A Critique of the Western Sociological Tradition Using the Japanangka Paradigm

Marten Koomen

This article critiques the Western sociological tradition using the Indigenous Australian Japanangka paradigm elaborated by Errol West as a reference. The critique centres on a three-world pattern persistent in the Western tradition. Western expressions of the pattern are compared to that from a distinct Indigenous Australian standpoint expressed through the Japanangka paradigm. The comparison reveals the Western tradition having a problematic and tenuous connection to the physical and sacred.

The critique builds on the method of rational reconstruction in conjunction with exploration of patterns. The method focuses on reconstructing pre-theoretical knowledge that is expressed as simply as possible and which has universal application. Rational reconstruction and its criteria emerge from the Western tradition and the method reveals it to be in deficit compared to the Japanangka paradigm which provides a better universal expression of the three-world pattern.

Rational reconstruction requires reference to clear examples against which pre-theoretical knowledge can be evaluated. To this end, the critique and analysis refer to the contemporary Uluru Statement from the Heart as well as acts of genocide such as the dispersal of Indigenous people from Coranderrk.

KEY WORDS: Japanangka, Habermas, Bourdieu, Coranderrk, Uluru Statement.

Introduction

This article critiques the Western sociological tradition using the Indigenous Australian Japanangka paradigm as an external point of reference (West 2000; Foley 2003). The critique is framed around a comparison of a three-world pattern evident in both traditions (Koomen 2020: 487-8). Furthermore, this article makes the case that the Japanangka paradigm provides the better universal paradigm for use across different traditions.

The three-world pattern persists in the Western tradition with Christianity expressing the pattern in terms of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; Immanuel Kant expresses the pattern through three critiques of Pure reason, Practical reason, and Judgement; and Jean-François Lyotard refers to the pattern through the terms Truth, Justice, and Beauty (Kant 2016, 2004, 2005; Lyotard 1984: 44). For this critique, the three-world patterns of Jürgen Habermas and Pierre Bourdieu provide the entry point into other authors in the Western tradition. Habermas frames the objective, social and subjective worlds, and Bourdieu describes economic, social, and cultural capital. These are considered here as typical framings within contemporary Western thought (Habermas 1985; Bourdieu 1986).

The Japanangka paradigm emerges from a distinct Indigenous Australian tradition and is described by Dennis Foley as having three interacting worlds; the Physical, the Human, and the Sacred (Foley 2003; West 2000). The Japanangka paradigm resembles patterns found in the Western tradition but has a distinct Indigenous Australian standpoint that explicitly references the physical and sacred. The Japanangka paradigm, along with the expressions of Habermas and Bourdieu, are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - The framings of Japanangka Errol West, Jürgen Habermas, and Pierre Bourdieu respectively

The Western tradition has an unclear relationship with the physical and sacred which are explicitly referred to in the Japanangka paradigm. Western thought emerges from a tradition that worships sky gods such as Zeus in Greek mythology and Christianity's Father in Heaven. This theme prevails in Western sociological thought including Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' of capitalism which is critiqued by Karl Marx through the notion of a political and economic superstructure that governs relationships among 'men' (sic). The heaven-and-earth pattern is found in Habermas's elaboration of system-and-lifeworld and in Anthony Giddens's elaboration of structure-and-agency. Therefore, either with or without reference to a deity, the Western tradition tends to approach the physical world through transcendental concepts and symbols (Smith 1993: 292; Marx 2000: 425; Habermas 1992; Giddens 2014: 5-28).

Japanangka Errol West describes Indigenous Australian ontology as enmeshing the spiritual and material. This contrasts with the polarised Western tradition in which one extreme worships the three worlds as a whole, such as Christian worship of the Holy Trinity, while others in the Western atheist tradition shun the sacred altogether (Dawkins 2016). Where the Western tradition is polarised between worship of the Holy Trinity and atheism, the Japanangka paradigm has a Sacred World that allows for a greater plurality of personal and group Dreaming along with attitudes towards the sacred (Andrews 2018: 1-15; West 2000: 237; Foley 2003: 47).

This article employs the method of rational reconstruction in conjunction with a focus on patterns. The method of rational reconstruction emerges from the Western tradition and is used by Habermas to describe what is important at a pre-theoretical level of human understanding (Koomen 2020; Habermas 1979: 12–4; Carnap 1962: 3; Wunderlich 1979: 169–72). Identification of patterns is used here in a similar fashion to the fields of architecture and software engineering where it is used to communicate ideas that repeatedly present but never the same way twice (Alexander et al. 1977: x; Gamma et al. 1995: 2). A focus on patterns is distinct from a focus on progress narratives emerging from historical materialism first elaborated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and subsequently reconstructed by Habermas (Marx and Engels [1846]2000; Habermas 1979).

The argument that the Japanangka paradigm provides the better sociological framing emerges from the method of rational reconstruction. Rational reconstruction seeks to replace vague human intuitions with exact statements to build universal theories. The method requires ideas to be expressed as simply as possible and to be universally applicable. It is argued here that the Japanangka paradigm is the most parsimonious expression of the

three-world pattern and expressed in a way that allows other expressions to be described and theoretically explored. The Japanangka paradigm is considered here to provide the better expression from the perspective of the Western tradition.

While this article makes the argument that the Japanangka paradigm provides the better universal expression of the three-world pattern, this effort is secondary to that of articulating interconnectedness across perspectives. There is a greater focus on exposition than on argument through a sensibility of Indigenous *métissage* that purposefully juxtaposes historical perspectives to reframe and enhance historical understanding (Donald 2009: 5). It touches on colonisation and maintains a stance that decolonisation involves Indigenous people gaining control of their land and life. Decolonisation is not taken as a metaphor for other ills of society (Tuck and Yang 2012: 162). Nevertheless, the focus here is on deficiencies in the Western tradition.

Inherent Tensions: The physical, human, and sacred

The physical world

Jürgen Habermas frames an abstract objective world that is here considered to correspond to the Physical World in the Japanangka paradigm. In Habermas's abstraction, an explicit connection to the physical world is lost. Where the Japanangka paradigm addresses resistance associated with the Physical World, Habermas explores resistance through a tension between *facticity* and validity (Foley 2003: 49; Habermas 1998). Facticity is a concept developed by Martin Heidegger to describe factual matter existing in a worldly sense but not necessarily in the inanimate existence of nature (Heidegger 1996: 52). Habermas' abstraction conflates the Japanangka paradigm's Physical World with its Human World. It is in the human social world where language is used to create constructs described by Heidegger as facticity (Austin 1975).

Habermas strongly rebukes Heidegger whilst simultaneously building a theory upon his concept of facticity. Heidegger provokes a personal rebuke through a failure to explicitly renounce Nazism and his membership of the Nazi Party. A philosophical rebuke responds to Heidegger's focus on *being (Dasein)* as a presence in time and history detached from the actions of the physical empirical person (Habermas 1990: 155-6). While distancing himself from Heidegger, Habermas nevertheless builds on his concept of facticity that is itself detached from the empirical world (Sluga 1993).

The tension between Heidegger and Habermas is of interest to postcolonial theory because it illustrates a

fissure in the Western tradition directly relating to the genocidal tendency of Nazism. This fissure is reflected upon later with reference to the colonisation of Australia. While Habermas makes great effort to avoid Heidegger's trajectory towards Nazism, there is nevertheless a gap in Habermas' own work explored throughout this article.

Pierre Bourdieu elaborates economic capital as a commodity able to be institutionalised through property rights making explicit a fundamental distinction between Indigenous Australian and Western thought (Bourdieu 1986: 47). Dennis Foley describes Indigenous Australian philosophy based on the belief that *people do not own the land and instead the land owns people* (Foley 2003: 46). Bourdieu's economic capital provides a direct contrast by characterising *land as owned by people* through property rights, titles, and mortgages.

Habermas and Bourdieu both conflate the physical with human constructs to privilege the latter. This turn towards the social world is reflected in other lines of inquiry in the Western tradition such as the *hermeneutic turn* and *linguistic turn* that privilege human understanding and language over the physical world itself (Lafont 1999). Karen Barad challenges this by turning towards the physical and material in a relatively recent line of inquiry referred to as posthumanism (Barad 2003). However, the Japanangka paradigm opens the possibility for a more direct return to the physical rather than an esoteric turn towards it.

The Japanangka paradigm provides a direct connection to land highlighting a fundamental distinction between Indigenous Australian philosophy and the Western tradition. However, all framings describe the three-worlds existing simultaneously and in connection with each other. In this way, the objective world of Habermas and the economic capital elaborated by Bourdieu can be expressed through the Japanangka paradigm as particular symbolic social constructions of the Physical World emerging from the Human World.

The sacred world

The sacred is problematic for the Western tradition. This is evident in the work of Habermas who, after Max Weber, frames the sacred within a progress narrative where religion disintegrates as a unifying force from which the autonomous spheres of science, morality and art emerge (Habermas 1992; Weber 2009; Harrington 2000). Where the Japanangka paradigm explicitly references the sacred, the Western tradition actively works towards excluding religion and its correlation to the sacred.

Bourdieu's cultural capital has a closer relationship to the Sacred World of the Japanangka paradigm. This

is illustrated in the work of a number of Indigenous Australian thinkers and artists who draw on Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital to explore individual difference and identity (Bamblett et al. 2019; Bourdieu 1984). It is through aesthetics and art, which include painting, dance, music, and ritual practice, that Bourdieu's cultural capital bears a relationship to the Sacred World of the Japanangka paradigm.

The Western tradition's uncertain relationship with art and the aesthetic can be traced to Plato who banished artists from the *Republic* only to praise art and beauty in the *Phaedrus.* Similarly, Hegel held that art was obsolete and having no future, only to devote much space and effort to exploring it (Beiser 2005: 23). Habermas emerges from this tradition to postulate a subjective world that is made manifest through aesthetic expressive rationality and art. However, Nikolas Kompridis, a student of Habermas, describes Habermas's work on art and the subjective world as 'nothing more than a stab in the dark' (Kompridis 2006: 108).

Andy Warhol and Herbert Marcuse further illustrate the Western tradition's uncertain relationship with art. Warhol equates art with business in a way that renders it almost indistinct from economic capital (Warhol 1975). Marcuse characterises art as containing the rationality of negation and 'the protest against that which is' (Marcuse 1968: 66). The Western tradition's escape from sacredness and the physical world through art contrasts with the Sacred World of the Japanangka paradigm that explicitly seeks to mesh the spiritual with the material world through sacred practice (West 2000: 237; Foley 2003: 40). The work of Warhol and Marcuse illustrate that the Western tradition often does not consider art and the aesthetic a sacred or cultural practice (Eagleton 2014). In the case of Warhol art becomes a form of economic capital; in the case of Marcuse art is a way to escape the physical and social world.

The Japanangka paradigm's Sacred World is reflected in Émile Durkheim's work that explores Indigenous Australian culture. Durkheim identified religion as a persistent aspect of humanity and a means for shaping an intersubjective moral universe to govern how people relate to one another (Durkheim 2001). This sacredness is lost in contemporary Western narratives that characterise religion as disintegrating or actively dismissed through atheism (Habermas 1992; Dawkins 2016). The loss of sacredness is associated with a loss of perspective over what is collectively known, and what is not. The Western tradition replaces the sacred with a belief that an objective progress narrative in science will ultimately reveal and explain the world. This contrasts with Indigenous Australian philosophy that has a comfortable awareness

of the limits of its knowledge, which Munya Andrews associates with a sacred respect for things greater than the Human World (Andrews 2018: 2; West 2000: 237; Foley 2003: 47).

Munya Andrews explains Indigenous Australian Dreamtime using Western ideas of God as unknowable, beyond words, and beyond understanding. Dreamtime is likened by Andrews to computer software that provides a worldview through a cultural coding of language and symbols that describes philosophy, cosmology, and relationships among people. This cultural software is described by Andrews as not being singular or homogenous among Australia's numerous Indigenous Nations, and that it instead varies across Indigenous Australian Nations. This illustrates an inherent pluralistic attitude towards worldviews that contrasts with the monotheistic Western traditions (Andrews 2018: 2).

The Dreamtime and Dreaming in the Indigenous Australian tradition can be juxtaposed to the Western tradition that encounters persistent issues around plurality of national and individual identity. Munya Andrews distinguishes Dreamtime as expressing foundational worldviews along with Dreaming that can express personal and group identity. The plurality of Dreamtime and Dreaming among Indigenous Australian nations shows how a plurality of worldviews and personal identity can be accommodated. Andrews conveys a sense of equanimity towards plurality in a way that contrasts with ongoing irreconcilable ideological contests over worldviews and identity in the Western tradition (Andrews 2018; Eagleton 2014).

The sacredness of Dreamtime as well as group and personal Dreaming provide a model that might be used in the Western tradition to address its problematic relationship with plurality. At a national level, the Sacred World of the Japanangka paradigm provides a framing for a plurality of worldviews, religions, and culture. At a personal level, the paradigm provides for a plurality of race, gender, sexuality. These matters are not readily addressed in the Western tradition (Meehan 1995; Abelove et al. 1993; Eagleton 2014).

The human world

The Human World of the Japanangka paradigm at first sight harmonises well with Habermas's social world. It is however the most problematic for the Western tradition as the human world provides the sphere for addressing conflicting approaches to the physical and sacred.

Sentiments in the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* agreed to by numerous Australian First Nation representatives reflect a sensibility also found in Habermas's work. The

Uluru statement is action oriented, and emphasises voice. The statement calls for the voice of First Nation people to be heard in an orderly process of agreement-making about the future, as well as truth-telling about the past (Mayor 2019). These sentiments can all be reasoned about through Habermas's work.

Like the Uluru statement, Habermas values intersubjective consensus and truth in a fashion that ensures all those affected by a consensus are in a position to accept it and its consequences (Habermas 1996). Both the Uluru statement and Habermas value voice and speech in the process of developing consensus, with Habermas stipulating four important presuppositions for a valid consensus: that no one capable of making a contribution is excluded from speaking; that all participants have equal rights to speak; that participants mean what they say; and that speech is not affected by coercion (Habermas 2008: 50).

Where the Uluru statement focuses on the heart, Habermas uses perceptions and feelings as the basis for personal world-disclosure. It is through intersubjectively redeeming the validity of an individual's stream of perceptions and a web moral feeling that Habermas conceptualises consensus (Habermas 1996). However, an issue emerges in Habermas's work as it explicitly links a *perceptible reality* with a species-wide *symbolically prestructured reality* through which consensus is negotiated (McCarthy 1979: xx; Habermas 1979: 10). In contrast to Habermas's species-wide symbolically prestructured reality, Munya Andrews describes a plurality of Dreamtime narratives among Indigenous Australian clans where each Dreamtime has its own signals and symbols that are not able to be meaningfully mixed with other Dreamtimes (Andrews 2018).

The universal symbolically prestructured reality that underpins Habermas's thought emerges from a Western tradition of *a priori* transcendentalism evident in Plato's *Forms* and Kant's *Categories* (Plato 1963; Kant 2016). Habermas argues that his work represents a weaker form of transcendentalism than those that came before (Habermas 1979: 21). Nevertheless, Habermas's symbolically prestructured reality is presented as monolithic and species-wide in a way that does not foster engagement across a plurality of worldviews. A universal symbolically prestructured reality might be considered akin to a universal dreamtime, which is not how Munya Andrews describes Indigenous Australian Dreamtime.

Two questions emerge for Habermas from his postulated symbolically prestructured reality. One asks about inclusiveness, and how a plurality of discordant symbolic realities might be included into a species-wide symbolic

reality. A second asks how understanding across a plurality of worldviews are meaningfully traversed in a context where Munya Andrews describes different Dreamtimes as not able to be meaningfully mixed. Both questions reveal a gap in Habermas's work.

Where Habermas bases his theory on a linguistically-based cognitive logic, Andrews likens Dreamtime and Dreaming to the work of Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell in the Western tradition (Andrews 2018: 6-7). The work of Jung and Campbell address a fluid, vital and a largely unformed unconscious symbolic universe that propels life (Jung 1964; Campbell 1973). Andrews describes a form of symbolic reasoning that is known in the Western tradition particularly through Greek mythology. Greek mythology itself provides a way of framing a distinction between Indigenous Australian Dreamtime and Western mythology. The Indigenous Australian Dreamtime emphasises sacredness of land that a Western perspective might interpret as akin to the ancient Greek's reverence for *Gaia, Hades* or *Demeter*; gods associated with the earth and its cornucopia. The Western tradition itself favours sacredness of the sky and heavens leading to the capricious and powerful *Zeus* being the prototypical Western god (Lovelock 2003; Neville 1989; Neville and Dalmau 2008; Graves 1992). While Andrews engages in this form of symbolic reasoning, neither Habermas nor his interlocutors seriously engage with it, other than perhaps Friedrich Nietzsche who explored the energies of Dionysus and Apollo (Nietzsche 2003). In contrast to Dreamtime and Dreaming that frame fluid and unformed unconscious symbols, Habermas's symbolically prestructured reality only encompasses symbols interrogable through cognitive logic.

Habermas acknowledges the limitations of his theory, which is explicated through a hypothetical argument in the cognitive realm with a sceptic. This hypothetical argument is not in the language of engagement (Saurette 2005: 177). Habermas acknowledges that satisfying his conditions for consensus are improbable given that they represent a form of ideal speech, and appeals to the cognitive moral psychology of Kohlberg for a solution. What is notably missing in Habermas's work is reference to the psychology of Jung, Freud and Campbell that addresses parts of the human mind inaccessible to conscious logic (Habermas 1996: 88,185; Kohlberg 1971; Jung 1964; Campbell 1973; Freud 1995). While perhaps sincere in his pursuit of intersubjective understanding, the awkwardness of Habermas's hypothetical argument, and its failure to address the psychology of the unconscious, suggests a gap in his work and the Western tradition more broadly (Habermas 1985).

Within the Western tradition, Jean-François Lyotard and Jacques Derrida provided a critique of Habermas that has

contemporary currency. Lyotard explicitly eschewed the kind of consensus Habermas works towards because it emerges from language games in the realm of science and cognitive logic (Lyotard 1984: 60-7; Wittgenstein 2009). Lyotard proffered paralogy as an alternative to address a plurality of worldviews, where paralogy is a form of reasoning outside of formal logic (Lyotard and Thébaud 2008). The attraction of paralogy can be demonstrated in fundamental differences across Indigenous and Western traditions on land ownership. The argument that Indigenous people be given land rights so that they can maintain a tradition of not having land rights does not seem a logical and coherent argument. However, there is a case that paralogy is not required to understand this paradox, as it can be readily understood by those with a sincere disposition to understand through ordinary language.

Derrida, like Lyotard, works towards untethering Western logic from its Eurocentric origins and does so in a similar fashion to Heidegger by detaching speech from the empirical person (Derrida 2007; Spivak 2016). Derrida proposes *arche-writing* as a form of writing that precedes speech. Arche-writing, for example, provides a way of extending the symbolically prestructured reality postulated by Habermas by creating new vocabularies (Derrida 2016). Through new vocabularies, and in a similar way to Marcuse's protest against everything through art, Derrida is associated with a subjective sublimity attained by escaping an inheritance of vocabulary and tradition (Rorty 1995: 457). Derrida's work has been used effectively in postcolonial contexts by theorists such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Spivak 2010). However, due to its diminished concern for voice and the empirical person, Derrida's work requires caution in the Australian context where the Uluru statement emphasises the importance of voice in reconciliation.

Trajectories of thought associated with Derrida are sometimes associated with moral relativism, which is an accusation that morality is an expression of culture not tethered to any fundamental tenets (Sweetman 1999). Concerns over moral relativism emerge in the context of Derrida and Heidegger because each seeks to free language from a fixed origin and transcendental signifiers such as God (Spivak 2016: xvi). In some respects, the Indigenous Australian paradigm affords the kind of plurality sought by Derrida and Heidegger. However, in contrast to both, the explicit reference to the Physical World in the Japanangka paradigm anchors morality to a universal truth found in the Physical World.

Like Derrida and Lyotard, Habermas also anchors truth in the social world and forestalls accusations of relativism by incorporating Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

Progress in moral development is the central contribution that Habermas makes when reconstructing Marxism's historical materialism that addresses technological progress (Habermas 1979). In doing so, Habermas implicitly links progress in the moral dimension with progress in the technological dimension. This link has the potential to unduly characterise Indigenous Australian culture poorly.

Kohlberg postulates three stages of moral development, with the third postconventional level associated with autonomous moral behaviour based on principles that have validity beyond the group to which an individual identifies. It is the postconventional level of moral development upon which Habermas bases his theory of communication (Kohlberg 1971; Habermas 1996).

A case emerges from a Western perspective that Indigenous Australians, independent of considerations of technological progress, have a higher level of moral development than non-Indigenous Australians. Australian First Nation adults, particularly prior to colonisation and dispossession, speak multiple Indigenous languages of neighbouring nations, with empirical evidence identifying some Indigenous adults speaking up to eight languages (Singer and Harris 2016; Andrews 2018: 5). In contrast, modern Australia remains steadfastly monolingual (Adoniou 2018: 273). There is a preliminary case to be made that Indigenous Australian adults, particularly leaders engaging neighbouring nations, routinely engage in what Kohlberg in the Western tradition describes as postconventional moral thinking.

Evidence of high levels of moral development is found among several contemporary Indigenous writers who, despite addressing grim matters of dispossession, genocide and stolen children, frame their work in empathetic and welcoming terms. Examples include *Learning to Fall in Love With Your Country, Welcome to Country, and Finding the Heart* (Pascoe 2007; Langton et al. 2018; Mayor 2019). This suggests that from the perspective of the Western tradition, Indigenous Australian cultures have high levels of moral development and empathy.

Discussion

This article has explored the case that the Japanangka paradigm is capable of accommodating Western framings of the three-world pattern and that it provides the better general pretheoretical framing for universal use. There is also a case that the Western tradition could align with the Indigenous Australian tradition through a turn towards the physical and the sacred. However, such a turn requires a non-trivial change in standpoint for those embedded in the Western tradition.

The analysis here reveals a tendency for the Western tradition to appropriate the physical world for social and economic goals using abstracted value symbols such as money and related forms of economic capital. The tension between the physical world and economic goals in the Western tradition is evident in contemporary debates over climate change and environmental policy.

The colonising tendency of managing land through the symbol of money was recognised in the early 1900s by Lenin who described capitalism as the ultimate driver of colonialism and imperialism (Lenin 2010). Lenin has been somewhat vindicated in the contemporary context where global coordination is increasingly through the flow of economic capital.

Globalisation and the global flow of money is often associated with neoliberalism and a form of economics promoted by the Nobel Laureate, Milton Friedman. Friedman described neoliberal economics as largely independent of ethical consideration or normative judgement (Friedman 2008: 146; 2002). A seminal contribution by Karl Popper illustrates how neoliberal economics distances itself from Habermas's tradition through a critique of Plato, Hegel and Marx that advocates against collectivist ideals and in favour of economic coordination with minimal government interference (Popper 2002; Stedman Jones 2012: 33-49; Friedman 2002; Hayek 2007; von Mises 2007). Nevertheless, contemporary neoliberalism is still often associated with the sacred through Pentecostal movements that explicitly connect the sacred with the accumulation of money and economic capital (Jennings 2017; Friedman 2002).

The Western tradition tends to appropriate sacred and cultural practices, including sex and education, for economic purposes. The German sociologist Max Weber described the spirit of capitalism emerging out of the sacred practices of Protestantism (Weber 2011). Marcuse postulated a relationship between sexual repression and capital accumulation (Marcuse 1974). The Nobel Laurette Gary Becker considered cultural capital acquired through education only in terms of its capacity to generate economic capital (Becker 1993; Bourdieu 1986). This demonstrates a propensity within the Western tradition to appropriate for the economic world aspects of life many associate with the sacred.

The sacred nevertheless plays an important part in the process of colonial appropriation of land for economic purposes which can be illustrated through the influence of missionaries. Missionaries played a pivotal role in the dispersal of Indigenous people in the Australian state of Victoria from the Aboriginal reserve of Coranderrk in the late 1890s. While some missionaries were sympathetic to

the Indigenous cause, the role of the German Moravian missionary Friedrich Hagenauer was influential in the genocide. Hagenauer was influential in forcing Indigenous people to change their cultural practice including wedding practices. Hagenauer was also influential in the establishment of a parliamentary act that allowed the colonial state to forcibly separate Indigenous children from their mothers (Jensz 2010a; 2010b: 125). In this way, Hagenauer's efforts to disrupt Indigenous sacred practice was central to the dispersal of Indigenous Australian people so that land could be appropriated for Western economic goals. The history of Coranderrk illustrates the importance of missionaries and the sacred in colonisation and land dispossession (Barwick 1998).

Hagenauer provides a link to Habermas's tradition and to the genocidal tendency manifest in Martin Heidegger and Nazism described earlier. Hagenauer considered the Indigenous corroboree a form of shocking satanical excitement and an enemy of the soul. Felicity Jensz describes Hagenauer's interpretation emerging from an inability among missionaries 'to see indigenous practices in any way other than through their own spiritual and cultural paradigms' (Jensz 2010b: 125). Hagenauer was not able to accommodate within his own socially structured symbolic reality the perceptible reality presented by the Indigenous corroboree in the physical world.

The distinction between Hagenauer and Indigenous Australian thought is an important one. Hagenauer's attitude is reflected in the work of Heidegger who concluded that *being* 'is not something like a being' (Heidegger 1996: 3). For Heidegger, *being* 'is that which determines beings as beings' (Heidegger 1996: 4). A similar line of thought allowed Hagenauer to assert his own socially constructed subjective sense of *being* to deny Indigenous Australian people their right to being. In contrast, the people of Coranderrk took their sense of *being* as largely self-evident as their physical presence is *like being*. This sensibility is better illustrated in Bruce Pascoe's account of how the Wathaurong people encountered the English convict William Buckley who they found wandering helplessly. The Wathaurong acknowledged Buckley's *being* through a physical familiarity to love him as one of their own. The Wathaurong accounted for Buckley's white skin colour through the sacred world as a returned spirit. Where Heidegger considered *being* a subjective human construct imposed on the physical world, Pascoe's account suggests Indigenous Australian people consider being as a physical semblance that is interpreted. The sacred practices of the Wathaurong people were able to interpret William Buckley as a *being*, and the sacred practices of Hagenauer could not reciprocate that sentiment for the people of Coranderrk with devastating consequences (Pascoe 2007: 14,22; Barwick 1998).

The reified symbolic reality used by Hagenauer to deny Indigenous Australian their humanity raises concerns about Habermas's theory founded upon a similar idea of a symbolically prestructured reality. This is to suggest that Habermas, and the Western tradition more broadly, may not have fully overcome the genocidal tendency inherited from Heidegger. Habermas attempts to make up for a neglect of the sacred in a later series of essays in which he acknowledges that religious traditions 'have a special power to articulate moral intuitions, especially with regard to vulnerable forms of communal life' (Habermas 2008: 131). However, there is an awkwardness in Habermas's addendum which is an adjunct to his main body of work.

The Western tradition neglects forces that propel human communal life – forces that are here considered part of the sacred. The Western sociological tradition is inordinately focused on the validity of negative laws which are laws that seek to prevent one individual from infringing upon the rights of others. This focus emerges from the Christian tradition and its concern for *doing unto others as you would have them do unto you*, a concern that was philosophically theorised and elaborated by Immanuel Kant into a *categorical imperative*. This interest was further elaborated by Habermas (Habermas 1998; Kant 2002; Bowie 2003). There is a contemporary bifurcation of the modernist tradition often described as *poststructuralism* reflected in the work of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Judith Butler. Poststructuralism is also concerned about the imposition of laws and norms, but instead of questioning their validity poststructuralism seeks to escape them altogether. However, common to both contemporary modernism and poststructuralism is that each emerge from Heidegger's notion of *being* that is detached from the empirical and physical world to privilege human will in defining *being* (Spivak 2016: xvi; Hargis 2011; Foucault 2002; Karademir 2014; Butler 2007; Sluga 1993; Harcourt 2007; Habermas 1981, 1997). Both modernism and poststructuralism eschew the sacred in a way that contrasts to how Durkheim found the sacred propelling a coherent and stable moral life among Indigenous Australian communities (Durkheim 2001).

Japanangka Errol West observes that while Indigenous Australians are aware of their origins and limits of their knowledge, the Western tradition has a certain capacity to publicly flaunt its knowledge (West 2000: 237; Foley 2003: 47). This flaunting might be explained in a number of ways. The Western tradition has an incompleteness, with an infinite incompleteness in its scientific quest. This incompleteness emerges from the Western tradition postulating a progress narrative which requires constant recalibration of thought. The analysis here also reveals an ongoing tension between the modernist tradition that seeks to impose negative laws fairly and a poststructuralist tradition that seeks to escape impositions

altogether. These debates are not anchored to a physical reality but to a social reality that requires ongoing linguistic output to reproduce. Finally, unlike Indigenous Australian approaches, the loss of religion and the sacred in the Western tradition has resulted in a lost capacity to differentiate: inside knowledge from outside knowledge, the sacred from profane, and the knowledge of youth from those of elders (Andrews 2018: 26-9; Durkheim 2001). The contemporary Western tradition encourages anyone to create and rearrange words and symbols, and to flaunt these creations for appropriation by economic goals (Kress 2003, 2010).

Conclusion

This critique has observed Western thought as having an inordinate focus on cognitive logic detached from the physical and sacred. In the cognitive realm, Habermas provides the Western tradition with a sophisticated approach towards democracy and inclusion that is reflected in Australian First Nation calls in the Uluru Statement from the Heart. While this suggests the possibility of common ground, the Uluru statement's reference to land and sacredness is problematic for the Western tradition.

The Western tradition's preference for cognitively interrogable arguments emerges from a history of transcendental *a priori* approaches including Plato's Forms, Kant's Categories, and Habermas's symbolically prestructured reality. These transcendental approaches can create barriers for addressing Indigenous claims, particularly those pertaining to the sacred and its fluid symbolic logic. Decolonisation efforts might be enhanced through further understanding different approaches to the sacred and how they pertain to attitudes towards land. Where Indigenous Australian philosophy uses the sacred to build a relationship between humans and the physical, the Western tradition tends to consider the physical only for scientific investigation and economic appropriation.

This article has sought to avoid appropriation or reification of Indigenous paradigms. Nevertheless, there are elements of Indigenous Australian approaches that are considered here to have broader utility. The notions of Dreamtime and Dreaming point to a more universal model for teaching about a plurality of creation narratives as well as providing for a diversity of personal and group identity.

How identity and plurality is addressed has been linked here to issues of *being*. The Indigenous Australian philosophy has been observed as approaching *being* through a physical presence that has personal Dreaming located within a group Dreaming and Dreamtime. In contrast, Heidegger expresses well what is still dominant in the Western tradition that being emerges from *being* itself, a position found here to be associated with a capricious tendency for genocide.

Japanangka Errol West worked to provide a teaching and research model through a paradigm that focused on the physical, human, and sacred. The discussion here has found that the paradigm is able to frame teaching and research about the Western tradition as well as being fruitful for the Indigenous Australian tradition. When compared to Western expressions, the Japanangka paradigm provides a better teaching and research framework for universal application.

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Author

Marten Koomen holds a PhD in educational assessment from Victoria University, Australia, and a Master of Business Administration and Master of Education from Latrobe University, Australia. Marten taught in secondary schools before embarking on a career in public sector management and educational research. Marten has worked in education as a human resource manager for a government agency and senior research fellow for intergovernmental agencies. His current educational interest is exam development and policy implementation.

Mariette Handke talks with her book group friends

Since the heart attack
I've changed,
drive slower on the freeway,
cook proper meals,
no longer use the microwave.

At our monthly meeting
it used to be me
who hadn't read or finished the novel
we'd chosen to discuss.
Now I make notes,
sometimes read a passage out loud.

I telephoned Debra last week.
She's living in Chico, California,
with a short order cook named Raymond.
I down-played my recovery,
the sessions with the hospital psychiatrist,
didn't mention my terror at night,
imagining my father in the fold of the bedroom curtains,
in his right hand, the punishing belt.

If I've learned anything
it's to practice gratitude,
so I try to remind myself I have
a heartbeat, and a daughter,
all of Proust, Melville and Dickens to read.

*P*ETER *B*AKOWSKI & *K*EN *B*OLTON