created additional considerations and challenges for participation (see Kustatscher et al., 2020; Calderon et al., 2021). An additional aim emerged during the project, namely, to support the young people to set up a gastro-cultural social enterprise business.

Global Research Relations and Funding Structures

Our project was funded through the Global Challenges Research Fund, a funding stream financed from the UK Government's developmental aid budget[3]. Projects under this fund are aimed at creating 'meaningful and equitable relationships' between UK-based academics and partners in the Global South, and to 'address challenges faced by developing countries' (UKRI, 2021). However, concerns have also been raised about the extent

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[3] The socio-political dimensions of this fund have been illustrated by recent reductions of official development assistance (ODA) budgets and subsequent funding cuts to new and ongoing research projects in the United Kingdom (see for example Tomley, 2021).

to which its funding requirements may reproduce structural inequalities (Grieve & Mitchell, 2020; Mkwananzi & Cin, 2021; Virk et al., 2019) and about its inherent epistemological biases (Girei, 2017).

Such concerns have been echoed to some extent in our project. Contractual agreements, and questions of ownership and research direction, appeared to be tilted in favour of UK-based partners. English was the main language of most research meetings, contracts and reports. Funding requirements encouraged travel of UK-based researchers to partner countries, but not vice-versa, highlighting inherent assumptions about the flow of expertise from the Global North to the South (in reality, the UK-based researchers went on a much steeper learning curve) and principles of knowledge extractivism. Research applications needed to highlight the extent of marginalisation and scale of possible change in the proposed research location, tempting researchers to create damage-based narratives about the contexts and people involved in projects to secure funding. Such hierarchies of deprivation can be problematic and illustrative of underlying white saviourism. Similar assumptions pervade much of the language in international development work, for example through terms such as 'capacity-building' (who builds capacity, in whom and for what? why is there an assumed lack of capacity in the first place?).

As members of the research team, we were all positioned differently—through our individual locations, identities and institutional affiliations—in this global web of power relations. As researchers, artists and educators, our livelihoods directly or indirectly depended on being a part of the project. Kapoor (2005) states that in participatory development projects, there are inevitable and often unconscious layers of complicity with colonial structures since we are implicated by default as we work within them. The rewards of working with young people and seeking to support them in transforming their lives and communities are at the same time implicating us in the broader power structures of developmental and intergenerational research.

Arts-Based Participatory Methodologies: Context and Flexibility

There are a wide range of methods that have been utilised under the umbrella of participatory research. Arts-based methods have been popular both in research with children and young people, as well as in international development. The advantages of arts-based methods in terms of children and young people's ability to express themselves, support inclusivity and foster wellbeing are often cited (see Lee et al., 2020). Indeed, we found that utilising music as a popular art form in the young people's communities helped to attract and sustain their participation in the project, enabling dialogue and a sense of collectivity. The power of music and arts went beyond aesthetics and enjoyment: the young co-researchers highlighted the potential of music and arts to transform their lives and communities, both through its inspirational and political power as well as in more material forms, for example by commodifying it for creative enterprise purposes.

As scholars in the fields of both youth participation and international development have highlighted, participatory methods contain the potential to decolonise knowledge and address child–adult power imbalances—but they can also reproduce the very power relationships that they seek to challenge. We were aware of risks about research being extractive, rather than transformative, and complex questions about the origins and ownerships of methodologies. Additionally, conducting the project online meant that some of the young people were not able to join due to issues of connectivity, which could not be resolved through data plans or purchasing devices. This illustrates that despite best intentions, participants were located within particular social and material structures which inevitably shaped the conditions of and obstacles to their participation.

While it may be a truism that participatory projects need to be adaptable and flexible, this does not always sit easily with funding requirements and timelines. Yet it was in this space of adaptation that many of the opportunities for making the project meaningful opened for us. For example, as an unexpected outcome, the young co-researchers developed a complex vision for a multi-strand gastro-cultural social

enterprise which celebrates their Afrocolombian and indigenous heritage, and this became a core element of the project to which they dedicated huge amounts of energy and passion.

Representation and 'Impact' at the Crossroads Between Research, Education and Intervention

As researchers we are socialised into academic discourses about what constitutes research, what are accepted methodologies and knowledges, and how to represent them. Working as part of an interdisciplinary team of researchers, artists and educators, located in different institutions and countries, helped us to unsettle some of these assumptions. It also highlighted that our project was taking place at the crossroads of research, education and social intervention. Depending on how these elements are weighted, there can be different assumptions about expertise. For example, in research with children and young people, they are generally seen as experts on their own lives (Cuevas-Parra & Tisdall, 2019). At the same time, providing training, for example, on participatory methodologies or on business skills, to the young people as part of the project positioned them as learners. Of course, framing a project as pedagogical does not necessarily imply a transmissive attitude to knowledge (Freire, 1970). However, we found it important to reflect as a team about how and where the boundaries are drawn around research, education and intervention and the implications in terms of expertise and power.

Participatory methodologies have been lauded for their potential to create change in participants' lives (Lee et al., 2020; Tisdall, 2015). This is particularly pertinent in the context of calls for research projects to deliver sustainable 'impact'. Young people were *invited* into the project because of their particular social locations and characteristics, yet there are limits to the extent to which projects like ours can transform these very conditions. This is perhaps one of the issues that is silenced by this

type of research. If participation remains 'project-based' rather than integrated into broader practices and institutions, it will inevitably face such limitations.

Nevertheless, the project has sparked a huge amount of new learning for the research team, including the young co-researchers. This involved both learning about each other's lives, about methodologies (particularly in the digital sphere) and about the practicalities of working in an international research team. Some of this learning is emotional and embodied, some of it factual or philosophical. It is the latter which tends to be more easily represented in outputs such as academic writing, talks or audiovisual outputs. With any publication, there is a risk that knowledge becomes represented in compartmentalised or sanitised ways, which reintegrates it into academic discourses that are shaped by colonial power relations.

The weight given to written research outputs, particularly academic publications, constitutes another layer of potential epistemic injustice. In our case, the young co-researchers were keen to produce audiovisual outputs such as songs and music videos, but less interested to contribute to more formal written outputs. Indeed, it often falls to the academic members of a project team to do justice to representing children and young people's views and experiences. This highlights the need for comprehensive publication plans and agreements in such projects, which cover all types of outputs, for including everyone involved in the project and for paying attention to questions of ethics and representation.

Ethics, Reflexivity and Relationality

Many writers have emphasised that ethical considerations go beyond what is covered by institutional review boards, and that these can be limited with regards to addressing 'ethics in practice' (Guillemin et al., 2012). Processes of decolonisation are fundamentally about the ethics of how we relate to each other within projects and about how the benefits and risks of research are shared, yet questions of decolonisation tend not to be part of institutional ethics reviews. The relationality of research ethics—in terms of wellbeing, ownership, care, respect—was apparent

throughout our project, both in terms of relationships within the team as well as with the young people. Heightened by the shift to online research, our Colombian team spent large amounts of time and energy to sustain relationships with young people and to support them. This support ranged from arranging mental health services to assisting them to deal with economic emergencies, to continuously bearing witness to their experiences. Such lived and situated ethics can be quite different from 'traditional' ethical review processes, which can be more about protecting researchers than participants, and thus risk reifying colonial research relations.

At the time of the research, Colombia saw sustained social protests against government corruption and growing inequality, amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, we were conscious of the fact that our research team lived in different locations from the young participants of the project (in different cities of Colombia, and the UK). Those conducting participatory research need to be particularly reflective about 'the material and political conditions of the collaborative research endeavor' (Robles, 2018, p. 607). Reflexivity also extends to questions around how our positionality serves as a resource or barrier in the process of research, how we frame the research and who, if at all, gives us the right to carry out certain types of research (Christoffersen, 2018).

The fact that we were in different geographical locations from the young people, as well as the fact that the majority of our research team did not share the cultural and ethnic heritage[4] of the Afrocolombian and indigenous young people, meant that we shared their experiences to a limited extent. While we were deeply impacted through the relationships built over the course of the project, these different locations meant that we were outsiders to the young people's lives. This is not necessarily only a disadvantage. On many occasions, the young people stated that they valued the relationships and witnessing of their lives through

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[4] While the UK-based team members identified as white, ethnic and racial identity is complex in Colombia. There is a strong cultural narrative of mestizaje ('race mixture') which suggests that everyone is of mixed racial heritage, to varying degrees, and promotes a narrative of multiculturalism that prioritises socio-economic over racial elements of stratification. Nevertheless, skin colour-based hierarchies and racism are a significant element of the distribution of social advantages and disadvantages (Restrepo, 2018; Valle, 2018).

outsiders. However, it created particular dynamics in terms of supporting the co-researchers to develop and realise the project on the ground.

All our team members have expressed a commitment to continue to maintain contact and support the young co-researchers in their endeavours, in their personal capacity, beyond the funded timeframe of the project. This aligns with Abebe's (2020) call for reciprocity as a key principle in participatory research with children and young people, going beyond material rewards to include loyalty and a commitment to sustained activism for change.

Conclusion

Prompted by global Black Lives Matter anti-racism protests in 2020, institutions in the UK and other countries in the Global North have begun to hear calls for decolonisation (which, of course, have been going on for a long time). As decolonisation becomes a buzzword in academic institutions of the Global North, there is a risk that it is turned into yet another trend or tickbox and, ironically, becomes subsumed into neoliberal knowledge production and implemented in purely performative ways (see also Moncrieffe, 2020, 2021).

There are parallels between children and young people's participation, and between processes of decolonisation. Both require a deep reckoning with taken for granted, established power relations (both intergenerational as well as intersectional along axes of race, ethnicity, language, nationality, age, gender, social class and more). With both, there are risks of tokenism, erasure and illusory visibility (Diaz-Diaz, 2021). And both meaningful participation as well as decolonisation require ongoing, relational and evolving commitment rather than following a logic of completion.

Returning to our earlier point about what decolonisation means in childhood and youth studies, it should involve three elements: First, it means involving children and young people in the generation of knowledges about their own lives. This may imply a challenge to accepted beliefs about what constitutes knowledge. Second, it requires us to critically interrogate, and liberate children and young people from dominant

theories and models of childhood that continue to shape normative ideas about what it means to be a child (Burman, 2020). Finally, it means to make visible and challenge the colonial histories and ongoing power dynamics which shape children's lives across the globe, while refraining from simplistic or stereotypical assumptions.

In this chapter, we have shared our reflections on how projects like ours are situated within global research relations and funding land-scapes, and how these frame all aspects of research—from relationships to methodologies, from ethics to outcomes. Participatory methodologies in themselves do not decolonise—it depends on what theories, positional-ities and relationships inform their realisation. With the best of inten-tions, some structural issues pervading projects—such as white hege-monic frameworks or resource distribution—cannot be easily 'resolved'. A rose-tinted view of participatory methodologies is not only unhelpful but can be dangerous—it can facilitate white saviourism and co-opt young people's agendas.

Decolonising participatory methods cannot be achieved through tick box exercises. It requires an ongoing questioning of our complicity—especially as the white members of this project team or those belonging to majority groups in their contexts, as well as those being based in the Global North. Given the ongoing realities of colonial histories high-lighted in this chapter, there is a valid question about whether white people/people from the Global North should conduct research in the Global South in the first place. There is no generalised answer to this. Anyone who does, needs to think deeply and critically about what we, as individuals and through our institutional and geographical locations, bring to the table. What power do we hold, or not hold? What do we assume and project, consciously and unconsciously? Who gains and who loses in this process? How does our involvement deconstruct or reify colonial narratives and practices?

These questions are pertinent for any research project, and particularly for those that aim to achieve social transformation through research. As de Sousa Santos (2007) says, there can be no global social justice without global cognitive justice.

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3

Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge Using Arts-Based Approaches for Teaching and Learning Civic Education with Young People in Nepal

Nub Raj Bhandari and Marlon Lee Moncrieffe

Introduction

This chapter looks at decolonising the construct of civic education knowledge set by the Nepalese social studies curriculum for teacher-led inculcation to the acquisition of young peoples' learning. We present and discuss our arts-based teaching and learning research project entitled: *Examining the Interpretations of Civic National Values made by young people*[1] *in Nepal* (Moncrieffe et al., 2019) A key aim in our conceiving

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[1] Young people in this research project and testimonies given in this chapter were aged between eight and twenty-one years old.

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35

and devising this research project was to offer an alternative teaching and learning approach to young people knowing civic national values in post-conflict settings against what we identified as didactic use of textbooks in approaches to curriculum knowledge transfer approaches for civic education in Nepal. Our research project facilitated an arts-based methods approach for teaching and learning, in which the devising, shaping and owning of the curriculum knowledge, and sharing of ideas would be generated by young people, who in their various collaborations with each other, would become their own teachers on civic national values. Another key aim in the processes of this research project was in effect to facilitate the enactment of creative agency sourced through the epistemic currency already held by young people (Cheney & Sinervo, 2019; Cuevas-Parra & Tisdall, 2019). They would determine for themselves the value knowing given in better understanding civic national values through their own lived experiences and imaginations. We were fueled by the perception that this approach to teaching, learning and researching would lead to a necessary epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2009) against the norms of curriculum construct, and by this, could uncover new ways of seeing civic national values through new epistemologies generated by young people in their knowledge exchange. We provide further context to our research project in this chapter by sharing interpretations given to the purpose of civic education within the social studies curriculum for teaching and learning with young people in Nepal. We also share accounts on how common notions of civic national values in Nepal have been transferred informally across the generations, and how this knowledge transference more recently has become formalised as national policy by the government in wake of a series of violent political revolutions, all of which have caused civic unrest to the nation state. We share a sample of testimonies given by young people involved in our research project. These provide insight on the impact of their participation, their learning and future possibilities. In conclusion, we provide recommendations for advancing effective civic education through arts-based teaching and learning approaches that can strengthen civic peacebuilding in Nepal.

The Role of Civic Education in Nepal

Civic education teaches people of a nation about their responsibilities as citizens, equipping and empowering them to exercise their constitutional rights, bridging the gap between knowledge and wisdom, widening their democratic desire (Dahal, 2021). Therefore, the role of civic education is directly related to the strengthening of democracy. According to Branson (1998, para. 2) 'civic education in a democratic society most assuredly needs to be concerned with promoting understanding of the ideals of democracy and a reasoned commitment to the values and principles of democracy'.

Nepal had no curriculum or formal system of civic education before 1951 (Phuyal, 2009; Smith, 2015). The Nepalese education system was based on the religion, custom, behaviour, attitude and ideals of contemporary society (Phuyal, 2009). In the absence of specific coursebooks for civic education, senior members of the family and the community would provide instructions for moral integrity, especially with the younger generation. Civic education in a traditional Nepalese society was patriarchal and authoritarian in terms of 'do this, and do not do this' (Koirala, 2021, para. 1). To achieve security in social life, individuals would have their duties and responsibilities towards family, society, and country. For example, people would say: 'Do not cheat other people, as it brings a curse and you will go to hell and those who do well, would attain emancipation' (see Dahal, 2006). Another example of cultural conditioning with civic education is where Nepalese people were taught to be loyal to the king—the nation's ruler regarded as the incarnation of God (Shaha, 1989; Deep, 1989).

Under the dictatorship of *Rana* rule from 1836 to 1950, the first formal school to be opened in Nepal was in 1854, following a visit to Europe by *Jung Bahadur Rana* (the first *Rana* ruler). He placed importance in the English language for communication with the outside world and felt that his sons should be given a western education (Sharma, 1990). It was a western model English medium school available only to the relatives of *Rana* rulers, and this new form of education did not cover civic education.

Following the *Sat Salko Kranti* revolution of 1951, the establishment of democracy also brought reforms in the education system of the country. Civic education was included in the social study curriculum (Nepal National Education Planning Commission [NNEPC], 1956). However, in 1960, the civil democracy won by the revolution was ceased by Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, king of Nepal (1955–1972). He suspended the constitution and dissolved the elected parliament in establishing a centralised monarchial system, commonly known as *Panchayat* system. With Nepal under the rule of Mahendra, the education system emphasised nationalist education, although civic education was continued through the social study curriculum from grade 1 to 7 (Ministry of Education, 1971).

The 1990 Nepal revolution led by the People's Movement brought an end to absolute monarchy. The profile of civic education in schools was raised after the restoration of democracy particularly where Nepal's constitution, multiparty system, good citizen, duties, rights and its use were included in the curriculum of social study (National Education Commission, 1992). It was also realised that civil society groups should seriously engage in the civic education policy to complete the unfinished task of transforming Nepal's political culture (Dahal, 2012). After 1990, many Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) were established for taking the lead with educating citizens, and in showing their ability to play a crucial role in promoting peace and security by introducing different models of civic education in the communities (Bhandari, 2021; Kharel, 2015).

The first textbook for civic education was introduced by Higher Secondary Educational Board (HSEB) in 2001, entitled *Civics in Nepal.* However, civil democracy in Nepal was once again broken in 2002 through Gyanendra Shah, the king of Nepal (2001–2008). The country returned to a state of undemocratic rule for another turbulent period. It was in 2006, that the Democracy Movement led a people's revolution to return the country back to a multiparty democracy, and with a responsibility of ensuring a permanent state of peace. With this, special attention was again given to developing civic education after the decade-long years of (1996–2006) civil conflict. The national curriculum was revised, and contents of civic education were embedded into the curriculum of social study.

Shrestha and Dahal (in Phuyal, 2009, p. 50) discuss civic education in Nepal as 'civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic dispositions'. Koirala (2021, para 2) states, civic education is an 'education that educates general people on the things that are beneficial to the society and the things that must not be done by them'. According to Kharel (2015, p. 40) civic education in Nepal has been 'crucial in creating the robust grass root democracy'. Similarly, Dahal (2012, p. 70) supports the statement 'civic education is key to democracy'. Civic education viewed as the training of youth into ideas of citizenship and exposing them to the functioning of their civic rights and duties in various areas of life, such as the family, the cultural industries, political parties and government (Dahal, 2012).

Peacebuilding Through Civic Education

The correlation between the political shifts in Nepal and the raised position of civic education and are apparent, especially after the establishment of democracy in 1951, re-establishment of democracy in 1990, and 2006. Dahal (2012, p. 70) affirms 'with the dawn of democracy in Nepal, the importance of civic education increased'. Similarly, during every political movement, leaders, as well as citizens, realised the importance of civic education. For example, the political change of 1990 led to the promotion of democratic culture through a democratic system where 'civic education is the backbone' (Phuyal, 2009, p. 173). In the wake of the internal conflict (1996–2006) and the transition to a democratic republic nation, initiatives were taken to revise the national curriculum to promote peace, human rights, and civic education (Smith, 2015). Civic education is viewed by Phuyal (2009, p. 72) as being able to 'sustain democracy and peace in the communities and countries if it provides opportunities to experience the value of democratic ingredients to the youth as well as other ordinary people'. Therefore, the importance of civic education has been increased in Nepal after the restoration of democracy in 1990 and in 2006.

The development of civic education in Nepal has been influenced by political points of view (Dahal, 2012; Phuyal, 2009). After the end of

decade-long (1996–2006) civic conflict, efforts were being made to teach several hundred students from different schools (private and public) through a programme of study intended to 'acquire civic knowledge and skills to develop their virtues for their roles in public life' (Dahal, 2012, p. 70). However, as Phuyal (2009, p. 72) suggests 'civic education needs to be modified and rationalised to inculcate values such as the willingness to seek the solution of conflicts and disputes through peaceful means.

Meira (2014, p. 11) says 'when the civic education is taught well, including active learning opportunities such as simulations, discussions, and action civics, they can contribute to students' civic knowledge, skills, and engagement'. The attributes are key to sustaining peacebuilding and democracy. McAllister in (Phuyal, 2009, p. 44) states 'most citizens who are knowledgeable about politics constitute a positive factor for democracy and the existence of knowledgeable citizens is possible through civic education'.

Policies and Practices for Teaching and Learning Civic Education

The Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC) formed in 1956 and visualised a developed country through the knowledge about Nepali contexts and consolidating it with the modern scientific knowledge (Nepal National Education Planning Commission, 1956). The government also gave high importance to nation-building through the utilisation of education (Caddell, 2007). The report of NNEPC also emphasised national education (NNEPC, 1956). For the first time in Nepal's educational history, civic education was included in the social study curriculum. 'Developing civic competency, competent citizenship, and respect to society, democracy, and humankind' (NNEPC, 1956, pp. 100–105) were identified as the objectives of education.

The National Education System Plan (1971), which followed NNEPC, continued Nepali medium textbooks, instructions, and exams. Inculcating moral integrity into young learners was also set as a goal of Education (Ministry of Education, 1971). This embedded the contents of civic education within the social study curriculum from

grade 1–7. The education envisaged to produce citizens loyal to the nation, monarchy and national independence, and remain ever alert and active towards rights and duties under the *Panchayat* System (Ministry of Education, 1971). Perhaps, to meet the nationalistic educational goals, the curriculum of *Panchayat* was introduced in place of social study for grades 8–10, which included the contents of civic education to some extent. Civic education was further emphasised after the re-establishment of democracy in 1990. Promotion of supreme human values, strengthening social integrity, and inculcating in the individual the national and social norms and beliefs to ensure a healthy social growth were also identified among the goals of education (National Education Commission, 1992).

The National Education Commission (1992) re-established social study as a compulsory subject from grade 1–10. After the restoration of democracy in 2006, the drastic reformation was brought in the state structure from central government to the federal state including the education system into basic (up to 8th grade) and secondary education (9th–12th grade). The National Curriculum Framework (2007) set the provision of compulsory social study curriculum from grade 1–10. The curriculum emphasised the local knowledge and development of a citizen with good norms and values (Curriculum Development Center, 2007). The National Curriculum Framework also included the contents like peace, tolerance, developing good characters, and a curriculum based on Nepalese norms and values (Curriculum Development Center, 2007). The Curriculum Development Centre (2019) has also given high importance to civic education and continued it in the social study curriculum. It also embedded the 'human value education' with social study from grade 6–8.

After the end of decade-long internal conflict and restoration of democracy in 2006, National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2007, with its policy provision for local need-based learning, was concerned to contextualise teaching and learning (Curriculum Development Centre, 2007). To promote local need-based education, the Curriculum Development Centre published guidelines directing schools to develop one local curriculum and textbook in local language for 100 marks (Curriculum Development Centre, 2010). The guidelines gave rights

to individual schools to design local need-based curriculum and text-book which was a step as curriculum decentralisation practices. With the promulgation of 2015 constitution, the Local Government Units in Nepal are made responsible for the formation as well as the implementation of regulations related to education. The national curriculum was revised in 2019 by introducing Curriculum Development Centre (2019).

Young people's Imaginations of Civic National Values

In Nepalese schools, young people learn about civic national values such as citizenship, social and moral behaviour, tolerance, and mutual respect generally through the teacher-led and directed social studies curriculum (Curriculum Development Centre, 2019). In view of seeking an alternative child-led approach to knowledge acquisition, our arts-based research project was conceived and devised by an international team comprised of curriculum teaching and learning experts; peace and conflict studies academics; arts methodology teaching and learning experts, research assistants and civil society organisation leaders from Nepal, and the UK. The motivation of international team was to promote the use of art-based approaches to curriculum teaching and learning in amplifying the voices and imaginations of young people and their lived interpretations (Savyasaachi & Butler, 2014; Cuevas-Parra & Tisdall, 2019) of civic national values in post-conflict Nepal.

The research project had four central aims:

1. Explore how young people in post-conflict settings interpret civic national values by their own conceptions, actions, and reflections, supported in their application of varied performance arts-based tools and techniques for their shared communications.
2. Empower children in post-conflict settings to develop and advance their thinking about the past; the present and future possibilities of peacebuilding through theories of 'reflection'.
3. Examine the perspectives of teachers on 'civic national values' including the varied ways they pass these narratives to their learners.

4. Facilitate our research partners to continuously analyse, reflect and conceptualise their understandings and shared communications of civic national values for advancing future policymaking through a performance arts-based 'scheme of work' that can be applied locally, nationally, and internationally in comparative contexts.

The Scheme of Work (Research Process)

The research project's arts-based approach for child-led knowledge development on civic national values was framed as a scheme of work[2] that included four teaching and learning lesson plans written in both English and Nepali for which the children would lead the teaching and learning processes facilitated by the research team. Young people from six, seven, and eighth grades and social study teachers were selected randomly from two schools in Nepal of distinct settings and opposing characteristics: rural/urban, public/private and English medium/local language medium.

In the first lesson (facilitated discussion, reflection and recording) the children participated in circle-time discussions to share their interpretations of community, through life experiences. They explored and discussed tolerance and mutual respect concerning their experiences in the local community. In the second lesson (reflection and recording) young students prepared graphic designs of posters where they illustrated from their discussions in the first lesson what their ideal community would look like. In the third lesson (performing) the students used drama as a method to translate their interpretations of belonging to a community that they are designed in their posters from lesson two. The young students chose their own ways of delivery through singing, acting, and creating a scene. After each lesson in this sequence of knowledge development, in pairs the young students used IPads to conduct each other's interviews to enable further reflection on their development of new knowledge. The entire process in each school was filmed to prepare a short learning video.

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2 See https://changingthestory.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/110/2020/02/Translated-_Scheme-of-Work_English-to-Nepali-revised-February-2020.pdf.

Lessons one to three were conducted in May 2019, a short film[3] was developed by the international research team, capturing the art-based methodologies applied. In December 2019, both schools were visited again for a lesson four (cross-cultural exchanges and impact). The exchanges were made between the two schools in Nepal from distinct settings i.e., rural/urban, public/private and English medium/local language medium. During lesson four, the young students in each school watched the films which showed themselves as young people of different regions in Nepal taking part in the same activities i.e., making their own sense and knowledge of civic national values from their own life experiences. They watched the films attentively, which was a clear indication that they wanted to know more about a good community, mutual respect, tolerance, peace, and harmony. After the film show, one young girl reflected:

> We learnt that everyone has the right to live happily in peace and harmony. It does not matter in which part of Nepal we live in, our thought about the community is similar. We must respect all the people from our heart, irrespective of their communities.

The young students found some similarities and differences in their interpretations of community, communal bond, peace, harmony, mutual respect, tolerance, and cooperation. They emphasised for the mutual benefit among communities and unity among the diversity. The students also emphasised the value of teamwork and mutual understanding on arts-based learning. A student from urban setting stated:

> It was really good to contribute in a teamwork to perform participatory arts i.e., designing a drawing, singing a song, and playing a drama. Team performance is really valuable. The idea that a community is like a family and there should be cooperation among each other.

Through the arts-based performance, the students developed thinking about the definition and values necessary for a good community in different post-conflict settings. They also learned about the connection

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[3] See https://changingthestory.leeds.ac.uk/civil_national_values_kenya_nepal/.

of community with nature, creatures, and insects. Young girls from the rural school had the following to say:

> The children talked about the birds, insects and animals. But we only talked about harmony, mutual respect and tolerance among humans. We should take care of these things in future because the community is not only about a human being, but every existence should also be considered as a whole.

The students also showed their interest in participatory arts-based learning methods. The responses of the students were an apparent indication that they enjoyed their participation in the arts-based exercises and were interested to do more. They wanted to do more arts-based performances, as a couple of participants reflected:

> Learning community through arts and films is really interesting. Everything was coming in my mind we had done before. It would have been better if we had also explained our community through a song, but we only did drama.

These young people were comfortable articulating their interpretations of civic national values through their arts-based approaches to learning. Arts-based methodologies also helped them to remember the contents for a long period.

Further valuable insights which arrived from the study were through the testimonies of the two Nepalese research project assistants. Both provided a unique sense on how the research project's application of arts-based approaches in teaching and learning with young children assisted to create new opportunities for the voices and expression:

> Although my role was on film making, I was equally given a chance to interact with the audience. I wasn't bound to my role only. The field work in urban and rural schools created a kind of nostalgia for me. When I was a student in school, I was supposed to focus more on my textbooks. The case was not only of mine but of the whole education system. We, the students were guided as per the syllabus of the textbooks only. Extracurricular activities (were considered) a learning platform but only textbooks

were a source for academic teaching. Being part of this project, I found that teaching could be done with various means and resources. I have never thought art could also be a medium for teaching. I was astonished to see how the students were learning about the civic values through the medium of art. Both the technology and art used in teaching during programme could set a reference to our education system.

The sense of empowerment in the movement from teacher-led pedagogy to a more dynamic child-led focussed approach to knowledge production is captured in the testimony below:

> I grew up in such school environment where I just sit on the bench and listen to the teacher. Even today, I believe more than half of the schools follow the same teaching method. I will not say this method of teaching is the best in today's context. Because the concept of teaching and learning is not only limited to student listening and teacher speaking, but also now more about (the) participation of students and using various artistic methods to learn as well as apply the learning better in life.
>
> Working on the documents in our own local language gave me the concept of new methods in teaching along with the use of technology i.e., Ipad. During the fieldwork when I engaged in the activities (I saw) fun group work among students, their own lessons on community and moral education from their course book, reflections on their actual concept of community, living in harmony, equality regardless of gender, background, caste, culture, and profession. Moreover, their capacity to reflect their thoughts into community context through arts such as drama, poetry and songs were amazing. It was all smiles on their faces after the activities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There is a co-relation between the decolonisation of civic education and national political movements in Nepal. Whenever democracy was seized or re-seized, the importance of civic education has been realised. Civic education has also been seen as an aspect to sustain democracy in Nepal. In every educational policy reform, which often followed the political movements or internal conflict, efforts have been made to revise civic

education in the social study curriculum. Though there is clear provision of local curriculum development, it is the central curriculum which is generally applied by teachers in schools. The federal government should motivate provincial and local governments to formulate local curriculum framework. They can engage civil society organisations in the process of building new curricula framed by arts-based methods. Through formative research, the generation of evidence and new knowledge, civil society organisations can advise the government on transforming the civic education curriculum framework at all levels of education. The development of new arts-based curricula will teach civic national values, peace, mutual respect, communal bond for sustaining democracy in Nepal. We see in our study concurrence with Meira (2014) in positioning active learning opportunities, simulations, peer discussion and reflection as contribute significantly to the students' civic knowledge, skills and engagement. The research project presented in this chapter has informed that arts-based teaching will give young people the freedom to learn creatively and through their own imaginations about the importance of mutual respect, harmony, environment, and civic national values. It also promotes the engagement of young people in learning and sharing civic education, which contributes to the wider promoting of peace and democracy in Nepal.

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4

Creating and Curating: Three Voices from Namibia, Australia and the UK on Decolonising the Literary-Related Doctorate

Josephine Mwasheka Nghikefelwa, Frances Wyld, and Gina Wisker

Introduction

This piece is the creative, critical product of constructive dialogue between graduated doctors, Josephine Mwasheka Nghikefelwa (Namibia/South Africa), Frances Wyld (Australia) whose doctorates are in literary-related work and who are transforming what is possible in decolonised doctorates in terms of perspectives, voice, research and writing and Gina Wisker (UK), researcher and examiner.

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Rumours that the doctorate is being decolonised are still much exaggerated. From our varied perspectives as graduated doctors (one, so far, an examiner), we see that for those whose voices it does not yet enable, it is largely the form and channel for white Northern Western male thinking and voices. Questioning whose knowledge has power, whose knowledge and voices should *also* have power, and must be included, celebrated and enabled to make overdue change, for an inclusive doctoral decolonisation process is long overdue. Decolonising the doctorate is crucial and essential as knowledge construction and its effective use spring from, survive and grow because of the diversity and vitality of the voices and minds engaged. Without the thinking, questioning, the research articulation and sharing of knowledge, knowledge ossifies, remains the product of and vehicle for a small, self-elected, self-serving, self-appointed blinkered elite and its use in practice becomes stale and outdated. We have only to look at the international and gender diversity of successful teams of biomedical scientists working with the 2020—COVID-19 pandemic to see that world and life changing research flourishes when a wide range, a richness of minds and voices are engaged as equals.

The doctorate is arguably the highest examined learning journey and recognised achievement that universities offer and recognise. It is a sought-after qualification leading to recognition and jobs within and outside academia, but is it in danger of remaining an exclusive vehicle for limited and limiting forms of questioning, knowledge construction and expression? In considering the intent, form and voices in the doctorate we must also think of those who supervise, examine and award it. Because of their official positions, both supervisors and examiners are powerful in recognising and enabling diversity and creativity. Gatekeepers, they can also be gate-openers and curators of this new knowledge.

Decolonising the Literary-Related Doctorate

Decolonising the literary-related doctorate, our focus, begins with questioning who is writing, reading, dramatising, creating and offering critique about what constitutes as knowledge and in what ways. This

decolonising process also questions who and what enables and effectively helps curate diverse knowledge and expression. Critical friends, community and family, supervisors, writing workshop colleagues sit alongside researchers and writers as their confident voices develop, acting constructively and critically, wisely using their knowledge about negotiating changes in content and form. The next curators are examiners who shepherd the work into broader view. On university websites including Edith Cowan, University of Queensland, University of Southern Queensland (Australia); University of British Columbia, (Canada); University of Auckland and Waikato University (New Zealand), literary-related, decolonised Indigenous doctorates are showcased, exemplifying successful models.

Decolonising the Doctorate—Context and Theorising

Higher education, research and writing, including literary-related expression are partners in decolonisation as Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1998) both asserts and demonstrates in his writing, while Chinua Achebe (1962) reminds us of the power of writers to speak out, change minds, which encourages actions leading to transformation. In recent National Research Foundation/Economic and Social Research Council (NRF/ESRC) funded South African Rurality in Higher Education (SARiHE) project research with undergraduate co-researchers on transitions into and through higher education (Timmis et al., 2019; Timmis et al., 2022), some fundamental theoretical considerations for issues and practices of decolonising higher education in enabling equality of diverse knowledge and expressions emerged, feeding our understanding of decolonising the doctorate. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 11) differentiates between colonialism (part of history) and coloniality (a continued mode of behaviour) exposing 'the invisible vampirism of technologies of imperialism and colonial matrices of power that continue to exist in the minds, lives, languages, dreams, imaginations and epistemologies of modern subjects in Africa and the entire Global South'. de Sousa Santos emphasises epistemicide (2014), what Whitehead labels 'the

murder of knowledge' (2016, p. 90) a deadly silencing, at every stage, instead asserting epistemic justice (Freire, 1970; de Sousa Santos, 2014; Whitehead, 2016) including access, recognition, reward concerning knowledges, research, forms of articulation. More recently, KaMpofu, (2019) argues for the importance of traditional forms of knowledge including oral histories and Indigenous technologies. Building on these arguments, in our work we assert and exemplify parity between doctoral work deriving from North/Western/European traditions and that situated in Indigenous and or Southern/Eastern knowledge communities, worldviews and knowledge construction systems. In South Africa, where Josephine gained her doctorate, historical protests against blockages to epistemological access include those against the introduction of Bantu education (1955) which literary author Zoe Wicomb explores (Wicomb, 1987; Wisker, 2000) and recent student protests (#FeesMust Fall, 2015–2016). Theorists and powerful educators (Chaka et al., 2017; Jansen, 2017; Maringe, 2017; Mbembe, 2016) explore the Africanisation of curriculum and knowledge in South African higher education drawing from Frantz Fanon's (1961) *The Wretched of the Earth,* renewing calls for the transformation and decolonisation and Maldonado-Torres (2011) engages theory with interventions. Transformation and decolonisation are not identical (Chaka et al., 2017; Letsekha, 2013) and Mbembe explains that historically in 'African postcolonial experiments in the 1960s and 1970s… "to decolonise" was the same thing as "to Africanize". To decolonise was part of a nation-building project' (Mbembe, 2016, p. 33).

Decolonisation, emerging as a strong argument since the 1960s (Ashcroft et al., 1995) does not necessitate complete replacement of European knowledge by (for example) African knowledge (Jansen, 2017). An alternative academic model is (re)-imagined (Jansen, 2017). Mgqwashu (2006, 2008) reminds us that access and voice are important steps to positive change, making deliberate relationships between language, thinking and access to higher learning. Decolonisation of the doctorate, as that of all higher education, is linked to epistemological access and a key to that access is language and forms of expression particularly for literary-related studies, to articulate thought contestatory response and to create new knowledge.

Decolonising the literary-related doctorate is initially influenced by the liberating politicising of postcolonial writing and critical practice which by questioning who was writing, about what, from where and in what forms enabled challenges to the canon and reading practices. Postcolonial literary practice as research and teaching also caused a fundamental repositioning of forms, roles and voices of literature, revealing literature as global and richly diverse. Decolonising the literary-related doctorate liberates and validates a variety of research approaches, forms of expression, changing the objects, subjects and voices (Wisker, 2006, 2022). Relationships of power and knowledge also change where the 'Contact zones' (Pratt, 1991, p. 35) of supervisory practices (Manathunga, 2014) and examination enable more equal dialogues, since the candidates have the insider knowledge, and supervisor and examiner roles are about enabling those voices of knowledge to be heard, curating it.

We argue that decolonising research and expression is not a matter of just adding another dimension or layer into an established hierarchy. Rather, different voices and forms, different perspectives and points of focus are prioritised, while the field itself changes so buildings in the field morph. Something new results: richer, more diverse, no longer as self-assured or as fixed. Dealing with the question of changing form, in the introduction to *So Long Been Dreaming* (2004), Nalo Hopkinson, Guyanan/Trinidadian/Jamaican/Canadian Afrofuturist refers to the work of Audre Lorde when answering this question:

> What do you think of Audre Lorde's comment that massa's tools will never dismantle massa's house?
> In my hands massa's tools don't dismantle massa's house – and in fact I don't want to destroy it so much as I want to undertake massive renovations – then build me a house of my own. (Hopkinson & Mehan, 2004, p. 7)

In her own writing, Hopkinson doesn't want to dismantle everything, rather she seeks massive change, improvement, something new and different. Like the literary-related doctorate, this will involve diverse focus, expression and form. As noted elsewhere (Wisker,

2022), decolonised literary-related doctorates often theorise with both Western/Northern and Southern/Eastern theorists, highlighting innovations. Authors develop methodology and voice from their own Indigenous contexts, blending storytelling, images, family history with traditional critical voices, changing the form and focus of the doctorate, often combining across disciplines, the creative and the critical. Support and recognition for the emergent decolonised doctorate are seen in New Zealand and Pasifika colleagues' work which produced a report and advice to support writing at the doctoral level (Carter et al., 2016).

Decolonised Literary-Related Doctoral Theses—Groundbreaking Work

In this next section, Josephine and Frances share introductory comments and groundbreaking thesis work, while Gina (historically examiner), offers a curating dialogue. Our voices are different, but in critical curating work we often merge. Both Josephine and Frances explain their intentions in their doctorates, exposing cultural and gendered blinkeredness and bias in critical work on African drama, as taught in school in Josephine's case, and in Frances's case creating a new culturally influenced way of writing alongside others with creative liberating story-working. Gina's comments following each are from an examiner *curator's* perspective (not the words of the reports).

Josephine -Critical Reflection

In exploring the drama God of Women and its teaching in the classroom, I discussed postcolonial feminist critics' view that only Western trained feminist critical voices were being heard, thus issues in African women's texts were being misinterpreted from a Western feminist point of view. Combining across literary studies and education, my analysis of and teaching of the drama notes bias against the practice of polygamy which misunderstood and criticised local customs. When analysing literary texts,

I came across some writers who portrayed characters in an uncritical way, whereas others do it by intending at encouraging the audience to engage critically. Some authors may unconsciously reflect on how some societies are, to an extent of even implying that such societies should change. Contrastingly, most men and women live different lives today compared to 1940s and 1960s, when some of these fictional texts were written. I used Spivak, UK, US and African critics, differentiating their approaches, uniting them so that the Northern, Western critical voices are neither prioritised nor silenced noting: Spivak (1990, p. 9) strongly argues that 'we will not be able to speak to women out there if we depend completely on conferences and anthologies by Western-trained informants.' African writers appear to be in a race to write the experiences of Africans as mirrored in the real world of being an African man or woman in different African societies. Amos and Parmer (1984) argue that Western feminists' perspective does not speak to the experiences of African women; however, where it attempts to do so, it is often from a racist perspective. It is likely that Western feminists are increasingly speaking much of the African women's experiences, albeit not experiencing it themselves. Sharing the same sentiments, Zongo (1996, p. 179) states that, "[t]he explosion in the West has equally left a legacy of misinterpretation, misrepresentations, and outright distortions of African cultures and cultural productions". I believe the information on which people interpret or represent the world around them comes from a wide range of sources. This could either be from personal interactions with others, from their knowledge and experiences, cultural conventions, from the public media and precedents in their social world. Oftentimes, texts are seen as part of social events. However, textual analysis from my position as a postgraduate African woman, literary critic and teacher situates my perspective, enabling me to blend educational and literary approaches.

Josephine's Thesis Extract with Gina's Curator Comments

In exploring the drama *God of Women* and its teaching in the classroom, Josephine Mwasheka Nghikefelwa, a Namibian doctoral graduate from Rhodes University, South Africa, whose work I examined, discussed postcolonial feminist critics' views that only Western trained feminist critical voices were being heard, so issues in African women's texts were

being misinterpreted from a Western, or Western feminist point of view. She comments on textual critical practice and the teaching of literature, exposing cultural confusions and silencing which lead to reluctance to question either the text or the values replayed through ways it is read:

> Demeaning language is used by the chief in *God of Women*, while literature teachers gloss over the language, refusing or failing to interpret it so students are neither guided to notice it nor rewarded if they do.
>
>   …Chief Lewanika used this figure of speech to demean his wives when they failed to produce a son. He assembled them and asked them about their sexuality using metaphors such as:
>
>   Your granary has been depleted.
>   You proved yourself barren beyond an ordinary desert.
>   I know it cannot be you with your exhausted womb.

These metaphors demean and humiliate women, yet they were no further explorations thereof in the classroom (Nghikefelwa, 2019).

Textual analysis from Josephine's position as a postgraduate African woman, literary critic and teacher situates her view, enabling her to blend local knowledge with educational and literary critical approaches. Her insider knowledge exposes limited critical perspectives.

Frances Wyld's Reflection on Decolonised Methodology, 'Storywork'

> Writing my thesis was an exercise in having a voice as an Aboriginal person within the academy. More importantly I argued for the use of storytelling or storywork as a methodology to be used in teaching and research as a performance of liberation and praxis. Storywork honours Indigenous knowledges through a connection to the land that gives us life, something that is essential to this future of uncertainty amidst climate crisis, economic inequality, and a pandemic. I now have this methodology that connects humanity through stories. It is established through my Aboriginal knowledges. Further to that, writing about connections with cultural studies and semiotics can show that it is something humans

do. By using the work of auto-ethnographers, I can give the work a foot-print within the social sciences. I can walk in two worlds and justify my methodologies and pedagogies. I have this now. And it is timely to use storytelling to call for a return to our ancestral visions and to ask non-Indigenous people to reconnect to their humanity to build communities for reciprocity and survival.

Frances notes:

I want to say that I want my legacy to be that which touches the coat tails of those who gave me a legacy. It is storied for me, for alongside the voices of mine within the references above are those who left me a legacy: Homi Bhabha, Toni Morrison, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Jo-ann Archibald, Marie Battiste, Paolo Freire and Doris Pilkington.

Frances Wyld Extract from the Doctorate with Curating Comments from Gina

In her thesis 'In the Time of Lorikeets: Storywork as an Academic Method', Australian Aboriginal doctoral graduate Frances Wyld describes her work developing: a 'metaphorical palimpsest: *She sheds a skin to reveal the ancient hide of strength and beauty so coveted by myth*' (Wyld, 2014, p. 8).

She alerts the reader that 'Storywork' is 'part of the process called 'narrative as inquiry' and the layers produced within the writing suggest that a 'Storyworker is not afraid to allow language to be stolen and over-taken by myth' (Wyld, 2014, p. 8) referencing Roland Barthes' reworking of mythology, using trickster words.

Her voice is strong, immediate, leading us through her story and decolonised forms of research and expression:

This thesis then is a palimpsest, but not in the way you might think it is. If I told you the purpose of this research was to uncover my Aboriginal identity, to uncover what it is in me that makes me an Aboriginal woman, and to learn how to survive using Storywork as both an academic method and as performance of cultural safety – a concept explained later in the

thesis – you might think this work involves a story gazing back into the past.

Frances refuses to simplify the complex intertwining her work develops, challenging our possible views:

> If it was built on a premise that the combination of western methods of writing as inquiry could simply marry with an Aboriginal framework as its research methodology, then perhaps you would be anticipating that this is the first layer which I will uncover, and that this 'fusion' will become my 'modern/postmodern' Aboriginal identity. This is an obvious conclusion, since it is well established that colonisation has written over first stories … First stories, or traditional stories that used myth, were until recently relegated to entertainment, through the rise of positivist approaches to 'serious' history.

The critical analysis, personal history, story and research methods are theorised and explained, showing method and self are interwoven, and that any simplistic expectations of what and how as an Aboriginal woman and doctoral candidate she would research and write fall short of the creative and critical complexity she is developing.

There was no uncovering of a family truth; no journey home… It uncovered another way of being a new 'first story' for the Self. The first layer of this palimpsest.

Frances calls her exploration and expression 'Trickster':

> It is a risky and in so many ways a treacherous approach.' 'With my trickster words I even fool myself.

She uses Indigenous feminist critical and creative voices to explore her own work including Aileen Moreton Robinson's critical repositioning in *Talkin' up to the white woman: Indigenous women and feminism* (2009) and Tracey Bunda's explanations of where voices and expressions can come from: 'Sovereign woman comes from that place that calls into being our warrior spirit that is defined in our relationship to other Aboriginal people and our land. In the context of continual colonisation, the

embodied sovereign woman exists to counter the coloniser' (Bunda, 2007, p. 85).

Frances notes that:

> To build my research position between two cultures I have to move, to fly… and so once again I experience the work in a more connected way: navigating my way forward, to land like the Murray Magpie in the right place. This is part of my ontology. The story must be mine to tell, and the research must work within my life - and so vice versa.

She also acknowledges family:

> Family is important to me; family members are tied up in my story, with me as I work, or missed as I travel to other places.

Neither compartmentalised nor silenced, she weaves a multicoloured bird of flight, a lorikeet, using storytelling, myths, wild encounters, self-reflection and engagement with Indigenous critical voices as well as Western, Northern literary and cultural criticism to do so.

Gina on Examiners

If we are intent on decolonising the doctorate, we also need to look at the choice and role of supervisors and examiners in this process. A cross-cultural supervisory team, and where culturally appropriate one involving Indigenous elders and other local (to the student) learned tribal (or similar) people, would be more sensitive to the focus and forms of doctoral student work, and sensitive to what the candidate aims to become and to do with the work (see Carter et al, 2016). I see my supervisor and here my examiner role as both someone who co-journeys with the doctoral work and candidate, and a curator of their work. I'm going to focus briefly here on the examiners since I was lucky enough to be part of the journey of these two doctors. Examining is both a gatekeeping and an enabling process. I feel uncomfortable in saying this because it sounds as though this powerful position also has some powerful role of

generosity to welcome in different voices and forms of expression, or not. I don't think it's about a form of patronising generosity. Rather it is about being able to see good groundbreaking work in ways that some might not. This is important for the work of all candidates but in a cultural Indigenous context it has special resonance. Candidates might well reveal new, sensitive, pioneering, critical responses to western literature and use a different range of sources and references from other literary and non-literary sources to express their research questions, practice, discoveries and arguments. They might construct their work in forms drawn from their traditional, cultural contexts rather than a westernised context. Their critical engagements with these choices could be part of a crucial decolonising dialogue. For supervisors and examiners which here includes Gina and already or will soon include Frances and Josephine, this is about doing our jobs to recognise and enable appropriate reward for the work that challenges and extends both the form and expression as well as the arguments in research and research writing (or/including other forms of expression). Gillian Robinson and I worked with creative doctorates on a similar basis () and creative minded supervisors where one notes in relation to both their own PhD journey and that of their students that there is a tension between doctorateness and creativity which they help manage: 'helping them address issues of doctoralness and research rigour without sacrificing their creative agenda. The dissertation needs to commence with the inquirer/practitioner's own story' (Wisker & Robinson, 2016, p. 333). Catherine Manathunga (2014) refers to her supervisory work with culturally diverse students as a contact zone (Pratt, 1991) considering both southern theory and decolonising the supervision of doctorates, in the context of the Southern African #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall student campaigns arguing 'the intercultural postgraduate supervision contact zone is a key pedagogical site heavily implicated in these struggles over contested histories, geographies and epistemologies' (Manathunga, 2014, p. 233).

Work on the role of the examiner (Wisker et al., 2016) extends research based on examiner reports and characteristics of sound doctorates (Holbrook et. al, 2008; Kiley & Mullins, 2002).

There are also examples of decolonised doctorates in Canada and Alaska. For example, Merculieff and Roderick (2013, p. iii) propose a

tangible decolonial educational practice from Alaska: 'Native ways of teaching and learning as both a common interest and a vehicle for exploring cross-cultural differences and commonalities' relating concepts and terminology at the core of Alaska. Native ways of living well on this planet, contrasting with those perpetuated by the Western educational system. First Nations Canadian scholar Sara Davidson *(2016) uses storytelling in her thesis, and* Joyce Schneider (2018) as *tapestry weaving metaphors.* The aim is not substitution and erasure of one form of expression in favour of the other, but for exchange and cross fertilisation, a broader equality and diversity of focus, process, expression and outcome to help reshape the doctorate, the knowledge it provides and the effects of such knowledge. This is not a gift from those in power, it is co-construction to nurture and curate.

Earlier in South Africa and Australia, Gina revealed doctoral candidate engagement with issues of social justice, land rights and identity, traditional and culturally inflected forms of knowledge collection, knowledge construction, using visualising, song, dance, community and family voices in the whole research writing process and the thesis (Wisker & Claesson, 2013). This earlier research interviewed a doctoral graduate from Charles Darwin University who characterises doctoral work as creativity, storytelling and community engagement. Anna (Interview B, 2013) talks of the involvement of family, community, creativity, and method in her work on identity and place: a blackbound thesis, and two large paintings, of 'the wet' and 'the dry', where she was living and writing. She emphasises creative methodology and a rich journey for work through and beyond the doctorate, focussed on identity and place:

> That was a part of the process for me, to understand how I position myself within the PhD. And that the PhD wasn't just going to be an artefact of western academia, it was part of our Aboriginal life. So, when I was asked the question once: Is it just another academic artefact? I said no it's not because my mum sung this thesis with the paintings that I did and my daughters danced to it while I painted bits in between and now it's become a pathway for my family, particularly my daughters to be able to integrate successfully. So, they understand what the ceremony is and what it means to belong to the country and how to engage with people

in the country and extended families through the ceremonies and what it means to come into a university environment.

Anna's family and their engagement were part of her methodology, and she speaks from and for them and her community, about their relationship with the land. She also emphasises that knowledge, and its articulation in this changed, a decolonised doctorate offers a route, a pathway and a voice for future fellow students from Indigenous backgrounds.

Conclusion

Decolonising the literary-related doctorate is powerful. It involves challenging knowledge origins and expressions with creative, critical constructions to vehicle culturally diverse voices. We have explored here experiences and expressions from our different roles. For supervisors, examiners, and most importantly doctoral authors, it is a crucial and responsible role to be a small, rich part of such a change that expresses, articulates, curates and recognises different critical and creative voices in the doctorate and so helps decolonise this significant journey, work, artefact and the positive social and cultural change it must surely then enable.

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5

Decolonising World Bank Influence on Curriculum Reforms in Mauritius

Hyleen Mariaye

Introduction

The approach taken to decolonising curriculum knowledge in this chapter is through an interrogation and critical analysis of the relationship between the Global South Republic of Mauritius Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology and the Global North-based World Bank.[1] The nature of this relationship is problematised within the context of the current Nine-Year Compulsory Basic Education (NYCBE) reforms policy *Inspiring every child* and the power of influence given to intervening World Bank neoliberal discourses on

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[1] The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides loans and grants to the governments of low- and middle-income countries for the purpose of pursuing capital projects. See: https://www.worldbank.org/en/home

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educational quality in conception, design, implementation and evaluation for the curricular reforms. Evidence of this influential discourse is shown through a case-study investigation involving interviews with three higher education leaders of policy, curriculum design, and teacher education. All were participants in mid-term evaluation of the Extended Programme (Mauritius Institute of Education, 2020) one of the flagship reforms initiated by the NYCBE. Patterns in the language from the interview responses show uncritical support for the World Bank, thus legitimising their ideological and epistemic influence on Mauritius education system reforms. A concern is raised about the World Bank's neoliberal capitalist educational discourse being applied universally in Mauritius, against what is argued for as a need to implement more locally contextualised and inclusive social reconstructionist educational policy reforms in providing epistemic equity in curriculum, teaching and learning opportunities (see for example Bunwaree, 1997; Dhunnoo & Adiapen, 2013; Daby, 2015).

International Power and Policy Influence on SIDS

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are considered within the Global South as a specific category on account of their environmental and economic vulnerabilities (McLean, 1985; Rustomjee, 2016). Most SIDS have a history of colonisation by European influence, and have therefore inherited social, educational and economic structures which maintain Eurocentric elitism, and with this, exclusion and inequalities imposed upon indigenous peoples (Seetah, 2010). Within this context, raising the quality of education has proved a major challenge to these states on account of the difficulties faced to mobilise the required economic and technical resources to finance systemic transformations (Baldacchino, 2006). Turning to international partners, predominantly supranational organisations, has thus been a common strategy for many SIDS to initiate and sustain national efforts to make educational systems more inclusive and responsive to both local and global contexts (Crossley &

Sprague, 2014; Fikuree et al., 2021). One of these supranational organisations is the World Bank (the WB thereafter).

For SIDS like Mauritius, the scope of organisations such as the WB in their influence on national and local policy design is even more significant given the country's dependence on external funding for reforms in a range of sectors, notably in education. The language used for their involvement in local educational policies may be termed as 'partnerships', 'collaboration', although, it often takes more instructive, directive forms and, as in many cases, becomes even tied to certain specific funding conditions (Mariaye & Samuel, 2020; Samuel & Mariaye, 2019). The development of a framework for the reform of Education Systems and Planning for Quality, predominantly based on the experience of East Asia and China uses a systems approach and echoes the motif of the World Bank Education Strategy 2020 (WBES 2020 thereafter) (The World Bank, 2011, 2019) which purports to be inclusive, and research driven. The three articulated and structural institutional dimensions are: *autonomy*, *accountability* and *assessment* across contexts irrespective of structures, culture and level of economic development (Patrinos et al., 2013). These dimensions point clearly to a purpose of schooling understood as making students employment ready. The unquestioned acceptance of the legitimacy of this document used as a barometer to evaluate the success of education reform stems from the authority and legitimacy afforded to it by the international community and recipient countries. As Mundy and Menashy (2014, p. 401) put it, "…its ideals of poverty alleviation, bureaucratic neutrality, scientific expertise and rational decision-making supersede the putative authority of nation states."

At the core of WBES 2020 is the Systems Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results (SABER) meant to generate an iron clad standardisation of educational objectives, functions and processes (Klees et al., 2012). While the higher purpose and agenda of such moves are related to a neoliberal understanding of what education is meant to achieve for society, the costs of WB educational authoritarianism to countries like Mauritius are onerous (Anwaruddin, 2014). The historical, political, cultural and economic texture of Mauritius, like many other SIDS make it particularly vulnerable to a host of external

shocks (Baldacchino, 2006). What appears to be absent in engaging with outside influences such as the WB is an understanding that Mauritius, its population, histories and the maintenance of its multiethnic-social fabric requires an educational system which is grounded and recognises the need for contextualised and progressive change (Mariaye & Samuel, 2020; Samuel & Mariaye, 2019). Brutal and unrealistic insertion into a global system of assessment of educational outcomes is likely to steer the local system in areas of instability which can work against deep, meaningful and ethical transformation.

Education Reform in Mauritius—'The Extended Programme'

'The Extended Programme' (the EP thereafter) is one of the flagship reforms initiated by the NYCBE to provide underperforming primary school leavers with additional support to meet minimum learning requirement expected at the end of compulsory nine years of schooling. This is designed to give these students one additional year of schooling with a modified curriculum, instruction in smaller classes, and individualised support from teachers assigned to the EP classes (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, 2022). Students following the EP are intended to participate in the National Certificate of Examinations after ten years of compulsory schooling rather than after nine years compared to their mainstream counterparts, who have successfully cleared the end of primary cycle examinations.

The implementation of the EP met with practical challenges, such as teachers being underprepared teach students with a history of academic failure that is influenced by their relationship with school and learning (Sewpersadsingh, 2021). More so, the life circumstances of many of these students are tied to poverty and many other forms of deprivation which make the curriculum reforms alone less likely to turn around their school trajectory (Sewpersadsingh, 2021). The fact they predominantly hail from the Kreol community (Mauritians from majorly African descent) while most of the secondary school teachers are from the majority Hindu

community has considerably politicised the issue within the teaching community itself (Deenmamode, 2016).The NYCBE is meant to address inequalities and inequities of the education system which persisted in the post-independence era but appears instead to have aggravated further exclusion and marginalisation of the large mass of primary school children who do not meet the minimum learning competencies as assessed by the end of cycle primary examinations.

The opposition and mounting critique of the EP from the teachers' unions, and the media was formulated as insufficiently innovative because they claim an extended year and cosmetic changes in the curriculum would perpetuate the same teaching and learning practices and produce the same outcomes (Jaddoo, 2018; Sewpersadsingh, 2021). Subjecting students from the EP to the same examinations as mainstream students even after ten years of schooling was deemed as unfair and unrealistic (Sewpersadsingh, 2021). More so, predictions about delayed failure of many students following this programme loomed large on the government attempts at transforming the system. Policymakers argued reforms were designed to introduce a completely different pedagogy designed to reformat the connection with schools and learning (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, 2016). With this intended aim, teachers who intended to apply for teaching positions in such classes, followed intensive training and facilitators were appointed in each school to co-ordinate efforts at grassroot level. Such measures were complemented by a reduction in teacher pupil ratio meant to afford teachers with more time to individually attend to students' needs. Despite this move, teachers' voice against reforms persisted in the public space (Jaddoo, 2018).

Involvement of the World Bank in Mauritius

The Ministry of Education, and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, and the WB signed a Reimbursable Advisory Services agreement, based on which the supranational organisation will provide technical assistance in support of the country's education sector until 2020 (The World Bank, 2017). Under this agreement, the WB

was initially expected to work closely with education institutions to ensure that the design of the different elements of the NYCBE changes are informed by international best practice. However, the bulk of the involvement came through benchmarking evaluation of the EP, set out to determine whether this is being implemented as intended, and whether this is succeeding with making progress in addressing the learning needs of students in the programme. This service offered by the WB cost Mauritius $985,000 US dollars (The World Bank, 2017) which is equivalent to 30 million Mauritian rupees.

Case Study Investigation

As a means of evaluating the risks of uncompromisingly purchasing and importing international policies and practices for use in Mauritian educational contexts, a case-study investigation was devised and carried out with three educational leaders based at a higher education institution. The investigation was to learn about their involvement in gathering responses to mid-term evaluation of the Extended Programme (Mauritius Institute of Education, 2020). The investigation was guided by the following questions:

  i. What has been the experience of the educators and curriculum leaders from local partner institutions in assisting the WB to affect the mid-term assessment?
 ii. What do their experiences reveal about the purpose of WB interventions in countries of the Global South and the place accorded to teachers in shaping/enacting educational reform?

   In their professional roles, these three educators were direct interlocutors with the WB, and each had the duty to produce their own official mid-term evaluative reports for validation by WB experts appointed by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research. For the purposes of sharing their responses in this chapter, and protecting their identities, the respondents are given the

pseudonyms: Rajesh, Vick and Krish. They each participated in unstructured interviews of approximately one-hour, and framed by one initial question:

> Tell me about your experience working with the World Bank on the intermediate evaluation of the Extended Programme?

> The interviews covered the following aspects of interest:

 i. Context of the WB involvement
 ii. How the mid-term review evaluation was carried out, and the nature of teacher involvement in the process
iii. Educator perspective and understanding of why/how the WB carried out the evaluation, and how the outcomes were represented.

Experiences of Working with World Bank on the Assessment of Educational Reforms

In the next section of writing, excerpts from the interview responses (in italics) are woven into a narrative, for presenting and sharing an understanding of the professional position adopted by each interviewee on how they interpret their experience of working with WB staff.

Rajesh

Rajesh has had the most consistent involvement with the WB in a variety of projects and is also currently involved in developing a continent-wide framework for higher education. Rajesh values what the WB *adds to national education system*[2] arguing strongly for *the objectivity* it brings to the exercise of evaluation of local systems of education because *of its wide expertise accumulated by providing similar service in many countries*. Rajesh highlights this comparative element as key to enabling countries to assess *how they compare to an international norm.* When queried about the need

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[2] The adverbatim quotes are in italics.

for such comparative assessments, Rajesh explains how the quantitative assessment has become necessary to ensure that *employability skills are being developed*. *Government is an investor on behalf of taxpayers so the education system should deliver in terms of return on investment*, he asserts. Because the WB is a supranational outsider, it would be trusted and its evaluation credible. The Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology solicited the consultancy at the cost of almost one million US dollars for what it perceived would be an uncontested report which could either be used to validate international reforms and assist in synchronising actions (The World Bank, 2017).

Rajesh finds value in a *model borrowed from the private sector* as used by the WB, rejecting criticism of the neoliberal agenda as *talk compared to a much-needed pragmatic approach which would render stakeholders accountable*. More importantly, seeking the expertise of the WB places Mauritius in good stead for future funding requests. Rajesh argues the option provided is currently the *best practice as it embraces the profitability and efficiency model of the private sector* which, if applied to education will enhance graduate attributes and employability; one of the key purposes of education. Teachers, Rajesh believes, should be empowered to make the required shift, and embrace these changes to develop skills in students.

Vick

Vick has more than 30 years of experience as a teacher and teacher educator. Vick currently fulfils a leadership position in his institution which provides for teacher education and oversees developing textbooks for all levels of schooling. As such, Vick is a key figure in the design and implementation of the EP for *overseeing the development of textbooks and pedagogically managing the implementation process by liaising with teacher clusters around the island.*

Vick recounts how the cordial professional relations with the Ministry caused him *to be unable to refuse the assignment to assist the Word Bank in carrying out the evaluation.* Although Vick is new to the WB, he prizes his involvement most highly qualifying it *as working at another*

level. Vick brings to attention the fact that he headed a team that did all the groundwork, but the report bears the stamp of the WB, not his organisation. There are no hard feelings on this account because Vick regards this association almost as an induction into *formal, scientific, world class report writing* which follows a set process allowing structure and *careful mapping of key areas against internationally determined indicators*. The quality of interaction with the WB is described as collegial reflecting *a conversation among academics* where he felt valued. Vick considers the experts as being beyond the politics of the context, and able to make independent judgements although they also know how government bureaucracies and education systems function the world over. Vick welcomes the opportunity offered by a credible international organisation, to leverage influence on the decision-making process of policymakers mid-way. He argues that *a national report submitted by a national agency would have been censored and likely ended up in a ministerial drawer*. Instead, the report *could not be ignored became impactful and led to changes in the way subsequent actions were enacted.* Vick highlighted the *reduction in the number of learning areas being examined at National Certificate of Examinations level* as one change the report brought about.

The process of data collection, Vick describes as inclusive of the *voices of teachers through the setting up of communities of practice whereby teachers clustered in zones/schools regularly came together to provide feedback on reform implementation. 15 teachers from 23 schools in each cluster reported regularly on the problems encountered and steered collectively how solutions were conceptualised and implemented*. The targeted outcome of 50% students reaching the basic competencies established in the NYCBE document remains a challenge. However, Vick claims the community of practice approach assisted teachers involved to *reflect collectively and develop a practical approach to adapting their teaching to the students in the EP*. Many of whom *consider their assignment to teach in the extended stream as a punishment from the Ministry of Education*. Their difficulties to relate to these students are explained by the inherent challenges to deal with students who are so culturally different from teachers. Vick argues, however, that there was a core group who had taught such students before and were willing to invest in leading and conversing with colleagues. Working collectively on finding solutions to the pedagogical

issues is, according to Vick *the best way to make teachers own the change and make it work*. Although, he is very much inclined to seeing the positive aspect of the EP, Vick could not but acknowledge the success was mitigated.

He reiterates how the process of engaging with this exercise revealed the power of the WB in opening doors locally and how institutions were expected to provide access because the exercise carried the quality seal and authority of the WB. All except one institution which carried out national examinations refused to give access to its database, a lack of compliance which was unexpected and indicated in the report.

Krish

Involvement with the WB and the EP has been an enriching experience for Krish. He reflects on how the *quality assurance processes set in place by the educational economists of the World Bank were rigorous* and constitutes a key learning experience for them. The use of an *evaluation template coupled with the outlined procedures for evaluation in terms of performance outcomes* drove the process. Their role, as Mauritian experts was constructed more in terms of provision of contextual details to enable WB experts to frame their reports. One of the key highlights for Krish is the ways in which WB raised issues about borderline cases when calculating the pass rates of students in the extended stream their *argument being those students falling short of 2–3 marks should be integrated as having met the requirements of a pass grade*. Krish further questions the position of WB experts who *upheld strict the numeracy and literacy requirements* as such a view ignores both the contextual realities and pronounced learning deficits accumulated by students from the extended stream. The core of his argument is framed around his own engagement which revealed *how students of this stream understand concepts but are unable to translate this understanding in written form*. However, Krish contests the position of the WB which expects <u>all</u> students to demonstrate their learning in formal academic ways which he considers to be an impossible target for them to meet especially when *they must demonstrate that learning in what remains a foreign language for most of those who*

are struggling to learn. Proposals and recommendations from the local team were framed *as greater emphasis on project/inquiry-based approach which conflicted with the textbook approach advocated by World Bank.* Krish believes the same barometer cannot be used for all categories. The curriculum and teaching approach, he contends, *need to be adjusted with more project-based /problem-based learning constructed around practical subjects like agriculture and plumbing which required manipulative skills which students from the Extended stream can demonstrate.* Krish reports that WB experts were not inclined to integrate these suggestions as they foregrounded the necessity of all students to meet the learning targets. Krish narrates an experience by one technical expert who witnessed in situ *how teachers spent an inordinate amount of time and energy trying to make students write the word P.L.A.S.T.I.C as compared to how quickly they evidently understood the concept.* The WB expert, he argues, *for the first time got a sense of how bad things are in a real Mauritian context. They do not know the situation here*, he asserts, *what you see on paper is nothing compared to reality.*

Krish's participation with the WB also enabled him to establish contact and be part of a project to introduce robotics and coding in the Extended Stream which involved *having pre-planned lessons prepared for and given to teachers in association with a polytechnic university in the USA.* When queried as to how far the project is suited to the needs of students and teachers in the extended stream, Krish is of the view that although *they were more suited for mainstream, the project had to be located within mainstream as was tied to funding requirements.* It was later moved to Grade 11 in high achieving schools where 'coding' was found to be successful.

Discussion

Building from the narrative summaries of participants, which though nuanced and positioned within their distinct professional roles, share common elements which illustrate, illuminate and extend the current scholarship. The focus of this brief discussion is how the WB is uncritically positioned as an unquestionable authoritative epistemic source for

educational policy development in countries of the Global South, such as Mauritius. This can be seen through the responses given by Rajesh, Vick and Krish, in their deferential stance to WB influence and leadership, particularly when they each spoke of the opportunity to learn what it means to think and write within those set standards set (Klees et al., 2012). The influence of WB discourse such as through international comparative context evidence, and equally its technical rational approach which is free from local politics and biases in Mauritius is revealed by the symmetrical internalised responses given from Rajesh, Vick and Krish. For example, where a premium is placed on the superiority of the economic logic embodied in terms like "return on investment". The apparently infallible economic logic of the WB has a sanitising effect, and the view is given of the WB as a dispassionate custodian of good sense. The WB is extremely careful to maintain an image of scientific neutrality and credibility with national governments which remains technically the commissioning agency for their consultancy role in the case of Mauritius (Anwaruddin, 2014). It is in their engagement with educational institutions and the leadership as shown with Rajesh, Vick and Krish, that enables the reification and enactment of their discourse.

The WB appears to have devised a winning formula with the presumably unconscious complicity of governments. For one, the financial gains associated with consultancy services; for two, much of the data collection work, as claimed by Rajesh, Vick and Krish, are performed by local experts who are in no way financially rewarded; for three, the WB adds the favourable data and report to its international track record which serves its claim as a "producer and manager of valuable knowledge" and fourth and not in the least, the report is framed within the ideological parameters defined by SABER which serves to inscribe the neoliberal agenda into local education reforms.

The case of Mauritius is specific, because the involvement of the WB in its reform project is not tied to the conditionality for funding. Rather the government's initial intention was to harness the explicative order represented by the WB to legitimise its decision to force structural adjustments on the system. What the WB has achieved in Mauritius is another milestone in its self-ascribed role as an authoritative and unquestionable global educational policy influencer insofar as it is now able to claim

resources from countries of the Global South in the process of asserting its neoliberal ideology (Ayling, 2019).

This it achieves through intersectionality of patterns of domination and capitalising on existing colonial habitus in SIDS which are maintained in a post independent era through their connection with international agencies (Baldacchino, 2019). SIDS was considered as vulnerable, and could not, without developmental assistance, be inserted into global economies. This assistance was and continues to be constructed on a grammar of disempowerment with international organisations like the International Monetary Fund and the WB self-assigning the role of dictating what targets should be met and how systems such as fiscal and welfare, should be reformatted in the direction of less state responsibility (Altbach, 1971; Klees et al., 2012). Their overriding concern with getting macro-economic indicators in line with their defined norms has coerced governments in many SIDS into inflicting immense suffering on local population because of the pressure on government to privatise public services like health and education (Klees et al., 2012).

As indicated in the narrative summaries, educational practice and discourse of those who take decisions about educational reforms reflect how this binary opposition between the Global North and Global South, and with the former being equated with development and quality in education, has been internalised (Arnove et al., 2013; Ayling, 2019). The WB legitimises this opposition by foregrounding the value of formal assessment by means of standardised testing to which all students across life circumstances and contexts must conform to be able to show learning and skills development (Altbach, 1971; Anwaruddin, 2014). Krish expressed how the WB experts were not attentive to what happens in class, but as a master explicator, the WB defined how students should perform on tests assuming a direct correlation between their performance in test and what they are expected to achieve in their life. Teachers, who work with these students were never listened to; their practice; their solutions; their reflections and suggestions are hardly visible in the final report, except for how much training they had received to be able to effect the desired transformations (Mauritius Institute of Education, 2020). The few WB visits effected did not change in any way their conclusions, nor was the issue of the medium of instruction

and assessment in English language (see Bissoonauth-Bedford, 2018; Rughoonauth, 2021), which is a foreign language for a vast majority of students addressed. None of the authentic contextual considerations which should have guided the final report fitted into a well-oiled solution package of the WB (Klees et al., 2012). The case of the joint project (mentioned by Krish) with an American Polytechnic on coding and robotics to be implemented in classes where most students can barely write their name, is certainly an illustration of the mismatch between the needs of a context and the funding criteria of the WB. The time and resources were invested in designing ready-made lessons for teachers "to apply" in under-resourced classrooms take attention away from dealing with more relevant contextual issues and exemplifies how the Global South receives those "gifts" as an opportunity to emulate the standards in the Global North (Anwarruddin, 2014).

Conclusion

The WB neoliberal educational discourse is significant as an epistemic influence on education policy reforms in the Global South. The critical interrogation and analysis offered by this chapter expose the power dynamics at play between the WB and its influence on Mauritius education system reforms. In exposing this relationship, the concern is raised about not only World Bank's neoliberal influence but also its neocolonial power in managing and maintaining their value as an unquestionable external authority on educational quality, against what is argued for as a need to implement more locally contextualised and inclusive social reconstructionist educational policy reforms in Mauritius for providing epistemic equity in curriculum, teaching and learning opportunities.

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6

Decolonising the "Thai-ness" Discourse in Education

Omsin Jatuporn

Introduction

The discourse on Thai-ness, as established by government-supported intellectuals, and propagated through the educational policy, curriculum and textbooks, remains highly influential, and is highly respected by Thai society. However, Thai-ness inevitably goes through a process of hybridisation due to the driving forces of globalisation and neoliberalism, which in recent decades have resulted in the emergence of an anti-establishment discourse on Thai-ness from critical educators. This can be seen in the white ribbon movement, which consists of students and youth demonstrating against an oppressive education system and undemocratic political institutions; also, the Thai civic education network, made up of teacher and teacher educators fighting for democracy, equity and

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justice (Jatuporn, 2019; Lertchoosakul, 2021). With a specific focus on the years 1957 to 2018, this chapter aims to problematise the concept of Thai-ness as a given for absolute knowledge in the social studies curriculum; in school textbooks, and through its discursive practices of power in Thailand, all of which have been regulated and formally approved by the Thai Ministry of Education (Department of Academic Affairs, Ministry of Education, 2018). The critical discourse analysis method can be applied as both a theoretical and methodological framework, which can reveal the discursive practices of social studies curriculum and textbooks as agentic forces of the dominant culture, which function to reinforce existing power relations, asymmetries, and forms of domination. This chapter demonstrates how discursive curricular practices have been mediated by the nation-state to inscribe rationalities in the minds of individuals, which in effect, legitimise historical tradition, garner the allegiance of people to the existing political status quo, and place them into a single set of unifying imaginaries about citizenship. Therefore, the curriculum and pedagogy of 'decolonisation' is essential as a pedagogy of liberalisation that can truly empower the Thai people.

The Production of Thai-ness

To understand the production of official knowledge for the educational system in Thailand, the relationship between the curriculum, textbooks and discursive practices combining to produce a dominate version of knowledge, culture and power, must be considered. An examination of the operation of knowledge that was circulating and disseminating in society during a period can reveal how this was able to successfully shape and sustain a particular image of the Thai nation. Variations in the curriculum and textbooks can be uncovered, demonstrating how the official knowledge of the nation has been adapted to fit with the image of Thai-ness according to the time. At this crucial point, the curriculum and textbooks were exploited by the state to inject the state's ideology into future-to-be citizens (Apple, 1990).

That is to say, the image of Thai-ness has led to the clear establishment of a knowledge system management that operates through the social studies curriculum and textbooks, and which has become a technology of power that the state uses to project the image of the Thai national community among Thai people to create a common identity (Arphattananon, 2013; Panpothong, 2015). However, the evolution of the social studies curriculum and textbooks as well as the related subjects of history, religion and civic education during the years 1957 to 2018 indicates that the image of Thai-ness has adapted according to the socio-cultural, economic and political contexts both within the country and of the international community. Therefore, Thai-ness never ceases to change. It is instead *re*-presented to fit in the contemporary situation or context of a particular time. Although Thai-ness seems to change with the times, I argue that these are merely illusory practices designed to uphold the invariability of the central tenets of Thai-ness, i.e. the institutions of 'nation', 'religion' and 'monarchy', all of which have remained intact regardless of the context.

Thai-ness, as formulated by the hegemonic alliances of Thai elites and ruling classes, is highlighted by the social studies curriculum and textbooks, in which the state itself has set the dominant framework for the desired Thai-ness (Sukata, 2014). What compliments and fulfils such Thai-ness at a particular given time is the social studies curriculum and textbooks as well as related subjects of history, religion and civic education, all which contain a set of intersectional discourses among knowledge, culture and power, and a set of explanations that fall closely in line with the framework of Thai-ness. Interestingly, a set of discourses of social studies knowledge in each period may be found disconnected from or totally different from other discourses.

This chapter was therefore conceptualised through analysis of the social studies curriculum, and textbooks, as well as the related subjects of history, religion and civic education, all of which it is argued have been imposed on the Thai citizen, crafting them to be equal only as a docile subject under the democratic regime of the government with the King as Head of State during the years 1957 to 2018 (Fairclough, 1995). Using a critical discourse analysis method, the purpose of the study was set to problematise Thai-ness within social studies curriculum and textbooks,

and thus obtain an understanding from which will lead to further deconstruction and decolonisation of Thai-ness as the hegemonic discourse in the spheres of education and civic culture in Thailand.

Thai-ness as Hegemonic Ideology in Social Studies Curriculum and Textbooks

The set of discourses within social studies knowledge which is pivotal for Thai-ness during the years 1957 to 2018 includes that of 'nation', 'religion', and 'monarchy', as evidenced in the social studies curriculum and textbooks during the years 1957 to 1967 (Leawpairoj, 2018). However, this mainstream discourse has transformed, as well as being incorporated into the discourse of 'national security' and 'democracy' with the King as head of state. This was especially the case within the social studies curriculum and textbooks during the years 1977–1987 (Leawpairoj, 2018) and with the emergence of the discourses of 'sufficiency economy', 'sustainable development', 'democracy' with the King as head of state, and the 'twelve Thai values' in the social studies curriculum and textbooks during the period 1997 to 2018. All these mainstream discourses evidence the superior status given to 'nation', 'religion', and 'monarchy' as the core tenets of Thai-ness (Jatuporn, 2021). Although the discourse of 'national security' seems to have weakened by the end of the Cold War[1] it has been replaced with the discourse of democracy with the King as head of state, which is significantly evident at any time from 1957 to 2018. This clearly demonstrates that this set of discourses of social studies knowledge perfectly embraces the core tenets of Thai-ness (Jatuporn, 2021). In fact, the seeming discontinuation of all these discourses indicates the unchangeable growth of the same ideas,

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[1] The Cold War was a period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies, the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc, which began following World War II. Historians do not fully agree on its starting and ending points, but the period is generally considered to span the 1947 Truman Doctrine (12 March 1947) to the 1991 Dissolution of the Soviet Union (26 December 1991). Thailand was a member of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) alongside the United States from 1954 to 1977 and is a Major non-NATO (since 2003).

but with different manifestations. Therefore, the outer appearances of these discourses may have changed, but the traces of their core origins still exist. This means that Thai-ness from the dominant perspective of the state and Thai elites/ruling classes has been intermittently reinforced over many generations of Thai society.

As a result of this, the social studies curriculum and textbooks, approved by the Department of Academic Affairs, Ministry of Education from 1957 to 2018 often created enemies who were portrayed as 'the others', to maintain the hegemonic power and status quo through the mainstream narrative (Winichakul, 2000).

The main enemy that has always been presented in the social studies textbooks from 1957 to 1977 was the threat of communism. To combat this, the state laid an ideological foundation which was to create an understanding and awareness of the danger of communism until it reached its peak in 1977 (Leawpairoj, 2018). When the threat of communism ceased following the end of the Cold War, the threats or enemies shifted towards globalisation and other related concepts such as modernisation, westernisation and internationalisation, as appeared in the social studies textbooks from the year 1987 onwards. However, there seems to be a certain level of hesitation and reconciliation represented in social studies textbooks, as the Thai nation still desires beneficial positionality in the global community. It is quite impractical for Thailand to be an isolated nation and indiscriminately keep the core tenets of Thai-ness intact. Therefore, new enemies must be produced; that is, the people within the Thai nation, who showed resentment or dissidence towards the original Thai-ness created by the state. All these enemies have effectively sustained the discourse of Thai-ness.

The mechanism of the production of knowledge, culture and power circulating in the social studies curriculum and textbooks reveals the state's motives for producing a particular set of hegemonic discourses as follows:

> The ancient Thai predecessors had sacrificed themselves for the sake of the country in every historical period. During the state of war, they were in unity to battle against enemies with brave dignity and self-sacrifice to protect the national sovereignty which had been maintaining independent status from the past until the present. (Worakawin, 2012, p. 45)

The discourses may appear distinct but are almost always served to maintain Thai values. In analysing the contents of social studies curriculum and textbooks during the years 1957 to 1967, the state's reasons for emphasising a series of discourses on development and the modern period is revealed. In these documents, Thailand was not only heading towards modernisation, but also allowed for the exposure of Western (American) civilisation and modern technology, representing Thai modernity in the context of traditional Thai-ness. The real essence of being Thai is thus manifested through the modernisation process during this period.

The social studies curriculum and textbooks from 1977 to 1987 reveal the state's rationale for manipulating knowledge about the enemies to Thailand's national security, in particular the threat of communism:

> Our ancestors had sacrificed their lives to protect the Thai national sovereignty. The ancient Thai predecessors were generous and benevolent. They knew how to adjust themselves in accordance with the changing context of society. As a Thai, we should embrace and follow this characteristic as a model for living our lives to uphold the sovereignty of our country. (Worakawin, 2012, p. 59)

The process of doing so was likened to the opening of the nation's door to welcome the knowledge of neighbouring countries, and the international community. However, the hostile behaviours towards Thai-ness were not perceived by 'the other' enemy nations. The knowledge of those nations that can be classified as friends of Thailand reflects the expected behaviour of Thai elites and ruling classes, who had been projecting and further highlighting the values of Thai-ness that have been going on for hundreds of years (Mukdawijitra, 2013). The Thai state also manages knowledge about Thailand in the global community, concomitant with the embrace of the world's progress. The projecting

of the image of Thai-ness, along with the dissemination of the values of the Thai nation, is implemented through the learning of foreign cultures within the unfolding processes of globalisation.

When scrutinising the social studies curriculum and textbooks (Leawpairoj, 2018) used in the years from 1997 to 2018, the ultimate values of Thai-ness are clearly illustrated (Jatuporn, 2021). The dangers of globalisation emerged in the form of capitalism and neoliberalism, which are emphasised as being the main cause of the Thai nation having had to face an economic crisis. In reaction to this, the sufficiency economy is presented as the gateway to survival, revealing the values of traditional Thai-ness based on culture and wisdom at both the local and national levels. The values proposed by sufficiency economy were soon confirmed to be authentic Thai. Both trends of the essence of real Thai-ness and unreal Thai-ness came to a major collision with the emergence of the twelve Thai values discourse (Leawpairoj, 2018). Particularly under the current regime of the junta government, the twelve Thai values have been emphasised in the current education reform. They have materialised in the social studies curriculum and textbooks, while their discursive practices of power demonstrate a sense of collective identity using language, such as the *Thai people, the people of Thailand* and *we the people,* which aims to reveal the core values of Thai-ness through the main institutions of the 'nation', 'religion', and 'monarchy'. This can be traced back to the sets of discourses from the social studies curriculum and textbooks in the years from 1957 to 1967. From the past six decades until now, therefore, the discursive practices of these values have been circulating throughout Thai society, having a very much influential moulding impact upon it.

As mentioned previously, the social studies curriculum and textbooks serve as significant tools of power for the state to assign knowledge through a series of discourses. Meanwhile, the discursive practices from teacher educators, educational supervisors and teachers who enact the social studies curriculum and textbooks, in effect disseminate this power, which is installed in the students' subjectivity and internalised in the organic make up of society. The discursive practices of social studies knowledge as well as the related subjects of history, religion and civic education can be referred to as disciplinary powers that create an identity

that is directly dependent on state power due to a particular governmentality that becomes deeply ingrained in the individual (Arphattananon, 2021; Boontinand, 2021). All these knowledge discourses do not only serve the purpose of imparting knowledge and constructing a particular idea of Thai-ness to cultivate Thai subjects with ideal notions. This sense of Thai-ness that was formed by a set of knowledge discourses further drives the individual to follow, conform with, and/or share some common conscience with the state (Mukdawijitra, 2013). All of these are supported by mechanisms of the ecosystem of power and knowledge production, such as schools and educational institutions at different levels, and the power relations between teachers and students, while the social studies curriculum and textbooks serve as the medium.

Considering this, the effects of the discursive practices that penetrate the mental recognition or consciousness of the individual are conditioned by the distribution of power from the state to power in social studies curriculum and textbooks (Leawpairoj, 2018). The disciplinary powers which are imbued in social studies knowledge will manipulate the identity of the individual, resulting in the establishment of the Thai identity that is imagined and espoused by those in power. Therefore, the power of knowledge via the social studies curriculum is gradually transferred into individuals, inducing them to question themselves: 'Who am I?' The knowledge discourse of Thai-ness was designed to address that question by answering for the individual what it means to be Thai. Thus, the social studies curriculum and textbooks, and their discursive power, in effect convert a person into an educational object, that is, the person's identity is 'Thai', mostly in line with the elitist knowledge discourse of Thai-ness.

Thus, the level of Thai-ness is associated with how people respond to the realities of society at that time, and which appear through the social studies curriculum and textbooks. This reflects a clear reliance on the state and the production of social studies knowledge, both of which play an important role in forging the correct Thai identity. Thus, through social studies knowledge and its discursive power, Thai people have been programmed with Thai-ness, who must cherish and preserve the core pillars of the Thai nation according to elitist Thai epistemes (Chutintaranond, 2009).

Decolonising the 'Thai-ness' Discourse in Education

Ultimately, this chapter intends to reveal that the true goal of the social studies curriculum and textbooks and their discursive power is to incorporate a series of discourses that can construct the ideal image of Thai-ness. This is a technology of power that is supported by publishing companies and the public–private partnerships in educational capitalism such as Aksorn Charoen Tat and Thai Wattana Panich (Leawpairoj, 2018). These discursive practices have real affects upon individuals, actively moulding the Thai citizen into a docile subject under a democratic regime of the government with the King as Head of State (Sripokangkul, 2020). Moreover, through the disciplinary powers, of governmentality and the supervision of the state of social studies knowledge, discursive practices can nurture the organic mechanism and thus, of dominating society. All these processes result in the creation of the state of Thai identity, which is the real goal of the social studies curriculum and textbooks. That is, the practice of being a Thai person is propelled by the driving force or the growth of Thai-ness subjectivity, with its advent in the social studies discourse in the years 1957 to 1967, followed by an altered Thai-ness, which appeared in the social studies discourse in the years 1977 to 1987. And most recently, Thai-centric orientations of educational policies, such as the National Education Act 2019, have become evident in the latest constitutional draft written by the junta-appointed constitution drafting committee and the educational reform roadmap, which is a major vehicle of educational policy. Additionally, the highly centralised control of administration and supervision has served nation-centric orientations. Although there have been some recent efforts at decentralisation and, in fact, to increase local autonomy in education, the education ministry continues to exercise great power. Considering these educational practices, social studies education as well as the related subjects of history, religion and civic education aimed at cultivating royal-nationalist narratives, while Thai nationalism was exploited to maintain the status quo of the elites and ruling classes who have held privileged positions within Thai society. This *re*-presentation for the King and royal family is clearly illustrated in the new revision

of the social studies, religion and culture textbook for the fifth grade (Puttmee, 2018).

It is plausible to state that the Thai nation employs various technologies of power; that is, the social studies curriculum and textbooks are tools of transmitting state power into Thai society. This, in effect, moulds individuals into subjects of the state; a process of which is achieved by the disciplinary power attained by the mediated discursive practices from teacher educators, educational supervisors and teachers enacting the social studies curriculum and textbooks. Therefore, the power of social studies knowledge is a bridge through which state power and the power of a particular subjectivity converge. The specific values of Thai-ness will then be embedded within everyone, which will eventually lead to their self-examination and examination of others. If successful, this process will spread the power of the state and receive the tacit submissiveness from the individual. Viewed in this sense, Thai-ness did not emerge from the power of the state alone. Rather, it also happens through the politics of negotiation, contestation and recognition that occur between state power and individual subjectivity.

I would like to assert that the state cannot achieve its objective of constructing and disseminating the national ideology, the ideology of Thai-ness, or the nationalist ideology to the citizens successfully without the awareness and consent on the citizens' part. The inculcation of the knowledge discourse of Thai-ness, as evident in the social studies curriculum and textbooks mandatory to all citizens, familiarises the Thai people with the imaginary Thai-ness community, while establishing Thai identity to be absorbed into the consciousness of the Thai individual. The status of the Thai community is, therefore, an important factor in urging citizens at the individual level to support, empower, protect, cherish, and ultimately maintain the state's power.

Throughout the period of 1957 to 2018, Thai-ness has revolved around circumstantial forces, which may seem to reflect the discontinuity of its propagation. Yet, the findings of this chapter indicate that such discontinuity was expected or even designed to preserve the continuity of the core values of the Thai nation that had been established since 1957. The social studies curriculum and textbooks remain effective in reshaping the hegemonic narrative and status quo so that Thai-ness never subsides

from the mainstream ideology of Thai society. For this reason, people who have different backgrounds in terms of age still perceive the core values of Thai-ness collectively. The knowledge discourse of Thai-ness dissolves the generation gap of people in Thai society.

That is to say, the social studies curriculum and textbooks are not only designed for teaching students who are young citizens, but also to educate people in Thai society. The people in the Thai community become 'children', whom which Thai identity becomes established and imparted regardless of their age. The first group of children who are expected to receive the message from the social studies curriculum and textbooks is social studies teachers and educators. This set of knowledge discourse will then be passed on to people in society for people to develop a conscience of Thai identity. This process can be traced back to the effects produced by the disciplinary power of the knowledge discourse on Thai-ness in the social studies curriculum and textbooks. When the life-worlds of that individual are strongly dominated by such hegemonic ideology, it is likely that such individual will find it not difficult to punish or eliminate those who do not belong to the Thai-ness community created by the Thai state. All of this can occur in which the state hardly has to exert any operational power to their people.

Conclusion

This chapter is an attempt to widen the knowledge frontiers of the study of state ideology, with the social studies curriculum and textbooks and their discursive power often being used as a gateway to the understanding of politics and state power. It is often found that Thai-ness or Thai nationalism as mainstream ideology are forged and propagated to citizens in a vertically hierarchal manner. Yet, I have attempted to point out the incessant growth of the Thai-ness discourse, purported to maintain the strength of the core values of the Thai nation, and achievable by implanting state power into the subjectivity of the individuals and indoctrinating the correct Thai-ness into mainstream public narratives, school curriculums and textbooks; all of which have been regulated and formally approved by the Thai Ministry of Education (Department of Academic

Affairs, Ministry of Education, 2018). Thus, the horizontal inculcation of power using a series of discourses that have been circulating in society, through discursive practices of the social studies curriculum and textbooks, allows us to see the vital mechanisms that are meant to protect the core values of the Thai nation that are confronting contemporary challenges and rapid changes. It allows us to obtain a glimpse of the reason why individuals are willing to sacrifice their lives for the 'nation', 'religion' and 'monarchy'. An individual may perceive that his or her systematic thinking is modernised, yet the Thai-ness discourse is functioning incessantly at the consciousness and internal subjectivity of every Thai citizen.

The curriculum reforms in democratic societies show that the main factor to successful reforms has come, not from globalisation or neoliberal policy, but from the internal realisation that the country and its citizens are the major beneficiaries of educational reform. Given that democratic government is crucial for democratic citizenship, the curriculum and pedagogy for 'decolonisation' are essential for the pedagogy of liberalisation, which can better empower the Thai people.

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Coloniality and National Exceptionalism in Norwegian Citizenship Education: Engaging the Ontological Baseline

Kristin Gregers Eriksen

Educational Narratives and the Colonial Production of Absences

In a seventh-grade social studies class in a classroom in South-Eastern Norway, the students are exploring the topic of slavery. While the teacher connects the historical process of Europeans' enslavement of Africans from the 1500s to the present and modern slavery, the textbook steers the conversation in a different direction. Information about slavery is provided in a chapter titled "The great explorers." The teacher tells her students: "Today we are going to learn about the Europeans who discovered the world." In this narrative, the coming of modernity, western science, and industrialisation made possible by these processes,

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is presented as the trajectory of human development towards infinite progress. The construction of a racialised system of forced labour relegating millions of people to immense suffering appears as a mere footnote. A student raises her hand and asks: "But, who discovered Norway, then?" The teacher hesitates, and answers, "I don't think anyone really discovered Norway; it is more that different people have been living here for thousands of years. We don't usually talk that way about Europe."

This situation is from a lesson I observed during my fieldwork in Norwegian primary schools (Eriksen, 2021). Portrayal of European colonialism as a major achievement of "great" white men has proven tenacious in educational narratives (Mikander, 2015). There are calls in education for the need to apply more than one set of ethnic lenses in viewing the past, to provide young people with richer opportunities to learn national history through critical perspectives (Moncrieffe, 2020). This illustrates by the example how lack of knowledge alone is not the root of the challenge. Rather than simply being a question of the content of the narrative, it is as much related to structure: How the story is told, and from where—the *locus of enunciation* (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). This way, the teacher's response is as accurate as it is elusive, when she explains, "this is not the way we usually talk."

Decolonisation of knowledge demands inquiry into how ongoing colonialism produces abyssal exclusions, that is: "to produce certain groups of people and forms of social life as nonexistent, invisible, radically inferior, or radically dangerous" (Santos, 2018, p. 25). In the logic of the narrative, perspectives of indigenous people already living in the colonised areas, as well as enslaved Africans, are not intelligible as valid knowledge. Production of absences through the erasure of these dark sides of modern European history must be understood not simply as rooted in epistemological domination, but also ontological deprivation—impossibility of acknowledging the full humanity of non-Europeans within the colonial logic (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). This illustrates that decolonisation of education must transcend traditional critiques in the social sciences, that are providing criticism within current epistemological frameworks, and engage the ontological level.

Interrupting Coloniality in Norwegian Citizenship Education

This chapter is based on analyses from a doctoral study aimed at interrupting coloniality in Norwegian citizenship education through fieldwork, textbook analysis, and teaching interventions (Eriksen, 2021). Coloniality is here understood with Quijano (2000) as manifested in how colonialism is not restricted to historical colonialism based on European territorial occupation. Colonialism is seen as the ontogenesis of modernity, which installed enduring structures of power and knowledge. Coloniality has particular significance for knowledge production, amounting to a "full dependence of the models of thinking, making and interpreting the world based on the norms created and imposed by/in Western modernity" (Tlostanova et al., 2019, p. 290). I am concerned with how coloniality was empirically detected in the Norwegian classrooms through the reproduction of a dominant national self-image embedded in discursive structures of *National exceptionalism* (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012).

Norway, much in line with the other Nordic countries,[1] has been successful in promoting exceptionalism as a particular form of nation branding. As the current minister of foreign affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, declared in a public speech in 2006: "We have some advantages - as a state outside the power blocks in international politics, with no colonial history and no tradition for hidden agendas" (Simonsen, 2010, p. 22). The imaginary of exceptionalism is connected to the idea of being innocent of colonialism. However, the dual kingdom of Denmark-Norway colonised areas in what is today Ghana, South-Eastern India, and the Caribbean Islands, beginning in the seventeenth century, and ship merchants acquired large fortunes from slave-based trade (Kjerland & Berthelsen, 2015). Even more pressing is the way this idea of

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[1] The concept "Nordic region" refers both to a historically embedded geographical entity, and a current political partnership between the countries Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland. Scholarly works has argued the existence of a particular Nordic national self-understanding and sociability related to colonialism, racism and whiteness (Loftsdottir & Jensen, 2012; Keskinen et al., 2019). I will not here engage a discussion about this Nordic imaginary, but rather discuss the case of Norway in relation to the globally oriented concept coloniality.

Norway's colonial innocence, upholds a sanctioned ignorance (Spivak, 1999) of colonisation of *Sápmi*, the ancestral homeland of the indigenous Sámi.[2] Although the Sámi today hold extensive group rights in Norway, deprivation of land rights and ongoing racism is the lived reality (Fjellheim, 2020).

The Norwegian nationally exceptionalist self-image is also manifested in understanding of the educational system as an undisputable success. Developed in the aftermath of World War II, the so-called Nordic model has facilitated free comprehensive education and formally equal access to higher education. However, it also fosters a system in which inequalities are invisibilised under the imaginary of an alleged homogenous national identity as a means for realising loyalty to the nation, obscuring how whiteness in practice works as norm for "true" Norwegians (Fylkesnes, 2019). Recent studies have reported on students experiences with racism in schools and the inability to acknowledge the presence of racialisation (Eriksen, 2020; Svendsen, 2014), as well as the dominance of Eurocentrism in educational narratives (Eriksen, 2018a; Jore, 2019).

National Exceptionalism and Universalised Western Epistemology

The main feature of National exceptionalism is enabling the construction and articulation of national identity in ways that disassociate the state from historical and systemic injustice. Exceptionalism is further manifested in the construction of Norway as an international saviour of the Global South, and the refusal of race, racism, and whiteness as relevant concepts for understanding Norwegian society and cultural identities today. I will briefly describe these aspects with empirical examples. These are chosen on basis of representing "telling cases," rather than to be understood through binaries of typical and atypical.

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[2] Sápmi stretches across Northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland, and North-eastern Russia. As category, Sámi encompass several different groups with distinct self-identities, languages and traditions. The Sámi are recognised as indigenous through the ILO-convention 169 in Norway.

The basis for selecting a telling case is the extent to which it articulates and makes visible previously obscure theoretical-analytical insights (Andreotti, 2011).

Analysis of textbooks for primary-level social studies revealed a discursive pattern where the Sámi are essentialised and actively constructed as a national other through the structure and content of narratives as well as imagery. While the history of the Sámi national day is historically connected to resistance toward assimilationist state polices, this connection is not mentioned. Rather, the focus is on festivities and costumes, reflecting a form of multicultural discourse associated with essentialised cultural traits (Gorski, 2008). Meanwhile, the Norwegian national day is presented as a political victory by a "small and humble people":

May 17: May 17 is the Norwegian national day. We celebrate that we got our own constitution. That means that we got our own laws and a parliament. For a long time, Denmark decided over Norway. But in 1814, people in Norway wanted their own constitution. That gave us the right to decide more in our own country.

February 6: On February 6, the Samis celebrate Sami peoples' day. That is the Sami national day. The day is in memory of the first time Samis from Norway and Sweden gathered to talk about important issues. [...] Samis in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia celebrate the Sami people's day on February 6. The day might be celebrated with singing and dancing, and activities for the children. Many meet to eat good food together. (Eriksen, 2018a)

Overall, Norwegian history is presented as progressive and dynamic, and associated with specific times and persons, representing the "official" historical narrative. The description of Sámi history remains obscured by orientalist discursive structures (Said, 1995). Visions of time and place are blurred, describing how Sámi culture existed "a long time ago" in an unspecified place. The example illustrates how national exceptionalism produces absences in historical discourses that are not just random lack of information, notably also as they appear systematically, elevating the nation state to a place beyond critique.

In addition to structuring historical narratives in ways that uphold the immunity of the Norwegian nation state, exceptionalism manifests

through the current branding of Norway as an international champion in sustainability, democracy, and aid. This represents an inherent paradox in exceptionalism: the self-image of being peripheral in relation to European colonialism and processes of imperialist globalisation, while simultaneously claiming to represent globally leading forces of benevolence (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012). Observing a project thematising sustainable development in a seventh-grade classroom (Eriksen, 2018b), I analysed how colonial education for sustainable development contributes to the reinforcement of differences between "us" and "them," i.e., the Global (white) North and South.[3] A somehow difficult presence in Norway's self-image, is the fact that its wealth is largely built upon the petroleum industry. The Norwegian national imaginary is highly invested in the idea that a strong Norwegian economy will advance global efforts for sustainability through the ability to produce "quality oil and gas" for other countries. An important political strategy is to continue the production of oil and gas at home, while paying for climate quotas abroad to balance carbon emissions. During the lessons, the teacher navigated comments from students on this issue by framing them as "realistic" and "idealistic":

> With this topic, I mean, realistically speaking, what you might think ideally is one thing ... At the same time, I think that it is important that you are critical toward ... You know just on this topic ... Not that you say that we cut it all just now (oil and gas) but that you think two thoughts at the same time, that you develop new technology and methods. It would have such huge consequences for Norway to decide to stop the entire petroleum industry. (Teacher quoted in Eriksen, 2018b)

There is a logical connection here between "realistic" and "rational," where rational represents the political status quo. This way of framing what counts as rational, also very effectively worked to obstruct the many critical questions coming from students. Interruptions were not made intelligible within the logic of the conversation. Universalising rationality by centring the Eurocentric, colonial perspective, as here represented

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[3] I here apply the concepts of Global North and South in line with Santos (2018), as epistemological rather than purely geographical terms.

by the official state policy, illustrates how coloniality is upheld through fictions that elides the particularity of Eurocentric perspective. I argue that such universalised epistemology led to a kind of *unlearning* of critical thinking. The strong discursive presence and power of coloniality seemingly defined the edges and limitations of the conversation (i.e., the abyssal line), resulting in the absences of perspectives on global economic inequalities and racism.

The series of lessons were also accompanied by showing the documentary *Before the Flood* (Stevens, 2017). The film features American actor Leonardo Dicaprio as a "UN messenger of peace," travelling the world to witness climate change. In this setting, DiCaprio appears as representing the white saviour. A powerful scene depicures his meeting with Indian activist Sunita Narain. During their somewhat heated conversation, Narain makes it very clear that the important work that needs to be done is looking at power relations and consumption in the Global North. However, Dicaprio positions himself as representing the source of rationality, answering Narain that her perspectives are "not feasible." The last part of the movie, which also closed the series of lessons that I observed, features DiCaprio performing a monologue. In his conclusive monologue, DiCaprio seals the issue of North/South relations within colonial modernity as the norm:

> What is the right thing to do? What actions should we be taking? There are over a billion people out there without electricity, and they want lights, they want heat, they want the lifestyle that we have had in the United States for over 100 years. If we are going to solve this problem, we all have a responsibility to set an example. But more than that, help the developing world transition, before it's too late. (Stevens, 2017)

The narrative has a clear and visible racialised aspect, in which the idea of the "white man's burden" is reproduced through the "burden of the fittest", explaining unsustainability as a lack of attributes in the South that the North can provide (Andreotti, 2011). This analysis also holds implications for constructions of global citizenship within educational narratives. Who is imagined to possibly inhabit the category of "global citizen" and who is only present as a passive object for the intervention of

superior others, is based on a racialised hierarchy (Ideland & Malmberg, 2014). In the above example, India is positioned as deviant or lacking in relation to an alleged "spaceless" neutral position of the United States. This epistemic blindness leads to the vanishing of everything outside the modern/colonial worldview—on the other side of the abyssal line (Santos, 2018). This explains, for example, how India in this context is depicted as backward in relation to the United States, even though the United States emits much higher amounts of CO_2 per capita and is far less innovative in renewable energy (cf. Eriksen, 2018b).

National Imaginary and the Production of "Ideal" Citizens

As exemplified above, National exceptionalism may work as invisible structuring grammars of meaning, determining whose perspectives are intelligible. This is also related to subjectivation and the construction of cultural identities concerning "ideal" national citizens. Exceptionalism assists the affective construction of a naturalised white "us," constituted through the representation of the racialised, cultural, or inferior others. National identity can thus be understood as predicated upon a relationship with colonised others that is also emotionally embedded (Ahmed, 2000).

In the classrooms I visited, race was a socially performative presence, not explicitly spoken with words. Even if none of the teachers or students were stated racists, race was still present and structured conversations concerning for example Norwegian national identity (Eriksen, 2020). The patterns of appearance included denial of racism while making clearly racist comments—describing it as "joking around," and the implicit centring of whiteness within images of Norwegianness. The discomfort concerning "seeing race" was embedded in the safeguarding of a white, affective equilibrium (cf. Ahmed, 2000) in the classroom. Affective navigations are part of how National exceptionalism creates being "non-racist" as a nationally embedded self-identity. This self-identity was further related to a connection between whiteness and being a good person:

–Do you have any suggestions?
Brian: Skin colour. Or, you know, in Norway you are not exactly brown, you know . . .
Anna: Light skin colour.
David: You can tell from the looks. The skin colour is light.
Cecilia: Erm... that you in a way can tell by the looks. Light skin.
–Why don't you write it down?
Cecilia [bites her nails]: No . . . maybe not. It is not exactly appropriate. (Eriksen, 2020)

In this situation, this white student that I have called Cecilia, is encountered with the existence of a sort of racial grammar connected to skin colour, but this also spurs an affective reaction, as she already holds the attitude that racism is wrong as part of her self-understanding. Such "innocent," exalted subjectivities are created through dominant, exceptionalist narratives in ways that deny complicity in systemic racism and colonial violence (Thobani, 2007).

At a point during my study, I made the decision to perform lessons thematising racism in Norway, as it was not really discussed explicitly in the classrooms. The teachers welcomed this initiative (Eriksen, 2021). However, although teachers were clear that racism needed to be acknowledged and countered in schools, they did not really connect this to their own contexts:

Yes, this is a small rural school where everybody knows each other. So, integration is not an issue here. We have different nations, but that has never been a challenge, always a strength, in our school. There might be bullying, but it is never about that. There are no secrets […] The one boy in that class you saw, he is adopted, the one that is dark. He is proud of it. Two countries. That is great! He is just really proud. (Teacher quoted in Eriksen, 2021)

Hence, the affective economy upheld by National exceptionalism thus makes it impossible, both intellectually and emotionally, to acknowledge the ongoing workings of race and racism in the present as well as one's possible complicity.

Engaging the Ontological Baseline

The above examples illustrate how National exceptionalism works to obstruct critical conversations about processes that systematically reproduce violence and injustice. This may paradoxically lead citizenship education to, despite its democratic promises, absolve educational institutions of their ethical and pedagogical responsibilities to disrupt unjust and unsustainable social relations.

Decoloniality is "at the same time an analytic and critique of coloniality and a type of praxis […] to make visible, open up, and advance radically distinct perspectives and positionalities that displace Western rationality as the only framework" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 17). The above reported examples point toward the need for decolonisation of epistemology, explicitly deconstructing exceptionalism and whiteness. This is not primarily a case of "filling knowledge gaps," but rather for emphasising how knowledge is produced and how knowledge is related to power. The insights also implicate a need for pluralising curriculum and teaching materials. We need to revise our stories and allow the actual plurality of voices that is humanity to tell them.

However, coloniality is not simply maintained through lack of knowledge, but also through the active investment of exalted subjects in promises offered by National exceptionalism. This can be further understood through the metaphor of *The house modernity built* (Stein et al., 2017) as describing modern/colonial sociability. The sovereignty and security offered by the house to its chosen inhabitants (i.e., the exalted, white, national subjects), are made possible through violences that are rendered absent by the walls (such as the nation state borders). Although instabilities in the structure of the house are constitutive of the house itself, for those invested in its promises, it appears as the threat is coming from outside. The modern/colonial house thus offers the *fantasy of ontological security* (Stein et al., 2017). Of the promises described in this chapter as upheld by imaginaries of National exceptionalism, are immunity offered by the construction of the exalted national subject and the benevolent state, and universal knowledge.

To unsettle the coloniality of education, we will need to go beyond addressing how colonial patterns are kept in place at the level of knowing,

and engaging with the level of being, i.e., *the ontological level*. If we are constituted as subjects within the house, it can be difficult to think and act outside of it, but we should strive to make visible its walls. This is what Mignolo (2012) calls "border thinking," that is, the moments in which the modern imaginary cracks, emerging from encounters with its borders. In this somewhat gloomy context, it is vital to point out that decolonisation is not an "against." Decoloniality is an analytic and praxis *for* humanisation, dignity, and democratisation of knowledge. This also demands our abilities to ask different questions. As Santos (2018, p. 136) states, "we perceive the world as seemingly complete only because our questions about it is limited." I therefore want to close this chapter with some questions that may assist our gesturing toward decolonial practices in education:

How can we challenge National exceptionalism in ways that do not simply seek to "right" historical wrongs and restore the nation to a position of benevolence, but rather engage in a deeper questioning of the nation-state itself as the presumptive "natural" mode of social organization?

What kind of frameworks can invite students to question the presumed universality of Western knowledge, engage ethically with other knowledge systems, and discern the gifts and limitations of all knowledge systems?

How can we cultivate a disposition through which both students and teachers can remain open to possibilities for knowing, being, and relating that are viable but unimaginable if we remain invested in a colonial ontology?

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8

Decolonising Early Childhood Curricula: A Canadian Perspective

Zuhra Abawi

Introduction

Within the early childhood education landscape, children are oftentimes portrayed as racially innocent and oblivious of racial differences among people. However, numerous studies suggest that young children are aware of cultural and visible differences between themselves and others, at as young as six months of age (Aboud, 1988; Byrd, 2012; Escayg et al., 2017; Robertson & Doyle-Jones, 2015; Xiao et al., 2017). Additionally, young children demonstrate positive and negative attitudes and dispositions towards their own racial communities as well as others. While Canada is often touted as a multicultural haven due to its diverse population and refugee settlement programmes, a 2019 United Way Report entitled: *Rebalancing the Opportunity Equation* demonstrates that Black, Indigenous and other non-white communities are being left behind their

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white counterparts in terms of income, employment and housing. The Canadian context cannot be divorced from the settler-colonial landscape, which continues to drive policy and curricula from the early years to higher education. This chapter will focus on the Ontario context, Canada's largest and most diverse province and apply an anti-colonial theory to critique discourses of diversity in Canadian early childhood curricula by drawing on the 'discursive shift' from multiculturalism to equity and inclusion permeated by neoliberalism. Early learning policy and curricula is encountering a competing agenda between narratives of equity and inclusion as commodified diversity, and discourses of choice and accountability.

Access to Childcare and Racial Inequities

Inequities are prevalent across the Canadian early childhood education arena, as Canada is unique among its peers for lacking both a national education department, as well as a national early childhood education strategy (Friendly et al., 2016). Thus, high-quality care is often a privilege reserved for the wealthy, rather than a human right for all Canadians. Canada's early childhood education programmes, funding and structures are responsibilities designated to the provinces and territories without federal oversight. This fragmented approach is largely attributed to the division of powers between federal, provincial and territorial governments (Friendly et al., 2016). Due to the lack of a national childcare strategy, childcare operates within the framework of mixed market-based approaches that value neoliberal discourses of choice and equity (Eizadirad & Portelli, 2018). A report released by Oxfam Canada in 2019 titled *Who Cares? Why Canada Needs a Public Childcare System* noted that:

> … compared to its OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) peers, Canada comes in lowest in public spending at merely 0.3% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product), which is well below the international benchmark of 1% of GDP. (p. 15)

As such, the provinces and territories have significantly different fee systems for childcare programmes, with Quebec having the lowest childcare costs and Ontario the highest (Eizadirad & Abawi, 2021). Median monthly fees for childcare are highest in Toronto, Ontario's capital and Canada's largest city, whereby daily fees are as follows: infants at $96.20 per day, toddlers at $89.95 and pre-school at $68.25 per day (City of Toronto, 2021). Under these circumstances, Black, Indigenous and racialised children and families are often barred access to high quality, affordable childcare as the deficit in wage gaps between Black, Indigenous and racialised people compared to white people in Ontario have not budged for over 35 years (United Way, 2019). Black, Indigenous and racialised Ontarians continue to be overrepresented in precarious labour, unemployment, underemployment, housing insecurity and health disparities (Colour of Poverty, 2019). These racial disparities in access to opportunities and services, such as education and childcare expose cracks in Canada's mythical narrative as a nation of equity, peace, tolerance and liberal multiculturalism (Abawi & Eizadirad, 2020; James & Turner, 2017; Shah, 2019). Access to services and these ensuing disparities are a result of ongoing colour-blind policies that perpetuate inequities between Black, Indigenous and racialised communities and white communities. As Canadian, and Ontario in particular, demographics become increasingly ethnically diverse, with 29% of Ontario's population self-identifying as racialised and Indigenous identity as the fastest growing demographic in the province (Statistics Canada, 2016), the push for equitable and accessible, high-quality childcare is at the forefront.

Settler Colonialism and Early Childhood Education

The imposition of Eurocentric education has long been a defining component of settler-colonial brutality on the part of the Canadian government against Indigenous people. In May 2021, a mass grave containing the bodies of 215 Indigenous children, from the age of three, was located at Canada's largest residential school in Kamloops, British

Columbia (Little, 2021). This uncovered for all to see the grotesque truth about the Canada's history, built upon a violent settler-colonial legacy and its intent on hiding this shame by seeking to erase from memory the genocide inflicted upon its Indigenous peoples. Moreover, Canada is plagued by an epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), whereby a total of 1181 Indigenous women and girls remain missing and 1017 have been murdered, highlighting the disproportionate violence, brutality and racism Indigenous women and girls encounter (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2018). Indian Residential Schools (IRS) were established under Canada's first Prime Minister John A. Macdonald in 1883, with the intent of forced assimilation to Eurocentrism (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). It is estimated that between 1883 and 1996 more than 150,000 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their homes and sent to IRS (Haig-Brown, 1988). The IRS were not schools, but rather forced labour camps of abuse, and where neglect and violence ran rampant. What is also evident from this enforced educational and cultural indoctrination is genocide. Thousands of Indigenous children were murdered or went missing while attending these schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). Blackstock (2007) argues that residential schools never really shut down but were rather morphed into the child welfare system as disproportionate numbers of Indigenous children are taken from their homes and placed in non-Indigenous foster care, ensuring continued racial trauma.

The IRS system was established under Canada's Federal Indian Act (1876), a legislation that continues in existence today. The Federal Indian Act allocates to the federal government full control over Indigenous lives, such as reserves, funding, blood quantum rules, mobility and policies. Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 5) differentiate between settler-colonialism and other forms of colonialism as follows: 'settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism in that settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain'.

This self-claimed sovereignty of European settler-colonialism dictates the writing of educational policies in Canada, segregating the

white (European heritage) Canadian beneficiaries from the disenfranchised Indigenous peoples, thus preventing and hindering their self-determination and resurgence. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was released. This was a similar process to the post-apartheid South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission established in 1995. The Canadian process provided statements of IRS survivors as well as 94 *Calls to Action* (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). An entire segment of the TRC *Calls to Action* was dedicated to education, which called for 'culturally appropriate early childhood education'. The TRC calls on early learning programmes to embed Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogical practices that have been marginalised by settler-colonial, Eurocentric dominance. However, many of the TRC *Calls to Action* have yet to materialise and encounter ongoing resistance, predominantly on the part of white settler-Canadians (Thom, 2021) as the socialisation of Indigenous, as well as Black and racialised children into the 'white racial frame' (Feagin, 2009) in terms of teaching practices and interactions between educators, children and families continue to thrive.

Decolonising Early Childhood Education Curricula

Anti-colonialism is often dwarfed by the more mainstream post-colonial discourse, which essentially assumes that resistance to colonialism is a phenomenon of the past, rather than an ongoing struggle (Dei & Simmons, 2012). Settler-colonialism is a myriad structure based on the ongoing displacement and dispossession of Indigenous people and lands (Snelgrove et al., 2014). The Canadian nation state continues to impose an all-encompassing assault on Indigenous people, their lands; their ways of being and knowing with the intent of its full destruction (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Waziyatawin (2010) argued that anti-colonialism challenges settler power relations and advocates for Indigenous knowledge recovery and resurgence that dismantles the dominance and fallacy of Eurocentric and European hegemony.

Citizenship, belonging and identity are foundational constructs of settler-colonialism, especially when it comes to education. Eurocentric epistemic and pedagogical ways of knowing are conceptualised as the only legitimate forms of knowledge (Cherubini, 2010; Coulthard, 2014; Razack, 2015; Thobani, 2007). Ontario has witnessed an onslaught of equity and inclusive educational policies that have undergone what Segeren (2016) calls a 'discursive shift' from liberal multiculturalism to neoliberal discourses of equity, diversity and inclusion. Neoliberal equity, diversity and inclusion narratives effectively commodify difference and 'other' or exoticise difference, thus normalising whiteness and the socialisation of whiteness while also perpetuating commitments to equity and the need for choices to meet the diverse needs of students and families (Abawi & Berman, 2019).

Early childhood curricula in Ontario is largely based on Western psychological-developmentalist norms of children and childhood that privilege Eurocentric concepts of developmental trajectories (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Nxumalo, 2013; MacNaughton & Davis, 2009; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Nxumalo, 2013; Iannacci & Whitty, 2009). Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) is foundational to the psychological-developmentalist approach, which effectively pathologizes children and families that do not conform to rigid concepts of development (Abawi & Berman, 2019; MacNaughton & Davis, 2009; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2011). Coupled with developmentalist narratives and practices, much of Ontario's early childhood curriculum is rooted in the 1989 US-based Derman-Sparks *Anti-Bias Curriculum.* This curricular approach is premised upon positive views of diversity, or what Ahmed (2012) would term 'happy diversity' framed as a colour-blind narrative that fails to acknowledge race, whiteness or power relations.

Ontario's two main early childhood education policy documents *Early Learning for Every Child Today* (ELECT, 2007) and *How Does Learning Happen?* (2014), outline the importance of infusing diversity, equity and inclusion into early learning, however, they fail to decentre white privilege and developmentalist norms (Berman et al., 2017; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Taylor, 2015). Further, a competing policy agenda exists in Ontario's early childhood landscape, by which the dominant goal of high-quality programming is placed in conflict with equity, diversity and

inclusion (Abawi & Berman, 2019; Berman et al., 2017; Robertson & Doyle-Jones, 2015). In turn, notions of high-quality early learning, which continues to privilege Eurocentric psychological-developmentalist trajectories and milestones is prioritised, thereby marginalising Indigenous ways of knowing, as well as the lived realities and experiences of Black and other racialised children, families and communities.

(Race)ing Forward: Identity as Contested Space in Early Childhood

Race, identity and Indigeneity are often downplayed and unacknowledged in early childhood education due to the hegemony of psychological-developmentalist norms that depict young children as too young or innocent to notice race or racial injustices. Racial socialisation within the settler-colonial context is policed by socialising institutions, such as education (MacNaughton & Davis, 2009). Anti-Indigenous and anti-Black discourses of racism rooted in Canada's genocidal past continues to thrive in the present. Constructs of race and racialisation operate through developmentalist ideas of race, such as the view that race is innately biological, rather than a social construction (Di Tomasso, 2012). While there have been limited studies on Canadian children and race, extant research points to similarities between American and Canadian children's perspectives, most notably a pro-white bias among white as well as non-white children (Escayg et al., 2017; MacNevin & Berman, 2017). These correlations between American and Canadian children cannot be divorced from their shared settler-colonial contexts (Veracini, 2010). However, conversations and interactions concerning race and identity in the early years continue to be silenced by educators as taboo subjects (Tatum, 1997). Although young children are constantly engaging in meaning-making processes and constructing ideas about identity, these issues are pathologised as somehow deriving children from their innocence. Studies continue to point to a lack of educator training and skills to effectively engage in and respond to topics of race and identity in early learning (Berman et al., 2017).

While the TRC *Calls to Action* on education have failed to materialise, environmental and land-based pedagogies have garnered increasing traction, effectively appropriating Indigenous epistemic traditions in the name of settler-colonialism (Nxumalo & Cedillo, 2017). These outdoor initiatives, such as forest schools are commodified and marketed by early learning programmes that fail to even acknowledge, let alone disrupt settler-colonialism. The ongoing erasure of Indigenous place-based education, stories and land perpetuates settler-colonialism, such as the forced removal of Indigenous people from their lands in the name of land appropriation for recreational intents (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Educational policies and practices continue to be premised upon exclusionary practices and the socialisation into norms of whiteness and psychological-developmentalist norms.

Conclusion

The decolonisation of early childhood education must start with the formal termination of the Indian Act. This will provide Indigenous self-determination and resurgence, as well as solidarity and allyship with Black and other racialised people. Early childhood educational spaces must be reconceputalised as politicised spaces whereby neoliberal discourses of diversity, equity and inclusion are dismantled, as such narratives seek to divide Indigenous, Black and racialised bodies, rather than coalesce allyship and solidarity required to resist white privilege, whiteness and Eurocentric developmentalist discourses that marginalise non-white bodies. Early learning and educational policies are embued with generalisations about diversity, rather than implementing anti-racist and anti-colonial practices to interrogate settler-colonial norms of education and learning. Rather than acknowledging these settler-colonial power relations, educators often take on cultural competence training to deal with and respond to difference, approaches that maintain Canada's settler-colonial hegemony, while simultaneously promoting Canadian identity as one of peace and social cohesion. Equity, diversity and inclusion thus remain as superficial buzz words as competency training takes precedence over antiracism and anticolonialism. Education

must be a space where decolonisation is centred to resist psychological-developmental paradigms of children and childhoods, individualism over collectivity and ongoing oppressive structures that serve to segregate Black, Indigenous and racialised children, families and communities, rather than fostering dialogue, solidarity and allyship. At the very heart of the decolonisation of education, it must be acknowledged that children, educators and families reside within a settler-colonial context sustained on the continuing genocide and erasure of Indigeneity.

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9

Developing a Reframed Curriculum for the UK: Who Were the Ancient Britons?

Marie Charles

Introduction

> Minute by minute, hour by hour, when you lose your history you lose your power, so sharpen your eyes and tune your ear so you'll know what you see and understand what you hear.

This prophetic verse is taken from a poem by Listervelt Middleton titled *The Origin of Things* (2003). Take a walk around any gallery or museum today in Britain and you will find almost exclusively inaccurate images of Britain's nobility. Similarly, if you open-up any school textbook about history, the dominant images of Melanated Global Majority people throughout time are depictions of slaves, servants, or runaways.

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The primary conceptual and theoretical framework for this chapter is Afrocentricity (Asante, 2003; King & Swartz, 2018; Mazama, 2003), and Africana phenomenology (Fanon, 1967; Gordon, 2006; Henry, 2006), situated within a critical pedagogical lens. These integrated and interwoven lenses facilitate an understanding of how a change in social and learning behaviour can occur because of an increased understanding of learners' affective, conative, and cognitive domains (Boyle & Charles, 2014). Framed within a pathway to praxis, my reconceptualised teaching programme of *Reframed Units of Change* (Charles, 2019), addresses the issue of decolonising the curriculum for both learner and teacher to access and engage. This evidenced gateway to Black identity is rooted in cultural and historical achievements. The word 'black' is erroneously viewed within a paradigm of connotative linguistics that positions oneself outside of the human family (El Adwo, 2014; Tariq Bey, 2015). The Kemites (Egyptians) had only one term to designate themselves: KMT = Black. This is the strongest term existing in the Nesut Biti/Pharonic tongue to indicate Blackness. This word is the etymological origin of the well-known root Kemit (Obadele Kambon, 2019). Additionally, the term Black here, is used throughout denotatively as a scientific term as proposed by Moore (2002):

> That the physiological origin of blackness or pigmentation is a result of melanocyte functioning. Since melanin is associated with the distribution of numerous types of cells to other destination sites in the body, it is apparent that there is a critical role for the *darkness* provided by melanin (pp. 23–24)

Barr et al. (1983) in their 139-page medical hypothesis paper entitled: *Melanin*: *The Organizing Molecule,* confirm: 'It (blackness) functions as the major organising molecule in living systems' (p. 1). In support to this, King (1993, online) provides a useful analogy:

> If you can understand plant photosynthesis then you can understand human photosynthesis because chlorophyll is to the plant, as melanin is to the human- chloroplast cell is to the plant as melanocyte is to the human.

Therefore, throughout this discussion, the words Black, Melanated, and Melanated Global Majority within this paradigm will be used interchangeably. Thank you to Professor Gus John for his appellation Global Majority (John, 2006) to describe the majoritising status rather than the erroneous label of 'minority'.

The goal of the research which is presented in this chapter, through intent and content (Nobles, 2010) is to alter the diminution of Black learner voice and learner behaviours; to raise their status as subjects with agency and power. 'Genesis of Geometry' was the specific unit of study from the *Reframed Units of Change* (Charles, 2019) that I taught to reinforce Black identity. Through extracts from a case study with children aged 7 and 8 years, I will argue in this chapter that the 'Genesis of Geometry' culture enables the reader/student to understand/innerstand and overstand that the original Britons were Black people (Al-Amin, 2014; Ali & Ali, 1992; MacRitchie, 1884a, 1884b; Martin, 1695; Massey, 1881; Thurnam, 1865; Von Fleischer, 2010). For example, the Silures of South Wales, the Picts of ancient Scotland, and the Tuatha de Danann throughout ancient Briton were all Black people (Rogers, 1952, 1980).

Notable Black writers, such as Ignatius Sancho (1729–1780) and Olaudah Equiano (1745–1797), are treated as isolated 'exceptions' but are nevertheless consistently framed within a slave narrative as formerly subjugated beings. This dominant narrative has created (and continues to create) in the minds of teachers, a narrative which they then pass onto their students (Charles, 2019, 2020). How accurate are these narratives? This 'Single Story' paradigm (see Kambon, 2019) has raised concern about how conversations for learning about Black history are being framed in the national curriculum, media, and public spaces (Moncrieffe, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021; Olusoga, 2016).

Because of this context, children in the current schooling system are being taught within a culture of historical untruths. The multidisciplinary scholar, historian, anthropologist, and physicist, Cheikh Anta Diop (1974, p. xiv) stated: 'Our investigations have convinced us that the West has not been calm enough and objective enough to teach us our history correctly, without crude falsifications'. This claim was supported in speech given by John Henrik Clarke (Lecture, 1991) where he said:

> If you expect the present-day school system to give history to you, you are dreaming. This, we must do ourselves. The Chinese didn't go out in the world and beg people to teach Chinese studies or let them teach Chinese studies. The Japanese didn't do that either. *People don't beg other people to restore their history: they do it themselves.*

This version of history that Dr Clarke raises is a system that operates within a *media res* framework, one which begins 'in the middle of things' such as slavery and ends with the Civil Rights Movement. Nowhere in the (UK or international) current national curriculum programmes are there any references to 'the Black migrations that settled the world…the Black people who founded the first cultures and civilisations of Africa, Europe, Australia, the Pacific Islands, and North and South America' (Dass, 2013a, pp. 12–13). Where in mainstream education are these Black foundational origins of culture, invention and discovery being taught based on enquiry, depth, and integrity? Therefore, to honour a Diopian legacy, which is 'to see the formation of bold research workers, allergic to complacency, [and] busy exploring ideas expressed in our work' (Diop, 1974, p. xiv), this chapter has been written to rescue, restore and reclaim Black history as indigenous settlers of the British Isles.

Historical Context: Where Did the First Human Beings Emerge?

> We know that the first inhabitants of Britain and especially those of the northern parts were craniologically of a type approaching to the Negro or to the Australian race. (MacRitchie, 1884b, pp. 7–8)

The current schooling system teaches young children a dislocated, disconnected, and premature sense of chronology and geography. (Moncrieffe, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). For example, for both primary and secondary age students, the earliest starting point in their history subject syllabus is a timeline starting from the 'Stone Age to the Bronze Age' (DfE, 2013, p. 4). This arbitrary limitation forces several questions:

For example, whose Stone Age does this refer to? The inference being that there was only *one* Stone Age, and that its inception was static in one locale. Secondly, the UK history curriculum effectively disorientates students and teachers by not grounding their spatial concepts in the region where the first human beings emerged on the planet. This disorientating premise creates not only a series of false conceptual baselines, but an inaccurate understanding of historical and geographical human migrations. Nowhere in the current UK curriculum content and planning does it state that human beings originated from Africa (Asante, 1999; Barashango, 1991; Bernal, 1987; Dass, 2013a, 2013b; Diop, 1974, 1991; Oppenheimer, 2004; Poe, 1997). Jackson (1994, p. 7) argues:

> The distortions must be admitted. The hard fact is that most of what we call world history is only the history of the first and second rise of Europe. The Europeans are not yet willing to acknowledge that the world did not wait in darkness for them to bring the light.

The History of Africa Was Already Old When Europe Was Born

Indeed, Runnymede (see Alexander et al., 2015), the United Kingdom's leading 'think-tank' on 'race' has critiqued the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) in this regard:

> Scope - that it artificially imposed barriers between 'British' and 'world' history and considered *the former in isolation from the latter.*

> Content - that it flattened historical content and sacrificed depth to 'facts and dates' disengaged from critique and the recognition of multiple and contested histories, sources and chronologies. (Runnymede, 2015, p. 4)

Findings a report produced by the Royal Historical Society (2018, p. 7) state: 'The taught curriculum for secondary school pupils and

university undergraduate and postgraduate students fails to fully incorporate the *new, diverse histories* produced by UK and international researchers'.

The Department for Education (DfE, 2013, p. 1) asserts in its guidance that the purpose and study of history: 'will help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world'. It should inspire pupils' curiosity to know more about the past'. Surely, then, from that Department's own statement of 'high quality' content there should be the connect to 'a coherent knowledge of Britain and the wider world'? DfE (2013) in its guidance for teaching and learning omits any reference to the knowing that 'Africans are the oldest group on the planet-meaning that the human species had originated there' (Wells, 2002, p. 30).

In 1987, Rebecca Cann produced a ground-breaking study in which as part of her PhD work, she persuaded 147 pregnant women to donate their babies' placentae to science. Cann, who trained in molecular biology, collected samples of human placentae (abundant source of mtDNA)[1] from different populations from Europe, New Guinea, Australia, and Asia. In her report Cann et al. (1987, p. 31) stated:

> Mitochondrial DNAs from 147 people, drawn from five geographic locations have been analysed by restriction mapping. All these mitochondrial DNAs stem from one woman who is postulated to have lived about 200,000 years ago, probably in Africa.

Where in the teaching of formal curriculum history is the importance of 'the journey we have taken as a species from our birthplace in Africa to the far corners of the world'? (Wells, 2002, p. xiii). Why, is this content not being explicitly taught in schools, when genetics and the study of DNA prove an African genesis of humanity? The DfE (2013) statements for teaching successfully the subject of History include: 'a

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[1] 'DNA is the code initials for deoxyribonucleic acid, the chemical of which genes are composed. Genes being the basic units of inheritance-which determines what a being will be. DNA is the hereditary material of living cells. Mitochondrial DNA is inherited only from the mother, and it functions as a cell's powerhouse converting the chemical energy from food into a form which the cell can use' (Barashango, 1998, p. 40).

quality content' of history to 'help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the *wider world'*? (p. 1, emphasis added). However, the aims and contents given by the document are framed by white British default position starting points only (see Moncrieffe, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021) Whiteness as a narcissistic positioning for knowing the past (Huidor & Cooper, 2010; Moncrieffe, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021) sees itself only as the entitled occupant of the intellectual space—the curriculum. Saha (2018, p. 7) recognises that 'whiteness impairs the faculties…it is a set of structures so familiar they [the structures] are often not apparent to those who benefit from them'. This has been termed as '*The painful demise of Eurocentrism*' and is the title of Asante's (1999) book. In this, Asante argues: 'Europe is no longer the definitional universal and the idea of race, first articulated by Europe, has come to be baggage that must be discarded' (Asante, 1999, p. viii). Asante's (1999) argument would expose DfE (2013) as presenting its history curriculum as 'definitionally universal'. The language of DfE (2013) gives sanction to the false premise that Britain's 'white' inhabitants have always been there as the first ancient civilisation.

A New Historiography of Experience: Afrocentricity and Africana Phenomenology

Wright and Counsell (2018) call for a 'new scholarship that moves away from stereotypical problem-based themes and towards broader conceptions and considerations of black children' (p. ix) (Asante, 1991; Henry, 2006). Wright and Counsell's (2018) argument is necessarily framed within Asante's (2009) new historiography of experience. In the pursuit of hidden histories that go beyond the starting point of black identity as slavery, this study is influenced by the work of Sullivan and Tuana's (2007) 'unknowledge(s)' and the phenomena of concealed information. Sullivan and Tuana (2007) suggest 'at times this takes the form of those at the centre refusing the marginalized to know' (p. 1). Therefore, the concealed and hidden history of this nation (UK) requires a paradigm shift in seeing and knowing; a change in worldview (Kuhn, 2012). Afrocentricity is the paradigmatic shift required for seeing and knowing the

past and the origins of people of the British Isles within this. However, DfE (2013) curriculum directives and guidance ignore the locating this history (Figs. 9.1, 9.2).
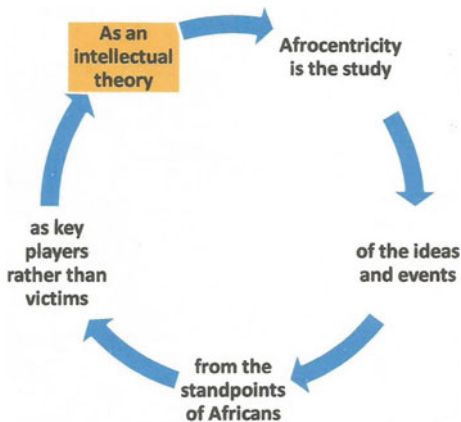
Fig. 9.1   Asante (1991, p. 172)
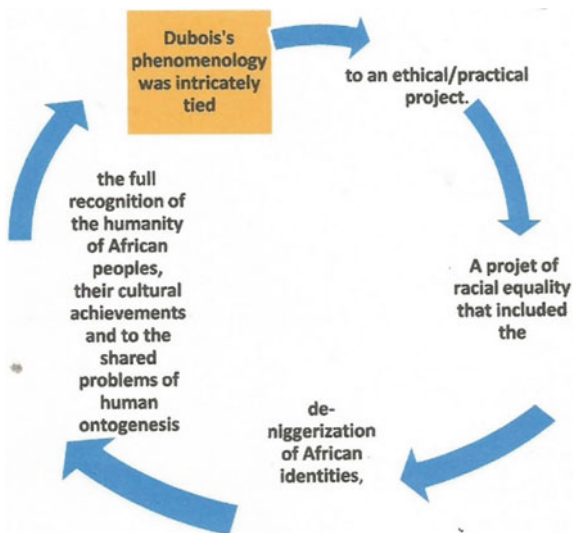
Fig. 9.2   Asante (1991, p. 172)

Consequently, children are not taught that the origins of writing began in Africa, and not Europe (Obenga, 2004). Similarly, the Phoenicians (Canaanites from Canan-Kin'anu), originally named Britain as: *Ba ra tanac* (Lemon, 1783) over three thousand years ago. Indeed, Roman author, Avienus writing in the fourth century AD describes the Phoenicians living in Britain and Ireland (Ali & Ali, 1992). The current UK school curriculum does not teach that the ancient geometric stone carvings found all over Britain, Scotland and Ireland have their etymon in Africa. For Masterman (1970, p.59) 'Paradigms are a puzzle-solving device…paradigm is a way of seeing'.

For more than 200 years, the anthropologists, archaeologists and historians have recorded in their works that the first people to inhabit the world were Black people: known as the Anu/Twa, the Khoi, the Diminutive Black People (DBP), and the seed people (Churchward, 1913; Dass, 2013a, 2013b).

Robert Munro was a Scottish physician and lecturer in anthropology and archaeology. In his work entitled: *Prehistoric Scotland and its place in European Civilization* he wrote:

> The results of my first investigations into the physical characteristics of the earliest races of North Britain appeared to me sufficient to establish the fact that the Aryan nations *on their arrival*, *found the country in occupation of* [2] *allophylian races*. (Munro, 1899, p. 445)

Added to this, he stated:

> With regard to the early ethnology of Western Europe, I have attempted to establish the truth of the two following propositions: (1) that during the Quaternary period [divided into two epochs: Pleistocene-2.588 million years ago to 11.7 thousand years ago] only dolichocephalic crania

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[2] From the Greek *Allos* which means 'different,' cognate with Latin *alius* = 'other.' *Phylon* is from the Greek which means 'tribe,' 'race'- a direct line of descent within a group; a group that constitutes or has the unity of a phylum (Merriam-Webster (nd) https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/phylum) 'Allobroges- a people of S.E Gaul- a Celtic tribe occupying what is now Dauphine & Savoy' (O'Neil, 1913, p. 52). See *Moorish Britain* on the original inhabitants of Gaul- France, Belgium & Luxembourg in Charles & Boyle (2021, issue #2, MFIT Magazine, January).

have been met with and (2) that the first appearance of a brachycephalic people on the scene was contemporary with the rudimentary development of the Neolithic civilization in Europe. Of these the dolichocephalic were the oldest… (Munro, 1899, p. 444)

It is noteworthy, how the UK history school curriculum for Key Stages 1 & 2 (DfE, 2013) gives no attention to the original cultural groups or parent civilisation of people on the British Isles as described by Munro (1899). Instead, (DfE, 2013, p. 3) states that pupils should be taught about 'late Neolithic hunter-gathers and early farmers, example Skara Brae. Bronze Age religion technology and travel, for example Stonehenge'. The evidence of Melanated people in Skara Brae and of their construction of Stonehenge is conspicuously absent and placed within a premature timeline (Imhotep, 2021; MacRitchie, 1884a, 1884b). 'Stonehenge: Geological feature indicates the site was constructed at the end of the last Ice Age, 14,000 years ago' (Imhotep, 2021, p. 228). Evidence of Melanted people as the original people of the British Isles comes from Higgins (1836) in his two-volume treatise: *Anacalypsis: An attempt to draw aside the veil of the Saitic Isis or an inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations and Religions*. In this (Vol. 1, p. 286) he wrote:

We have found the black complexion or something relating to it whenever we have approached to the *origin of nations*. The Alma Mater, the Goddess Multimammia, the founders of the oracles, the Memnons or first idols were always black. Venus, Juno, Jupiter, Apollo, Bacchus, Hercules, Asteroth, Adonis, Horus, Apis, Osiris, Ammon, - in short, all the wood and stone Deities were black.

In addition to this, he adds:

I shall in the course of this work, produce a number of extraordinary facts, which will be quite sufficient to prove that a black race, in very early times, had more influence over the world than has been lately suspected. (Higgins, 1836, p. 51)

Massey (1881) produced his two-volume work: *A Book of the Beginnings. Egyptian Origines in the British Isles*. He writes (Vol. 1, p. 218)
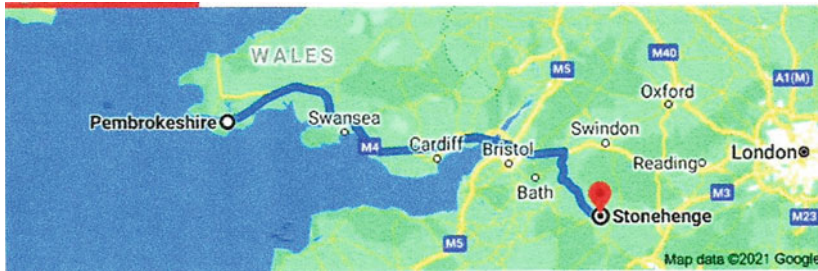
Fig. 9.3 Map shows the distance the ancient builders travelled in carrying the stones from Wales to Stonehenge

that Stonehenge was built by the Moors, namely Morien an Egyptian architect, or overseer through the root word MER (Fig. 9.3):

> The MERE is the Mayor, and there is an English MER, a superintendent, prefect, overseer, or governor. An official called the MER governed the people of the quarries at Turuau, the mountain-quarry in Egypt. The MER was not only an overseer and superintendent, but an architect. The architects of the Egyptian Pharaohs, who were the royal sons and grandsons were called MER-KET. And we are told by the[3] Barddas Morion lifted the stone of the kettai. Morien is said to have been the architect of Stonehenge, Gwath Emrys, or the MUR Ior. MUR (e.g.) means the circle, as does the KETUI. KET (e.g.) denotes the builder, and the Kettai are the builders. MORIEN was the chief of the KETTAI. Now as a negro is still known as MORIEN in English, the language used appears to indicate that MORIEN belonged to the black race, the Kushite builders. (p. 218)

Massey describes the written evidence from a Welsh Manuscript (the land today known as Wales was occupied by Melanated Global Majority people over 33,000 years ago) and in 2019, geologists and archaeologists confirmed that 'at least 42 of Stonehenge's smaller stones, known

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[3] The Barddas of Iolo Morganwg is a collection of writings about ancient Welsh Bardic and Druidic beliefs. Although the author of this work is cited as J. Williams Ab Ithel, he was the editor, who pieced together from manuscripts written by Iolo Morganwg (1747–1826).

as 'bluestones' came from the Preseli hills in Pembrokeshire, West Wales' (Andrei, 2019, p. 1).

The Reframed Units of Change Teaching Programme

The aim of this chapter is to understand the experience of a positivised, formative pedagogy using the *Reframed Units of Change* (Charles, 2019)*;* and how this method can challenge the prevailing myth of Black Caribbean inferiority in learning and shape Black students' perceptions of themselves as successful learners (Charles, 2019). Framing within a formative teaching and learning model provides the evidenced support necessary to 're-assemble a fractured self-consciousness within an educational setting that negates the affective, conative, and cognitive domains of Black learner identities' (Charles, 2019, p. 732).

The *Reframed Units of Change* (Charles, 2019) has five units of study:

1. Genesis of Geometry.
2. People & Places.
3. Measurement: Order & Arrangement.
4. Artefacts as Evidence.
5. Language & Etymology of First World People.

In the case study presented below, in my role as Teacher/Researcher, I began laying the foundation of successful learning concepts with children through the 'Genesis of Geometry'. The units of study comprise an integrated whole. However, I found that the dominant (White) culture of the school where the study took place became a barrier to commencing with a pure Africana episteme orientation. Below is a short extract taken from a lesson on Etymology shared as examples from a wider catalogue of lesson transcripts (Fig. 9.4).

Teacher/Researcher: Now, we have a lot to learn today and I'm going to introduce you to a new word, the Year 6 children had never heard of it before, and the word is called (begins to write it on the board) see if you can read it 'Etymology'.
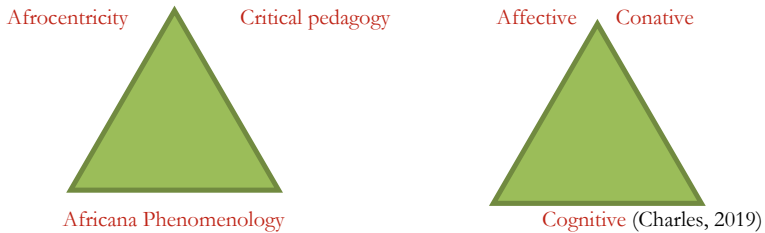
Fig. 9.4 Author's model demonstrates the importance of discursive spaces transforming into praxis. The learner is at the centre of planning, pedagogy, and correct historical content through Afrocentricity & phenomenology

Child 1:   Etymology…but what about the question you asked us last week why would our ancestors do that? (Referring to the technology of creating microscopic carvings in ancient Kemet).

Teacher/Researcher: What a super memory you have, and we will come back to that later, thank you. Etymology, what does it mean?

Child 2: I 've heard of it, but I don't know what it means.

Child 1:   Is it in the dictionary?

Researcher: Yes, it is…and it is the study and origin of words. So, when I say to you that the etymon of Egypt….

Child 1:   So, it's the study of Egypt?

Teacher/Researcher: It is the study of the WORD Egypt.

Child 3:   How the new name was created.

Teacher/Researcher: Excellent.

Child 4:   Kemet.

Teacher/Researcher: Now before that, there was a place called Memphis or *Men-Nefer* which means 'built in perfection' and when the Greeks came into this land, they saw a beautiful temple called 'Hekuptah'

Child 1and 2 (together):   You mean it had three names?

Teacher/Researcher: So Hekuptah means 'spirit on the hill', and when the Greeks came upon this temple, they couldn't pronounce Hekuptah (researcher points to locations on Peter's Projection map) so they said (begins to write derivatives on board) '*Aegupotus*', then '*Aegopt* and finally *Egypt*.

Child 1: The took the 'g' and the 'p' but they didn't take the 'o' and the 'a'

Teacher/Researcher: Well spotted Menes!

Child 2:   WOOOW!!

Teacher/Researcher: So, when we look at the etymon of word, the original names, this is very important because the original names will show you who the original people are.

Child 1: I get it now.

Teacher/Researcher: When we study etymology, we study the original word, and the etymon of Britain is *Baratanac'* (children echo the word). Thousands of years ago the Phoenicians named this land *Baratanac*. (Shows the group a picture of the Phoenicians and they all shout out lots of questions…the researcher writes *Pho*nics and *Pho*enicians on the board) (Fig. 9.5).

The Phoenicians first named the British Isles as *Baratanac* (Lemon, 1783, p. 120). The name Phoenicians [descendants of the Canaanites] given to them by the 'Greeks, means dark-skinned' (De Beer, 1969, p. 21). *Ba* signifies the 'world-soul which exists within man and the universe' (Browder, 1992, p. 91). *Ra* is a Ntchr of light and victory of protection and of immeasurable power. He is the seen force of the universe manifested by the sun-the symbol used to describe energy. *Ra* is the energy that allows light to shine (Mfundishi, 2016, p. 129). *Anac* is of Hebrew derivation pronounced '*anas*' which means 'to insist-compel'
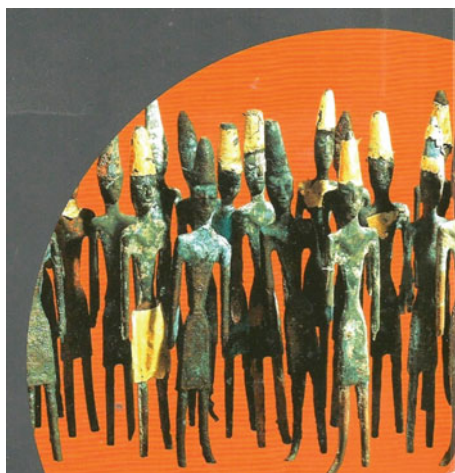
Fig. 9.5 Phonecian gilded bronze statuettes *Source* Photo credit: front cover The Phoenicians by Woolmer (2017) https://www.gettyimages.com.au

(Blue Letter Bible, n.d., p. 1). Additionally, *anac* contains the word *ana* a name like all other versions of the milk-giving mother she represented wealth or plenty and came to be synonymous with abundance (Walker, 1983, p. 122). The Tuatha de D*ana*nns of ancient Ireland were black people and were also known as the tribes of *Ana*. The Irish scholar Marcus Keene (1867, p. 235) states: 'The only historical references made to the colour of the Tuath-de-Danaans describe them as black.—'The rusty large black youth' Gobban Saer and his black race' (p. 235). We also find in the Dogon language the word: *barank*amaza (Dorey, 2019, p. 4). Therefore, the ancient melanated cultures were tied etymologically to the origin and naming of Britain as *Ba ra tanac*.

Conclusion

Decolonising curriculum knowledge within a critical pedagogy facilitated the children's understanding of language originates from an indigenous episteme. Extracts from my case study showing the introduction of etymology with its historical concepts of people, places and time to students aged 7 and 8 years old demonstrate not only their enthusiasm and attentiveness in the session, but equally the ability to comprehend and engage with complex concepts. Bey (2016) argues in his lecture presentation:

> In the dictionaries they always refer to the Indo-European root when they look at the family tree of languages where are we in all of this?' As mothers and fathers of the planet this sounds like linguistic apartheid to me. They separate us from the very language that we created.

In the transcript shared above, Child 1 articulated the observation of a sophisticated linguistic process called *umlaut*, a loss of vowels in words over time. The collective enthusiasm that the young children whom I worked with displayed when shown the original name *Baratanac* for Britain, and the image of the Phoenicians as the architects, and sound carriers of the alphabet shows pedagogy in decolonising curriculum knowledge. The Melanated faces of the Phoenicians not only decolonised

and reframed their phonics instruction but began the process of identifying and recognising root words e.g.[4] *Pho*netics—*Pho*enicians. The transcribed extract above comes from a teaching and -learning session which generated a rich and in-depth longer narrative (see Charles, 2019; Charles & Boyle, 2020) which has been analysed and evaluated to provide direction to improved pathways for combining formative pedagogy with inclusive, affective domain-based teaching and learning to achieve the unapologetic education empowerment of Black children.

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[4] The Sanskrit word '*bha*'- to shine and '*bhas*- to speak (Whitney, 1885, p. 110) show how the '*bh*' phoneme was transliterated to the aspirated '*ph*' Greek 'phono' sound and 'phone' voice. Notice how the modern idiom 'blah' 'blah' 'blah' has been transposed through epenthesis (addition of sounds) from its Sanskrida etymon (see *'language of the Gitanos'*-Moorish Spain, Borrow, 1846), from the Sanskrit words *bhas* to speak and *bha* to shine.

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10

Decolonising the Curriculum in Hybrid Spaces: Muslim Schooling in Russia

Kamil Nasibullov and Nataliia Kopylova

Introduction

A researcher who applies a decolonial lens to the analysis of education in Russia faces several challenges. The first significant controversy is whether the social situation in Russia can be considered postcolonial, that is, somewhat preserving colonial relations. Secondly, what are the peculiarities of colonial relations that are relevant to Russia and the Russian education system? Finally, are there any possible ways to decolonise educational programmes in Russia?

The answer to the first question has generated considerable discussion in academia, including a re-examination of the experience of the

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Soviet Union with its (possible) colonial past (Adams, 2008; Moore, 2001; Spivak et al., 2006). One of these issues was connected to the spread of the ideology of the Three-Worlds, which associates 'postcolonialism with a bounded space called the Third World and post socialism with the Second World' (Chari & Verdery, 2009, p. 12). Although the experience of establishing Soviet society was controversial, some indicators reveal the preservation of colonial relations. Some examples of this include the forced relocation of non-Russian peoples, the Soviet reconquest of the once independent Baltic states in 1941, and the inevitable direction of Russia's Third World policy from its Moscow centre (Moore, 2001). A famous Russian historian, Etkind (2001) described this using the term 'internal colonisation', which was first mentioned by Lenin in the analysis of the characteristics of the Russian Empire. Russian internal colonisation as a socio-political practice, which emerged in imperial times, retained its characteristics in the Soviet Union and continues in the new post-Soviet era (Etkind et al., 2012).

Educational Reforms in Post-Soviet Russia: From Decolonisation to 'Recolonisation'

The application of a decolonial perspective to the field of education in Russia has not been extensively studied. We believe that 'the indigenous identity continuously confronts the colonial/ imperial order' (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001, p. 320) so that studies on post-Soviet space through the lens of decolonial ideas should be focused on ethnography of indigenous peoples, considering their rights and interests (Chary & Verdery, 2009).

In the Soviet Union, schools played an important role in promoting Russian culture to the detriment of the 'voices' of other cultures of indigenous peoples (Nasibullov & Kopylova, 2020). The collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in the pluralisation of education and the emergence of new methods of education and new types of schools, while the government's control over education has become weaker (Eklof & Dneprov, 1993; Eklof et al., 2005; Johnson, 2010; Kerr, 1994; Lisovskaya & Karpov, 2010). At that time, regional political actors, as

well as ethno-national movements, seized the opportunity to implement projects promoting regional and ethnic identity formation in schools (Suleymanova, 2018). However, cultural hierarchy is still prevalent in educational programmes in post-Soviet Russia. For instance, according to Shnirelman (2009), Russian school textbooks portray Russians as the main characters in Russian history, focused on a civilising mission; however, representatives of other indigenous peoples are presented as passive participants in historical processes. At the same time, many representatives of non-Russian (indigenous) intellectuals claim that education should play a major role in the preservation of ethnic cultures (Bloch, 2004; Chevalier, 2017; Derlicki, 2005).

Opportunities for regionalisation of educational programmes are guaranteed by The Federal Law on Education in the Russian Federation (1992), particularly the right to obtain education in a native language. Moreover, this law established a three-component structure of educational programmes: (1) the 'federal component', which is compulsory, and its content is determined by the state and should constitute no less than 75% of the whole structure of the educational programme; (2) the 'regional component', the content of which remains at the discretion of the local government and should comprise 10–15% of the whole structure of the educational programme; and (3) the 'school component', where a school can determine 5–10% of the curriculum. The 'regional component' not only allowed for the possibility to include in the curriculum subjects related to history, culture, and language of the indigenous peoples, but also to develop new textbooks. This was an important step in the decolonisation of educational programmes in Russia, as the curriculum of Soviet schools did not presuppose the study of history and culture of native peoples (Gibatdinov, 2003). Thus, history textbooks written by representatives of indigenous peoples were an important source of alternative historical narratives.

Since the early 2000s under the presidency of Vladimir Putin, Russian government policy has dramatically changed toward increased centralisation, which thus has had an impact on the educational system. One of the major goals of numerous educational reforms was the development of a Russian unified educational space (Lemutkina, 2007). The 'regional component' was removed from the curriculum structure with

the adoption of Federal State Educational Standards in 2009–2010. According to new standards, educational programmes must be comprised of two components, namely a compulsory component (70%) and an elective component (30%). The local government could no longer influence the content of educational programmes. The main priority of new educational standards was 'the development of Russian civic identity among pupils'. The 'regional component' of educational programmes was believed to support ethnic separatism and the superiority of regional (ethnic) identity over national identity.

Several other educational reforms were aimed at increasing the significance of the state (Russian) language (Chevalier, 2005). In 2008, the government introduced the Unified State Exam (USE), an obligatory test taken by all Russian school leavers and modelled on tests in the USA, the UK, and France. Pupils who finish school cannot choose the language of examination—the Unified State Exam can only be passed in Russian regardless of the language of instruction at school (Prina, 2015; Suleymanova, 2018). The rigid standards of the USE made competences in a native language unimportant for obtaining the school diploma or getting higher scores on the USE. In 2018, the State Duma adopted new amendments to the Federal Law on education in the Russian Federation, which concerns the teaching of native languages. Whereas previously the learning of native languages was compulsory upon assessment by local authorities, it now became optional and depended on parents' request.

The educational reforms of the early 2000s have halted much of the progress of post-Soviet Russia in terms of democratisation. This has led to a reduction in the 'regional component' of the curriculum structure, the unification of educational programmes, and their homogenisation in terms of cultural diversity.

The Case of the Republic of Tatarstan

The history of the Republic of Tatarstan, a place of resistance to unification and centralisation tendencies in education, is an important narrative about colonisation of indigenous peoples and the first steps in establishing the Russian Empire. Volga Bulgaria was among the first Turkic

States, emerging on the territory of the modern Republic of Tatarstan and later became a part of the Golden Horde[1] by conquest. Islam was adopted in Volga Bulgaria in the tenth century, which was before the adoption of Christianity in some Russian principalities. Then, after the Golden Horde's breakup the Kazan Khanate, a powerful Tatar state, was established. In 1552 the Kazan Khanate became a part of the Moscow Principality, which can be seen as one of the first steps in establishing the Russian Empire (Gerasimov et al., 2017). The population of the region had periodically experienced a violent adoption of the Christian faith on the way to establishing the Russian Empire up until the reign of Catherine the Great when Tatars were allowed to freely manifest their religion and/or belief and build mosques (Rorlich, 1986).

Now the Republic of Tatarstan, or simply Tatarstan, is an important industrial region in Russia, situated 800 kms east of Moscow at the confluence of the Volga and Kama rivers. Most of the population consists of two ethnic groups: Tatars (53%), who are the second largest minority in Russia and traditionally follow Sunni Islam, and the Russian population (40%), who hold Orthodox Christian views. Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, was formed as the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic during the Soviet time in 1920 and has a very long history of statehood (Khakimov, 2013). Due to the Russian Federation Treaty of 1994, Tatarstan had been the only Russian region with limited sovereignty for a long time. This can be seen as a case of non-violent resolution of political conflict between the republic and its federal centre during the collapse of the Soviet Union (see Bukharaev, 2004). The region possesses certain elements of a sovereign state, such as its own constitution and president; however, regional legislation is brought into line with Russian federal legislation while addressing key issues. The Tatar language has official language status in the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan.

The situation regarding the Tatar language has changed dramatically during the last decades. The Tatar language, previously having the status of the official language of the Republic, started to disappear from the

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[1] The north-western sector of the Mongol Empire established by Batu Khan in the thirteenth century.

public sphere by the end of the Soviet era. Speaking Tatar in cities was looked down on with disdain as it was associated with low prestige and a lack of education. There was only one school with Tatar as the language of instruction left in Kazan, and most of the others were primarily situated in rural areas (Suleymanova, 2020).

The Tatar national movement became more active in the Republic of Tatarstan after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. One of the main achievements of that period was the inclusion of Tatar in a list of compulsory subjects at school. Tatar language courses became a part of 'regionalisation of educational programmes' (Gayfullin, 1999) and presupposed the study of history and culture of peoples (predominantly Tatars) living within the region.

During those years, ideas of the national Tatar pedagogy were built on educational achievements and works of the late 19th and early twentieth-century Tatar educators. The undertaken educational reforms can be seen as 'decolonial' as their aim is to revive the Tatar culture, make their voices heard in public life, and be included in political decision-making.

The increase of political centralisation in Russia under the presidency of Putin has resulted in the limitation of regional autonomy in general and Tatarstan's sovereignty (Goode, 2011). Changes in legislation, which negatively influenced the status of native languages in Russia, were the introduction of the Unified State Exam in the Russian language and the decision of the Federal Russian government to make the studies of ethnic minority (non-Russian) languages entirely voluntary. Regulatory authorities also put pressure on Russian schools to reduce the number of hours devoted to Tatar instruction. As a result, fewer hours were allocated to teaching Tatar at schools and more than 200 Tatar-medium schools were closed in the period 2013–2017 (Suleymanova, 2020).

Tatar-Medium Schools as Advocates for Pluralism

The reforms prevented Tatar-medium schools from implementing their mission of national reconstruction. Schools have not, however, lost their legal status and still play a key role in supporting Tatar culture, largely

due to teachers' and school administration's enthusiasm. The establishment of Tatar-medium schools with the idea of an ethno-national upbringing, was a major step in the implementation of the educational reforms aimed at supporting ethnic identity. Tatar-medium schools, which gained support from the regional authority, had a dual role; on the one hand, they were fully aligned with the government's requirements, and on the other hand, they played a key role in the process of revival of Tatar culture. During the 1990s, there was a balance between these two opposite roles, which was linked to democratic trends in the Russian education system; however, educational reforms aimed at unification and centralisation of government changed the balance of power. To describe the complex changes that took place in Tatar-medium schools, it seems appropriate to use the notions of 'hybridity' and 'third space', proposed by the postcolonial theorist, Homi Bhabha in relation to a variety of liminal semi-public spaces. He claimed that the relationship between coloniser and colonised is two-sided; on the one hand, it may be associated with discrimination and the abuse of power, but on the other hand, with resistance (Bhabha & Rutherford, 2006). Bhabha (2012) highlighted the ambivalent character of colonial subordination, seeing it as the sign of a double articulation. Orsi (1999) also stressed the importance of semi-public heterotopic third spaces for multi-ethnic urban settings, adding that the case of minority schools is helpful in maintaining the balance between assimilation and demands for accommodations. If we consider a Tatar-medium school as a hybrid space, we are referring to a power struggle in relation to school curricula and school practices.

A Tatar school is a favourable place for the education of national minorities as its learning is based on local epistemologies and cultural traditions, all of which create conditions for the decolonisation of dominant national educational programmes. Moral upbringing (*nravstvennoe vospitanie*) has become a central idea in Tatar-medium schools, the educational programmes of which rely on ideas of Tatar intellectuals and prominent Islamic scholars. Apart from school textbooks recommended by the federal centre, teachers of Tatar-medium schools use textbooks written by Tatar scholars and public figures which provide alternative perspectives on historical events and deepen knowledge about local culture and peoples. At the same time, as our previous research

(Nasibullov & Kopylova, 2020) has shown, Tatar schools are vulnerable to state policy, which is aimed at the unification and centralisation of education in Russia.

One of the key functions of a hybrid space of a Tatar school is that it supports cultural pluralism, which helps consider the interests of all communities and not just ethnic minorities. A survey of Muslim parents that we conducted in 2017–2018 showed that Tatar schools are more popular among Muslim families than mainstream schools in terms of observing their religious rites and customs. At first glance, it seems that Russian legislation provides a variety of educational opportunities; education can be acquired both in private or state educational establishments, or in family-type settings. Parents also have a right to choose a school and form of education for their children. However, diversity in terms of Russian legislation does not necessarily mean that all forms of education in Russia are equally accessible to everyone. According to a statistical handbook titled *'Indicatory obrazovaniya'* (in English, *Indicators of Education*), mainstream schools in Russia constitute 97.9% of the total number of Russian schools, and these schools are attended by 99.3% of Russian pupils (Bondarenko et al., 2017).

According to the Federal Law on Education of the Russian Federation of 2012, one of the principles of state policy is the 'secular nature of education in the state, municipal organisations performing educational activities' (art. 3, p. 6). The secular nature of education limits the opportunities of religious communities in terms of their observation of religious rites and customs at school. As for Tatarstan, Tatar-medium schools are the most favourable for the education of Muslims. Similar results can be found in research on Tatar schools conducted by Suleymanova (2020).

Based on interviews conducted between 2017 and 2019 with Muslim parents, as well as teachers and principals of several Tatar-medium schools, we tried to understand the reasons why Muslim parents prefer to choose Tatar-medium schools over mainstream schools for the education of their children in Russia. Muslim parents claimed that Tatar-medium schools are stricter than mainstream schools in terms of requirements for school discipline. They were also worried that mainstream schools may negatively affect the moral qualities of their children who are raised in accordance with Islam. A Tatar-medium school climate and atmosphere

based on the principles of respect, tolerance, and responsibility meet the expectations of Muslim parents. Teachers that we interviewed confirmed that they establish school culture aimed at continuous improvement of pupils' behaviour, not only at school, but also outside the classroom. While creating behavioural rules at Tatar-medium schools, teachers rely on principles of national Tatar pedagogy; in particular, the ideas of the Tatar educator of the late nineteenth century, Rizaetdin bin Fakhretdin who rethought Islamic ethics in general (non-religious) terms. Thus, it has become apparent that Tatar and Islamic communities share a similar approach to the moral education of children.

Teachers and principals interpreted the principle of secularism as 'ideological pluralism'. Secularism at school is associated with finding a balance between the legislation of the Russian Federation and the right to observe religious rites and customs. Muslim culture and its customs occupy a significant place in Tatar-medium school settings. Teachers and principals of Tatar-medium schools have been trying to improve conditions for the education of children from Muslim families; for example, halal food, the wearing of the traditional hijab, and collective worship where available to them. Many teachers who participated in our interviews were quite well informed about Islamic history and culture and tried to incorporate this knowledge into teaching their subjects at school, such as when comparing European art with art in Arabic countries or telling pupils about the participation of Muslims in historical events in Russia. Teachers were also open to Muslim parents' requests on many issues. For instance, if parents did not want their children to participate in different school events, such as dancing in a mixed gender environment, they were not forced to do so.

On the other hand, teachers and principals had concerns regarding the influence of Islam on school culture and put in a lot of effort to make sure that these schools are not being 'Islamised'. They believed that if Muslim demands are inconsistent with the essential aims of education, the legislation of the Russian Federation, and national Tatar pedagogy, these demands should be limited. At the same time, Muslim parents played an important role in school life. One of the key strategies that Tatar-medium schools adopted to involve Muslim parents in decision-making processes included the development of a Muslim parent group,

The Council of Dads, for addressing the most sensitive issues. The Council of Dads was initiated by a principal of a Tatar-medium school who invited prominent Islamic religious leaders to contribute to the decisions made by the Council. The principal, who was not Muslim, decided to learn more about Islamic culture, which was an important part of her native Tatar culture. A principal of another school, who considered himself as 'a person of secular worldview', was also deeply interested in Islam. He read the Quran and religious books to better understand Muslim parents and prepare to uphold the school's values using religious arguments. This willingness to leave room for Islam in school settings was motivated by ideals of cultural pluralism and justified by the fact that Islam has a significant positive impact on Tatar culture.

Conclusion

The processes of the centralisation of education governance and the unification of educational programmes have intensified in Russia since 2000, except for a brief period of democratisation of education in Russian history. This has strengthened the status of the Russian language and culture; however, the space for representation of ethnic minorities has been limited. The study of local cultures, their history and non-Russian languages has become almost impossible since these subjects are no longer compulsory at schools.

However, according to our research, Tatar-medium schools remain an important place for countering cultural homogenisation of education despite an unfavourable political situation. Teachers and principals of the schools, being enthusiastic about their native culture, employ various methods of teaching to transfer learning opportunities. Tatar-medium schools as 'hybrid spaces', provide very strong support for native culture, and even fulfil a broader mission. They should be considered as a modelling a stronghold of cultural pluralism in education, amidst increasing institutional cultural uniformity. The case of Russia presents Tatar-medium schools as favourable places for the education of Muslims. Therefore, the pluralist approach to education occurring in hybrid spaces within the Russian educational context, by the support of several cultural

perspectives in the school curriculum is also a decolonial approach to education.

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11

Decolonising Education Through Bottom-Up Participatory Activities in Poland

Urszula Markowska-Manista

> When we step into our neighbourhoods, we can engage in the practices of good neighbourliness, or we can choose not to. The quality of life on our planet now and in the future will be determined by the small daily choices that we make as much as by the big decisions in the corridors of power. (Tutu & Tutu, 2011, p. 193)

The Unobvious Context

The words of learning given by Tutu and Tutu (2011) are used to frame the issues of discussion in this chapter which lead to considering new possibilities of inclusive curriculum teaching and learning in Polish schools. The educational practice of Polish mass schools still

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seems oriented towards the needs of a culturally homogeneous environment, with students who do not stand out, and above all—students who melt into the discourse and are not different from others. It is this practice that assumes an absence of diversity in the students' sense of belonging and identity (Markowska-Manista & Dąbrowa, 2016). There are multiple reasons for this situation: from ideologies such as nationalism, through lack of international contact (few non-white[1] Poles, migrants, and refugees from the African continent present in Poland), to prejudice towards new minority groups connected e.g. with the "migration crisis" in 2015 and then 2021.

As Monika Bobako (2020, online) argues, today 'the question of being white or non-white appears in the context of migration to Europe from non-European countries'. Many symbolical consequences of this process (as well as of white supremacy, the burden of colonialism and its effects) have not been dealt with in Poland. It concerns, among other things, the question: How does the presence of a small but growing community of non-white persons identifying themselves as Black Poles influence a culturally established relationship between being a Pole (nationality and affiliation) and being white (Eastern-European identity)? This question, one of many '(…) about Polish whiteness is a question about the place of different Polish identities in an imagined structure of racial divisions which does not come down to a simple opposition between whites and non-whites' (Bobako, 2020, online).

This situation foregrounds the problems of culturally and nationally diverse families, particularly non-white Poles, and their children. Despite the fact that they were born in Poland, they are Polish citizens, they are brought up in Polish culture, identify with Poland as their homeland and Polish is their first language, they are treated through the prism of Polish-centrism in the space of schools (Balogun, 2020). Polish-centrism is understood here as "the everyday biological practices that constantly reproduce the differences between 'them' and 'us'" (Balogun, 2020, p. 1208). This oppositional definition amplifies the perception

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[1] In Poland, skin colour is usually used in academic articles only in justified cases and people are referred to by their country of origin.

of non-white Poles as being foreign and leads to contrasting them with "typical" Poles or labelling them as "not quite Polish" (Omolo, 2017).

Taking Matters in One's Hands: Participatory Bottom-Up Activities

Łaziński (2014) provides examples of a common White Polish discourse of othering towards Black Polish people regarding their physical appearance, and more specifically, skin colour. Therefore, to eliminate stereotypes and avoid the replication of judgement and the danger of creating a single story (Adichie, 2009) "about Africa" and "Africans" in Poland, many parents of non-white children have decided to take matters in their hands by initiating participatory bottom-up activities. In this chapter, I will share on their education interventions for challenging racial stereotyping, and how their work functions to decolonise curriculum content and knowledge. In conclusion, I will offer new ways of thinking about school education through participation based on this involvement of the parents[2]—"Black Poles" (Polish citizens) in their advocacy and education activities in Warsaw, Poland.

The participatory bottom-up activities are led by Black Polish parents as advocates for their children's education and future well-being. The activities function to promote non-discrimination, anti-racism, and notions of social justice through active citizenship and intercultural education for all. These activities involve White Polish parents and educators. The activities focus on cultural diversity and integration in school-based education and non-governmental organisation (NGO) projects and offer knowledge advancement opportunities through teaching and learning activities which enhance pupils', teachers', and university students' intercultural competences.

The activities often involve Black Polish parents reflecting on their experiences of migration to Poland (in general educational migrants,

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[2] I outline only activities initiated and implemented by parents, I do not present bottom-up activism of non-white Polish children and adolescents. It is a very important subject which I will address in a separate article.

the majority of Africans coming to Poland wanted to pursue further education, see Omolo, 2017). By listening to their children's voices in the spaces and places of common daily functioning, the parents become sensitive recipients of the information about their needs and implementors of activities that decolonise the schematic "dry-run education" (Markowska-Manista, 2016) and education "about Others" (Januszewska & Markowska-Manista, 2017) without their active participation. The bottom-up activities fit into Lundy's model of four steps leading to children's participation (Lundy, 2007). These steps in the right to participation involve space, voice, recipients, and impact. There must be a space in which the children can freely and safely express their opinions and comments. In the case of these parents, this safe space is in family homes where their children's voices can be heard and analysed. In order for the voices to have impact in practical activities, there must be recipients who are ready to listen and react to them. Parents are those recipients. And finally, "to ensure that children's right to participation has a chance to be fully implemented, the impact of children's voices is necessary—which is a resultant of cooperation between children and parents, but also between various adult voices (thanks to the cooperation between participatory attitudes and participatory tools)"[3] (Brzozowska, 2017, pp. 45–64). Here, impact takes the form of parents' engagement and their participatory bottom-up activities in education. These activities are necessary to weaken the public discreditation based on race and the political and media hate speech, which aggravate interpersonal racial prejudice, discrimination, and white supremacy around the world (Omolo, 2020).

This experience of racism (Balogun & Joseph-Salisbury, 2021) reported by young dark-skinned Poles (Piekarska, 2020) illustrates the need for these educational activities led by Black Polish parents and their adult children. This has emerged for example through public anti-racism campaign DontCallMeMurzyn 2020 (see NFP, 2020) where mainly young women and girls protested against the oppressive and racist context of school education and discourse in which they grew

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[3] Own translation.

up and studied. Another example in public exposure of racial experiences comes from a study by Shepherd Mutsvara: *The odd-looking fellow': An autoethnographic narrative on identity and exclusion of the Zimbabwean child in the diaspora in Poland*, presented at the conference on *Local dimension of children's migrations and its impact on EU integration policy* (online 2020). Mutsvara speaks about the discriminatory media and social discourse, which he grew up in and functioned in every day. He advocates the need for educational activities that would open the eyes of the majority to the discrimination of non-white children in Poland (the poem "Bambo Brown",[4] margarine with the image of a "brown child"; the song Makumba about racial relations recorded in 2021 with children from the Central African Republic,[5] etc.). The poem "Bambo Brown" and other fiction publications for young people were some of the reasons the Afyka inaczej Foundation[6] took action to devise and publish an anti-racist guidebook entitled: *How to speak and write about Africa?* (Diouf et al., 2011).

Another of such books—the first school encounter with complex colonial themes (legitimising the colonial perspective) is *In Desert and Wilderness* by Henryk Sienkiewicz (1923). This is a historically valuable source text, not for primary school pupils but rather for secondary school students. Admittedly, the book is accompanied by a short commentary by the Ministry of National Education on the core curriculum for primary school, which stresses the need to "look from the point of view of the attitude of the main characters to their African companions or African culture in general" (see p. 70). The key issue however and an

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[4] Julian Tuwim's poem was published in 1935 as a tool to make the "Other" familiar, with the aim of anti-discrimination (the author was a member of the Jewish minority in Poland). It is an example of how a tool which worked in one historical reality has a different overtone and effects in a different, contemporary reality. Teachers should have the sensitivity and competences to differentiate between what is adequate for the decolonisation in the process of education in a particular socio-historical context.

[5] The song, with altered lyrics—accompanied by Polish musicians—was sung by children from the Africa Music School run by Polish missionaries in CAR.

[6] 'The handbook is dedicated to journalists and public persons, to politicians. Its aim is to show how to speak and write about Africa, in order not to shape and perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices. The book is written by Africans living in Poland for many years.' (European Website on Integration, 29th December 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/how-speak-and-write-about-africa_en).

approach that seems to be lacking in practice is to look at literary works in the perspective of the times when they were written and provide a broad didactic commentary pointing to past and present contexts.

Selected Bottom-Up Activities of Parents for the Decolonisation of Education

There are organisations based in Warsaw such as: Association for Somalia; Adulis Foundation; Africa Connect Foundation; and the Association of Poles of African origin, all of which are founded or co-run by Black people—Polish citizens. There is also The Warsaw Multicultural Centre, which offers cultural and educational activities for supporting social integration. The centre offers a space to all those who want to organise events promoting multiculturalism, education in and for diversity as well as neighbourly integration in the capital city. Parents who are engaged in the activities of the organisation and the Centre participate in education and advocacy projects and search for solutions to the most urgent problems affecting the Black people communities (also Black Poles) in Poland. These problems are concerned with discrimination through language (Ohia, 2013) or preventing exclusion and stereotyping processes (Diouf et al., 2011). The majority of parents have experienced racial discrimination because of their darker skin colour opposed to the white norms, hence in their anti-racist educational activities, they focus on the protection of their children's rights.

The parents initiate or become involved in culture workshops in Warsaw's preschools and schools as well as meetings with so-called "living books" (part of the living library project).[7] These provide information to children and teachers about the lived experiences of children and adults in their countries of origin. They explain what education looks like, how children across the African continent live and play (every parent tries to present a lived experience of his/her country of origin). These educational

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[7] The Living Library is an international movement for human rights and diverse society. It builds on the classic method of meeting and talking as an attempt to counteract prejudice and discrimination. More: http://zywabibliotekapolska.pl/.

activities aim at raising the awareness of Polish people, shaping attitudes of openness and cooperation in local communities, for advancing opportunities in cultural and social integration. Black Polish parents as leaders of change are building bridges between minority and majority-ethnic communities through education.

Conclusion

The decolonisation of education through minority-ethnic group (non-white Polish) participation provides an opportunity through a process of transformation by restructuring the walls of a reflexive school and reflexive participants involved in the education process i.e. teachers, students, and parents as well as the local environment in which the school operates. This process of decolonising knowledge provides young non-white Polish people with a narrative and a voice, which was not considered earlier in activities "with", but as activities "about" (Others). This is also an important attempt to deprogram the dominant White Polish ethnic group majority narration in education. Moncrieffe et al. (2019) argue that the decolonisation of school curricula usually involves a fundamental revision of who teaches, what the subject is and how teaching is conducted. I have illustrated the crucial role of parents instigating and supporting the processes of decolonial teaching and learning for the deconstruction of schematic thought patterns through their bottom-up educational activities.

   The decolonisation of education via participation requires joint efforts on the part of teachers, students, and the society as a whole to break the apparent, frequently stereotypical "self-evident truths" and schematic representations of Black people. Above all, it demands efforts to eliminate the calcified forms of presenting information which frames thought patterns dominant in didactic strategies and the perception of cultural diversity in schools. It involves a gradual redefinition and reconceptualisation of educational paradigms and categories. Importantly, it requires that we recognise, understand, and critically look at the school climate, the centric school culture, and its educational offer via curriculum. The latter lacks for instance the literature of African Nobel prize winners,

references to literature from countries on the African continent, books written by Polish Africans or reliable historical information about pre-colonial kingdoms (apart from ancient Egypt) and the consequences of present-day ethnic inequalities due to European colonialism. Little time is devoted to a decolonial perspective on Africa and colonial processes in the Polish school education. Equally, little space is devoted to inter-cultural education and education for diversity based on the theories of intercultural contact (Gudykunst, 2003), one that considers communi-cation between the representatives of minority and majority groups in the school space as crucial.

In postulating the decolonisation of curricula, aspects such as cultural distinctiveness, Poland's experience of post-dependence and isolation from the growth of multicultural societies in the West during commu-nism cannot be ignored. All of them influenced the education of the majority society in the past. Many years of 'dry, non-contextual education' (see Markowska-Manista, 2021) about others, their cultures, the small percentage of migrants and refugees in Polish society have contributed to the fact that colonial themes are still present in an asymmetric, one-sided way, for example in the school literary canon or textbooks. Threads connected with colonisation present in the school literary canon such as *In Desert and Wilderness* (Sienkiewicz, 1923) should be supplemented with reflexive, critical thinking, comments and be discussed and analysed in terms of the consequences of these prac-tices for colonised societies. I personally do not agree with the postulate to remove didactic and ethnocentric publications from Polish schools, as this would remove knowledge and would in turn be a form of whitewashing colonialism.

Through understanding and implementing a participatory approach, I support a paradigm in which issues connected with the situation of children in the context of a multi-ethnic and multicultural society can be explored with greater depth, can be reliably described, inter-preted, and implemented through the content of diverse curricula. This can provide a multi-layered understanding of the complexity of chil-dren's realities. Separate monologues of education for the majority-ethnic group and minority-ethnic groups in Poland will not form in consensual dialogue. However, the educational activities offered and led by Black

Polish parents who have become the voices of their children and the entire community of Poles with African origin, and in their cooperation with white Polish parents and educators, is showing a pathway of de-orientalising and re-conceptualising education for all. These are parents who are showing that it is possible to implement joint, bottom-up educational activities that will open the doors to the decolonisation of thinking and education in and for diversity and consequently facilitate greater possibilities for full social integration of children and adults in Poland.

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12

Universe, Pluriverse and a Blue Ocean: Reflective Analogies and Philosophical Considerations for Decolonising Education—A View from the Netherlands

Bert Meeuwsen

Introduction

A while ago Marlon Lee Moncrieffe an educational scholar expressed the world like being a pluriverse environment. This instead of being a worldly universe. He compared Mother Earth as comprising of a diversity of stars; as a part of an unfathomable pluriverse. Have these stars the same names, or do these names and their meanings differ depending on our worldly biases, cultures, and the teachings from our ancestries? What is the value of differentiation in perspectives and meaning we give to the

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same cosmos that we share? Planets in a named western solar system can offer a universal sense of knowing without much question in the order of things. But what are the unexplored possibilities with knowing when aiming to see further beyond the given system? What are the possibilities of 'pluriversality with all its internal diversity'? (Mignolo, 2018, p. ix). These are questions that relate to my reflections on decolonising curriculum knowledge, within international business studies at Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences (Wittenborg), established in 1987 in the Netherlands, an institute to which I am associated. My cross-cultural teaching experiences here support my various analogical reflections in this chapter with decolonising curriculum knowledge.

Historically, due to European colonialisation (Wiesner-Hanks, 2018) global leadership in educational policy has been framed epistemologically by the hegemony of Western-centric knowledge (Silova et al., 2017). Assimilation of colonised peoples to the universality in western thought processes including the erasure of their ancestral ways of seeing and knowing is exposed by magnification of decolonial lenses (see for example Mignolo, 2018; Wa Thiong'o, 1986). Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2015) concept of the '*coloniality of knowledge*' provides a robust framework from which to tease epistemological issues, politics of knowledge generation, as well as questions of who generates which knowledge and for what purpose' (p. 490). He argues for 'ontologicial pluralism as a reality' needing 'ecologies of knowledges to understand' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, p. 492).

I see that practical attention is required to achieve what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) implies as 'something good'. This will be addressed in this chapter. Firstly, via introduction of a unique cross-cultural 'boutique university' from the Netherlands. From the start in 1987, a mixture of world-philosophies are present, and although the business studies are framed in origin by Western-European business studies parameters, the context at Wittenborg differs, a lot. More than 1000 students, from 100 countries, and almost 180 staff-members from 52 countries enable a unique and interesting mix of cross-cultural learning and development. The university's mission is 'Better Yourself, Better Our World', with the Key Values of Internationalisation, Diversity and Ethics (www.wittenborg.eu/vision-mission-pillars, 2021).

In this chapter, what I see as developing a pluriformity of knowledge is addressed through three connecting perspectives, and three less recognised needs. These perspectives are: (1) Learning from each other; (2) Assisting development of the other; (3) Connecting virtues of ethical leadership. Whereas the less recognised needs are: (1) 'Ledig Gemüete', (2) 'Syncritic method', and (3) 'Comprehensive analogies'. These perspectives and needs come together in a practical and to be applied approach—a how. Whereas, in reference to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's statement: (2015, p. 492) 'decoloniality accepts the fact of ontological pluralism as a reality that needs ecologies of knowledges to understand', the applied approach, is focal too. Thus, when Western-European scholars are presented in this chapter, they are for the purposes adding to the mix of ontological pluralism i.e., multiple ways of seeing and being, and multiple ways of knowing through a pluriverse of epistemologies.

I share a series of analogical narrative reflections in this chapter for storying an understanding of my experiences of cross-cultural teaching and learning with students and teachers at Wittenborg. I set this scene as the 'Charming School' with educators and students taking an educational fieldtrip that transforms the reality of their teaching and learning pursuits. The pivotal moments of seeing and coming to know the value of decolonial practice are built by notions of self-development '*Bildung*' (Taylor, 2017); the 'Professional Learning Community' (Hord & Sommers, 2008; Verbiest, 2011, 2012); through the meaning-oriented reflection model i.e., '*De Lift*' ('*The Escalator*') by Korthagen (2014, 2017) and by seeing the virtues of Ethical Leadership (Dahlsgaard et al., 2005). This leads to 'Blue Ocean' thinking (Whittington et al., 2019, p. 85), stimulating potential and possibly unrecognised latent educators' needs. I see this as process in relation to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986, p. 108) and the notion of 'regenerative reconnection' to the unfathomable depths of the pluriverse, of knowledge, of being.

Reflective Analogy

The reader, an educator, hovers in a helicopter above the countryside. He or she, sees three dynamic, but small rivers meander towards a little village. On the cross-roads of the blue rivers' geographical connection the Charming School is situated. One river continues and ends up in a blue ocean. It is almost surreal, it seems like a mirage. Is it?

Differing children originating from the surrounding areas walk along paths, through woods, heathland, or past the rivers to their Charming School. Here, day-to-day activities take place. In this school, a team of dedicated educators is active.

Developing a Pluriformity of Knowledge in the Charming School

These educators, these professionals want to work together as a team and learn from each other. They are there to assist their learners with their self-development, or '*Bildung*' (Taylor, 2017) on the background their differing traditions, in other words 'worldviews' that formed them to whom they are, are present. Present in a sense, like Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) noted, of covering comparable virtues, but differing worldviews' origins. These traditions, appear affected by the hegemony of Western-centric knowledge (Silova et al., 2017). Interestingly, and perhaps somewhat unconsciously, their traditions and virtues appear comparable (Chun, 2005; Dahlsgaard et al., 2005; Louw, 2019). This is to be regarded an asset; an untapped source of riches that must become more known among educators. Stimulation of awareness, increasing consciousness, other manners of learning, as well as thinking, feeling, wanting, and doing are needed. The educators' drive is leading, supporting, and forming their learners towards a common objective to realise 'something good' (Woldring, 2016). Aiming for 'something good' to me is a like an elementary behaviour, a virtue, towards assisting self-development.

Reflective Analogy

In itself everything there in the Charming School is to be able to succeed: professionalism, community, reflection, transformation, thrill, traditions, virtues, and objectives are all set. In fact, all aspects to be successful are in place. But something is missing. The educators' conventional approach at the school does not seem to be complete. In the school a curious situation takes place. It is as if one common denominator, like a one-and-only paradigm is in the lead. All educators appear to fit their learners into this one standard. But both educators and learners originate from different ancestries. They use the same language, but they do not really understand each other. Or even worse, are not allowed to think or act in another manner than the Western-centric epistemology, linked to 'Enlightenment'. The latter criticised by e.g., Comenius, in the seventeenth century (Woldring, 2016) *and in the twentieth century by* Horkheimer and Adorno (1947/2007) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986, p. 65): *'the world of Ptolemy was being replaced by the world of Copernicus and Galileo. A tension is present, but not felt by everyone. Interesting, strange, and, perhaps, sad. Unconsciousness of needs present has to be made conscious. But how? That is the objective of the field-trip. But first we have to address three connecting perspectives to achieve our mutual ground. These three perspectives are: (1) Learning from each other, (2) Assisting development of the other, and (3) Connecting virtues of ethical leadership. In the following paragraphs these are described and connected, by means of practical ideas, for instance based on behavioural influencing. The field trip ends with recommendations and a conclusion. But before that the 'blue ocean' will play its important role. Hopefully, in the story of this pluriverse fieldtrip the sun will never set.*

Three Connecting Perspectives

The descriptions of the following three perspectives: (1) Learning from each other; (2) Assisting development of the other; (3) Connecting virtues of ethical leadership, are not meant as an introduction on underlying knowledge. The objective is to provide next to common ground, food for thought. Being consciously aware can be of assistance towards

the further developing of selves. Next to this, these paragraphs may provide input on how to use the perspectives within one own's professional environment and/or others for whom one is responsible, e.g., your learners.

Educators Learning from Each Other

I see educators learning from each other as based on a number of interacting principles. Educators at the same time being learners themselves behave like a 'Professional Learning Community' (PLC) (Hord & Sommers, 2008; Verbiest, 2011, 2012). According to Hord and Sommers (2008, p. 8), the components of a PLC consist of five components:

1. Shared beliefs, values, and visions
2. Shared and supportive leadership
3. Collective learning and its application
4. Supportive conditions
5. Shared personal practice

From another perspective, Verbiest (2012, pp. 19–21) describes an obligatory interface of three capacities to achieve a successful PLC:

1. Personal capacity
2. Interpersonal capacity
3. Organisational capacity

The first two, each consist of two dimensions, while the last one contains three conditions, all interacting to support achieving a successful PLC.

- Personal capacity
    - Dimension 1: Active, reflective, and critical (re)construction of meaning.

- Dimension 2: Use actual understandings from science and from practice.

- Interpersonal capacity

  - Dimension 1 covers: Shared values and vision on learning and the educator's role.
  - Dimension 2 covers: Collective learning of shared practices.

- Organisational capacity deals with three supporting conditions:

  - Condition 1: Resources, structures, and systems.
  - Condition 2: Culture based on respect, trust, and care, as well as a critical research and improvement.
  - Condition 3: Encouraging and shared leadership.

How Do Educators Achieve Being and Remaining a PLC?

Literature on change management describes a number of approaches, for instance by means of using phases (Burke, 2018, pp. 179–180). Verbiest (2012, pp. 58–62) advises another approach. The three capacities and underlying dimensions are developed by a path consisting of three key-concepts: (1) 'broadening', (2) 'deepening' and (3) 'anchoring'. 'Broadening' relates to an increase of the number of professionals, as well as/or increased organisational support on (inter)personal capacities (Verbiest, 2012, p. 58). 'Deepening' relates to regarding education as a team's collective effort and responsibility and related activities, e.g., connecting learners' learning and results, and underlying intellectual ideas like learning, education, and nurturing (Verbiest, 2012, p. 58). 'Anchoring' relates to describing the PLC's learning path, e.g., educators' professionalisation, educational institute's vision and policies, systematic analysis, and team members structural participation in policy development (Verbiest, 2012, pp. 58–59). Verbiest (2012, p. 61) stipulates presence of a non-phase-oriented change management approach, where from the beginning anchoring both broadening and deepening is vital. He advices to concentrate on the practical possibilities of the notions of

the key-concepts, capacities, and dimensions. This can be regarded as a holistic and synergetic approach. Concentration on analysis of where are we now (the *'Ist'*) and what do we want to achieve (the '*Soll*'). In this manner a decision-taking analytical model, next to an implementation model, are provided.

Reflective Analogy
In the Charming School, near the river some of the educators do realise a change may have to take place. The question to them, is What to do next? They wonder whether they manage this all alone. They even ask themselves if an alternative path should be walked. And if alternatives are there, what alternative, or combination of alternatives that should be. In a way they feel a bit trapped in one common approach of thinking. Perhaps that is part of the answer towards a more promising direction. Not just 'thinking', only.

Within their learning, educators, based on the concept of PLC, are to be interested in the ideas of their peers, and intend to reflect on views, and meanings behind, expressed. Subsequently, meaning-oriented reflective learning among each other is key. The meaning-oriented reflection model '*De Lift*' ('*The Escalator*') by Korthagen (2014, 2017) based on a back and forth connecting of 'thinking' to 'feeling', and only then 'wanting' and 'doing' is applicable. Applicable both towards past activities and future actions, can be of assistance. The model is used within the educational sector, however, perhaps hardly within other studies' curricula. Team members are aware that a gradual and/or even fast mode of learning assists them in developing towards another level of knowing and doing as well. Their change, their transformation, by means of learning-by-reflection is eminent (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

> **Reflective Analogy**
> *The Charming School educators start to realise that there is more than thinking alone. Another aspect of being must be taken into consideration. The factor of 'feeling' plays an important role, before they become aware of perhaps more adequate scenarios of doing.*

The stimulated and supported active reflective-learning behaviour leads towards mastery of learning. Educators appear self-motivated, they are 'thrilled' (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). More than, 'deep acquiring' knowledge, they aim for 'deep consolidating' of knowing and doing. Thus, to develop individual and collective understanding, while concentrating on the detection of similarities and of differences. Results of this analytical process are used within and for educators' new situation(s). They want to make sense of what they achieve by means of 'transfer-learning'. This both being an intellectual-fundamental and applied-practical effective combination. By doing so motivational 'thrill' gradually results in an executional 'thrill', among each other as educators, and within their learners. Their learners, or pupils, those they want to assist in their self-development.

Assisting Development of the Other

> **Reflective Analogy**
> *One of the educators in the Charming School has been acting in a more constructivist mode for the past decades. His phlegmatic approach with which he assists his pupils, to some of them provides less structure. They miss something to support their learning, their self-development. What may be lacking?*

An approach is that educators are there to assist their learners with their self-development, or *Bildung* (Taylor, cr). While pedagogics is related to, the German word of, *Erziehung*, i.e., education, *Bildung* is

related to assisted self-development. The idea of development by self is connected to actions by self. The influence of educators is, from a pedagogic perspective, influential and assists development. Addressing this relation and differences contributes to educators' thoughts on *Bildung* and their assistance to self-development. The concept of *Bildung* is not new. As a concept, the German scholar Von Humboldt described this social constructive pedagogic approach in the late eighteenth century (Von Humboldt, 1986). In his thoughts Von Humboldt connects one own's nature to rational educational development (Von Humboldt, 1785–1795). In other words, connecting *emotio* and *ratio* appears key, as manyfold arts and approaches are applicable. *Emotio* is related to emotion and is the demonstrable inner body movement or excitement (Visser, 2018, p. 19). This including the spiritual more mysterious effects and reflection, of a world 'only knowable through ritual, magic and divination' (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 65). *Ratio* is related to rationality. This covers making decisions based on clear thought and reason. The ancient correlation between *emotio* and *ratio* has been put under pressure due to the seventeenth-century European paradigm of 'Enlightenment'. Enlightenment is an intellectual and cultural movement in late seventeenth-century Europe and the wider world that used rational and critical thinking to debate issues such as political sovereignty, religious tolerance, gender roles, and racial difference (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986; Wiesner-Hanks et al., 2018). Based on this philosophical movement, rationality can grow to an exercise of power, evolving towards suppression of mankind (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947/2007) and in 'a God of profit and loss' (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 65).

In the geographical area of the origin of Enlightenment, in the years prior to, the movement really started to develop tensions where one may reflect upon as trying to prevent progress towards what we nowadays address as Eurocentric philosophical framing. Unfortunately, the epistemological balance tipped to colonisation. In 1642 Comenius and Descartes discussed their philosophical ideas (Woldring, 2016, pp. 173–174). Where Comenius applies a pansophic, or comprehensive paradigm, Descartes encourages a strict rational activity 'to promote the general welfare of all people' (Descartes in Woldring, 2016, p. 174).

The latter 'to promote the general welfare of all people' being Comenius' objective too. To Comenius 'Pansophia': 'from all the sub-sciences, a universal science of knowledge must ultimately emerge', Comenius in Woldring, 2016, p. 79). Where *pan* is all or comprehensive, and *sophia* is wisdom. This implies, an a priori connecting everything to everything (Meyer, in Goris et al., 2016, p. 3), therefore, *ratio* and *emotio* too. Comenius' main work *De rerum homanorum emendatione consultation catholica* (General reflection on the improvement of human conditions), was overshadowed by the Enlightenment, and has been lost for over three hundred years. Only in 1935 these were retrieved and published in 1966. In Comenius' pansophia three instruments are present to realise something good. 'Something good' is anything that can help improve the world or improve humanity in all situations. These instruments are senses, reason and biblical, i.e., spiritual revelation.

However, as the seventeenth-century European Enlightenment ideology spread across the globe, particularly and developed overseas (Wiesner-Hanks et al., 2018, p. 551), this tradition, and with it the 'hegemony of Western-centric knowledge' became imbedded in formerly European colonised communities, reconfiguring their worlds to a way of thinking through the dominant Eurocentric epistemology (Silova et al., 2017). One could conclude that the notion of a dominant Eurocentric science of knowledge appears narcissistic (see Moncrieffe, 2020). In fact, Comenius already in the seventeenth century foresaw a more holistic cooperation among world-philosophies, instead of just one dominant epistemology. The pluriverse of world-philosophies had to be involved to develop the other and create 'something good'.

Reflective Analogy
Within the Charming School educators started to realise that their origins were not exactly the same. They realised that perhaps they could make use of their differences and create a more attractive learning environment. At the same time, by giving this some extra reflection, using thinking, and feeling, they noticed similarities in their acting. What to make out of these parallels?

Connecting Virtues of Ethical Leadership

Interestingly, and perhaps somewhat unconsciously virtues (Table 12.1) and traditions espoused in the diversity of world cultures are comparable by their congruency (Chun, 2005; Dahlsgaard et al., 2005; Louw, 2019). Being aware of these similarities can be of assistance for developing virtues, without positioning one dominant philosophy (ontological standpoint) as most important.

Virtues are in relation to existence, and contrast disorder. This as everything in the world is ordered, is caused, and has an effect. A virtue has its limits; therefore, a person must constrain to and master virtues. Regarded from a philosophical perspective, a virtue is more than existence, as it descends from higher power, according to Plato: 'the Good', in Christian belief: God. A virtue is a 'concatenation', a series of ideas that are connected, and is more than commonplace, is rich and assists in practical life. Although, due to character traits and environment, execution varies from person to person, however, can be learned (Guardini, 1963).

Table 12.1 Core virtues

Virtue	Description
Courage	Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal; examples include bravery, perseverance, and authenticity (honesty)
Justice	Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life; examples include fairness, leadership, and citizenship or teamwork
Humanity	Interpersonal strengths that involve 'tending and befriending' others (Taylor et al., 2000); examples include love and kindness
Temperance	Strengths that protect against excess; examples include forgiveness, humility, prudence, and self-control
Wisdom	Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge; examples include creativity, curiosity, judgement, and perspective (providing counsel to others)
Transcendence	Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and thereby provide meaning; examples include gratitude, hope, and spirituality

Source Dahlsgaard et al. (2005, p. 205)

> **Reflective Analogy**
> *The Charming School educators realised that what connected them was on a somewhat deeper level of ideas. While reflecting, some of them addressed, next to thinking and feeling, the importance of being inspired and the importance to them of higher indefinable power* (e.g., Okri, 1991/2016, pp. viii–x). *To some of the colleagues this was not only new, but even peculiar. They, at first, more or less revolted. Nevertheless, and step by step they started to realise that learning with and from each other required being open to others' views. In fact, the question was asked: "How does your 'being inspired' show in your day-to-day life?" That was not easy to explain, but this was given a try. It led to a becoming aware. Being inspired next to what you felt and thought. The three-fold base of awareness made them realise what they wanted, and… What to do (Meeuwsen, 2022).*

According to Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) eight world-philosophies share six core virtues (See Table 12.2). Whereas, based on Chun (2005) the so-called 'virtue ethical character scale (VECS)' consists of six dimensions of organisational virtues (Integrity, Empathy, Warmth, Courage, Conscientiousness and Zeal) and associated virtue character traits (Chun, 2005, p. 281). Comenius, already prior to Enlightenment (1623, 1657, pp. 217–220) and in Woldring (2016, pp. 51–52) urges mankind to acquire moral virtues and these be part of attitude, in order to achieve a future society of justice and peace, achieving 'something good' (Woldring, 2016, p. 17).

Regarding 'ethical leadership' the definition by Shakeel et al. (2020) is used:

Ethical leadership is the implicit and explicit pursuit of desired ethical behaviour for self and followers through efforts governed by rules and principles that advocate learning motivation, healthy optimism, and clarity of purpose to uphold the values of empowerment, service to others, concern for human rights, change for betterment and fulfilling duty towards society, future generations, environment, and its sustainability.

While reading the definition it implicitly is to be noticed how connections can be made to virtues.

Table 12.2 Convergence of virtues

Tradition	Courage	Justice	Humanity	Temperance	Wisdom	Transcendence
Confucianism		E	E	T	E	T
Taoism		E	E	E	E	T
Buddhism		E	E	E	T	E
Hinduism	E	E	E	E	E	E
Athenian philos- ophy	E	E	E	E	E	T
Christianity	E	E	E	E	E	E
Judaism	E	E	E	E	E	E
Islam	E	E	E	E	E	E

Note E = explicitly named; T = thematically implied
Source Dahlsgaard et al. (2005, p. 211).

Connecting virtues, world-societies, and ethical leadership within the pluriverse of cross-cultural ontologies and perspectives according to Comenius (in Woldring, 2014, pp. 96–101), Hatley (2019), Maldonado-Torres (2007), Mignolo and Walsh (2018) need to be touched upon. Maldonado-Torres addresses 'interventions at the levels of power, knowledge, and being through varied actions of decolonisation and desgener-acción' (2007, p. 262). He explains that 'Decolonisation' and 'des-gener-acción' are the active products of decolonial love and justice. They aim to restore the logics of the gift through a decolonial politics of receptive generosity." (2007, p. 261). Towards this being an educators' task appears eminent. However, this task starts with being aware, by thinking, feeling, being inspired, and willing, and subsequently doing 'something good'.

> **Reflective Analogy**
> *The Charming School was buzzing with positive energy. The educators more and more realised they appeared on the brink of some important steps. These steps needed warm colour towards the direction to go; colours to open up more than the mindset only. Based on their warm reflections they realised they were to take these steps together, while making use of each other's backgrounds.*

Blue Ocean

Assisting self-development (*Bildung*) of learners, including educators, is among others related to insights into the importance of *emotio* and *ratio*. Didactic interventions and PLCs have to concentrate on both 'feeling' and 'thinking'. Execution is to be stimulated from an empty and maximally receptive 'emptied mind' (*Ledic Gemuëte*, Meister Eckhart, thirteenth century, in Visser, 2018). The 'emptied mind' can be regarded a first 'Blue Ocean' (Whittington et al., 2019, p. 85). A 'Blue Ocean' is a business economics term related to innovation on 'value'. Technically, it is a new market space where competition is minimised, is sought after and useful for identifying potential spaces of needs in the environment. These environments show little competition, i.e., attention, new critical success factors and especially previously unrecognised customer needs too (Whittington et al., 2019, p. 85). We now concentrate on these previously unrecognised customer needs, related to educators' needs. A second 'Blue Ocean' concept is Comenius' syncretic applied practice (early seventeenth century) based on his pansophical, or comprehensive applied scientific approach. The latter in itself being a third 'Blue Ocean'. These three concepts are described to provide information and stimulate potential and possibly unrecognised latent educators' needs. By doing so to further grow into their vocation. By doing so, having attention to new epistemologies. This for instance can be achieved by looking at other worldviews and bridging differences. Koehn suggests:

> …thinking and to arrive at common, good practices, an outcome especially to be desired in this era of global business practice. These practices do not need to be imposed hegemonically by one party on the other, but rather can grow organically out of the shared heritage of virtue ethics (2013, p. 714)

Thus, acting in line with varied actions of decolonisation and 'desgener-acción', as stressed by Maldonado-Torres (2007) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986, p. 108) 'call for the regenerative reconnection', to create 'something good'.

Blue Ocean—1. 'Ledic Gemüete'

Neo-Aristotelian insights from MacIntyre (2020) and thoughts from, among others, Huijgen (2019) support the thirteenth-century concept of Meister Eckharts 'emptied mind'. The term '*gemüete*' or 'mind'/'mood' covers more than thinking and feeling. The term primarily comprises an affective dimension. Although connected to mental abilities, there appears an additional setting. To Eckhardt '*gemüete*' is a total of soul forces of the inner spiritual human being (Visser, 2018, p. 24). An additional aspect is the 'emptiness of the mind' ('*ledig gemüete*'). Like going out of oneself. This appears like having exited from oneself. This is not what Eckhardt meant. He addressed an active reflection, towards achieving an inner transformation (Visser, 2018, p. 25). The active reflection is based on one's own deliberate will. Basically, a letting go of oneself. One no longer is confused or connected to anything, while being free of images and associated passions. An opening up to the will of a higher spiritual influence is possible—according to Eckhardt: the will of God (Visser, 2018, p. 26). There is more. As stated, will or thinking and affection or feeling are both present. The immediate influence of a higher power is in itself not new for the thirteenth and/or the twenty-first centuries. Although, only from the sixteenth century the word 'mood' developed towards its current sensation-oriented meaning (Visser, 2006, p. 693). Both Plato and Socrates spoke about comparable helpful higher forces, and tools, to e.g., develop virtues (Visser, 2018, p. 28). Visser (2018, p. 29) concludes that state of mind is affective, as well as draws attention to the original being of the affective.

While being in a meaningful reflection, as an activity taking place within a professional learning community, one ought to deliberately open up oneself towards the others, the peers, without being prejudiced by one owns epistemological bias. Aiming for the 'emptied mind' assists an 'open mind' towards learning from others' experiences, ideas, knowledge, and biases. Ultimately, the underlying 'thrill' can result in 'deep acquiring' and 'deep consolidating' (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016), assisting the PLC creating something good.

Blue Ocean—2. 'Syncritic Method'

Comenius offers, an additional method to fundamental and applied sciences. This method he developed in advance of Enlightenment turned into like a standard, the Eurocentric paradigm. Comenius' method comprises of Analytical method, Synthetic method, and Syncritic method (Comparative method) (Woldring in Goris et al., 2016; Woldring, 2016). Where 'Analysisc takes a phenomenon apart to its smallest detail 'Synthesis' reconstructs parts towards each other. Subsequently, 'Syncritic' to compare phenomena to detect potential correlations. The syncritic method by means of practical acting appears to realise specific improvements of mankind. Improvement of mankind can be connected to worldviews' common virtues and developing ethical leadership. Woldring (in Goris et al., 2016, p. 23) concludes 'Comenius' syncritic method does not produce but may instead generate hypotheses that should be investigated by empirical research'. The syncritic method may contribute towards ethical leadership development, and to the 'Agenda of Peace' (United Nations, 1992 in Goris et al., 2016). Herewith, Comenius' syncritic model appears actual.

Making practical use of the syncritic model can be achieved by comparing phenomena among sciences, and in detecting correlations. An example is connecting schools of thought originating from different sciences like a school of economics with a school of theology. Currently Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands, has an Institute for Theology connected to Erasmus School of Economics (Erasmusmagazine, 2019). As Van Geest stated:

> The idea behind interdisciplinary collaboration between theologians and economists is that we can help each other by asking each other questions inspired by our own discipline. This will help us get a different perspective on one of our objects of research – human beings – which will give us a more realistic perspective. (Erasmusmagazine, 2019)

In educational practice comparable approaches are possible, e.g., by making use of other sciences like anthropology, economics, psychology,

sociology, etc., within day-to-day practice like learning from each other. In this fusion, creating new possible ways of seeing and knowing.

Blue Ocean—3. 'Comprehensive Analogies'

To assist and increase understanding of Comenius syncritic or comparative method, Woldring (2016, pp. 137–140) introduces a philosophical theory by Dooyeweerd (1953–1958). This theory analyses all kinds of entities (e.g., things, flora, creatures, phenomena, etc.) using differentiating modal aspects, e.g., arithmetic, physical, psychic, moral, religious, etc., from reality. These modal aspects are regarded circles of law, while having their own legality or standard. Dooyeweerd is interested in reality of variety, as well as mutual connectedness. His philosophy elaborates by means of theory of analogies. The theory of Dooyeweerd can be compared to Comenius. For instance, within education introductory aspects are related to individualism, pedagogic, psychic, etc. Also, analogies in anticipation of modal aspects are present, e.g., lingual, social, economic, moral, belief, etc. By analysing modal aspects, Dooyeweerd examines a diversity of phenomena, events, and processes. Thereafter, he seeks for analogies between the modal aspects on preliminary and consequential factors. He, in contrast to Comenius, did not search for analogies among sciences. Woldring, however, stipulates this search for modal aspects among sciences an interesting approach, as this may broaden insights (Woldring, 2016, p. 140). A comparable advice is provided and stressed upon by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: 'How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics and at the social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to nature and to other things'. (1986, p. 16).

An approach to practically making use of the connection of the comparative method and actual epistemological thoughts, like e.g., Enlightenment, and/or world-philosophies within a PLC means being open to all schools of thought, thus requiring 'emptied mind' ('*ledic gemüete*'). This new sense of a pluriversity in possibilities of new knowledge making creates challenge within meaningful reflection, as the

default understanding of the new learner may be biased by the conditioning of learnt principles. These can be overcome. Next to having an 'emptied mind' the willingness to compare potential correlations maybe helpful. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986, p. 100) sees this as a study the own culture for symmetry with comparative societies. The search for modal aspects and comparing these by using a common language, may create a mutual deeper understanding. Thinking over Comenius theory of analogies in relation to thinking along modal aspects of comparable virtues as present within the pluriveristy of world-philosophies and epistemology, could be of interest to achieve analogies. As a result, by assisting peer-review, as well as assisting self-development of learners, improving professional relations, and achieving 'something good'.

> **Reflective Analogy**
> *The professional learning community of the Charming School gradually not only became more aware of each other's backgrounds. This is a result of their opening up of thinking, feeling, and listening to the divine voices. At the same time, while comparing colleagues' ideas, they developed new educational directions. Why? They saw parallels within their differing experiences, that were beneficial towards their learners. Their practical skills, curiosity, willingness, and skilful educating gradually changed towards achieving professional emotions, the 'thrill'* (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016, p. 9).

Associating Perspectives and Needs

The needs expressed within the 'Blue Ocean' stimulate and generate renewed thinking about the importance of an 'emptied mind': 'thinking' and 'feeling'; 'syncritic': interdisciplinary cooperation and 'Comprehensiveness': using a comprehensive common language within PLCs. The three perspectives: Learning from each other; Assisting development of the other, and Connecting virtues of ethical leadership, were not meant as an introduction on underlying knowledge. The objective was to provide, next to common ground, food for thought on how to learn with,

from and to each other. It is recommended to further think over these three perspectives and the three 'needs' within inter-collegial peer-review, as part of creating and being a PLC.

The pluriverse of world-philosophies and its related and common virtues supporting ethical leadership, are recommended to be involved to assist to develop oneself and the other. These recommendations are connected to ancient and actual insights. For instance, realising assistance of self-development of both educators and learners' virtuous behaviour requires both to achieve learning outcomes, while based on common denominators, though not related to one epistemology. It is, therefore, recommended to make use of the 'emptied mind' and to be open, affective, towards other schools of thought.

Binding and Bonding

Decolonising the curriculum by challenging the 'hegemony of Western-centric knowledge', as well as epistemology related to Enlightenment, needs a binding of emptied minds. A bonding professional thrill, to together achieve a 'deep consolidation' of three angles of 1. 'being inspired', 2. 'thinking', and 3. 'feeling' Bringing these into 'being aware', preceding 'wanting' and 'doing' (Meeuwsen, 2022), is key. Stimulating virtuous behaviour, while making use of common denominators, described from world-philosophies of comparable virtues assists the development of educators, learners, and future leadership. Meaningful-oriented reflecting within a PLC is an important transformative tool. This while, at the same time, an active decolonisation of curricula is executed. As De Sousa Santos (2007, p. 53) states: 'The struggle for global social justice must, therefore, be a struggle for global cognitive justice as well'. All together now, leading towards 'Something good'.

> **Reflective Analogy**
>
> Once a while, the Charming School's professional learning community takes a climate-friendly green train, for their pluriverse field trip to the blue ocean. Next to meaningful learning from each other, addressing the now more conscious needs, enjoying a '*gezellige*'[1] company and having fun together, stimulates their educational thrill. Global social justice, all together now, leading towards 'Something good'.
>
> The weather is nice, the environment is more than cool, and the sun…? Never sets.

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[1] **Gezellig**: Dutch for cosy, enjoyable, intimate, pleasant, welcoming, etc.

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Index