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<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Stewart, G; Arndt, S; Besley, T; Devine, N; Forster, D; Gibbons, A; Grierson, E; Jackson, EJ; Jandric, P; Locke, K; Peters, MA; Tesar, M</b>
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## Antipodean theory for educational research

Georgina Stewart <sup>a</sup>, Sonja Arndt<sup>b</sup>, Tina Besley <sup>b</sup>, Nesta Devine<sup>a</sup>,  
Daniella J. Forster<sup>c</sup>, Andrew Gibbons<sup>a</sup>, Elizabeth Grierson <sup>d</sup>, Liz Jackson<sup>e</sup>,  
Petar Jandrić <sup>f</sup>, Kirsten Locke<sup>g</sup>, Michael A. Peters <sup>b</sup> and Marek Tesar <sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Te Kura Mātauranga School of Education, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand; <sup>b</sup>Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand; <sup>c</sup>School of Education, University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia; <sup>d</sup>College of Design and Social Context, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia; <sup>e</sup>Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong; <sup>f</sup>Zagreb University of Applied Sciences, Zagreb, Croatia; <sup>g</sup>Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

### ABSTRACT

This article results from a collaborative investigation into Antipodean theory in education by members of the Editors' Collective ([www.editorscollective.org.nz](http://www.editorscollective.org.nz)). The Prologue contains a brief personal account of the South Project ([www.southernperspectives.net](http://www.southernperspectives.net)), as an example of the contemporary projects and activities falling under the banner of 'Antipodean' ways of working and thinking. The Introduction briefly reviews the history of (mainly Western) ideas about the Antipodes, from classical Greek philosophy through to the contemporary globalised era. This is followed by a synopsis of the motivations, purposes and benefits of Antipodean theory, with more detailed examinations of equality, indigeneity, replication and creation as some of its central elements. We consider the role of Antipodean thinking as a located critical theory for education, and a way to defend our aspirations for equality and social justice against the incursions of neoliberalism, today and in the future.

### KEYWORDS

Antipodes; criticality; editors' collective; postcolonialism; poststructuralism; Southern Theory

## Prologue: the south project, Melbourne 2003–2013

Elizabeth Grierson: The time and setting is Melbourne 2003: the birth of the South Project. The project began as an initiative from Craft Victoria to instigate a series of 'gatherings' of artists and curators, scholars, writers and educators of different age groups, languages, cultural backgrounds from diverse locations across the South ([www.southernperspectives.net](http://www.southernperspectives.net)). The aim was to bring together cultural practitioners to consider different understandings of what 'the South' may be and could be. From this germination, the project gained momentum and enough support from cultural and educational institutions to continue for a decade.

Trans-cultural 'gatherings' with exhibitions, workshops and educational events were held in Melbourne in 2004, Wellington in 2005, Santiago in 2006, Johannesburg 2007, then back to Melbourne and Yogyakarta, finishing in 2013 with the launch of a multilingual book, *Mapping South: Journeys in South-South cultural relations* (Gardner, 2013). Along the

**CONTACT** Georgina Stewart  [georgina.stewart@aut.ac.nz](mailto:georgina.stewart@aut.ac.nz)

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way, 20 artists-in-residence were hosted at universities and other institutions in different locations, and many significant exhibitions and educational events were held in museums, universities and schools. Exchanges with children led to 'South Kids', a primary school programme based on the story of an emu that wanted to fly, bringing children's focus to other flightless birds and environments in their own country, such as the ostrich in Soweto (<http://southkids.blogspot.co.nz/2007/12/1.html>).

At RMIT University in central Melbourne I fostered an Artist-in-Residence partnership with the South Project, hosting artists from South Africa, Brazil, Chile and other countries; and in 2005 the South Project included me as an invited speaker at 'Between Earth and Sky', the Wellington gathering at Te Papa Tongarewa, the national museum. In these on-the-ground activities I witnessed the generation of sustained vitality, described by Gardner (2013, p. 2) as a 'throbbing mix of curiosity and uncertainty, extraordinary openness and unbridled energy'.

Over the duration of the South Project it became apparent that 'the South' and 'the Antipodes' are more of a state-of-mind or condition, rather than a place. The generative discussions between viewpoints, experiences and languages engaged with the obvious differences of geography, political and cultural tension, uneven socio-economic practices, and power relations of historical and present trade routes. Ultimately, the South Project offered some indicators of what 'the South' is or may be: 'If anything, the South is itself a mode of questioning ... both analytic and catalytic' (Gardner, 2013, p. 3). It is also a poetic space. The Chilean poet, Neruda (1990, p. 12) speaks of listening to the sea, hearing the sea and learning from it:

I come and go on the sea and its countries / I know / the language of the fishbone.

Neruda's poetry resonates across the South, with its 80% ocean coverage. Neruda (2003) speaks to an Antipodean ethos in his poem, *The Sea*: 'I need the sea because it teaches me', concluding 'in some magnetic way I move in the university of the waves'. Antipodean theory has many currents, some of which are evident in the story of the South Project, tracing tides that lap southern shores. What does such oceanic dominance mean for an Antipodean theory for educational research, and how may it be contemplated, beyond mere reflection?

## Introduction: finding the Antipodean

Some of the earliest writing on the Antipodes emerges in Socratic dialogue and engages with the form and relationship of 'man' in the world and to the universe. In conversation with Socrates about whether all positions are equidistant from the centre in a spherical universe, Timaeus says (Plato, n.d.), 'if a person were to go round the world in a circle, he would often, when standing at the Antipodes of his former position, speak of the same point as above and below'. He goes on to say, 'to speak of the whole which is in the form of a globe as having one part above and another below is not like a sensible man' (Plato, n.d.). Timaeus appears to be arguing that there is no human centre to civilisation – that all humans are equal in their relationship to the centre, to the divine creator. In ancient Greek thinking, Timaeus is using 'Antipodes' to mean 'the feet opposite our feet', and so is engaging with an idea of living on a spherical planet. While this idea is geographical, clearly it also refers to the cosmological and anthropological. The Greek thinker

imagined not only that there was an 'other' side of the world, but also that there was an 'other' people to be reckoned with.

Timaeus thus raises the possibility of regarding the Antipodeans as equals. However, Fausett's (1995) analysis of the construction of an 'other' place, an opposite place, suggests an inclination to regard the Antipodes as an underworld. Fausett notes the idea of a mythical southern continent is evident in the thinking of Greek physician Ctesias (400 B.C.). Medieval European thinking revives this idea and amplifies the oppositional tension between light and dark, good and evil, here and there.

This cosmological vision of the world represented, in early modern and Enlightenment thinking, a radical departure from the linearity of an order of beings. The notion of a spherical earth inverted a linear view of the universe, physically and normatively, replacing a view of men and women below and subject to kings and gods. Galileo was imprisoned for endorsing this spherical earth view, despite early Papal authorities accepting his research in this area. Here, then, is a trace of Timaeus' thinking, yet without the sense of the Antipodes being a place of sameness.

As European travel to the Antipodes became more possible, tensions in the construction of the other, as equivalent or equal versus opposite, continued to manifest. These tensions are evident in Richard Brome's seventeenth-century play, *The Antipodes*. McInnis' (2012) study of Brome's play provides an analysis of its conceptual and critical contribution to Antipodean thinking. The play tells the story of a young Englishman who spends his time escaping into a range of travel texts that had become, through innovations in seventeenth-century printing, cheap and hence widely available. For the central figure, reading about travel to the Antipodes introduces new possibilities for imagining the self (McInnis, 2012). Yet in *The Antipodes*, such escapism is dangerous.

In the midst of England's greatest period of exploration and imperial expansion, writers and playwrights seemed to be encouraging their readers and spectators to stay at home to learn about foreign countries rather than to travel. One explanation for this curious phenomenon lies in the recognition that concomitant with the rise of the English nation state was an attendant fear over the fragility of English identity. (McInnis, 2012, p. 454)

McInnis (2012, p. 450) notes that in Brome's play the Antipodes is both actual and symbolic: symbolic of the exotic and extreme, as well as the 'satirical antithesis of familiar society'. The imagined or symbolic Antipodes operated as an early focus for science fiction, such as in the novel *Erewhon* (Butler, 1970). Yet the notion of the Antipodes also suggests there is something 'good' about England and English society. This 'goodness' is endangered both by Antipodeans and by travellers to the Antipodes, who might return from there influenced by the odd ways of others.

Geographical distance reflects developmental difference, according to the view from the Imperial centre. This correlation reconciles Enlightenment visions of equality of humanity with colonial expansion and conquest. Early anthropology, assuming that the scientist would discover only differences, has often been critiqued as a self-fulfilling prophecy, aligned with a positivistic view of the world allowing men to exploit and control whatever is encountered. Like the Antipodes, Orientalism too describes the British Empire as the centre of the world, positioning everything British, even British physical travel and movement, for example, as the central and most correct path. Rather than just threatening the core, travel outward can entail developing colonial subjects in India and East Asia. The

thinking can travel according to centre design, creating for instance 'persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect' (Macaulay, 1935).

Travel itself also features in Orientalist thought as something at which the Empire excels, in contrast with the so-called developing peoples in the periphery. For instance, much imperial and even liberal Orientalist theory was dedicated to exploring how nomadism in the Middle East and practices of foot binding and growing long fingernails in China reflected not only the relatively limited physical mobility of these distant peoples, but also their stunted cognitive development. Early liberal thinkers saw free physical movement at not just the political level but also the individual level, as prerequisite to and indicative of free and liberal use of one's mental capacities (Kotef, 2015).

Perhaps, however, the expansion of an empire leads to a culture of expansive thinking that keeps as its goal the celebration of the empire: the celebration, in this context, of England. Hence a critical historical exploration of Antipodean thinking must also consider how thinking has travelled and how travelling has influenced thinking. 'Antipodean' means in itself being the 'other' to something – something on the other side of the world. So what is the 'podean', the foundational term or originating position, understood as a centre? This question returns our awareness to the influence of a Western paradigm that frames our thinking, and our own consequent complicity in upholding assumptions related to gender, race, culture, power. The original centre point then becomes the beginning of Imperial thinking, and the Antipodes the furthest point for an Empire to stretch.

Of course, the centre does not need to be European: Antipodean thought occurs in many societies. For instance, in Chinese language, China is the 'middle kingdom', Thai food and Italian food alike are 'western foods' and east and west and north and south are defined with reference to orientation from Beijing. That the Antipodes has become understood, in England at least, as New Zealand and Australia reflects a view that these ex-colonies are symbolically antipodal, since they are not literally so in geographical terms. More than this, the term 'Antipodean' glosses over the differences between Australia and New Zealand, two nations with shared early colonial history that have grown apart in more recent decades. The English were thinking about the Antipodes well before the voyages that led Europeans to claim the discovery of these two Southern lands. The symbolism of the Antipodes is important for any Antipodean theory, in order to avoid becoming reduced to nation building.

From the seventeenth to the twentieth century, a pervasive interest in experience of the other, through personal travels or through literature, media and the social imaginary remains evident. Echoing Brome's tour guide, one observes that media is not a clear window to another world, nor designed to make a society look within itself: rather its purpose can be to see the other as strange and extraordinary, in the interests of media producers. One remedy for insular thinking has been student exchange, which aims to get youth out of their element in order to develop more compassion for others in distant lands. Despite the prevalence of a normative attitude that this is essentially a good thing, contrary findings are easily found, where people develop views that are more prejudicial by travelling abroad, further entrenching views of their own cultural superiority (Jackson, 2013). Despite uncertainty about how ideas and ways of thinking move across geographic regions, and how to conceive of spatial knowledge, there can be no doubt that more people are now moving around and thinking about the other side of the globe than at any earlier time.

## Why Antipodean theory?

We note above that the geographical meaning of ‘Antipodes’ is as a pair of diametrically opposed points on the Earth’s surface – the antipodal point for Britain and Ireland lies in the southern Pacific Ocean close to New Zealand, hence the origin of this colonial name for ‘Australia and New Zealand’. Built into the word ‘Antipodean’ is a trace of its links to our national histories and a link to the materiality of the Earth, our spinning cosmic Ark. Antipodean theory reminds us of our location on the planet, thereby encompassing environmental concerns that are vital today in education.

What are the purposes of proposing and developing temporally, and spatially located theory? If theory is a tool for generalisability then how might a theory located in the concrete, specific messiness and intermingling of space, place and relations help educational researchers to make claims of value? When the notion of ‘Southern Theory’ was given voice in sociological thinking by Raewyn Connell her aim was to illuminate ‘a situation in its concreteness’ by creating pathways in which ‘theorizing [is] mixed up with specific situations’ (2007, p. 207). For this aim, theorists must multiply the perspectives and ideas in play. Following this logic, for philosophical thinking to be Southern in the way intended by Connell, ideas from the global North traditionally held pure must be ‘dirtied’ with actualities often overlooked. Hegemonic systems of thought will be complicated, overlapped and even subsumed by local understandings and practice.

Theorists looking for a perfect, disembodied antipodean alloy are mistaken in their goal. Rather, the Southern researcher will avoid abstracting from the ways in which a focus or problem is locally understood, attempting to simultaneously recognise their own epistemological standpoint on the issue and the possibility of multiple ways of knowing it. They will acknowledge the peculiar histories that generate social practices, form dialogic encounters with voices on the peripheries of authority and loop back and forth in an iterative process to generate theory from the ground. In this way, for instance, Hardy (2012) applies Connell’s Southern Theory to educational practice, arguing that research engaging with specifics need not relinquish potential insights for generalisations: rather it can overcome the dualism of relativism vs. absolutism.

Ethical claims are also conventionally universal: deliberate, purposeless human suffering is immoral, no matter if located in the Antipodes or the global North. So how might an ethicist look out from the Antipodes for powerful ethical theory, capable of speaking to universal ethical value with sensitivity to temporal, spatial, embodied and experiential particularities? Thinking through an Antipodean or Southern ethics in education means considering those on the margins, whose experience of ethics is often overlooked and abstracted into pre-existing categories. Antipodean ethics invite dialogic encounters that move beyond the reduction of knowledge to social power. It means describing in detail those tangible particularities that make each ethical case unique, leaving the decision open about what counts as salient or relevant in each case, and doing so imaginatively, from multiple positions. It means resisting efforts to lock down procedures or priorities for more or less ethical courses of action, whilst still providing pathways for becoming and acting ethically, and setting a distinctive research agenda for educational ethics.

From an Antipodean perspective, Australia is not simply ‘periphery’ given its metropolitan centres are as gifted as any on the globe; and the population is crowded around the

east coast, where modern consumption suffers no limits. The 'real' periphery is the Outback, the remote, semi-inhabited towns, regularly cut off from affordances the east coast takes for granted, and perhaps its (growing) inner pockets of locked-in inequality. The Global South is often associated with economic and cultural disenfranchisement, dispossession and exploitation, and whilst there are many who identify with these experiences in both regional and metropolitan Australian society, it is only geographically accurate to categorise Australia as wholly 'southern'. Connell (2007) clusters South American, African, Middle East and Indian alongside Indigenous Australian perspectives; and raises questions about how the privileged Australian theorist might hope to address the 'southern' experience in any authentic way.

Antipodean theory is a bipolar term, and therefore relational in the sense that it signifies a form of identity shaped by a relationship between the centre and the periphery (Connell, 2007). In its dominant meanings the term 'Antipodean' is multi-national, and therefore holds out genuine hope of bi/cross/multi- or interculturalism, as discussed further below. Antipodean theory is therefore like the intercultural hyphen (Jones & Jenkins, 2008; Stewart, 2016), another relational identity concept, a continuum with multiple identity choices, rather than fixed, either-or, reductive cultural categories.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the ontological content of identity in the national imaginary has changed and evolved over time. Māori ways of understanding reality were very different to the assumptions of the colonisers. At worst, the Antipodean encapsulates the cultural cringe and the violence, both epistemological and material, of colonialism. This aspect is illustrated by twentieth-century artists in New Zealand who sought a specific New Zealand sensibility, distinct from that of Europe, but which in practice was a very 'white' monocultural sensibility. Curnow's passage from 'Skeleton of a Moa' shows insensitivity to previous inhabitants of Aotearoa New Zealand when he soliloquises in the 1940s:

Not I, but some child born in a glorious year / Will learn the trick of standing upright here  
(Curnow, 1944)

The reference to a Darwinian and anthropological image of human progress and development ignores the fact that Māori were 'standing upright here' in Aotearoa, centuries before Curnow wrote these words. Antipodean theory also relates to emerging traditions such as World Philosophies (Zene, 2015) in that it signals the existence of something other than the 'received versions' of knowledge, theory and philosophy. Antipodean theory has the advantage of being less specific than other critical intellectual traditions such as feminism and indigeneity. 'Antipodean' originates in a hierarchical colonial relationship, but inverts the binary in a Derridean or postcolonial move (Drichel, 2008), uplifting the formerly derogatory label to a proud identity claim.

Kaupapa Māori, Mana Wahine, and other critical Māori intellectual traditions can count as forms of Antipodean theory (though whether or not this is of any interest to Māori may be another discussion). In some contexts, for Māori scholars to identify as 'Indigene Antipode' may be useful to distinguish local notes among Indigenous voices, just as White Australian authors have adopted the label of Antipodean to differentiate themselves from other Whites in the Global South. Antipodean theory has found more fertile pastures in (white) Australia than in (white) New Zealand (Beilharz, 2015), since 'Pākehā' has served Kiwi scholars as an equivalent self-label, to mean in relationship with Māori as citizens of this country, an aim to move 'beyond domination' (Bell, 2014). The strength of

Antipodean theory as an academic territory is its potential relevance, as suggested above, to both Pākehā and Māori scholars; to White Australian scholars, clearly, and, maybe, to Indigenous Australian scholars, and scholars of Pacific island nations, as well.

### Antipodean ideals of equality

As delineated in the Introduction above, Western views of the Antipodes indicate 'New Zealand' first as an improbable place (as reflected in the name 'Erewhon' – the reverse of 'nowhere', see Butler, 1970) and, second, complete denial of its existence. Under colonial conditions, New Zealand became a space of replication, trials and pilots: even the architecture adopted by early settlers was British, designed for houses facing south. The idea of equality was one source of difference to develop early in the colony, as an expression of 'arcadia' and escape from industrial class-based Victorian England. In New Zealand, the principle of equality underpinned a new vision of society, politics and education. The idea of equality influenced the adoption of progressive social legislation to establish industrial arbitration, trade unions, fair wages, university education and social security, despite substantially excluding Māori and women. In 1893 New Zealand was the first country in the world to extend voting rights to women, and from the 1890s social welfare policies developed to make New Zealand one of the most comprehensive welfare societies anywhere, based firmly on a concept of equality.

The idea of equality had its origins in Christianity, which proclaimed all men (sic) 'equal in the eyes of God'. The basis of modern Western jurisprudence is 'equality before the law' founded on the principle of 'equality of rights'. The French Revolution was based on 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' and the central goal of communism and socialism was 'economic equality'. Many Fabian movements and the US Civil Rights Movement sought 'equality of opportunity'. The women's movement beginning in the twentieth century demanded 'equal rights for women' and 'equal pay for equal work'.

As an exclusively Western ideal with a patchwork history of development and partial realisation, the early white settlers saw equality as the ideal basis of a just society. The story of New Zealand from the 1890s is in part a story of the progressive realisation of equality in social policies, where education was the mechanism of both social merit and mobility, and social and educational opportunity. Yet critical examination of New Zealand's history makes clear the extent to which the dream of 'equality' was partial, if not completely ideological:

New Zealand was created in Aotearoa by the British for the purpose of absorbing a growing and surplus population that began to threaten the profitability of British capital. In order to entice people to leave home, New Zealand had to be more attractive than Britain, and this was possible because the land taken from the Māori could be made available to settlers at prices that sustained a very profitable export trade. Because exports could bring in large profits, the new colony could also afford high wages for workers, and these in turn enticed poor people from Britain. Crucial to this whole enterprise, therefore, was cheap land, and that could be provided only by taking the land from the indigenous people in ways that left them without adequate return. These ways included low prices, theft, and expropriation through military might. Paradoxically, then, the high standard of living enjoyed by Pākehā workers was the direct result of the poverty of the Māori. The great inequalities experienced by the Māori even today stem from this founding fact of our society. (Novitz & Willmott, 1989, p. 2)



Only from the 1960s did the national vision of equality begin to become more socially inclusive for Māori and women. Equality was the guiding idea behind New Zealand education and educational theory, formulated in the modern context as 'equality of educational opportunity'. New Zealand in the post-WWII period was one of the fairest, most equitable and open societies in the world; a society with the most comprehensive social welfare system, until an imported neoliberalism began in the 1980s to reverse the gains made in previous decades.

After cultural and gender critique, the vision was seriously impaired, and in response, neoliberals argued that equality robbed economic liberalism of its vitality, innovation and strength of purpose, and created welfare dependence. The New Zealand dream of equality, however flawed, has been strangled by neoliberalism. Pākehā have progressed from the financial security but cultural insecurity of a white settler society characterised by a cultural cringe, to an uneasy partnership with an increasingly politically assertive Māori population: a condition not unlike that of a 'stateless state' in the globalised world. New Zealand is an interconnected part of the Western global alliance, under which cultural differences are disappearing in the face of increased migration, mobility, media and markets, turning New Zealand into a node in the circuits of global capital.

### Antipodean education: between replication and creation

Traditionally, the Antipodes have been places of replication. Colonial legislation transferred laws from countries of origin into newly established settlements; colonial education imposed systems of belief (most notably religion) from the countries of origin. Yet, such replication has always required some adaptation. Laws had been adapted to local circumstances, Jesus had been portrayed with indigenous skin colour(s), and colonial architecture created 'residences that combined the architecture of their countries of origin with the design characteristics of their new lands' (Guaita, 2000). Up to very recently, however, education has been especially resilient to adaptation. Based on the Seven Liberal Arts (Parker, 1890), and on introduction of students into the Greek-Roman traditions of philosophy and literature, education in the Antipodes by and large abides to classical Western canons. While the Antipodean countries have managed to develop distinct national identities, literature and the arts, 'proper' education in the Antipodes is still very close to 'proper' education in Europe. Education is then neither peripheral nor Antipodean in origin or design, except in terms of secondary effects emanating from the centres of 'Western civilisation' and colonising powers: first, nineteenth-century British liberal capitalism, based on organised white settler policies; second, over a century later, an Anglo-American neoliberalism that circulates the ideas of the 1970s and 1980s Chicago school. As such, education is one of the key mechanisms for maintenance of links between the Antipodes and the countries of origin long after ex-colonies had gained political and cultural independence.

Certainly, the postcolonial movement has introduced many indigenous knowledges and traditions into the scene. For instance, Māori intellectual traditions in New Zealand and Aboriginal intellectual traditions in Australia are now cherished, developed and blended into educational systems. In this way, the role of education in maintaining cultural and economic harmony with the countries of origin complements the role of education in maintaining local cultures, knowledges and identities. In his seminal study of

postcolonialism in Algeria, however, Frantz Fanon shows that maintenance and preservation of local traditions merely replicates the existing power relationships and keeps local cultures, knowledges and identities firmly in the position of the Other (Fanon, 2001, pp. 166–167). In order to become truly equal, therefore, local cultures need to take up the role of active participants in production of knowledge, culture and education.

So where should we look for this active role? The term Antipodes may be a useful spatial marker for Australia and New Zealand. However, the active and creative role of culture and education does not arrive from the inherent opposition between ‘above’ and ‘below’, or ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’, but from intersection, connection and co-creation. An Antipodean, ethical, onto-epistemological turn in thinking means that as human subjects we need to understand education as an Antipodean-friendly discipline. An Antipodean education needs to recognise relationality; within and between human subjects, whilst also considering intra-species connections and the age of the Anthropocene. It should actively create integrated models of social, political and economic behaviour: these are conduits for legal norms.

Perhaps Antipodean-friendly disciplines are those that utilise both an ontological, epistemological and ethical relationship with a discourse, and the materiality of place. These disciplines carry theories and ideas into practices: questioning every ontology and uprooting established epistemologies. Human subjects have adjusted and developed philosophies, and relevant methodologies, and have gradually, and in very diverse ways, shaped our understanding of being and becoming, our habits of mind, our relationship with the world, our preferred and not so preferred models of behaviour and thus the values we, as human subjects, can accept, recognise and respect. In essence, a new, singular epidermis of Antipodean thinking has emerged (no matter how diverse, plural or technicolour it may seem).

Simultaneously, as ancient traditions and practices are being revived; different thoughts, religions and cultures are awakening to new ways of being, and struggling with growing fervour to express what is unique to them and what makes them different from others. In an Antipodean sense, their individuality is a call for political expression, and a search for legitimisation of their philosophies and methodologies. As a multi-national, multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary activity, education in the Antipodes needs to embrace the discourse of multiplicity, actively develop local identities, and participate in global knowledge development. The embrace of multiplicity is itself a stance in which claims of universalism or objectivism sit uneasily. Thusly conceived, education is indeed neither peripheral, nor Antipodean, nor even Antipodean-friendly: moving from replication towards creation, education has a central role to play in the quest for both authentic equality and the means for its recognition.

### The Antipodean editors’ collective?

As an identity label, ‘Antipodean’ has connotations that we might both embrace and reject. This ambivalence, both a strength and a weakness, permeates the history of Antipodean thinking, and presents serious challenges for philosophical integrity. In this last section we consider the relevance of such a label for the identity of an ‘editors’ collective’. First, we can acknowledge that yes, our Editors’ Collective is Antipodean, since most of its current members see themselves as belonging to parts of the Asia Pacific Rim. There is a mixed heritage in this ‘being other’, this being, by definition, something different. The difference is geographical and indeed ontological, since location and its accompanying

differences affect one's way of being. To identify as Antipodean implies that we have no existence in ourselves, but only in relation to that from which some of us come. The term Antipodean somehow both enshrines and exoticises the ties that bind us, and the (increasing) differences of thought and practice.

In Southern nations including New Zealand and Australia, the conventional tropes of the Northern hemisphere enforce a kind of double dislocation. The imported and pervasive dominance of British-derived cultural assumptions mean that in New Zealand, we think nothing of having Christmas cards that depict Father Christmas in woolly red hat fringed with white fur, whilst standing in jandals and togs on a beach in the shade of a blooming pohutakawa tree in December. There is a third dislocation, even within geography. New Zealand is usually depicted upside down, according to the Māori view with the South Island at the top, and the North Island below. Just as Māori understand Pākehā geographical points of reference while Pākehā seldom understand Māori perspectives, so New Zealanders and Antipodeans in general understand and pragmatically concede to a Northern hemisphere understanding of the world that is incongruent with their own lived experience.

### **Conclusion: Antipodean theory for educational research**

Today the only theories – educational and economic – that have any kind of political influence are those pragmatically grafted onto the stock of Anglo-American neoliberalism that emphasises individual freedom over social equality. These neoliberal ideas have almost entirely displaced notions of equality: so much so that it seems to be regarded as a quaint and old-fashioned philosophy, even in the face of burgeoning child poverty in New Zealand, concentrated among Māori and Pacific, and with indefensible, serious levels of poverty not seen since the first welfare programmes.

Being by definition 'other' (if not opposite) means we cannot accept the views that emanate from those Northern-grounded feet in quite the same way in which they are expressed, or expect to be understood. We see those feet upside down: we have a necessarily different position from which to hear. As the co-inhabitants of lands that support both indigenous and invading peoples, we necessarily have to listen to each other – even though there has been, and still is, resistance. The end result is something 'different'.

An Antipodean style of thinking contributes to an inescapable criticality that strives to move beyond the pervasive colonialist influence. We can interrogate universal statements in terms of their assumptions of universality: are they formed by experiences and theories that ignore those from the 'other' side of the world? To answer the question of whether the Editors' Collective is dominated by Antipodean thinking, in the sense of a style of thinking, we say yes. Poststructuralism comes easily to us as Antipodeans: we understand that there is no distance between discourse and the objects of discourse.

Education is a central discipline and one that has best defended the notion of equality in the years since the neoliberal virus infected us. Despite its flaws, the education sector also has the best potential to end the present reign of neoliberalism, and to revitalise the dream of equality that recognises religious, ethnic, gender, sexual, social and economic equality as the basis for Antipodean-Southern politics and society for the twenty-first century.

## OPEN REVIEWS:

### **Another way of knowing: A response to *Antipodean theory for educational research***

WELBY INGS

welby.ings@aut.ac.nz

Professor of Graphic Design, Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies  
Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

When we consider the Antipodes as a way of knowing and being, we turn our faces to the land upon which we live. In this regard I am reminded of the rarely quoted whakatauki (Māori proverb) that notes,

Ehara tā te tangata kai, he kai titongi kau; engari mahi ai ia ki te whenua; tino kai, tino mākona.

Food provided by someone else is only food to be nibbled; food produced by one's own labour on the land is good and satisfying.

This article offers a consideration of claim ... a reflection on otherness that does not presuppose a binary. It suggests agency and a move beyond adoption and adaptation. Its strength lies in its reluctance to close down considerations of Antipodean theory into an absolute, disembodied ideology. However, it concurrently asserts that something distinctive exists, where the quality of humanity in education may be drawn forward through the active engagement of local cultures operating as co-creative participants.

The Antipodes do not represent a clean slate; a white parchment upon which white thinking ponders the concept of indigeneity and multi-culturalism. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, Māori education in its esoteric and pragmatic dimensions functioned and expanded ways of knowing centuries before western philosophy brought its considerations to the land. These complex ways of knowing remain actively concerned with what is seen and what refuses to take explicit form (e.g. wairua and mauri). Such dimensions continue to permeate the way we perceive and value the wholeness of learning and identity. Such non-European thinking, questions the triumph of individualism over social responsibility, the abrogation of respect for ancestral knowledge and influence, the stripping of genealogical and cosmological dimensions from land and the marginalising of the spirit. They actively engage with dimensions beyond the physical and cognitive. As Antipodean learners, teachers and social agents, we are integrated with, and responsible to, our world on multiple levels.

Accordingly, in Antipodean theory and practice considerations of the health of education and the economic poverty of populations become inseparable. When we make sandwiches in the staff room for children whose families cannot afford to give them breakfast, we draw on something deeper than responsibility born of ideological position. Our duties of care reach beyond multi-national, multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary activity; they are tied to a fundamental knowing that social equality is fundamental to the health of a living essence – both of humans who populate the multiple dimensions of education, and the living mauri of its institutions.

## A response to *Antipodean theory for educational research*

LEON BENADE

leon.benade@aut.ac.nz

School of Education,

Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

To 'be from the South' has some differing meanings for me. Typically, many cities in the world seem to locate the finest suburbs in the North, with the poorer, or less affluent, or troubled, neighbourhoods to the South. Thus, to come from 'the South' could demarcate one as 'rough' or 'unsophisticated' or perhaps 'working class'. The same could, I suppose be said of the 'the West' or 'the East', but my experience in two completely removed contexts has enforced the former perspective. The South is also the cold side or the dark side – but now I give away a further dimension of my Southernness – that is, my being a citizen of the Southern Hemisphere. And in this sense, I look on the contribution of the authors from my unique perspective as a naturalised New Zealander, born in South Africa. And to that extent, I have been constantly aware, for all my adult life certainly, of the remoteness, isolation and marginalisation associated with living in the Southern region of the Southern Hemisphere – a sense of being, as it were, on 'the arse-end of the world'.

The authors have curated and synthesised the words and ideas which provide a carefully considered and scholarly perspective on these auto ethnographic musings from my life. They bring attention to the marginalisation or 'otherness' the colonial forebears of these Southern lands have imposed on their inhabitants – be they indigenous or migrants. A key question the authors must answer is this: does the scholarship of the Antipodes carry a voice unique and distinct from that of its Northern counterparts? The challenge of being a scholar located in the South is to forge a voice that *is* distinct; that breaks with the universalising homogeneity of the North. If there is such a voice, it is one, as the authors might argue, that is born from the unique relations that originate in the sediment of indigenous-colonial relations.

The authors do indeed argue for a unique Antipodean perspective on knowledge, which they regard as distinct from the Anglophone contexts of the North: namely an easy attachment to poststructural ideas that value difference, challenge the centre and give voice to the periphery. They see arising from respect for equality and social justice, a platform from which to challenge neoliberal incursions.

Certainly, the physical and historical location of 'Antipodean' scholars, such as the authors, must play a role in forging a unique voice, though this too, troubles the authors, who, as members of an Editorial Collective, are mindful of the danger that their perspective overshadows the perspectives of their Northern colleagues on the same Collective. Indeed, even within this Antipodean sense of voice lies another challenge – one hinted at by the authors early in the piece, namely that, despite the label 'Antipodean' making general reference to New Zealand and Australia, these are two quite distinct locations. What are the prospects for developing a scholarly voice unique to each, yet recognisable by both as collectively unique from the North? It is not certain these authors have satisfied these queries, but they have opened the door for fruitful further examinations of

these, and other questions raised by the notion of developing an Antipodean theory for educational research.

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## Notes on contributors

The biographies of the authors are available in the following link: [www.editorscollective.org.nz/membership/](http://www.editorscollective.org.nz/membership/)

## ORCID

Georgina Stewart  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8832-2415>

Tina Besley  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-437-1257>

Elizabeth Grierson  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7102-1464>

Petar Jandrić  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6464-4142>

Michael A. Peters  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1482-2975>

Marek Tesar  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7771-2880>

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