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LAND DIALOGUES: Interdisciplinary research in dialogue with land

**Communities as 'other': Social engineering Indigenous
Communities - Lessons from the Past to Inform Community
Sustainability**

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Abstract

This paper considers the question, *what is it that makes a community?* It uses examples of the ongoing contemporary colonisation of Indigenous communities in Australia and New Zealand, to highlight the disabling effects from different levels of Western-style governments to try to massage that definition. An increasing practice in western worlds is to galvanise actions in particular towards the redefinition of Indigenous communities. Social engineering is a phenomenon that is not talked about much, but it is far-reaching; manifested in the appropriation and dismantlement of communities. The sense that people have strengths to offer is a mute point when there are policies and practices of inclusion and exclusion that actually have the effect of not only stultifying a community, but wiping it out altogether. 'For the betterment of all' is an example of a particular form of whiteness language that promulgates debates about equality, but whiteness is the erasure of inequality because it presents as the norm in many social policy situations. Often, it surfaces as indulgent practice; reinforcing the hegemony of normativity. Dubbo's former Gordon Estate in New South Wales, Australia, and a small Māori community example from New Zealand, suffered at the hands of whiteness behaviours. The gaze of such behaviours has recently moved to the questioning and continuation of remote Indigenous communities in Western Australia. Within a whiteness frame, patterned behaviours of dealing with Indigenous communities will be exercised as the potential to produce accessibility and achievement, but who will critique the inequalities?

Background

At a 2014 social work residential school connected to the 4th-year Bachelor of Social Work [BSW] and 2nd-year Master of Social Work [MSW] students at Charles Sturt University, New South Wales [NSW], Australia, I presented a lecture on the topic of community engagement. Through discussion about definitions of community, the story of the Dubbo Gordon Estate [New South Wales] came up and all 15 non-Indigenous students were shocked and unbelieving that such a thing could have happened in Australia. During that time, I visited Dubbo on a weekly-basis, delivering

lectures and tutorials and watched as the story of the demise of the Estate unfolded before my eyes. Although only one student at that residential school knew about what happened to the Gordon Estate; mature-aged and herself from that inner-rural city of Dubbo, that student's visibly upset reaction accompanied by lamenting words akin to a grief and loss situation, was shared and supported by the whole group. It was obvious that this was a wound that had continued to fester for some years, and some further years to come; the example of people displacement was just 'too close to home'; something that did not happen only to refugee-background peoples or in places torn apart by conflict and war, but here in a close neighbourhood, right beside us.

I remembered that story when, in 2015, I visited my own home community in Matapihi Tauranga, New Zealand, and was shocked to see gigantic concrete water sewerage pipes lining the narrow road through the village, and pockets of enormous road-work machinery similar to those used in the mines of Western Australia, parked in the front fields of *whanau* [family] homes. Just months before my visit, there had been the *tangihanga* [funeral] of a young cousin, whose motor-bike had collided with an earth-moving digger (Bay of Plenty Times, December 6, 2014; April 18, 2016 [online]) that had been parked along the narrow road through Matapihi – he was just 200 meters from his house. The events were particularly shocking for someone like me coming back into the area after being away for nearly seven years, because in 2008, I had been part of the local *marae* [meeting place] committee that had rejected the initial information-dissemination about the proposed pipeline project. In 2015, I asked the question, 'how did this happen'? The responses from fellow *tangata whenua* [people of that land; that locality] signaled confusion and elements of despair that circumstances of the situation had effectively silenced their concerns. It was also in 2015, and at the same time as my above visit to New Zealand, that the West Australian and Federal Governments triggered wide-spread dissent to cease services to approximately 150 Aboriginal remote communities, therefore condemning them to imminent closure. As support rallied 'across the ditch' from New Zealand Māori activists, in the *Stringer Independent News*, Georgatos (March 22nd, 2015) wrote that, "We will be damned by the future if we sit quiet on any dispossession of

Homelands – ‘remote communities’ – just as we damn the past for similar brutal dispossessions, for the evil of the Stolen Generations, the Stolen Wages, en masse indenture, apartheid, the lot. The dispossession of hundreds of Homelands, loosely referred to as remote communities, has been in the mix for a long while. The bent of Governments for assimilation has not died, it is still their way. But assimilation is not their end all; it is a tool, a means to the end. Exploitation is the driver, and assimilation is the servant”. Prior to Georgatos’ revealing report, the then Prime Minister, Mr Tony Abbott, was criticised for being ‘hopeless’, ‘disrespectful’, and ‘simplistic’, for his likening the living in remote communities to mere ‘life-style choices’ that could not be supported by governments (Griffiths, 2015).

Introduction

The Dubbo Gordon Estate story will be revealed in a later section below, but the message from the above experiences indicate the need for social workers at least, to be watchful and aware of our own complicitness through privilege, or lack of power in some situations; the personal and political spheres of our lives are ever-entwined. So, I begin by introducing the term and context of the phrase ‘*Kia hiwa ra!*’, and also another that relates to the importance of people. The first comes from its use by New Zealand Māori guarding their communities, lands, and fortresses. It is an exclamation that was shouted from the palisades or stockades by sentries/watchmen at specific times throughout the night to be “Alert” and “Watchful” (Aranga, Mika, & Mlcek, 2008, p. 1) against potential disaster. On hearing this cry, other people from the surrounds would know that the sentry was awake and that all was well. This phrase is part of a larger injunction or *whakaaraara* (*ibid*, 2008, p. 1) to be watchful, and in a contemporary context is used mainly as an oratorical device before formal speeches by Māori orators. An extended version with a translation follows below; the words have a metaphorical resonance for the way that Indigenous community life is hijacked, not for the ‘benefit of all’, but for political gain:

Kia hiwa ra! Kia hiwa!

Kia hiwa ra ki tēnei tuku,

Kia hiwa ra ki tēnā tuku,

Kia apurua koe ki te toto

Whakapurua tonu

Whakapurua tonu

Kia hiwa ra! Kia hiwa ra!

Be watchful! Be alert!

Be watchful at this terrace

Be alert at that terrace

Lest you be overwhelmed

And the blood flows

Be watchful! Be alert!

It is not difficult to see the relevance of this *whakaaraara* [chant] to keep the watch alert, or give the alarm in time of attack (p. 14), just as the academic ritual of critical analysis is itself a seeking out and type of dialectical engagement with others.

The second phrase of significance to the stories and discussion in this paper comes from another Māori lament – *He tangata* – it is people, that is:

He aha te mea nui? What is the greatest thing?

He tangata! It is people, He tangata!

He tangata! It is people, He tangata! It is people.

In addition, we know about the spiritual links of Indigenous realities to all parts of the environment, and not just to people. Those links include what it means to be part of community/ies, and everything that lives and breathes within that environment. We also know that pristine surroundings of real and symbolic significance to Indigenous peoples are being appropriated. Peoples and places are being displaced through contemporary colonisation practices. These occur through the hegemony of normativity in the face of an improvement and betterment discourse, and through often-times willful and neglectful government and developer actions that miss important processes in the spirit of dialectic and dialogic action. That is, any engagement with communities requires the exploratory nature behind dialogue, as

well as the integration and assessment of conflicting ideas that are raised through dialectical thinking (Freire, 1972).

[Nearly nine years ago, a troubled, predominantly-Indigenous housing estate in Central NSW made national headlines. The Gordon Estate in Dubbo, Australia, was 'a hotbed of crime', as almost 'everyone' in this regional city of 42,000 admits. The reality is that many people, on the ground, have starkly differing opinions to what was reported in the media. However, despite the concerted efforts of a few, Gordon Estate was controversially 'pulled down' in 2006 after media outlets reported a New Year's Eve riot. Controversial, because families were uprooted without notice, with some sent out of town to alternative public housing across NSW.](#) The legacy lives on from the 2002 re-engineering of Claymore in Sydney's south-west (Browne, 2015), and the welfare development and renewal of Minto in east New South Wales (Collins, 2006). The strength of communities like Dubbo, Claymore, and Minto, is through its people and being leaders in the area of collective impact. So, have lessons been learned from the past?

The phenomenon of social engineering may appear to be an elusive construct to many people, but that is exactly what happened with the Gordon Estate; a predominantly-Indigenous community was dismantled, with land and housing being re-sold as free-hold, and the estate renamed as Rosewood. The enormity of such an occurrence and its aftermath to still raise the kinds of concerns at the social work residential school, is made more acute when this story is being recounted here, ten years later, and yet the one about the Gordon Estate did actually happen in 2006, finally triggered by a 2005 New Year's incident. In reality, it probably started even long before that, with the final dismantlement happening extremely quickly.

Being 'too close to home' requires further explanation but fundamentally it is there in the way rural and regional human services practice is played out in Australia, that is, to the visibility of the whole community, hardly anything is not known. For example, anecdotally, several non-Indigenous people who had purchased 're-sold' property after the dismantlement of the Gordon Estate were so fearful of being 'found out', they used different postal addresses to collect mail. These experiences are

juxtaposed with the other stark reality of Indigenous Elders flying over the unraveling of the Gordon Estate, to witness the landscape set out below like a patch-work quilt, but with many of the patch-squares missing, replaced by cleared blocks of land of houses that used to be there, and now branded with For Sale signs hammered into the earth.

Lessons from the past – *what makes a ‘community’?*

For any of our social work students, prior to understanding community development and engagement in community work, is for them to acknowledge the fundamental debate that revolves around our notion of ‘community’; a concept that is notoriously difficult to define. An aspect of this debate seems to appear on a regular basis in the idea that any definition is going to either describe community in an ideal sense or in terms of a community as it is experienced in terms of a taken-for-granted world (de Certeau, 1984). Wild (1981, p. 14) described this as the confusion between a “normative prescription” and an “empirical description” of any given community, that is, whether we engage with a community on the basis of what we are told of what ought to be going on, or whether we make conclusions based on what we see and hear from people who are directly involved.

Another aspect of viewing a community is to note how services are conceived and disseminated (Ife, 2002). At the macro level of engagement, there is relevance in the way people are perceived to come together in communities, as well as the strengths and weaknesses in what those models of community might be. This kind of insight gives some grounding for understanding how and why community workers for example, might approach their community work. Within the rural-urban continuum view of community espoused by early social theorists such as Redfield or Frankenburg (in Wild, 1981, p. 22) there are close-knit networks and integration on the ‘rural end’ to characteristics of specialisation of labour and organic solidarity from the ‘urban end’ of the scale. Another model of community – the social political network - was conceptualised as community members having subjective feelings of belonging together (Weber, 1947, p. 136) and having definite lines of interaction

(Barnes, in Bell & Newby, 1978, p. 52); sharing values and beliefs. The third model of community is especially relevant to this paper because it views communities as localised social, political or economic systems that always exist within geographical boundaries and as a “combination of social units and systems that perform the major social functions as having locality relevance” (Warren, 1983, p. 28).

However, “when the romantic rhetoric is stripped away” the political dimensions attributed to communities is much more interesting and within the New Welfare system, community development and engagement is often seen as the outcome of agencies brokering assistance (Cass & Brennan, 2002, p. 254). Community development workers can then be seen to broker assistance for community members, but they do not do this in isolation from the management models of those organisations that impact their existence. In terms of the focus of this paper, the suggestion is made here, that services (including development) are delivered based on a response to the internal community situation, the external environment, together with available strategies and resources.

One of the challenges for community development workers, and community members as a whole, is not only to know what to do *within their place* in the community, but also to find their *sense of place* (Chenoweth, 2004, p. 279). This idea relates to their self-efficacy and locus of control to be able to determine the degree to which they believe they are capable of doing their work and contributing to community concerns (Chaousis, 2000, pp. 29 & 87). A sense of place in this paper is taken to be an important part of the *structuration process* (Giddens, 1984), “both constitutive of, and constituted by, social relations” (Duncan, 2000, cited in Johnston et al [Eds.], 2003, p. 583). It is also implied here as coming from the improvisatory nature of *habitus* whereby actions are both governed, or not governed, by structures (Bourdieu, 1990). In other words, communities have often been at the mercy of government management practices; their development has always been based on the social/political settlements of the time, and furthermore, relationships have been redefined “between the state and citizen, between public and private, between

providers and recipients of social welfare, and between management and policies” (Clarke & Newman, 1997, p. ix).

The following three communities can be easily captured in the typical whiteness worldview of what it means to be a community as espoused in the previous ideas. However, there are cultural layers in the social action that determine and redefine these communities, and that push at conventional understandings of colonisation, participation, inclusion, and empowerment (Victorian Aboriginal peak and state-wide organisations, 2004). As Moreton-Robinson (2011, p. 75) suggests, “Whiteness establishes the limits of what can be known about the other through itself, disappearing beyond or behind the limits of this knowledge it creates in the other’s name”. There are still some Euro-Western debates questioning the Indigenous person’s claim of connection to country as some kind of elusive construct. But there is no denying that the connection of Indigenous peoples to land has a visceral quality that is felt deep in their bones and provides the essence of cultural perpetuity (Blackstock, 2007; Blackstock & Trocmé, 2005;). This produces a feeling of survival, spiritual connection, and sustainability through not just the embodiment of soul with the corporeal essence of people, but the tangible links with both animate and inanimate objects like the air we breathe, the soil, rocks, flora and fauna we observe and touch, and that no western worldview can easily encapsulate in an academic attempt to define community.

Saving Claymore

Before the community of Claymore in NSW became transformed by an initial Animation Program run by the Catholic Church, its residents lived in fear and isolation, deserted by industry that never turned up to provide jobs. This was a community of people from different ethnic groups who were “given a rotten start and found the courage to turn their lives around” (Compass, 2002). The irony of using the Animation program of community development strategies in a struggling suburban community like Claymore is that in a well-developed country like Australia, those

initiatives began from lessons taken from some of the poorest countries in the world (Boal, 1992; Freire, 1972).

Remembering Minto: Life and memories of a community

The stoic presence of the Franciscan Friars within Minto, NSW, created an enormous positive impact on that community. In one reclamation situation involving community development of a kids' park, members were supported in applying for and taking hold of the deeds to the actual place. Minto is in Sydney's far south-west, with nearly 5% of its population made up of Australian Indigenous heritage (Remembering Minto, n.d. [online]). It was built in the 1970s as a model public housing development based on the American 'Radburn' concept. Houses would front onto public parkland where residents would congregate and develop a strong community spirit. The idea for this development worked in cohesive and affluent communities in the United States and elsewhere, but in Sydney's western suburbs it was a disaster. The houses seemed back to front, because they were accessed from the rear. The Parklands, intended to bring people together, became suburban wastelands, and people in desperate need of different services. One of the service providers at the time related the following thoughts about the relocation of the Minto community members:

I have a special passion for Minto and its people. As a service provider, the redevelopment will have a huge impact. Whoever thought of the idea, "We'll just bulldoze these homes down and then we'll give you all new ones?" Peoples' lives are in those homes. People living 20 or 30 years in the area, to just be stripped like that. As a service provider, what does that do for us? We're there to provide a service for the community. Well they've just relocated half the community (Remembering Minto, n.d. [online]).

To a certain extent, Minto residents became 'animated' also, to save their community, but was it the right sort of animation in the end, to prevent the destruction of nearly 1,000 homes? That is, just as the community was starting to take control and transform those pockets of the community that were in need of resurrection, Mr Andrew Refshauge, Minister for Housing, said at the time:

We've got to give people in this community a better future and part of that is moving away, getting rid of these Radburn Estates. Bulldozing the past and giving a better future for our tenants (ABC Television, October 8, 2006 [online]).

The Minto Resident Action Group (RAG) had been formed for some time with the assistance of a social researcher, Dr Judy Stubbs, and was in repeated stand-offs with the Department of Housing to release a master plan about the relocation of their community; there was still a failure by the Department to inform Minto tenants openly about the issue of relocation. Judith Stubbs recounts from that time:

I think when the community started to really work on its own behalf, through participation in the various forums the Department set up with the support of the Franciscans and others. They became I guess not just objects of redevelopment, but they started to take some control over that (ABC Television, October 8, 2006 [online]).

Gordon Estate: Breaking down a community in Dubbo

Dubbo is in the central west of New South Wales, with approximately 40,000 people, including over 4,000 Indigenous Australians. The Gordon Estate in Dubbo is still 'there', but is no longer a designated place for Aboriginal people. The Estate was dismantled in 2006 as a response to address 'social problems'. The relocation of people in this case, to make way for others is a whiteness behaviour that is juxtaposed with the hegemonic practice of creating solutions for everyone, and racism at its core. It was seen as a culturally appropriate intervention that was in fact culturally insensitive, non-collaborative, and non-consultative. There is now a "property boom in a ghetto reborn" with Elders having lived on the Estate since its beginnings in the early 1960s forced to move to make way for "another bargain for a private owner/occupier" (Brisbane Times, August 2008 [online]). Furthermore, *The NSW Government won an award in August 2008, from the Urban Development Institute of Australia, NSW for its Dubbo Transformation Strategy, which judges called "a great example of courageous and innovative leadership addressing problems and perceptions in a notorious public housing estate". By about mid-2008, the Government was close to a third of the way through converting the 'public ghetto'*

into private suburbia. It had sold 63 public housing properties to private owners in the past year after relocating scores of Indigenous tenants - sometimes against their will - and renovating or demolishing their former state-owned homes. There were 304 left to sell by June 2012 (summarised from the Brisbane Times August 2008 [online]).

As already mentioned, community can be defined in many different ways.

Community as social construct is sometimes best understood after the community is no longer there; through the street stories that help to keep the history of the people alive. One of the competing challenges for historians however, is that in any community there are both visible and invisible stories.

In response to the issues around the relocation of people from the Gordon Estate, the Housing Minister at the time, Cherie Burton, had this to say,

We've got a whole program of redevelopments amongst our estates in New South Wales and we've already started a very successful program with the Minto Renewal Project. We're looking at renewing the Bonnyrigg Estate and also the Macquarie Fields Estate. So what this is about is building better housing for our people that are the good tenants and making sure that our bad tenants start to take some respect and responsibility for where they live, or then public housing won't be an option to them (ABC Local Radio, May 12, 2006 [online]).

Matapihi, Tauranga – a New Zealand Māori community example

In a current similar social engineering and sanitising exercise in my own Indigenous home community - Matapihi, in Tauranga, NZ - the Southern Pipeline sewerage project is seen as a way to 'improve people's lives'. Despite community objections, the Pipeline now invades the surrounding *moana* [sea area and locality], tracks through the community and actually does not service the people of Matapihi at all, because most of their homes rely on the use of septic tanks.

Research tells us that from an upper area in the urban part of the Tauranga township, raw sewerage is pumped across the seabed, through a small semi-rural local Māori village, to be treated in an adjoining neighbourhood 8kms away. Locality issues between the community members voicing concerns to the local council, included cultural and community concerns that ranged from: hydrological effects on

the surrounding waters, and the negative effects on harbour ecological communities, to rights of access over Māori land, and in particular, concerns relating to effects upon archaeological sites given significant occupation of the area, by Māori.

In one of almost 200 official Reports, applications, and drawings/plans found on the Tauranga City Council website, regarding the Southern Pipeline Project (see <https://www.tauranga.govt.nz/projects/southern-pipeline/pipeline-resource-consents.aspx>), the *Hearing Decisions Resource Consent Report* (New Zealand Government, 2009) submitted to the regional and local councils, as well as to the Minister of Conservation, notes that the local 'cultural community' was singled out in an interestingly segregated way. In several cases, it was reported that this Māori community harboured grievances and concerns, for example, in areas of: inadequate consultation around the principle of waste water transported over Māori land; the removal of soil from the locality, as well as importing soil to the area; the effects on *kaimoana* [food from the sea], sea food harvesting, customary activities, endangering estuarine ecosystems, altering tidal flows and the Harbour; a need to protect *waahi tapu* [sacred] archaeological sites, and of cultural earthworks protocols. In addition alternative methods for sewerage treatment disposal to be environmentally sound were not adequately addressed by the consortium for the Project (p. 28).

Despite the above numerous concerns and challenges for Māori, the Southern Pipeline Project was given the green light with the Report noting "findings of fact" (p. 32, 12.1.1 & 12.1.2), whereby the growth of Tauranga urban area has been continued and sustained and the existing wastewater system is not of sufficient capacity to cater for the projected and planned growth of Tauranga. Accordingly, there is a need to upgrade and expand the waste water network (12.1.1).

Furthermore, the treatment and disposal of waste water from the growing population of Tauranga is necessary to protect not only the health and welfare of the community but also the qualities of the waters of Tauranga Harbour.

Discussion

There are numerous definitions to offer in answer to the question, *what makes a community?* According to the New South Government, however, and the local government in Dubbo, the Gordon Estate did not ‘make a community’ worth saving. The tragedy of the ‘dismembering’ of that Estate causes anxiety and stress to this day. The legacy of banishment without consultation from a community lives on in the hearts of the Elders who feel shame and displacement, anger and heartache, on behalf of their people. However, what is it about social policy implementation that steals a community? The execution of power is an often insidious phenomenon that encroaches on personal well-being and the ability of people to articulate, especially Indigenous peoples who still carry the legacy of the effect of past colonisation into contemporary colonisation practices.

The physical landscape around this Estate at the time was peppered with For Sale signs. Again, this realtor action followed the forced removal after events of 2006, of over 1,000 Indigenous inhabitants [some of whom had lived there since the early 1960s]. The estate (now identified with a lower case ‘e’, because it was rendered insignificant) was later renamed ‘Rosewood Grove’, in a *sanitising exercise* by the local government which canvassed through the local media, for broader community suggestions to rename this part of Dubbo.

In the example from New Zealand, this could be seen as a story of affluence, influence, and effluence. It is a story of waste, and of wasteful and neglectful influence on people’s lives. Paulo Freire (2004) inspired a pedagogy of indignation that seems to provide a relevant springboard for further discussion about the social engineering of Indigenous communities. His words have strong resonance in capturing the situation, that, “Washing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral” (p. 122). I often wonder how many social workers or students of social work participated in that government renaming process, at Dubbo, in an act of non-reflective complicity.

Practising with a blended critical reflection framework provides a beginning axiom to deconstruct the injustice directed at communities to either conform, or miss out. This type of framework includes several elements depending on the positioning of the user but the following elements have become part of my own standard for analysis and reflection, as well as providing useful and relevant approaches to storying, including:

- *Auto-ethnography* inspires us to critically reflect upon our own life experiences of privilege and power within a socio-cultural context (Spry, 2001); perhaps through a psycho-dynamic lens to tap into the consciousness of feelings about the way that conflict and/or deep ‘interruptions’ in a taken-for-granted world, affect people.
- *Personal stories* informed by socio-cultural experiences (Pease, 2010b) are powerful ways to talk about patterns of privilege and oppression (Scott-Simmons, 2012); on the ‘borders’; and perhaps from a ‘conflicted base’.
- *Critical social theory* identifies class positioning through the influence and affluence of people and ideas, and our own part in that complicitness (Young, 2008).

There are some challenging ideas about what is a ‘community’? These lie in the stories we can share about social engineering that tend to locate Indigenous peoples and concerns *outside of* the mainstream, thus making them invisible. One of the limiting ideas about the homogeneity of communities is captured through a colour-blindness lens (Moreton-Robinson, 2011), which sees people as being the same people everywhere; until of course, we unpack notions of privilege, power and class. Some definitions are tied up in the ideas around social inclusion, and the building of social capital through a collective and synonymous gaze, but these thoughts originate from whiteness language that promulgates equity but which is really not available for everyone without the corresponding critique of access for people, as well as their levels of equality compared to others.

Whiteness language is akin to ‘white noise’, manifested in white sound that includes someone saying all the ‘right’ things; making the ‘right’ statements. This language is steady like rain, but is also dehumanising, unvarying, unobtrusive, drone-like, drip-

like, and masking or obliterating unwanted sounds. Whiteness is a socially and politically constructed behaviour. It represents a position of power where the power holder defines social categories and reality. It provides the stage for the 'master narrator' to perform. Furthermore, examples of unearned privilege are *denumerable* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013).

The *rhizomatics* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013) of privilege and critical whiteness here in Australia, are tied to the fact that White Australia has a Black History; and so does New Zealand. When we look at the dismantlement of Indigenous communities, there are ever-present comparative considerations that are part of the personal and political spheres: post-colonialism compared to ongoing contemporary colonisation; cultural perpetuity and responsiveness (O'Sullivan, Hill, Bernoth, & Mlcek, 2016) compared to cultural submersion; inclusion and acceptance compared to diasporic anomie (Mlcek, 2016); decolonising methodologies to claim stories compared to social engineering that annihilates the narratives of people. The problematic for many, is that there is often quietness associated with the arrogance of some behaviours rather than a shouting from the rooftops when systemic silence allows the perpetuation of stereotypes, tokenistic acknowledgement of 'community', and simplistic views on cultural difference. That is, "*... it is not difference that immobilises us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken*" (Lorde, 1984, p. 84). Up to the time of dismantlement and invasion into the above communities, there were several attempts made to animate the community members in inclusive discussion, but the original agendas were flawed and the trust of individuals was never quite attained. From a community development point of view, the type of animation (Smith, 2009) that is required for truly-inclusive self-determination comes from a compilation of ideas that have their grounding in a collective socio-cultural framework. This framework includes notions of working with people and groups so that they participate in and manage the communities in which they live, but interestingly enough for the first two communities, there has been benevolent and tireless intervention by caring supporters that offer no condemnation, that believe in the resilience of people to overcome adversity and the limit-situations of their lives (Freire, 1972), as well as in the transformation process engendered by communities

to impact changes in their circumstances (Pollo, 1991, in Green, 2009 [online]). In an Indigenous community, the challenge is to provide continuous opportunities for affirmation of identity, and to recognise and applaud the strength of the relationship between very young people and the wisdom of Elders to contribute to the cultural perpetuity within communities.

Consultation is at the heart of participation in Indigenous communities. For the original Aboriginal people who lived in west Dubbo, breaking down the Gordon Estate (ABC Radio National, April 1, 2007 [online]) on the instructions from the New South Wales Department of Housing, consolidated the constant despair in their lives to overcome lack of self-determination, the constant lack of consultation, the constant attempts to overcome marginalisation, constant racism, and the constant spotlight to perform to find ongoing solutions in a western timely fashion. Tensions arise from the mis-match of cultural expectations from a Western worldview, compared to that of an Aboriginal worldview.

Conclusion

This is a story from afar and from within. It is a story that began in 2006 and culminates here through further observation and analysis in 2016. As such, the story is a reflective piece about practitioner engagement, over ten years. But of course it is a story that has been centuries in the making, as is the pedagogy of the oppressed; a story of the legacy of hurt and displacement; of hands tied behind one's back; of frustration and anguish; of insurmountable loss and lost opportunity. The story feeds a broader narrative about the toll on individuals to withstand 'successful' social engineering in the guise of development, of communities. The story started out as yet another commentary in the long litany of questionable government engagements with Indigenous Peoples in Australia, but has become, yet again, another grief and loss story that is juxtaposed with non-Indigenous actions and feelings of puzzlement and 'shameful' helplessness (as highlighted in the Background section at the start of this paper). The story moves to incorporate another type of social engineering whereby interference in a New Zealand Māori community is portrayed as something

other; not to be concerned with, because deontologically, it has all been for the greater good.

This is however, a story of a way forward because abjectness is never a place to occupy for any length of time; the impact on the human psyche is too overwhelming and the power of individuals to move forward, some way, somehow, is fundamental to social work practice – even when things ‘get too close to home’. When social engineering of Indigenous communities happens, silence is never a good option. Being watchful to be aware of the appropriation and engineering of Indigenous communities is not an easy task, especially when the need to be alert is in relation to sometimes-co-opted behaviours and actions from those who are close to us within our own communities. The legacy of colonisation lives on in the cycle of brokerage and enticement, where those of the oppressed group can be easily-enticed to fit the shoes of the oppressor; as ‘agents of change’, and in many cases not even knowing that is what is happening. However, social engineering is a scourge; we cannot promote resilience, empowerment, safety and respect for others, if we are not constantly mindful of inappropriate and unchallenged behaviours towards communities; we cannot practise unknowingly when positions of power and privilege impact the social and cultural wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. We need to use a critical whiteness framework to interrogate and problematise those things we know to be wrong. When we try to engineer Indigenous communities – *we reap what we sow* in terms of continued loss and grief, as well as the disengagement of individuals from whole-of-community endeavours. We need to rethink the influences of a white ontological frame, a white epistemological frame, and a white axiological frame that, at their most basic levels, privilege the individual over the collective strength of Indigenous communities.

The challenge from this paper is to project the ideas posed in the previous sections to a place of realism that could be any Indigenous community in the future. The ideas from the successful animation project in ‘saving Claymore’ can be transformed into strategies to be used to build an Indigenous Framework for Cultural Perpetuity

within communities, so that whiteness behaviours are not privileged, but effective self-determined Indigenous communities are.

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