

# Southern Psychotherapies

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**ABSTRACT** *Drawing on Connell's ground-breaking and ground-affirming work, Southern Theory, published in 2008, this paper explores the concept and possibility of "Southern psychotherapy" – or, more accurately, as the author advocates pluralism in psychotherapy, "Southern psychotherapies". The paper first discusses the significance of context, personally and in theory, and the relationship between culture and theory. From this, it then addresses the hegemony of Western theory, the arguments by which this is maintained, and the "Northernness" of general theory. The second half of the paper responds to the "characteristic textual moves" of Northern theory, identified by Connell, and offers four "textual" counterpoints as defining the theory and practice of Southern psychotherapies. Copyright © 2012 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

**Key words:** Southern theory; context; culture; universality; colonisation

## PEPEHA

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.	Greetings to you all, greetings to us all.
Ko Helvellyn te maunga.	My mountain in Helvellyn.
Ko Don te awa.	My river is the Don.
Ko Waka Oranga te waka.	My canoe is Waka Oranga. <sup>1</sup>
Ko Werehi te iwi.	I have Welsh ancestry.
He tangata Tiriti ahau.	I am a person of te Tiriti   the Treaty. <sup>2</sup>
Ko Tudor te hapū.	My family name is Tudor.
Ko Ngā Wai o Horotiu te marae.	My marae is Ngā Wai o Horotiu. <sup>3</sup>
Ko John Tudor te tangata.	My ancestor is John Tudor.
Nō Sheffield ki Ingārangi ahau.	I am from Sheffield, England.
Kei Titirangi, kei Waitakere ahau e noho ana.	I live in Titirangi, in the Waitakere.
Ko Keith Tudor taku ingoa.	My name is Keith Tudor.
Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.	Greetings to all.

## INTRODUCTION

Two years ago I emigrated from the United Kingdom to Aotearoa New Zealand: from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere, where things are, at least from a Northern perspective, a little different: the flora and fauna are different, although there are imports of

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<sup>1</sup>See Hall, Morice, & Wilson (2012).

<sup>2</sup>Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi (see the Waitangi Tribunal, 2011).

<sup>3</sup>The AUT University marae, Auckland.

both that are familiar, but which, in many cases, also have a history of having colonised native plants and animals, some to extinction. There is different food, and certain food (such as Marmite, a childhood favourite) which looks the same but tastes different. Some of the (English) language is different; and, of course, there is a different, and second, official language: teo reo Māori. I have moved from being “at home” and indigenous (at least as far back as I know and have researched) or, in teo reo māori, “tangata whenua” (people of the land), to being “tau iwi” or of the “other tribe”: an immigrant settler in my new homeland, a permanent resident but not yet a citizen. Furthermore, I moved from a Western (and Northern) intellectual tradition to a Southern land in which law, social policy, thinking and attitudes are hugely influenced by the West (and North), but often at the expense of indigenous wisdom and traditions. Whilst the outcomes of this influence are strangely familiar, they are not comfortable, as there are daily examples of colonial, colonising, and racist attitudes, behaviour, assumptions, and thinking.

I come to this land, and a new position, situating myself in new ground, as a cultural being: both in the sense of being cultured (as in educated), and of having a culture and being “culturally intentional” (Shweder, 1990). I was brought up in a liberal household, influenced by nonconformist religious beliefs, with strong parental and family values of social service and social justice, and of internationalism, and benefitted from a liberal education. I have always had a sense of being English, though more in the liberal and radical tradition of culture than patriotism (see Bragg, 2006), and, partly as a result of living in Italy for two years in my thirties, have a strong sense both of my own Englishness and of this as a part of European culture.

In the late 1970s and '80s I was actively involved in community politics, was part of a group which founded a Housing Cooperative and for ten years lived in collective houses. These political and personal activities and commitments were influenced by the politics of movement (as distinct from party), and both feminism and the politics of *autonomia* (autonomy) in Italy (see Lotringer & Marazzi, 1980), and by a libertarian socialism (see Howell, 1981) which aspired to reflect a “prefigurative politics”, i.e., ways of being, relating, and organising that articulated and reflected personal and social liberation – before the revolution. I took this interest in and concern about the state of the social/political world, culture, and context to my training as a psychotherapist in the United Kingdom (1987–1994), and found some resonance for it in the radical psychiatry tradition of transactional analysis (Agel, 1971; see Tudor, 2011). Whilst an interest in the social/political world and the context of people’s lives is, of course, not confined to liberals or socialists, it is generally those on the Left who tend to interrogate and articulate more about the social/political world than the conservative Right, some of whom are even sceptical about the concept of society – epitomised by Margaret Thatcher’s infamous comment that “There’s no such thing as society” (Keay, 1987). Significantly, some research in psychotherapy suggests that 40% of improvement in clients as a function of therapeutic factors is due to client variables and extra-therapeutic events (Asay & Lambert, 1999), which suggests that psychotherapists across the political spectrum should, at least, be interested in the society that surrounds their client(s). As the systemic family therapist, Virginia Satir put it: “I count, you count, context counts” (see Tudor & Hobbes, 2007).

## CONTEXT AND THEORY

If – or, rather, as – we need to count or account for context with regard to clients and their lives, so too we need psychotherapeutic practice and theory which account for and, indeed, is embedded in context.

There are, of course, a number of approaches to and forms of Western and Northern psychology and psychotherapy which account for the context outside the consulting room, and are more psychosocial than others, e.g., the therapeutic community movement (Main, 1946); radical therapy (Agel, 1971; Wyckoff, 1976); feminist therapy (Chaplin, 1988; Mitchell, 1974); radical psychiatry (Steiner, 1975, 2000); sociodrama (Moreno, 1978); social action psychotherapy (Holland, 1988); pink therapy (Davies & Neal, 1996, 2000; Neal & Davies, 2000); and psychodynamic social relations (Clarke, Hahn, & Hoggett, 2009). Nevertheless, these forms of and perspectives on therapy are the exception rather than the rule, and the rule – and those that rule and regulate – tend to be more conservative, conformist, and even reactionary, than liberal or radical (see Fay, 2008).

A number of the founding fathers and mothers of psychotherapy were themselves either overtly political and, therefore, interested in the social/political world and context, and/or interested in culture and in different cultures, including:

- Alfred Adler (1870–1937), an early psychoanalyst and, later, psychotherapist, who was also a socialist, and emphasised in his theory and practice the understanding of power dynamics and the importance of equality; and espoused the development of “social interest” and democratic family structures, especially in raising children.
- Carl Jung (1875–1961), the founder of analytic psychology, who travelled widely, encountered different cultural perspectives, and made efforts to value and include indigenous wisdom traditions into his version of psychoanalysis, a project which has been continued by analytic psychologists and post-Jungians (see, for example, Petchkovsky, San Roque, & Beskow, 2003).
- Karen Horney (1885–1952), one of the first women to enter a German university as a medical student, and an early feminist and psychoanalyst, who instigated research into female sexual development, and wrote, contrary to Freud, that the source of penis envy was in the way that female children were treated by the parents. Her work was influenced by her studies of sociology and anthropology and, in 1941, she founded the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis, which focused on the importance of culture in shaping personality.
- Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957), a psychoanalyst and a Marxist, who argued that neurosis is rooted in the physical, sexual, economic, and social conditions of the patient, and wrote *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (Reich, 1933/1980); he also promoted adolescent sexuality, and the availability of contraceptives and abortion, establishing the first sexual hygiene clinics in Europe; and argued the importance for women of economic independence.
- Eric Berne (1910–1970), the founder of transactional analysis, who, like Jung, also travelled widely, and was highly influenced by his anthropological studies.
- Paul Goodman (1911–1972), an anarchist and early gestalt therapist, who brought his particular social perspectives to influence the theory and practice of gestalt therapy (see Aylward, 1999).

Nevertheless, the extent to which such political, social and cultural influences and interests have impacted on psychotherapeutic theory and practice is arguable, as psychotherapy is not generally viewed by its proponents, let alone its clients, as revolutionary, anarchic, subversive, kinky, queer, or genuinely cross-cultural. It follows that we should not assume that

a theory which has been developed and grounded in one culture is necessarily transferable to another. Indeed, I tend to assume that theory is not transferable until proved otherwise; in other words: a theory is guilty, or at least suspect, until proved innocent! There are two specific arguments which support this critique, regarding the myth of universality, which leads to universalism; and the magnification of error; as well as political analysis of the impact of colonialism.

### **The myth of universality**

Universality refers to the notion that a (one) theory provides a complete understanding of everything, in this case, the field of human personality including behaviour, human relations, health and illness, healing and cure, and so on. Universalism refers to the view that a theory is applicable everywhere. Universality – and universalism – has been a popular notion in Western philosophy and theology, and the subject of recent debates in the fields of linguistics, geography and human rights – more so than in the field of psychotherapy. There are a number of theories and aspects of psychological theory which are based on universality. One example is the notion that there is a set number of personality disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) or personality adaptations (see Ware, 1983), for a critique of which see Tudor and Widdowson (2008). This kind of universal explanation is based on essentialism, i.e., that there are unchanging universal qualities, attributes or, in this instance, categories of personality, which pre-date existence; and on an assumption of cultural neutrality, i.e., the (supposed) neutrality of theory across culture(s) and, therefore, the (universal) applicability of theory. The assumption of universality (again, in both senses) is challenged by the reality of different views in different cultures and different wisdom and intellectual traditions about human beings; about being, personality, self, and o/Other; about knowledge and understanding; and about the principles of practice. Such differences about human nature, ontology, epistemology, and methodology, respectively, reflect different and differing paradigms (see Kuhn, 1970; Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

### **The magnification of error**

This refers to a philosophical argument about the development and application of theory which Rogers (1959) summarised well:

when the theory is projected to explain more remote phenomena [an] error may be magnified. . . . Thus every theory deserves the greatest respect in the area from which it was drawn from the facts and a decreasing amount of respect as it makes predictions in areas more and more remote from its origin. (p. 193)

Rogers was writing in the context of a discussion about the application of theory that originates in the clinic, e.g., the theory of therapeutic conditions, to other fields of application such as supervision, education or training, or the nature, structure and dynamics of organisations. I suggest that the same caution could – and should – be extended on a geographical basis; i.e., that what is founded in one country and culture is more tested (rather than disrespected) the further it travels from its geographical origins. Akhtar and Tummala-Narra (2005) have discussed this

(though without reference to the concept of the magnification of error) with regard to the translation, development and questioning of certain Freudian concepts in psychoanalysis in India – and the independent development of psychoanalysis in the subcontinent through the work of Girindrashekar Bose (1887–1953). As Connell (2008) put it: “Since the ground is different, the form of theorising is often different too” (p. xii). Thus, the further we are, geographically, culturally, and intellectually from the source and the ground of a particular theory, the more we need to question and test its application and applicability. In this sense, this argument about the magnification of error follows on from the myth of universality – and both need to be considered in the context of colonisation.

### **The impact of colonisation**

Theory only exists in context and, as far as some geographical areas or countries are concerned, their context involves colonisation. The word “colony” comes from the Latin *colonia* meaning settled land, farm, or landed estate, and was a translation of the Ancient Greek word *apoikia*, which referred to “people from home” so, originally, colonisation referred to the settlement of a place by emigrants. Whilst the Greek association of colony is benevolent, the development of colonies in Roman history became associated with the settlement of a community, usually as a garrison, in a conquered territory. Thus colonisation has come to mean the appropriation and exploitation of a geopolitical territory by an external power, through conquest and, often, spurious claims, consolidated by the coloniser’s law, policy, and the imposition of language – and, as Stewart-Harawira (2005) put it, “the marginalization of indigenous sovereignty and self-determination within the structural framework of world order” (p. 24). This process also applies to theory, whereby a dominant theory, such as the Western medical model, is imposed on a non-Western society or culture, whilst indigenous wisdom and theory are discounted and/or outlawed. As Nandy (1983) summarised it:

This colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once for all. In the process it helps to generalize the concept of the modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. (p. xi)

Also, theory itself may be colonial, such as those theories which “justified” racism; and other theories, however “universal”, may be used to reinforce colonial and colonising attitudes. In a letter to Bose, written in response to having received a birthday present from him (an ivory statuette of Vishnu, for his 75th birthday), Freud (1931) wrote “As long as I can enjoy life it will recall to my mind the progress of psychoanalysis and the proud conquests it has made in foreign countries” (p. 128). We may well speculate about Freud’s conscious or unconscious use of the word “conquest”. Although some take this reference to “conquest” as referring to the challenge posed by psychoanalysis to conventional psychology and psychiatry, dominant in Western/Northern countries, others offer a different reading. Commenting on aspects of this correspondence and, specifically, on Freud’s use of the word “conquest”, Akhtar and Tummala-Narra (2005) decried “an unfortunate tendency of psychoanalysis to colonize other idioms of thought rather than enter into a mutually enhancing, dialectical relationship with them.” (p. 8, n1).

## CULTURE AND THEORY

There are many ways to describe the relationship between one culture and another, and between culture and theory. Some view cross-cultural psychology as holding the promise of a movement and a trade across and between cultures; however, as with cross-cultural studies in other disciplines, cross-cultural psychology – and psychotherapy – generally ignores colonisation, and the effects of colonisation on the colonised. Taking account of the three arguments articulated in the previous section, it is important to ask, firstly, “Whence the theory?” and, secondly, “It is relevant here?”

For example, Akhtar (2004) has noted that there are at least four separate and distinct concepts implied in psychoanalysis and, one might say, more broadly, psychotherapy: a theory of mental functioning; models of development (which vary, depending on the school or modality of psychotherapy); concepts of psychopathology; and the technique and practice of analysis or therapy. Of these, however, for Akhtar, only the theory of mental functioning, including conscious and unconscious forces, projection, internalisation, regression, and so on, is universally applicable across cultures and ethnic groups. He considered – and considers – that the other aspects of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy are profoundly culture-bound and, from a cautious or critical perspective, that they are not necessarily or easily transferable across cultural, ethnic, and geopolitical boundaries. However, for others, including myself, the logic of Akhtar’s argument includes a critique of the universal “nature” of mental functioning. Akhtar himself is particularly critical of “Western” developmental models, which have been all been uniformly developed from empirical observation in Western settings and, often, within specific settings within Western culture. For example, the developmental model of separation and individuation espoused by Mahler, Pine and Bergman (1973) was derived largely from observation of white, upper-class children in Manhattan, New York. Moreover, formulations about what constitutes normal or abnormal behaviour, and concepts such as regression or the need for transitional objects are very different from one culture to the other. The imposition of such concepts (ideas, models, idioms, theories, etc.); the assumption that they are “universal” or “neutral”; and their uncritical application in other areas, whether conceptual or geographical: all support a “top-down” approach to the relationship between “Western” and “non-Western” cultures and theories.

Assuming, however, that those bringing together different theories founded in different cultures are interested in a genuine and respectful engagement and dialogue, the issue becomes one of whether there is necessary and sufficient cross-, trans- or bi-cultural knowledge between the parties, as well as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and agreement about meta-theoretical constructs (e.g., regarding ontology, epistemology, methodology, and method) – and, crucially, an equality between the parties to the “dialectical relationship” that discuss such integration. Given the history of colonialism, power imbalance between certain cultures, knowledge and paradigms, this is problematic, and so I now turn to a more radical relationship between culture and theory: that of comparing theories from the “bottom-up”, subordinate, subaltern or peripheral position.

## SOUTHERN THEORY

In her book *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge*, the Australian sociologist, Raewyn Connell advances the thesis that “modern social science embeds the viewpoints,

perspectives and problems of metropolitan society, while presenting itself as universal knowledge” (2008, pp. vii–viii). The global “metropole” refers to the “Northern” capital exporting countries of Europe and North America. Connell uses the word “Southern” for several reasons: firstly, to highlight relations in knowledge between “centre” and “periphery”; secondly, to acknowledge that theory emerges from the social experience of the periphery; and, thirdly, to draw attention to the fact that social thought occurs in particular places such as Australia or “the south land” – and that the land (ground, and context) situates the social theory of the people who inhabit it. She has defined Southern theory as informed by the view: “that colonised and peripheral societies produce social thought *about the modern world* which has as much intellectual power as metropolitan social thought, and more political relevance” (p. xii). Thus “Southern” is used not so much to describe or represent a geographical location – indeed, many Southern Hemisphere countries are, in terms of culture and theory, predominantly “Western” or “Northern” – but, rather, to indicate a particular analysis and attitude, and one which seeks to challenge the assumption and colonising influence of the West (see Nandy, 1983).

Connell argues that the Northernness of general theory is expressed in four, related “characteristic textual moves” (p. 44):

- the claim of universality;
- reading from the centre, e.g., sociology *in* Australia or *in* New Zealand, a move or manoeuvre which presupposes that sociology or psychology has a centre and that this centre is “neutral”;
- gestures of exclusion, i.e., the exclusion of ideas from the “periphery” such as Aboriginal or Māori concepts of health and healing;
- “grand erasure”, i.e., the erasure of key experiences such as colonisation.

In order to counter these textual and political “moves”, we need, from a Southern perspective:

- (1) theories that are specific and contextual;
- (2) theories that are generated from and that reflect readings from the periphery, the edge and the margins;
- (3) theories that are inclusive and specifically inclusive of ideas from the periphery;
- (4) theories that present and represent experiences from the periphery and, therefore, that reclaim erased wisdom, knowledge, and experience.

## **SOUTHERN PSYCHOTHERAPIES**

The final part of this paper considers these counterpoints and advances some ideas as to and examples of what Southern psychotherapies would represent. I use the plural firstly because I acknowledge and, indeed, advocate that there are many forms or modalities of psychotherapy, counselling, psychology, and psychiatry or “soul healing” (Steiner, 1971); and, secondly, because pluralism (see Samuels, 1997) is an inclusive concept which challenges a certain trend in psychotherapy to unilateralism as manifested, for example, in the statutory and unilateral regulation of the profession (in some countries) (see Tudor, 2011), and in governments’ obsession about so-called “evidence-based practice”.

## Specificity and context

Southern psychotherapies challenge theories and practices which claim universality and universal relevance, as well as the theory, language and methodology of, as Connell (2008) put it, “talking in universals” (p. 44). This involves making the origins of these universal and dominant theories explicit; challenging the rewriting (and colonisation) of indigenous wisdom in the conceptual language of the dominant paradigm, e.g., the Western – and Northern – intellectual tradition, without the experiential and contextual knowledge and appreciation of such wisdom; and drawing on theories and practice that are specific to local conditions.

The counterpoint here is to develop theory and practice which are specific and contextual and that name and promote the periphery as the beginning of its analysis and/or understanding. An important example of this is kaupapa Māori research theory (KMRT) which, as Woodard (2008) has commented:

is an attempt by indigenous researchers to develop their own methodology in order to take ownership of research. KM[R]T draws from an indigenous knowledge base to construct meaning (Pihama, 1993) and includes rectifying the damage of oppressive practices and promoting a social change agenda. (p. 11)

Woodard identified and summarised seven key principles which guide indigenous research:

- (1) The principle of the Treaty of Waitangi: Te Tiriti o Waitangi provides a basis through which Māori may critically analyse relationships, challenge the status quo, and affirm Māori rights (Pihama, 2001).
- (2) The principle of collective philosophy: the kaupapa refers to the collective vision, aspiration and purpose of Māori communities.
- (3) The principle of emancipation: Tino rangatiratanga relates to sovereignty, autonomy, control, self determination and independence.
- (4) The principle of socio-economic mediation: this principle asserts a need for kaupapa Māori research to be of positive benefit to Māori communities.
- (5) The principle of cultural aspiration: within a kaupapa Māori paradigm, Māori ways of knowing, doing and understanding the world are considered valid in their own right.
- (6) The principle of growing respectful relationships: the principle of āta [respectful thoroughness] (Pohatu, 2004) relates specifically to building, nurturing and maintaining wellbeing in relationships with Māori.
- (7) The principle of extended family structure: the principle of whānau acknowledges the relationship that Māori have with the world around them and to one another. It also identifies the intrinsic connection between the researcher, the researched and the research (p.12).

One example of this counterpoint would be to develop a psychotherapy education/training programme that reflects “local conditions” such as the extended family structure, and promotes psychotherapeutic work with clients in the context of whanau (extended family), rather than one that focuses on the individual and, at worst, an individualising psychoanalysis of the individual client. Another example would be to include KMRT as a research methodology in courses or papers on research, most obviously in “Southern” universities and psychotherapy training institutes.



### Reading from the periphery

As with Southern social science, Southern psychotherapies (would) register the different situations of metropole and periphery as a requirement for psychological science to work on both a local and a world scale and, therefore, they embrace wisdom from the periphery or margins – and reposition it as central. As Connell (2008) acknowledged:

white Australians often think of themselves as living at the end of the earth, and their distance from the metropole produces odd effects in social science. But Australia also has an Indigenous population for whom this is not the end of the earth, but the centre. Australian Aboriginal civilization is the oldest continuously existing culture in the world. (p. ix)

This counterpoint both plays with notions of periphery and centre, and “reads” (interprets, understands) the centre from the periphery – and, perhaps somewhat mischievously, subverts notions of centrality, neutrality and universality by offering its own universalism. As Nandy (1983) put it:

The aim is not to adjust, alter or refurbish Indian experiences to fit the existing psychological and social theories – to make a better case for cultural relativism or for a more cross cultural psychology. The aim is to make sense of some of the relevant categories of contemporary knowledge in Indian terms and put them in a competing theory of universalism. (p. 17)

One example of this is – or would be – the promotion of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi, which is often referred to as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand, i.e., the principles of partnership, protection, and participation, to contexts outside or beyond Aotearoa New Zealand. Although these principles are upheld in many (though not all) settings within the public sector in Aotearoa New Zealand, including, for example, at universities in the country, there also appears to be a certain trend to downgrade or even remove (erase) references to these principles. I was party to an interesting discussion at a University Faculty Board of Studies in which an argument was made to remove these principles from Papers (courses) aimed at international students as they (the principles) were viewed as too local and too specific. I and others argued (successfully) to retain them precisely because they were – are – both specific (to Aotearoa New Zealand) *and* universal, in that they could form the basis or the basis of discussions about bi-cultural relationships elsewhere. Nevertheless, the discussion revealed and represented a worrying trend towards an imagined, neutral and neutralised “centre”, and, at times, a certain lack of confidence at the periphery, which, on the whole, is not shared by the more confident Western and Northern centre/periphery.

The “reading” that is Southern psychotherapies recognises and embraces the impact of diversity with regard to the (plural) essence of things (ontologies) (see, for example, Stewart-Harawira, 2005); to multiple theories of knowledge (epistemologies), including oral traditions; and to the principles of investigation of experience (methodologies), e.g., kaupapa Māori research theory (see G. Smith, 1997; L. Smith, 1999) – and to respectful engagement with this diversity and, in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, to bi-cultural relationships (and hence the opening to this paper).

## Gestures of inclusion

Connell (2008) referred to “gestures of exclusion” (p. 46) as the third of the four geopolitical assumption of the Northernness of general theory, and one which is maintained (or gestured) through the exclusion of anything that is not Northern (or Western) and, therefore, “metropole” or mainstream. Connell cited the example of reading lists which rarely include theorists from the colonised world. By contrast, Southern psychotherapies counterpoint this assumption by consciously including such theorists in reading lists, and, importantly, as Connell has emphasised, *ideas* from the periphery.

Another example of this counterpoint would be to apply ideas and concepts from indigenous wisdom traditions to critique the Western epistemology that informs taxonomies such as the APA’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) (currently in its fourth edition). For example, thinking about “depression” as despair or even as a form of alienation positions both the practitioner and the patient differently:

Māori have always struggled to accept the division of illness into physical and mental disorders. The demarcation is never that clear in experience or in language. Pukiriri, the word for fury or hostility, locates feelings of anger in the stomach (puku) rather than the head. Manawa-pa, apprehension, and manawa-pouri, a term for sadness, link anxiety and depression not with the mind, or with free floating emotions but with the heart – manawa. (Durie, 2001, p. 115)

There is a striking parallel between this exclusion and the marginalisation in mainstream psychotherapy of ideas from voices that are most often excluded, i.e., clients and patients. It is only relatively recently (in the last 20 years) that psychotherapy clients – in some cases, psychotherapy survivors – have found their published voices on the(ir) experiences of therapy (e.g., Heyward, 1993; Alexander, 1995); and that researchers have become interested in the view from the couch or the other chair in the consulting room. This discounting of the client may be traced back to the earliest days of psychoanalysis when Anna O’s comment about the value of “the listening cure”, i.e., what the analyst/therapist needed to do, was reinterpreted and reframed as “the talking cure”, i.e., what the patient/client needed to do.

Other important gestures of inclusion that psychotherapy, at least from a Southern perspective, could and should include are: naming the client’s experience of being peripheral and marginalised; undoing the erasure, denial and distortion of experience, especially of colonisation; acknowledging the experience of oppression and of dominant narratives; and, of course, acknowledging the experience of trauma, dispossession, and loss (see Durie, 2011).

## Grand “rasure”

In *Southern Theory*, Connell (2008) referred to “grand erasure”, a concept which refers to the effect of assumptions of “Northernness”:

When . . . empirical knowledge derives wholly or mainly from the metropole, and where the theorist’s concerns arise from the problems of metropolitan society, the effect is the erasure of the experience of the majority of human kind from the foundation of social thought. (p. 46)

Such theoretical erasure and insensitivity, and the lack of reflexivity about certain geopolitical and geopsychological assumptions, often intersect with similar social and legal assumptions.

Perhaps the most devastating example of this in Australia was the legal notion – and fiction – of “terra nullius”, meaning no one’s land or empty land, a term applied by early settlers to Australia, a fiction which was overturned by the Australian High Court only as recently as 1992 in the Mabo judgement, which found that “native title” to land had existed in 1788! Reflecting on this notion, Connell commented: “*Terra nullius*, the coloniser’s dream, is a sinister presupposition for social science. It is invoked every time we try to theorise the formation of social institutions and systems from scratch, in a blank space.” (p. 47) She then added: “Whenever we see the words “building block” in a treatise of social theory, we should be asking who used to occupy the land” (p. 47).

Just as we recognise the psychopolitical concepts and realities of internalised sexism, racism and homophobia, so we must recognise internalised colonialism whereby the oppressed (individuals and/or groups), to a greater or lesser extent, also “erase” themselves: their history, connection to land, family, tribe, culture, etc. Montero (1984) described this as altercentricism, whereby external, foreign (alter) figures are viewed as having and holding positive qualities, in contrast to the indigenous subject who views themselves as negative (see also Montero, 2007).

If erasure means the rubbing out and obliteration of what has gone before, I suggest that the neologism “rasure” can stand for the careful scraping away, in an archaeological sense, to reveal what was before. After all, one nation’s national holiday is another people’s “Invasion Day” (see Westergren, 2011).

At best, of course, psychotherapy, both Southern and Northern, is a process of rasure: of uncovering and reclaiming previously “erased” and forgotten trauma, memory, oppression, mystification, isolation, disconnection, and so on. Southern – and, indeed, radical Northern or Western – psychotherapies acknowledge local inequalities of wealth and health and power, and their impact on psychological as well as social indicators; and are informed by local configurations of social forces, whether poverty, class struggle, or indigenous land rights’ movements. Southern psychotherapies, then, clearly represent a political psychology and praxis of liberation (see Fanon, 1961/1963; Nandy, 1983; Montero, 2007).

On the day of the presentation at the World Congress of Psychotherapy on which this article is based, an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that incidences of indigenous imprisonment, child abuse and chronic disease continue to rise two years after Kevin Rudd, the then Australian Prime Minister, announced the ambitious programme to “close the gap” (Martin, 2011). Similarly, in New Zealand, the gap in health indicators for Māori and non Māori continues to grow rather than narrow. An important part of this “rasure” is stating these realities in order to acknowledge and textualise the experience of the oppressed, and especially those omitted from, as Connell (2008) has put it, “the hegemonic narratives of history and modernity” (p. 214).

## **SOUTHERN, EASTERN, NORTHERN, AND WESTERN**

When we think about things on a global basis, we may conjure up the image of the Earth as a round planet. It is, however, somewhat symbolic that the Earth, our world, is not perfectly round; it is, in fact, an oblate spheroid: the distance between the North and South Pole being shorter than the distance between the opposite sides of the world at the Equator. This

unevenness, this unequalness, stands as a useful geographical metaphor for the geopolitical and psychopolitical realities of inequality, hegemony, and colonisation.

As I acknowledged in the earlier discussion of context and theory, there are a number of approaches and forms of Western and Northern therapy which are more psychosocial and psychopolitical than others. However, neither the critical tradition in Western thinking, nor the radical therapy tradition in Western psychology and psychotherapy, emphasises the relationship between people and land in quite the same way that indigenous wisdom traditions or “Southern theory” do. From this perspective, those of us trained in the Western and Northern tradition need Southern – and Eastern – wisdom and theory to inform and enhance our practice in a colonial or post-colonial landscape (bearing in mind that post-colonial does not mean that “they” have gone).

Southern theory and Southern psychotherapies do not stand against Northern or Western social or psychological sciences; they do stand against the assumption that Northern/Western social and psychological thought is a universal knowledge; and they stand for “Southern” knowledge and method – and, for that matter and by similar argument, “Eastern” knowledge (see Watts, 1961/1971). Similarly, Southern theory and Southern psychotherapies do not discount the problems and perspectives of metropolitan centres (indeed, there are significant metropolitan centres in the “South”, with significant problems); they do stand against the notion that the metropole is the only place that produces social and psychological thought about the modern or postmodern world; and they stand for the wisdom that comes from the periphery.

It is my contention that the four counterpoints identified in the previous section constitute the basis of Southern psychotherapies which, whatever their local variations, theorise in and on different ground from the Western and Northern intellectual tradition; are informed by indigenous wisdom and healing traditions; share a critical and radical analysis of the world from the periphery; and (re)present an anti-oppressive, post-colonial psychosocial therapeutic practice which is predominantly concerned with alienation and, therefore, dis-alienation, and with altercentricism and, therefore, the reclaiming of the subject and their social relations.

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