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Guest Editorial

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In this special issue we focus on exploring the tensions, challenges and possibilities for working in contexts where relationships between groups are characterized by dominance and resistance. Some of the impetus lies in our own struggles and frustrations with models, guidelines and 'recipes' that have been developed to guide sensitive, competent and empowering research and practice across boundaries of 'race', ethnicity and culture. These models and guidelines are often framed as tools that will enable culturally competent transactions across these boundaries. For example, in the Australian context guidelines have been developed for the provision of psychological services for and the conduct of research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People that will aim to promote culturally competent engagement (Australian Psychological Society, 1997). Initiatives such as these are central to the agenda of promoting forms of practice that will enhance the capacity for self-determination and voice of those individuals and communities that are excluded.

However, it is not these models and guidelines themselves that cause our frustrations, but the understanding of culture and intercultural relationships on which they are based. Models and guidelines often rely on an understanding of culture and ethnicity that is fixed, reified and essentialised and tend to be informed by cultural assumptions that are rooted in Euro-American traditions and worldviews. Hermans and Kempen (1998) have argued that dominant approaches to knowledge have favoured static conceptualizations of culture (see also Josephs, 2002; Shweder, 1990; Squire, 2000). Cultures are viewed as measurable and individuals and culture seen as independent. Consequently, the creation of static categories that position the West in relation to other cultures contributes to the

reification of culturally homogenous ‘ethnic’ and racial groups. This orientation undermines ways in which the self is understood in different cultures (e.g., Bhatia & Ram, 1998; Mkhize, 2004).

At a different level, the framing of culture, and subsequently identities, as static is problematic because it does not take into account the broader social, structural and political realities that shape or determine intergroup relationships in different spaces and in everyday practices. The ways in which practices of exclusion based on race and other markers of identity play out within and between groups may be rendered invisible. There is limited attention given to the symbolic power and privileges afforded by our different social group memberships and how these may impact upon relationships and everyday interactions. Like other authors (e.g., Martin-Baró, 1994; Parker, 2005; Riggs, 2004; Squire, 2000) we argue that critical engagement with symbolic power in research and practice across cultural and racial boundaries is central to transformative practice.

We have struggled with these issues and challenges in our own work and from our different social locations. I, Chris, am an immigrant to Australia who has had to negotiate discourses about race and belonging following emigration from South Africa. Here, in Australia I have been researching with immigrant and Indigenous peoples’ responses to intergroup contact with a focus on explicating the resilient and resistant ways these groups respond to oppressive power relationships (e.g., Sonn & Fisher, 2003). My position as an immigrant outside the dominant white ethnic group and outside the non-dominant Indigenous communities has offered me a vantage point from which to explore the multiple and complex dynamics involved in negotiating race relations and the implications for identity. Based on this work it has become clearer that our taken for granted social and

cultural identities and the power afforded by our different group memberships have significant implications for research and practice (Sonn, 2004). This has led to a concern to explicate how different ways of knowing can contribute to oppression and exclusion and the devaluing of different social and cultural realities.

I, Meredith, am a 4th generation white Australian. My research into race relations and racism led me away from researching the 'other' and their marginalization to investigating the dominance and privilege of the normative 'mainstream' group. In Australia this means focusing, in particular, on white Australians. The aim of this sort of research is to find ways in which dominance and privilege of white people in Australia has been constructed, and to problematise and tackle it as part of working towards attaining justice and equity. Racial dominance and privilege in Australia stem from an underlying ideology of white superiority and hegemony that disadvantages and marginalizes particular groups and maintain oppressive power relations between groups (Watts, 1994; Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1994). Rather than simply focusing on the 'victim' of these unfair power relations, interrogating whiteness as the source for continuing disadvantage and colonizing practices and discourses aims to decentre and displace the central position of dominance and privilege (Frankenberg, 2001; Nakayama & Krizek, 1999).

While there are many 'mainstream' practices that may essentialise and simplify other cultures, there is a growing interest highlighting the complexity of culture and intercultural relationships and to find useful and empowering ways of working with these complexities. Hook (2005) for example has argued that the work of postcolonial critics such as Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha and Steve Biko, among others, may offer ways of reconstructing social psychological narratives and concepts as part of the process of

developing new discourses of resistance. We concur with Hook (2005) that the writing of those who have been marginalised and oppressed hold exciting possibilities for developing a transformative psychology. In our view, Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) proposal for decolonizing methodologies is an example of writing that can contribute to the development of a transformative psychology.

Decolonising methodologies

Smith's (1999) book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples,* is both challenging and informative. She argues that research is one of the ways in which imperialism and colonialism is enacted and regulated. Research in her view is a dirty word in Indigenous communities, and "is implicated in the production of Western knowledge, in the nature of academic work, in the production of theories which have dehumanized Maori and in practices which have continued to privilege Western ways of knowing, while denying the validity for Maori of Maori knowledge, language and culture" (p. 183). Smith (1999) offers more than just a deconstruction of Western scholarship and sharing horror stories of research experiences. In her view this will do little to disrupt the enormous health, social and other inequities that continue to plague Indigenous people in many countries around the globe. She couches her project within a broader framework of decolonization and self-determination. This project involves engaging with and challenging imperialism. Imperialism has been discussed in different ways – for example, as economic expansion, and as the subjugation of indigenous peoples and from the vantage point of those who have been colonized (Smith, 1999). Colonialism is one form of imperialism. Colonialism involves processes of domination and subjugation through control of culture, economics, and education (Bulhan, 1985; Moane, 2003). For those in colonized and post-

colonial societies there are ongoing efforts to challenge colonization. Different authors have set the challenge for the reconstruction and development of methodologies that can positively contribute to social justice and discourses of resistance for Indigenous and other marginalized communities in Australia and elsewhere (e.g., Bulhan, 1985; Comas-Díaz, Lykes, Alarcón, 1998; Fanon, 1967; Harris, Carney, & Fine, 2002; Hook, 2005; Martin, 2003; Prilleltensky, 1994; Seedat, 1997; Watts, & Serrano, 2003). Ongoing questions include: What has been the impact of colonization and how are these impacts still felt? What are the workings of colonizing systems and how are they expressed at different levels? How can these systems be disrupted and transformed as part of the broader project of self-determination and transformation?

Smith (1999) implicates knowledge and knowledge making in the processes of colonization and oppression: “Decolonisation engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers one of the levels is having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations, and values which informs research practices” (p. 20). Smith challenges taken-for-granted ways of knowledge production, highlights issues of power and privilege as part of these processes, and calls for different methodologies and approaches that will ensure methodologies and approaches to “research with indigenous peoples can be more respectful, ethical, sympathetic, and useful” (p.9). She encourages Indigenous peoples to take ownership of their knowledge as part of the projects of self-determination, empowerment, healing, and decolonisation.

In the Australian and New Zealand contexts, authors (e.g., Glover, Dudgeon, & Huygens, 2005; Martin, 2003; Moreton-Robinson, 2003) have articulated Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. Based on the work of Rigney, Martin (2003) wrote that

Indigenist research "is culturally safe and culturally respectful research that is comprised of three principles: resistance as an emancipatory imperative, political integrity in Indigenous research and privileging Indigenous voices in Indigenist research" (p.205). She goes further to state that Indigenist research is both reactive and about opposition, it is about valuing the strength of being Aboriginal and "viewing anything western as 'other', alongside and among western worldviews and realities" (Martin, 2003, p. 205).

Smith (1999) writes that her book is addressed to "those researchers who work with, alongside and for communities who have chosen to identify themselves as indigenous." (p.5). Smith acknowledges that there are innovative models and bicultural partnerships that reflect a greater sensitivity to issues of oppression and decolonization. In our view, there are many issues stemming from the proposal for decolonising methodologies for those in dominant positions who work alongside Indigenous peoples and in the pursuit for social justice and social transformation. Importantly, it has been highlighted that the task for decolonization will be different for those non-indigenous people. In fact, Huygens' (1997) argument for depowerment of those in positions of privilege, which must accompany the empowerment of those who are marginalized, echoes the different implications of indigenous voices for the different groups involved.

However, we need to be cautious in how we think about working across boundaries and using concepts such as biculturalism. When dominant groups use concepts such as multiculturalism and biculturalism the blurring of boundaries is celebrated under the assumption that boundaries are destructive because they may suppress and exclude the identity of the other (Marotta, 2000). However, boundaries are also constructive in that they differentiate between self and other and blurring them may not always result in positive

social and cultural experiences. An in-between or hybrid identity can only manifest itself through boundaries; it does not do away with boundaries, but redefines them. While the post-modern turn has made way for insightful and critical analysis of the exclusionary practices of hegemonic cultural identities, it risks taking a one-dimensional view of cultural boundaries and neglects the dialectical nature of boundary construction.

This special issue is in part a response to the challenges explicated by Indigenous authors and other groups in marginalized positions about the need for decolonisation. We set out to explore colonisation and decolonisation in multiple spaces with an emphasis on the dynamics of racial power. Our objective for the special issue was to further our understanding of the forms, processes and mechanisms of colonization and decolonisation in different countries in the global south. We sent a call inviting a range of contributions that speak from different places and spaces about:

- The workings of oppression in contexts of research and practice that is concerned with subjectivities of dominance and privilege.
- Empirical and theoretical contributions concerned with explicating power dynamics of the processes of research and practice and intersections with subjectivities and its links with transformative practice.
- Alternative ways of working towards social justice and change that attend to the dominance and privilege afforded particular groups. These articles are not intended to provide prescriptive instructions for working with the non-dominant ‘other’ but rather emphasise the fluidity and complexity of dealing with and transforming oppressive intergroup relations. The difficulties are flagged, and so too the

importance of approaches that emphasise reflexivity, shifting power, and creating spaces for critical engagement.

We have been able to include four articles that responded to this invitation. While each of the articles is unique in the way the authors have tackled the challenges put forward by the special issue and the positions from which they have responded, shared themes amongst the artlices have emerged. We have identified four of these and discussed them below.

Disrupting the oppressed-oppressor dichotomy

In recent years, and across a number of disciplines, more attention has been given to understanding the way in which dominance and privilege is constructed and maintained and how it perpetuates the unfair distribution of power across different groups. In settler societies like Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa the dominant ethnic groups are white people. Some have conceptualised dominance and privilege and the normativity of those groups as whiteness. Investigating whiteness has become a significant part of the research agenda of race, racism, and race relations. However, many express concerns that this may lead to a turn away from the material and symbolic disadvantage of marginalised groups (Frankenberg, 2001). Such concern is warranted if research into whiteness focuses on studying the experiences of white people, rather than analysing the processes and mechanisms that organise forms of racial stratification.

Disruption of the dichotomy between marginalised and dominant groups and emphasis on the dialectical relationship between the two is one of the themes presented in this special edition. Dudgeon and Fielder use their work in Indigenous education to explore decolonisation. Central to their argument is the notion of third space derived from the work of Homi Bhahba. They argue that the third space is a liminal space that challenges

polarities; it disrupts the idea of pure identities. This space is characterised by hybridity and ambivalence. They state that it is in the third space that "new signs of identity, innovative collaborations (between cultures) and contestations emerge" (Dudgeon & Fielder, this issue). By creating a third space in the context of education, Indigenous and non-indigenous students are encouraged critically to self reflect on their social and cultural identities and social positioning. It is here that different ways of knowing and being are made visible and contested, providing the space for change and the creation and valuing of different ways of knowing and being.

The other three articles also encompass moves towards the dialectical understanding of relations of domination and subjugation. Kessaris does this by taking a black viewpoint on the stories of white anti-racist activists/academics. She sees herself as the outsider looking into and reflecting on the stories of dissenting white people. This position is liminal and a space from which to make visible dominance and normativity through counter stories. Huygens's and Green and Sonn's involvement in the dialectical is through the race relations they studied, which in both cases were around anti-racism efforts. Huygens uses the term co-intentional (M. Nairn, 1990) to conceptualise different ways the oppressed and the colonisers may be working towards the same end. The analysis of interviews with white Australians involved in reconciliation by Green and Sonn engages with this dialectic by identifying the different ways different discourses used by white Australians position Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Experiences of the dominant

Through discourses and narratives three of the articles, Huygens, Kessaris, and Green and Sonn, investigated the experiences and responses of white people's participation

in anti-racism. Particularising the experiences of whiteness through the analysis of discourses, narratives and practices works to displace white people from a universal stance, deconstruct the centrality and normativity of whiteness, and focus on the specific questions and challenges faced by people in any other racial location (Nakayama & Krizek, 1999). However, awareness of power inequalities can shake white people's faith in meritocracy, which may result in feelings of uncertainty, despair, anger, and guilt (Giroux, 1997; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998).

In her paper, Huygens talks about the psychological and linguistic changes Pakeha activists experience when accepting Maori authority. The psychological changes include feelings of doubt, urgency and uncertainty. Kessaris highlighted the experiences of white Australians' who have not conformed to covert group racism and who struggle to develop counter-narratives from the inside of dominance. Similarly, the paper by Green and Sonn discusses the struggles white Australians experience in understanding racism in a way that necessitates a critique of dominant, white practices in Australian society. Dudgeon and Fielder explain the impulse to pin down, close or paste over the fissure between ostensibly seamless and stable places of the third space. This space is unstable, changing, tenuous, and neither here nor there, with a lack of safety and security.

So another theme within this special edition are the struggles of engaging in anti-racism and across racial boundaries, either in terms of across different racial groups or in terms of dissenting white people stepping across boundaries white society has laid out for them. Related to this is the slowness of the process. Green and Sonn point to some of the connections between current discourses used within the reconciliation movement and colonial and oppressive discourses of the past. Huygens talks specifically about the slow

dialogue of decolonisation and the need for the process of decolonisation to move from the institutional level to the constitutional level.

Those of us involved in challenging our own dominance and unfair privileges may desire to reach an endpoint, an idealised and embodied state of competence in cross-cultural relationships. However, it would seem that in the current context of countries like Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa, where power differentials still exist both materially and in post-structural ways, those in dominant positions can only strive to continually struggle to engage in relationships with an awareness of these differentials. Dudgeon and Fielder also discuss the delicate, piecemeal and formative process of thinking differently and attitudinal change. Cultural knowledge and awareness cannot be imposed or 'injected', but needs to develop within an open space for shared learning.

Position of Indigenous people

Although white people may choose to write and advocate for Indigenous women it is not from what hooks (1996) calls a "location of experience" (Moreton-Robinson, 2000). White and Indigenous Australians speak out of different cultural, epistemological, experiential, historical, and material conditions, which separate politics and analyses (Moreton-Robinson, 2000). To *know an* Indigenous social world is to have experienced it from within, while to *know about* an Indigenous social world is to impose a conceptual framework.

Based on 'knowing an' Indigenous world, Kessaris identifies the invisible practices of covert group racism. Despite naming some of these practices in this paper, Kessaris asserts at the end of the paper that it is white people who have a primary responsibility for and the power to address continuing colonial dominance and racism in their community.

Huygens discusses the authoritative role Indigenous people take in discussing the Treaty in New Zealand/Aotearoa and the plans for the future. She sees this assertion of authority as critical to enabling dialogue between Pakeha and Maori people. To provide an anti-colonial space in the current context of Australian society Dudgeon and Fielder discuss how Indigenous people have had to be involved in 'answering back' about history and re-writing and re-telling the story. For Indigenous people, strategic essentialism and cultural renaissance is important in creating space within places controlled by the powerful and revaluing what has been systematically devalued.

From these articles we can identify the necessary role for Indigenous people in decolonisation, which may be through offering an alternative standpoint through which to view mainstream narratives and constructions, naming covert social practices of racism, asserting Indigenous ways of knowing and being, or resisting the dominance of white structures and processes. However, the marginalised position from which Indigenous people take on this role and the fragility of the space and society in which they do so is also pointed to. It is under these conditions that the responsibility of white people to address racism and decolonisation in Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa is highlighted. This is a responsibility to bring into focus an ethic of connection. According to Bird-Rose (2003),

> The ethic of connection, of mutually implicated humans whose primary duty is to respond to the calls of others, particularly those who are vulnerable does not demand a suppression of denial of one's self. Rather to the contrary, the argument is that one finds one's own self in responding to others, and so both self and other become entangled in ethical relationships, or, if responsibility is abjured in favour of violence, in abuse of ethics (p.20).

In their paper Green and Sonn have identified some of the risks that come from 'knowing about' an Indigenous constructed social world and working towards reconciliation. Taking on a 'devil's advocate' role, Green and Sonn talk about the ways reconciliation actions may unknowingly and unintentionally perpetuate colonial practices and ways of thinking. White people being aware of their dominant position and how that may affect Indigenous people are essential in working across cultural boundaries. White people are in a position to determine and depoliticise the relevance and meaning of race and racism for minority groups positioned as 'other' (Moreton-Robinson 2000). For example, although feminists have considered the oppressive conditions faced by Indigenous women, these investigations are often blind to the manifestation of white race privilege in and through the relations between white and Indigenous women. Therefore, whiteness remains invisible, unmarked, and uninterrogated, while Indigenous women's subjectivities are objectified. White people can then also dismiss, ignore, or rebuff the knowledge Indigenous woman have about whiteness, thereby suppressing knowledge about whiteness and maintaining white racial domination and privilege.

Researching and practicing differently

A broad range of issues is explored in the articles included in this special edition. Each of them raises questions about how dominant and privileged groups can be thought about in a dialectical way, without losing sight of needing to tackle the material and symbolic racism of continuing colonising practices and discourses. Related to this are questions about the roles and experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. However, these articles also provide examples of how we can start engaging meaningfully

in decolonising research and education and how alternative social realities may be constructed.

The difference between what is explored in these articles and what is provided in models and guidelines is that the theoretical and analytical tools discussed here allow and even emphasise the need for the fluidity and changing dynamics, both within a group and between groups. The need for continual negotiations and dialogues about these changes are seen as essential for intercultural research and practice. With the focus on decolonisation, many of the theoretical and analytical tools are about dealing with the dominance and privilege of white people in countries like Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa.

The articles by Huygens and Green and Sonn discuss how different processes of discourse analysis can contribute to conscientisation or awareness of dominant groups about unequal and unfair distributions of power. Huygens highlights the way in which new linguistic resources available to both the marginalised and dominant groups enabled coherent dialogue towards co-intentional outcomes. As well as raising awareness, Green and Sonn discuss the ideological and cultural critique that is part of a process of discourse analysis. It is through this critique that we can see the macro-dynamics brought into the micro-dynamics.

Kessaris and Dudgeon and Fielder offer some theoretical and analytical tools that focus on counter-narratives or counter-spaces. Kessaris talks about counter-narratives as a way white people can take responsibility for the racism in Australian society. Similar to the process of discourse analysis, counter-narratives make visible the normative and dominance of white. In their article Dudgeon and Fielder discuss the productive tension that emerges

from the unsettling third space. It is in these spaces that new signs of identity and innovative collaborations between cultures emerge.

In summary, we have outlined the issues implicit in adopting models that assume the uniformity of cultures as maps for working across cultures. While recognizing writing in different contexts (e.g., Harris et al., 2002; Seedat, 1997; Watts & Serrano-Garcia, 2003), we have used Linda Smith's call for decolonizing methodologies as a stimulus for engaging in critical discussions about the challenges and tensions involved in working across cultural boundaries and the implications for identity and power. The different articles highlight the possibilities, tensions, and pitfalls. Importantly, they highlight the importance of engaging in research and practice that value lived experiences, are critically reflective, are dialogical and informed by an ethic of connection, and that is aimed at promoting and affirming identities in settings created to disrupt oppression.

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