

**ABORIGINAL EDUCATION WORKERS IN SOUTH
AUSTRALIA: TOWARDS EQUALITY OF
RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS ETHICS OF CARE
PRACTICES**

by

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Abstract

This thesis is focused on Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) who work with, support and care for Indigenous students in schools in South Australia. AEWs work in the ‘border zones’ (Giroux 2005) between the values of schools and the expectations of Indigenous communities. This thesis highlights how AEWs experience indirect discrimination in the workplace as a result of their complex racialised position. In particular, there is a general absence of recognition of AEWs’ caring role by non-Indigenous staff in schools.

AEWs are not only marginalised in schools, but also at an institutional level. While AEWs’ working conditions have improved, the ‘redistribution’ (Fraser & Honneth 2003, p. 10) of better working conditions has not eliminated indirect discrimination in the workplace. Furthermore, there is little research regarding AEWs in Indigenous education. Thus at three levels, namely school, Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS) and academia, there is a cyclical pattern that perpetuates an absence of recognition of AEWs.

This thesis uses whiteness theory (Frankenberg 1993) as a theoretical framework to examine this lack of recognition and the consequent low status of AEWs in schools. The thesis emerges from research, experience working as a teacher in a remote Aboriginal school with AEWs, and in-depth semi-structured interviews with 12 AEWs who are working in South Australian state schools. Standpoint theory (Collins 2004; Harding 2004) is used as both a method and methodology in order to understand and map AEWs’ position in schools. A common theme raised by all of the AEWs in the interviews is the absence of recognition of their work in schools by non-Indigenous staff and the consequent feeling of marginalisation in the workplace. In this thesis the site-specific contexts of the interviewees and the effects of whiteness are examined.

The findings that emerged from the in-depth semi-structured interviews with AEWs were concerned with Indigenous ethics of care models. The narratives from the

interviewees who were AEWs revealed how white ethics of care practices in schools de-legitimise Indigenous ethics of care. Furthermore, the discursive regimes that govern school policy and protocol often limit AEWs' ability to respond effectively to Indigenous student needs. This thesis highlights the complexities and contradictions of AEWs who are working in the border zones. As a result, AEWs often feel caught between school expectations and community protocols.

This thesis advocates equality of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices to address the indirect discrimination that AEWs experience. It concludes with a map for recognition of AEWs' care practices on an institutional level in relation to academia and DECS, and in schools in order to overturn the continual marginalisation of AEWs in South Australia. It argues for a values shift for non-Indigenous teachers and staff in schools and at the institutional levels in DECS and academia. In particular, this involves a values shift by non-Indigenous teachers, academics and policy makers towards an understanding of whiteness. Recommendations are provided in the concluding chapter that signpost possible moves towards equality of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices by non-Indigenous staff in schools.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Bindi MacGill

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

- AECG Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups
- AEDP Aboriginal Employment Development Policy
- AEP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy
- AERTs Aboriginal Education Resource Teachers
- AES Aboriginal Education Services
- AEU/ATU after 1993 the Australian Teachers Union became the Australian Education Union
- AEW Aboriginal Education Worker
- AIEW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker
- AnTEP Anangu Teacher Education Program
- APY Lands – Anangu Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Lands (previously known as AP Lands)
- ASIP Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program
- ASSPA Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Committee
- CPC Child Parent Centre
- DECS Department of Education and Children’s Services (this thesis only uses DECS in order to keep the nomenclature consistent)
- DEET Department of Employment, Education and Training
- NAEC National Aboriginal Education Committee
- PYEC Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Education Council
- QIECB Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Body
- RDA Racial Discrimination Act, 1975, (Cth)
- SAAECC South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee
- TAFE Technical and Further Education

Glossary of key terms

Anangu: A self-referential term for Pitjantjatjara/ Yankunytjatjara people: it literally means 'person' or 'people' in the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara language group. Recently its semantic range has expanded somewhat to include some non-Aboriginal people as well, ie to denote a 'person' or 'people' generically, but this is only occasional.

Auntie/Uncle: an Indigenous woman or man who has the status of a person present in an Indigenous community who has influence over children; the equivalent being a *parent in situ* in nuclear family models.

Country: Land from which a person's ancestors and Dreamings came and with which kin affiliations and identity are associated.

Ethics of care: Ethics of care is concerned with the social practice of caring in families, schools and societies and includes 'attentiveness, responsibility [and] responsiveness' (Sevenhuijsen 1998, p. 83). Caring is a physical act but the act of caring and the manners of reciprocation of care are grounded in cultural practices.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

This thesis focuses on Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) who are employed by the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) in South Australian schools¹. Aboriginal Education Workers (SA and TAS) are also known as Aboriginal Teacher Aides, Koorie Educators (Vic), Indigenous Educators, Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (WA), Aboriginal Teaching Assistants (NSW), Aboriginal Assistant Teachers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers (NT) or Indigenous Education Workers (QLD and ACT) (*National Report* vol. 4. n. d.; Winkler n. d.). In 2007 there were '2500 AEWs working under different titles' (*Same Kids Same Goals* 2007) working in state schools in Australia.

An Enterprise Agreement signed in 1997 clarified the job specification of AEWs and ensured training through TAFE (Technical and Further Education) or AnTEP (Anangu Teacher Education Program). AEWs are employed from Level 1—Level 5 on a DECS employment scale (*AEW Career Structure* n. d; for further details see *Appendix 2*). This thesis focuses primarily on AEWs employed by DECS in South Australia who work in schools. AEWs work in urban, rural and remote schools 'on the basis of 1 AEW for every 60 Aboriginal students' in South Australia (*AEW Career Structure* n. d.). However, when there are 20 Indigenous students or less enrolled in schools AEWs are employed on a part-time or casual basis.

In 2007 there were 225 AEWs working in DECS schools in South Australia. In 2004, there were just under 200 AEWs employed in State schools across South Australia. 105 of those AEWs were employed in metropolitan and rural areas and the rest were employed in remote areas, such as the APY Lands schools (Sue Rankin, Aboriginal Education Unit, 2007, pers. comm., 5 December). Approximately 75% of the AEWs were female. However this statistic varies as new employees are hired

¹ In 2008 AEWs were renamed Aboriginal Community Education Officers.

throughout the year depending on circumstances. The majority of AEWs are between 20-50 years of age, but the predominant age group cluster is between 25-40 years of age (Sue Rankin, Aboriginal Education Unit, 2007, pers. comm., 5 December). The majority of AEWs employed in rural and metropolitan areas speak English as their first language. The majority of Anangu on the APY Lands speak Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara or Antikarinya. English is a third or fourth language for many AEWs and Indigenous students in remote Aboriginal schools.

There are eight remote Anangu schools in the area commonly identified as the APY Lands that are located approximately 1000-1500 kilometres North West of Adelaide. The APY Lands is a short hand way of referring to the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara Lands of north-western South Australia owned by the Anangu people. The APY Lands cover the Western Desert region and include the intersection between Western Australia, South Australia and Northern Territory (Brokensha 1975, p. 5). The names of the Anangu schools on the APY Lands are: Pipalyatjara, Pukatja (Ernabella), Yunyarinyi (Kenmore Park), Iwantja (Indulkana), Mimili, Amata, Aparawatatja (Fregon). There is one more Anangu school called Yalata outside of the APY Lands and located in the south west of South Australia. The majority of AEWs working in these schools are employed in the Child Parent Centre (CPC) and the primary section of the school. These schools, as well as the Adelaide based Wiltja program at Woodville High School, operate under the umbrella of Anangu Education Services, DECS and the Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Education Council (PYEC). AEWs who are employed to work at Wiltja secondary school tend to be sourced more locally rather than from the APY Lands.

AEWs occupy a central role in the lives of Indigenous students. AEWs' primary roles are to support Indigenous students in schools and liaise with their parents and extended families in their local community. One of the 'priority actions' in the *DECS' Aboriginal Strategy 2005-2010* is to increase the employment of AEWs (2005, p. 7). The employment of AEWs is an affirmative action approach by the Government to address Indigenous students' needs in schools. However, affirmative action does not seamlessly translate into inclusive practices in the workplace, particularly when AEWs' conditions of employment are grounded in assimilatory procedures and practices.

AEWs and their status are dependent upon the goodwill of their colleagues in schools. In particular, AEWs work in class rooms with non-Indigenous teachers who have a direct impact on their status in schools. The performance of whiteness (Cook 2003) through non-Indigenous teachers' body language and actions towards AEWs operates either consciously or subconsciously to exclude AEWs as legitimate employees of schools (see Davies on exclusion in 2005, pp. 7-11; King on dysconscious racism in 1991, pp. 336-348). The discursive language of the curriculum further marginalises Indigenous knowledges despite statements by DECS in the *SACSA Framework* to include Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum (*SACSA Framework* n. d. p. 20). There are many reasons for this, including the constructions of race, class and gender in Australia. This thesis addresses these issues on a micro level in relation to AEWs, and on a macro level in relation to the discursive regimes that position Indigenous parents and caregivers as deficit in their roles as carers.

This thesis addresses the notion of ethics of care in relation to this group, because it is an unexamined field of knowledge regarding the role of AEWs. Ethics of care is a discourse that is concerned with the relationships and the moral codes of conduct between people, particularly in families. Ethics of care operates on a subconscious level and is shaped by cultural values and acts of emotional labour (See Glossary of key terms and Chapter Seven for a full analysis of ethics of care).

This thesis examines white ethics of care in order to critically view how it is privileged through whiteness in Australian schools. In particular, this examination addresses how the unexamined hegemony of a white ethics of care marginalises and denies agency to AEWs as members of extended family networks in Australian schools. It argues that an absence of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practised by many AEWs operates as a form of indirect discrimination. In order to overturn this practice it is necessary for non-Indigenous teachers, academics and policy makers to move from 'race-blindness' towards 'race-cognisance' (Aveling 2002, p. 128).

Catalyst for this study

The marginalisation of AEWs was clearly evident when I was a teacher at a remote Aboriginal School on the APY Lands in 1997, which became the catalyst for this thesis. At the same time I was completing a Masters degree in postcolonial theory in the visual arts. The theory led to a deeper understanding of my position as a young non-Indigenous teacher in a remote community. Said's *Orientalism* (1979) influenced my world view significantly. The contradictions of Anangu people living in third world conditions in a first world country became a focus of injustice that I attempted to unravel in my role as a primary teacher in the school. I developed a deeper understanding of Anangu culture and my own as a result of working with AEWs. This understanding was further expanded through my engagement in evening painting sessions with Anangu women and their children from the community. As a result of these experiences, I worked with AEWs in the Child Parent Centre (CPC) to develop a resistance framework where the curriculum reflected Anangu values and knowledge. This resulted in carers, family members and their children engaging in the curriculum in the CPC on a daily basis.

Notwithstanding these experiences, it took many years to challenge the values, assumptions, stereotypes and privilege that I unconsciously held as a result of being deeply socialized by my own socio-cultural values. Understanding my own socio-cultural biases was part of the process of deconstructing whiteness, but this was only the beginning. This journey has been deepened and enriched by teaching the course 'Teaching Indigenous Australian Students' for Yunggoendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research and the School of Education at Flinders University.

Over the three years I have taught pre-service teachers in this topic, along with my colleagues I have identified a pattern of behaviour demonstrated by the majority of fourth year pre-service teachers each year. Firstly, the majority of the students begin with resistance, and focus on the injustice of having to complete this compulsory topic. By week five many of the students move into a space of defensiveness when they are forced to examine their own socio-cultural biases and privileges. This resistance gradually settles by week ten by which time students have made their resolutions regarding their standpoints. Whilst this is not definitive, it does support

my methodology in relation to standpoint epistemology as a methodology of observation, experience and inquiry.

What remains clear is the need for de-centering whiteness, which has the potential to inform best practice regarding good pedagogy. ‘Prospective teachers need both an intellectual understanding of schooling and inequity as well as self-reflective, transformative emotional growth experiences’ (King 1991, p. 337). An examination and deconstruction of white ethics of care has proven to be a key process to engage pre-service teachers emotionally and intellectually in understanding cross-cultural pedagogy and practice. AEWs are located in a site of structural discrimination and when this site is unpacked it can be used to demonstrate how white ethics of care serves to marginalise AEWs and Indigenous students.

I had never heard of AEWs during my own teacher education program. This continues to be an issue whereby AEWs remain largely absent in Indigenous education discourse in universities. The first time I had heard of AEWs was during the two hour DECS induction video I watched before I went to the APY Lands. However, it was my experience working on the APY Lands that revealed to me the general misrecognition of AEWs in Anangu schools by non-Indigenous teachers (Fraser & Honneth 2003, p. 29).

To be ‘misrecognised’..., is not to suffer distorted identity or impaired subjectivity...it is rather to be constituted by *institutionalized patterns of cultural value* in ways that prevent one from participating as a peer in social life’ (Fraser & Honneth 2003, p. 29). Based on my observations as a teacher, this misrecognition provided the framework for the majority of the non-Indigenous teachers to engage with AEWs inside a binary relationship that is incommensurate. There is an interplay between the institutional and collegial levels, whereby AEWs are often ignored or used inappropriately by non-Indigenous teachers. AEWs are marginalised by the institutionalised patterns that govern and determine what is of cultural value in schools (Fraser & Honneth 2003, p. 29). These issues will be discussed in detail throughout the thesis.

In 1997 I collaborated with the AEWs and we wrote to DECS regarding the lack of recognition of their knowledge and contributions in the school. There was no response to our collaborative letter. The lack of response became the catalyst for my research. In a sense, this thesis is a long letter that has taken more than seven years of research and writing.

Aims

In this thesis I aim to reveal how the absence of recognition of AEWs in State schools is a form of institutionalised discrimination that leads to the marginalisation of AEWs by their non-Indigenous colleagues. This thesis investigates the institutional privileging of white ethics of care and the impact this has on AEWs. Society informally recognises care and the caring component of teaching, yet only within a white ethics of care framework. The theoretical framework of whiteness theory (Frankenberg 1993; Moreton-Robinson 1998) is used in this thesis as a lens to examine these formations of discrimination. I highlight the omission of AEWs in educational research as a result of the low status of care and the deficit theories constructed in relation to Indigenous ethics of care. I provide a map directed towards equality of recognition of AEWs in schools and on the institutional level. This includes a framework to generate dialogical relations and parity of participation (Fraser & Honneth 2003) between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers. Finally, I aim to link a pedagogy of whiteness to equality of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices in schools.

Why is this topic significant?

This thesis is significant because it unpacks white ethics of care in Australian schools and its impacts on AEWs' roles and responsibilities. Deconstructing white ethics of care practices in schools is important as it unveils the patterns of marginalisation experienced by AEWs. These patterns emerge in the form of an absence of recognition of AEWs' care practices, which is arguably an act of dysconscious racism (King 1991, p. 338). This often unintentional process requires attention and this thesis highlights how the process occurs through the interplay of uncritically examined institutional structures and the 'culturally sanctioned assumptions, myths,

and beliefs that justify the social and economic advantages white people have as a result of subordinating diverse others' (Wellman 1977 cited in King 1991, p. 338).

It is important to canvass whiteness in relation to ethics of care, because it reveals hidden privileges for teachers and students, particularly from white middle class backgrounds. It also highlights the patterns of indirect discrimination experienced by AEWs and Indigenous students as a result of white race privilege. However, this thesis applies Nakayama and Krizek's call against whiteness essentialism and uses 'strategic rhetoric' (in Connelly 2002) in order to 'get the job done' inside 'the field of difference' (Connelly 2002). Strategic rhetoric includes the general patterns of behaviour that are normalised in schools, yet also recognises the complexities of identities that disrupt these categories.

White ethics of care practices operate uncritically as a normative model in schools due to the hegemony (Dyer 1977, p.30) of white practices of care. 'Colour-blind' teaching practices (Thompson 1998) reflect 'gross inequalities of power' (Hall 1997, p. 258). In Australian educational settings 'differing perspectives' (Sevenhuijsen 1998, p. 83) on pedagogy and care are largely ignored. Through deconstructing white ethics of care in schools it is possible to highlight sites of indirect discrimination that AEWs routinely experience. By means of this process of analysis it is possible to examine the patterns of Indigenous and white ethics of care. In so doing, it becomes possible to understand differences inside of pluralism where normative models are decentred (Davies 2006, p. 578; Fraser & Honneth 2003, p. 42). In the context of this thesis, the right to recognition is used as one of the underlying principles of pluralism.

Recognition is a broad term that has held currency since Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977). Yet, the notion of equality of recognition of ethics of care developed in this thesis is a radicalised version of the Hegelian concept, because it intersects race, class and gender constructions inside a critical pedagogy of whiteness.

Standpoint theory is used to substantiate AEWs recognition claims based on in-depth semi-structured interviews. Standpoint theory avoids broad essentialist claims to recognition through the specifics of location and situated knowledge that emerge into patterns across AEWs experiences as revealed in Chapter Six.

In order to achieve equality in different ways of 'caring' it is necessary to move towards an understanding of the diversity of Indigenous ethics of care, as well as illuminate and shift the patterns of white race privilege. This thesis provides a conceptual map for achieving equality of recognition of AEWs where their status is commensurate with non-Indigenous teachers.

It is necessary to move from sites of resistance to a pedagogy of whiteness that challenges white race privilege. This ensures that both AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers can work in the border zones (Giroux 2005) in a pluralist society. Finally, this research is significant because it critically examines the values and beliefs upheld by white ethics of care that substantiated the policy that led to the Stolen Generations (*Bringing them Home* 1997, pp. 181-186).

Limitations of the study

There are a number of limitations in relation to this study. Firstly, many complexities arise when addressing Indigenous issues as a non-Indigenous researcher. Central to unravelling those complexities is developing an understanding of the position of the researcher, in order to address the issues of whiteness and authorship inside academia. The detail of this is explored in relation to standpoint theory in Chapter Five. Secondly, while acknowledging the psychological impact of misrecognition experienced by AEWs, this aspect has not been examined directly in this thesis, as an understanding of that cannot be achieved without reconstructing identity. Instead, AEWs' voices are canvassed in Chapter Six to demonstrate the issues that result from an absence of recognition of their roles in schools. Thirdly, the relationship between AEWs' role and Indigenous student learning outcomes has only been explored in a limited fashion, where features of the relationship are substantiated by the interviewees in Chapter Six. Fourthly, the focus of this thesis requires an examination of patterns of whiteness and differences between ethics of care models that excludes multiplicities of experience. Transcending the essentialist binaries that begin to emerge from such homogeneity remains a challenge throughout. As a case in point, I take this opportunity here to acknowledge that this

thesis rarely distinguishes non-Indigenous teachers or AEWs who excel in their roles from those who do not. However, writing similar constant disclaimers throughout the thesis is inappropriate, and serves to move the argument away from the guiding investigation into the marginalisation of AEWs, or any category considered entire. Included among the issues that have not been addressed in detail is the relationship between AEWs and Indigenous teachers. This was not raised as I was only able to interview one Indigenous teacher and the majority of the teachers who work with AEWs are non-Indigenous. Finally, despite the diversity of nomenclature within categories such as non-Indigenous teacher or Indigenous ethics of care, I chose to maintain a single name for each category, to improve clarity.

Outline of the chapters

This chapter has introduced the thesis and outlined the premises and key ideas concerning the marginalisation of AEWs' roles and the privilege of white ethics of care in schools. The catalyst of the study, based on my own experience working with AEWs, was outlined. The aims of the thesis were raised in conjunction with the tools used for analysis such as, whiteness theory and standpoint theory. The limitations of the thesis have been mentioned, which includes a disclaimer regarding distinguishing anomalies and differences inside any area of analysis.

Chapter Two is a history of AEWs and their working conditions. AEWs began as Teacher Aides without clearly delineated roles and responsibilities and with poor working conditions. As a result of efforts by the Australian Education Union (AEU) and the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee (SAAECC), the *Ara Kuwaritjakutu projects* (Buckskin & Hignett 1994) were written that led to recommendations for improving AEWs' working conditions. This chapter outlines the development of AEWs' working conditions, which reflects the broad improvements that have occurred for Indigenous workers throughout Australia. Although AEWs' working conditions have improved, this has not culminated in a higher status for this group in schools.

The theoretical framework is outlined in Chapter Three. Whiteness theory is the framework that is utilised to examine the lack of status of AEWs in schools, despite the improvements in their working conditions. Links between whiteness (Frankenberg 1993; Moreton-Robinson 2000), representation (Hall 1997) and culturalism (McConaghy 2000) are made in this chapter to provide greater clarification regarding the patterns and frameworks of indirect discrimination that remain in relation to AEWs' roles and status in schools. The theoretical framework also addresses the key differences between whiteness as a theory and whiteness as a privileged status. This is necessary as there are linguistic slippages that need to be clarified before the theory is used as a deconstructive tool.

Chapter Four reveals the dearth of research pertaining to the role of AEWs and applies whiteness theory as the tool for analysis in this chapter. This chapter highlights the general lack of attention to AEWs in education research and the discursive regimes that have defined AEWs as deficit. In the first section titled 'Locating AEWs in Indigenous education: 1960-1980' culturalist methodologies used by researchers that are grounded in whiteness are examined. The qualitative research used during this period reflects dominant cultural assumptions. These assumptions fuelled the stereotypes and representations that constructed AEWs and Indigenous ethics of care as deficit.

There was an epistemological shift during the 1980s in relation to Indigenous education, which led to contemporary understandings of discriminatory practices experienced by Indigenous students. However, there remained a general lack of attention regarding the position of AEWs in educational theory during this period. In the section headed 'AEWs in contemporary research: 1980s-2008' I discuss these changes, and the qualitative research practices used to analyse the context of AEWs in schools. The final section in this chapter is concerned with AEWs' voices in educational research. In 'AEWs: Indigenous perspectives', articles, essays and booklets by AEWs and the use of multimedia technology in the form of video interviews are canvassed. The issues raised in this section stand in contrast to the findings presented in the earlier period of 1960-1980. Essential to this project is the inclusion of Indigenous voices which is supported through standpoint theory.

Chapter Five introduces the methodology, which reflects recent developments in qualitative research practices. The use of standpoint theory and related critical theories such as poststructuralism and postmodernism support the theoretical framework used throughout the thesis. These theories have been strategically selected and are applied throughout the thesis to address the multiple formations of indirect discrimination that AEWs' experience, as well as reflect their different positions in general. These theories also support a reflexive location in relation to the complexities of the researcher and researched position (Edwards & Ribbens 1998, p. 3). This chapter also discusses the qualitative methods used for this thesis, which include in-depth interviews that were semi-structured. This provides the greatest scope for ideas and themes to emerge via the interviewees (Patton 1990; Reinharz 1992).

Chapter Six is based on five interviews with AEWs. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of the interviewees. The interviewees came from diverse backgrounds. Sue worked in a country school and had been an AEW for over 20 years. She had also worked in a range of schools and as a level four AEW administrator. However, her interview reflects her work as an AEW in schools. Similarly, Harry had worked as an AEW for over twenty years and he also worked in a rural school. Lucy worked in Adelaide in an urban boarding school for Indigenous students from remote communities. She also has a broad range of experience working in rural schools in South Australia. Matthew had been an AEW in metropolitan Adelaide and then began a teaching degree. Alison was an AEW, completed a Bachelor of Aboriginal Studies and a Graduate Diploma in Education and is currently writing a Masters thesis. Her insight into each step throughout her career has been used throughout this thesis. Interviews from these interviewees were selected for analysis as they reflect what the other seven interviewees raised (although they could not all be integrated due to the restraints of the chapter), particularly in relation to indirect discrimination and how it operates in schools.

This chapter also shows that many AEWs identify themselves as members of the extended family network and this informs their ethics of care practices. Here I use standpoint theory to explore the perspectives of AEWs, in particular the stresses of working in the border zones (Giroux 2005) between their local communities and

schools. The reflections of AEWs in relation to their experiences, particularly issues concerned with the misrecognition of their roles, developed the themes addressed throughout the thesis.

Chapter Seven discusses the theory on ethics of care, in particular the differences and sites of dissonance between Indigenous and white ethics of care. This chapter applies Spivak's (1987b) idea of 'strategic essentialism' as a tool to discuss issues in relation to ethics of care. I look at how white ethics of care is represented as 'value-neutral' in schools and educational theory and I examine the notion of universalist assumptions used by theorists in relation to ethics of care. The chapter reveals the process by which Indigenous extended family models of care are marginalised in white ethics of care theories. The impact of ethics of care theory has been largely unexamined theoretically in an Australian school context. As a result, commonly held beliefs regarding nuclear models of care are seen as intrinsic and natural. This chapter highlights these debates in ethics of care which are analysed in the following chapter in relation to constructions of race, class and gender.

In Chapter Eight I discuss the impact of race, class and gender. It examines the gendered state of education and its association with women's work in primary school. The historical relationship between white employees and Indigenous domestic servants is used as an analogous situation to AEWs' role in a contemporary context. This situates AEWs inside a gendered and classed location which is further demarcated by race. AEWs' relationship to non-Indigenous teachers is demarcated by race where whiteness operates in the omission of recognition of AEWs' presence as legitimate employees of schools. This chapter addresses the intersections of race, class and gender in relation to the politics of ethics of care.

In Chapter Nine I argue for equality of recognition of AEWs' care practices in schools. A call for equality of recognition is to give parity of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices institutionally and on a collegial level within school settings. Equality of recognition is a response to the race discrimination acts and United Nations Charters that address the issues of status and cultural commensurability in public sites, such as schools. A landmark indirect discrimination case is used to link AEWs' experiences of indirect discrimination in

schools. Whiteness theory is again used to examine the marginalised position of AEWs despite policies and Charters that argue for equal status of cultural differences in caring paradigms. Fraser's (2003) recognition theory is used in response to indirect discrimination that AEWs' experience as a result of misrecognition. This thesis extends Fraser's parity of participation model and argues for parity of recognition whereby differences are acknowledged where necessary, but they have equal status and recognition in institutional sites. The status model developed by Fraser (2003) is also discussed in relation to AEWs which leads to the map for recognition raised in the following chapter.

In Chapter Ten I use several tools to address indirect discrimination in schools in relation to the role of AEWs. This chapter maps the process towards AEWs achieving equality of recognition at the school and institutional level. It is argued that it is necessary for non-Indigenous teachers to be mobilised through a critical pedagogy of whiteness in order to move towards equality in the workplace. The structural implications of achieving equality of recognition are canvassed in the context of a values shift on an institutional level. Deconstructing (Derrida 1982) whiteness through the re-education of those working on the school and institutional level is analysed in two parts throughout this chapter.

Recommendations are made in this final chapter. These recommendations are brief and operate as a basic guideline to be developed into a framework. This chapter concludes with a brief summary of the entire thesis. This includes a synthesis of the main themes developed throughout the thesis and summarises the research findings. It includes final remarks regarding the future directions required in order to transform current indirect discrimination practices in education experienced by AEWs.

Conclusion

When educators work well together, students will benefit. Similarly, when educators do not work well together, students will be negatively affected. A lack of recognition of AEWs serves to keep Indigenous students disadvantaged in the

education system and inhibits the potential of AEWs as effective and powerful agents for transformation in Indigenous education.

This chapter has revealed the scope of the thesis. It links together a range of theoretical perspectives including whiteness and standpoint theory. This framework and this methodology, respectively, is necessary to appropriately address the complexity of AEWs' role and Indigenous ethics of care as a non-Indigenous researcher. The intersection between white and Indigenous ethics of care must be examined in order to illuminate the operation of indirect discrimination and how it serves to limit AEWs' status and potential to meet the needs of Indigenous students.

The significance of this thesis is to reveal this inequality of recognition by an examination, previously unexplored, of the privileging of whiteness and white ethics of care in schools. As a result, this thesis offers a significant contribution to the understanding of indirect discrimination and how it operates in Australian schools. The following chapter provides an historical overview of AEWs and their working conditions.

Chapter 2: Background to the study: An overview of the history and working conditions of AEWs in South Australia

Introduction

This chapter is a brief history of AEWs and an analysis of their working conditions in South Australia. The written record about AEWs is scant and this chapter is an attempt to create a narrative that correlates with both oral histories and the most consistent time lines presented thus far regarding AEWs' working conditions. There have been a range of anomalies encountered in the written record and this chapter therefore relies heavily on oral interviews in an attempt to clarify any historical inconsistencies.

This history canvases the transformations of AEWs' working conditions over the last six decades. The nomenclature for AEWs has changed considerably over this period. For example, the first nomenclature for AEWs at the Ernabella Mission School in the 1940s was Anangu Teaching Assistants (Edwards & Underwood 2006, p. 108). They were the first AEWs in South Australia and their roles and working conditions will be discussed in the first section of this chapter. AEWs were then called Aboriginal School Assistants, terminology which was used interchangeably with the term Aboriginal Teacher Aides in the 1970s, and this second section will address the political and social events that had an impact on their working conditions throughout Australia. In the 1980s the nomenclature changed to AEW which is the same terminology used currently in South Australia. This final change of nomenclature was the result of efforts by the Australian Education Union and the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee to address workplace discrimination. Throughout this chapter I use the nomenclature that was appropriate to each time period concerning AEWs. Whilst AEWs' name has changed significantly over the last six decades, their actual role and their status has not changed in any substantial way.

The most comprehensive document concerning AEWs' working conditions was written during the 1990s by members of the Australian Education Union and the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee. This project was called the *Ara Kuwaritjakutu projects* (Buckskin & Hignett 1994) and is addressed in this chapter, rather than the literature review, because it was the most significant document that led to improved working conditions of AEWs (Woods 1996, p. 23). This project was conceptualised in stages and canvassed equity issues in relation to the working conditions of AEWs in schools.

The final section of this chapter discusses the institutionalised roles of AEWs as outlined by the *Aboriginal Education Workers Handbook and ASSPA Committee Handbook* (DECS 1995). This text was created as the result of the recommendations made by the *Ara Kuwaritjakutu projects*. Despite these changes, AEWs do not have Duty of Care and Indigenous ethics of care is not positioned as a legitimate caring model inside schools. Historically, the education system has never provided AEWs with appropriate recognition of their roles, yet they have been working in schools since 1940.

Anangu Teaching Assistants

The first Anangu Teaching Assistant was employed by the Presbyterian Church (Edwards & Underwood 2006, p. 108). Dr Duguid, a Presbyterian missionary, established Ernabella Mission in 1937 (Mattingley & Hampton 1988, p. 256). 1939 was the year the Assimilation Policy was first discussed in parliament (Nicholls n. d.). Despite the rhetoric of mono-culturalism and mono-lingualism canvassed in parliament, Dr Duguid founded the Ernabella Mission School in 1940 as a bilingual school where Pitjantjatjara was taught in school (Edwards 1969, p. 278-82; Edwards & Underwood 2006, p. 108). In the 1940s the Ernabella Mission School employed a male Anangu Teaching Assistant (whose name was not mentioned) and a non-Indigenous teacher called R.M. Trudinger (Edwards 1969, p. 279).

The Anangu Teaching Assistant taught Pitjantjatjara and Edwards states that he 'incorporated Aboriginal songs and the relating and reading of stories', and enforced

‘strict discipline in the Ernabella School’ (1969, p. 279). At Ernabella during this phase, the Anangu people and the missionaries developed a written form of Pitjantjatjara. ‘The emphasis on vernacular education enabled the employment of Pitjantjatjara assistants who did much of the teaching in the earlier years’ (*Ernabella News Letter* March 1952 cited in Edwards & Underwood 2006, p. 109). However, there is no record of payment, so it is assumed that this Anangu Teaching Assistant and those who followed him were involved in the school without pay as this was the norm for Indigenous employees throughout Australia at that time.

The 1952 *Ernabella News Letter* referred to three women who were Anangu Teaching Assistants. They were called Watulya, Nganyintja and Tjuwilya. They had been students at the Ernabella Mission School and later became Anangu Teaching Assistants. The 1957 *Ernabella News Letter* mentioned that ‘several of these girls’ have the:

... ability to handle and control new children and infants, taking classes of up to 20 weeks on end, devising new numbers and letter games, doing their own blackboard work, preparation and marking books (cited in Edwards 1969, p. 280).

In fact, until 1959 it was only necessary to have one ‘white teacher on the staff’ due to the expertise of the Anangu Teaching Assistants (Edwards 1969, p. 280). The Ernabella Mission School was the only site in South Australia to employ Anangu Teaching Assistants during the 1950s. In 1952 Australia had officially adopted the Assimilation Policy (Nicholls 1998). Yet, Ernabella Mission School proved to be one of the exceptions regarding the adoption of assimilation through monolingualism and mono-culturalism, because it instituted a full bilingual education program and taught literacy in both Pitjantjatjara and English (Edwards & Underwood 2006, pp. 108-109).

Throughout the 1960s the working conditions of Anangu Teaching Assistants did not shift significantly. However, the 1960s was a period where the Federal government was sensitive to social change in relation to Indigenous rights. In 1964 in the House of Representatives, Kim Beazley (Senior) questioned the English-only policy that

was adopted in remote Indigenous schools with the exception of Ernabella and its sister school Fregon (Edwards 1969, pp. 277-78). During the same period, requests were made for the Anangu Teaching Assistants at Ernabella and Fregon to be given formal training (Gale, M 1996, p. 19). Anangu Teaching Assistants were not granted housing, income, or training, yet the government subsidised the “non-Aboriginal teachers” income to the extent of some \$5200 per annum in order to assist in the development of a bilingual program’ (Gunton 1969, p. 32). This set the precedent for discriminatory working conditions of Anangu Teaching Assistants, regardless of the fact that they were invaluable in the development of a bilingual school.

During 1965 Indigenous activism became public through the Freedom rides led by Charles Perkins (Horner 2004). The Freedom rides was a call for legal and substantive equality. Whilst there is no direct or official correlation to this recognition claim to legal and substantive equality in Australia, the general public were becoming aware of workplace discrimination experienced by Indigenous employees across Australia. This led to the first Aboriginal pre-school assistant to be ‘appointed by the Kindergarten Union to Point Pearce Preschool’ in 1966 (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 26). Aboriginal pre-school assistants’ role was the same as Anangu Teaching Assistants.

In 1967 the Australian constitution was amended so that Indigenous people would be counted in the national census. After the 1967 Commonwealth referendum on Indigenous citizenship the Premier of South Australia lobbied the Commonwealth government to fund Aboriginal Teacher Aides through Aboriginal Affairs. Consequently, the funds to employ Aboriginal Teacher Aides were channelled ‘through the old Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs’ (Hignett, interview, 2003, 5 April). In 1969 DECS agreed that Aboriginal Teacher Aides could formally assist in the education of Indigenous students in remote communities (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 26; Kwan 1987, p. 165; Watts 1982, p. 56). Hignett (interview, 2003, 5 April) from the Australian Education Union stated that a teacher called David Amery, who worked as a teacher at an Aboriginal community school on the APY Lands, had unofficially contracted an Aboriginal Teacher Aide called Elsie Jackson in 1967. She was aged between 14 and 16 years old. He paid for her salary in Term 3 of 1967 ‘out of his own pocket’ (Hignett, interview, 2003, 5 April).

Prior to 1972, there was no collective agreement or arrangement to monitor Aboriginal Teacher Aides' conditions or employment and they were considered as award-free ancillary staff. There was no formal classification career structure for Aboriginal Teacher Aides during this period. In 1972, Aboriginal Teacher Aides were placed under the School Assistant Award that had a classification structure and standardised conditions (Hignett, interview, 2003, 5 April). Under this award, Aboriginal Teacher Aides were officially renamed Aboriginal School Assistants. Their jobs were organised by the school in consultation with DECS and their roles were subject to Principal and staff requirements.

In the early 1970s there were 73 Aboriginal School Assistants in South Australia and they were allowed to work in both secondary and primary schools (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 26). As a result of the new self-determination policy, DECS 'dispatched someone to the AP Lands to select three "Aboriginal School Assistants" ...for registration as teachers' (Gale, M 1996, p. 20). However, the closest Aboriginal Teacher Education Centre (ATEC) was at Batchelor College, which was 90km south of Darwin. This proved to be too isolated for the selected Anangu trainees as they all became homesick and did not complete the course (Gale, M 1996, p. 20).

In 1977 Aboriginal School Assistants were given regional responsibilities under the Aboriginal Home School Visitor scheme. By 1978 there were 131 Aboriginal School Assistants and 14 Aboriginal Preschool Assistants in South Australia (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 26) and the 'Aboriginal movement' had developed links with the Australian Education Union (Hignett, interview, 2003, 5 April) and the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee. This consultative committee included prominent Indigenous members such as Paul Hughes (chairperson), Peter Buckskin, Pat Buckskin, Louis O'Brien, and a number of Aboriginal School Assistants (Hignett, interview, 2003, 5 April). The South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee was a powerful lobby group for Indigenous rights in education and this led to negotiations with DECS in relation to Aboriginal School Assistants (Hignett, interview, 2003, 5 April).

Aboriginal Education Worker: A New Title

In December 1981 Aboriginal School Assistants were re-named Aboriginal Education Workers, but their role and status did not change significantly. Nevertheless, this new title reflected a shift along the continuum regarding the working conditions of AEWs in schools. The South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee created a new role statement for AEWs in conjunction with DECS and the Kindergarten Union.

After 1981, the roles of AEWs were more clearly defined, but remained under the School Assistant Award classification structure (Hignett, interview, 2003, 5 April). In 1982, the Australian Education Union and the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee met with AEWs across the state to discuss and develop a new award and classification structure. It was not until the 7th of March 1987 that an Industrial Agreement was established to define new wages and conditions for AEWs. This new classification structure was then registered in the South Australian Industrial Commission (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 27). The Australian Education Union wanted at least 6000 AEWs employed across Australia by 2001. Only 1500 were employed across Australia by this date and not all AEWs were hired on a full time basis (Woods 1996, p. 23).

Ara Kuwaritjakutu projects: Towards a new way, Stages 1, 2 and 3.

As a result of Pat Buckskin (who was also an AEW), Bill Hignett (AEU) and Pat Fowell's (Aboriginal Education Coordinator of the AEU) involvement in the union and their collective drive to establish better working conditions for AEWs, they embarked on the *Ara Kuwaritjakutu projects: Towards a new way, Stages 1&2* (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 17). This report provided insight and recommendations for employees regarding the role and working conditions of AEWs. This report was an instrumental document in defining the complex roles of AEWs and highlighting the challenges they faced. The *Ara Kuwaritjakutu projects: Towards a new way, Stages 1&2* was funded by DECS, and the project advisory committee originally included the Standing Committee of Ministers of Education, Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training, Australian

Council of Trade Unions, Australian Teachers Union and the Australian Federation of Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 18).

The methodology for the projects employed qualitative and quantitative approaches to understanding the needs of AEWs in the workplace. The projects were particularly significant because the data collection process led to the development of a central record of AEWs in Australia (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 20). The absence of a central record until that time revealed the general lack of structural equality that was necessary for AEWs' employment. Furthermore, 20 workshops were conducted across Australia to elicit issues of concern to AEWs from the AEWs themselves (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 21). This was the most comprehensive research regarding the working conditions of AEWs in Australia and was the first time that AEWs opinions had been canvassed.

This first report was initiated by the Australian Education Union and the Aboriginal Education Committee in response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 16). Nine recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody formed the basis of the investigation regarding AEWs' roles in schools. These recommendations were that the following issues be investigated:

1. Responding to truancy (Recommendation 72)
2. Pre-schooling initiatives and the involvement of parents in preschool education (Recommendation 289)
3. The inclusion/reflection of Aboriginal history and perspectives in the curricula (Recommendation 290)
4. Recognition of the expertise of local Aboriginal people in the inclusion/reflection of Aboriginal history and perspectives in the curricula (Recommendation 291)
5. The recognized need and request from Aboriginal parents for courses of study to include legal system, civil rights, drug and alcohol use and sex education (Recommendation 292)
6. The importance of ASSPA committees and consultation (Recommendation 293)

7. The provision of appropriate in-service and pre-service education for teachers (Recommendation 295)
8. The importance of AIEWs [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker] (Recommendation 297)
9. Achievement of the first long-term goal of the AEP, i.e. the involvement of Aboriginal people in the education of Aboriginal children (Recommendation 299) (cited in Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 17).

There are five incremental levels of employment for AEWs (See *Appendix 2*) that were later developed in response to these recommendations. AEWs working in levels 1-2 are required to incorporate the recommendations: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9. AEWs working in level 3-5 need to incorporate all of the above nine recommendations. Their general roles are outlined in more detail later in this chapter and were developed in 1994 and amended in 1997 after an Enterprise Agreement was signed by DECS (*AEW Training and Development* n. d.). The emergence of defined roles was part of a response to the key ideas that were developed in the *Ara Kuwaritjakutu* projects.

The aim of stages 1 and 2 of the projects was to identify the competencies necessary for AEWs to work effectively in schools and to resolve the issue of the high turnover of AEWs (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 5). The research from stage 1 and 2 of the projects was embedded into Stage 3, which revealed that there was a 'high turnover of AEWs, role confusion, low salaries, a desire for training and development in conflict resolution, mediation and curriculum' (Davis, Woodberry & Buckskin 1995, p. 9). The research showed that there were expectations by staff in schools that AEWs work outside their job specifications, such as providing 'fill in' teaching or managing Child Parent Centres without appropriate pay or working conditions. Other issues that were raised included a general absence of permanent positions for AEWs, a lack of funding allocations and racism. According to Davis, Woodberry and Buckskin, racism was prevalent in every aspect of AEWs' work conducted in schools (1995, pp. 9, 10). Stage 3 also included a range of recommendations regarding training and development for AEWs, such as:

...employer and community expectations; training provisions; responses from training providers; industrial arrangements for AIEWs [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers]; general duties and specific tasks and interim competencies; recommendations and issues to consider (Davis, Woodberry & Buckskin 1995, pp. iii, iv).

These recommendations led to the development of an Associate Diploma for AEWs at the University of South Australia, the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educators' Association Incorporated (NAIEA Inc) and other similar initiatives across the country. They also led to further research that culminated in the *Ara Kuwaritjakutu projects, Stage 5*. This final report by Buckskin and Hignett led to an enterprise agreement in 1996 regarding a new classification structure that had a strong emphasis on training. Buckskin and Hignett spoke to the Commonwealth Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and a number of groups about AEWs wanting to become better AEWs as opposed to becoming teachers (Hignett, interview, 2003, 5 April). Buckskin and Hignett stated that there was a valid role in schools for AEWs, who were strongly community-based. Buckskin and Hignett wanted to develop the counselling, modelling, Aboriginal studies and community based role for AEWs and the research based on Recommendation 297 of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody supported this model (Hignett, interview, 2003, 5 April; Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 16). As a result, there has been a greater access to actual training and development and the University of South Australia continues to develop the profile of their Anangu Teacher Education Program (AnTEP) as a result of the *Ara Kuwaritjakutu Projects*.

As a result of these research projects, national strategies and plans that were concerned with Indigenous education now include AEWs. For example, in *A National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People 1996-2002*, the inclusion of 'Indigenous involvement' in education (1995, p. 2) was listed as a key recommendation, and Priority 2 of this document called for an improvement in the working conditions for AEWs (1995, p. 3), as well as the 'appropriate recognition and payment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in education and training on a sessional basis' (1995, p. 3). Similarly, in *The*

Plan for Aboriginal Education in Early Childhood and Schooling, 1999-2003, strategies included recommendations for the inclusion of Aboriginal adults in schools, training for AEWs, programs that included Aboriginal perspectives (n. d., p.7) and appropriate methodologies and culturally relevant resources (n. d., p. 6). These recommendations are also present in the DECS Aboriginal Strategy 2005-2010 and highlight the perpetuation of lip service given to AEWs.

The recommendations in policy documents cannot be achieved without the necessary structural changes to incorporate AEWs' knowledge, experience and ethics of care practices. The work AEWs do in schools is not easily mapped regarding social relations inside an institutional framework (Campbell & Gregor 2004). AEWs' roles are diverse and involve emotional labour, in particular with Indigenous students inside the school. This work is routinely supplemented outside of schools hours. The following outlines the specifics of these roles, yet due to their generic nature, these roles are difficult to measure in terms of what is perceived by non-Indigenous teaching staff as work, because it is largely identified as emotional labour.

Aboriginal Education Workers' current roles in school

AEWs' roles in school are generally defined as concerned with the care and educational support of Indigenous students, and the specific role statements for AEWs are outlined below. They were developed in 1994 and amended in 1997 after the Enterprise Agreement was signed by DECS (*AEW Training and Development n. d.*). The following list reflects the core duties from the 1994 document for AEWs working in schools:

- 1) Provide support and assistance to small groups in classrooms,
- 2) Undertake home school liaison,
- 3) Liaise with Aboriginal communities,
- 4) Participate in committees,
- 5) Counsel Aboriginal students and parents,
- 6) Organise and participate in camps and excursions,
- 7) Liaise with government agencies,
- 8) Provide a consulting service to principals and teachers,

- 9) Educate in-service teachers on cultural awareness,
- 10) Promote and develop Aboriginal cultural activities in the school,
- 11) Perform administrative duties (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, pp. 61-63).

The school-based AEW role is diverse and they are required to respond to the needs of the school. This diversity provides flexibility but it often results in 'sundry' work for AEWs. Moreover, AEWs are routinely expected to manage behaviour of all Indigenous students in a school. This task often results in charged complaints by members of the students' families, carers, and also by non-Indigenous teachers and principals. This complex position routinely goes by unseen by non-Indigenous teachers and principals. AEWs' default position as para-professionals entrenches their ancillary status, which is maintained by an absence of recognition by non-Indigenous staff. Instead, training and development is seen as a panacea to any issues that relate to AEWs.

The focus on 'systematic quality training' is seen as a key site that represents AEWs' improved working conditions (*Aboriginal Education Worker Training and Development Historical Background* n. d., p. 1). The status of AEWs is defined institutionally in over 165 online DECS documents that relate to the employment conditions of AEWs, such as training and development, grievance policies, classification structures, career structures (*Aboriginal Education Worker Career Structure* n. d.) and responsibilities of employers in relation to AEWs. That institutionalization of AEWs requires their work to be measurable through definable outcomes, yet AEWs' care work remains invisible. Moreover, the epistemology of education in Australia is concerned with specific knowledge that renders AEWs' perspectives and knowledge as less valuable on an institutional level.

Based on the interviewees for this thesis, training and development has not overturned a general absence of recognition of their roles in schools by non-Indigenous teachers and staff. One of the AEWs interviewed for this thesis stated: 'I have been trained to death' (Sue, pers. comm., 2.2.2000). She argued that, despite this training, she feels she is not treated differently in terms of recognition of her role by the majority of her non-Indigenous colleagues in the school. This comment resonates with the following statement by a middle manager in Alice Springs: 'We

have been trained to death...we are the most trained group of people in this country, but nothing has changed' (cited in Tsey 1997, p. 77). This indicates that training and development is privileged in a way that can appear as a neutral criterion for gaining institutional status. However, training and development does not ensure AEWs security as they are still perceived to lack education and as a result, their status has not shifted. Moreover, AEWs continue to be expected to manage complex behavior management issues and the commitment to respond to students is often unmeasured as it is not institutionally defined as a key role (see Campbell & Gregor 2004, pp. 20-25 for a detailed analysis of organisational literacy and the omission of emotional labour).

Better working conditions have improved for AEWs, yet in the national report *Aboriginal Education Workers and Teaching Aides* (n. d.), AEWs' lack of status was signified by the absence of resources allocated. This was exemplified by the fact that many AEWs were responsible for over two hundred students without decision making power, which 'limit[s] the effectiveness of AEWs and place[s] enormous stress on these workers' (*Aboriginal Education Workers and Teaching Aides* n. d.; Williams & Thorpe 2003, pp. 68-91).

The Aboriginal Education Workers Handbook

The *Aboriginal Education Workers Handbook and ASSPA Committee Handbook* (DECS 1995) outlines the role of AEWs and ASSPA committees. It is a combined handbook detailing AEWs' work and the role of ASSPA committees, but this chapter will focus only on the AEW section of the handbook. It was created to address a mis-use of AEWs in schools. However, as the following section outlines, there are anomalies between AEWs' job specification and their experiences in the workplace. DECS' affirmative action aims are limited by a range of factors, including the legal status of AEWs as their employees.

The overarching emphasis in the *Handbook* is that AEWs are not 'responsible for the education and care of Aboriginal students' (1995, p. 26). Their role is to provide student support and liaise between the community and the school. They are expected to represent their Indigenous community's expectations and support teachers in

curriculum planning and development in Aboriginal and Cultural studies (DECS 1995, p. 26).

The *Handbook* is restricted by legal definitions of duty of care. Such constraints limit the position of AEWs and in some ways further confuse recognition of their role and 'reproduce social inequalities' (Blackmore 1998, p. 461). There is a dissonance between the legal requirements of AEWs in relation to 'care' according to DECS and what is perceived to be an 'illegitimate' (McConaghy 2000, p. 2) ethics of care practised by AEWs. Furthermore, the reference that deems AEWs as 'support people' who are not responsible for the education and care of Aboriginal students (DECS 1995, p. 26) places AEWs in a social and emotional paradox. Moreover, this document is necessary as a guide for AEWs, yet it is based on a 'disadvantage' model (Gale, P 1996, p. 95) inherent in the majority of DECS documents and policies.

The generic term 'equity' in DECS documents places 'little emphasis on institutional reform' (Gale, P 1996, p. 95) that would facilitate change. DECS documents in general tend towards offering solutions, such as financial investment to overcoming 'disadvantage', such as in *A National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People 1996-2002*. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are required to be involved in the school site in order to overcome 'disadvantage' as presented in *The Plan for Aboriginal Education in Early Childhood and Schooling, 1999-2003*, yet they are not granted the autonomy or privilege to overturn racism in schools. The 'disadvantage' model does not centralize Indigenous rights, but instead 'places a greater emphasis on institutional practices which limit the level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in teaching, research, and senior management' (Gale, P 1996, p. 98).

The 'disadvantage' model inherent in the *Handbook* can be further identified through the fact that legally AEWs do not have Duty of Care. This is a safeguard against litigation. However, AEWs are disproportionately at risk as they are so often involved in, and expected to, resolve complex issues that involve behaviour management. They are not guaranteed legal security due to the withholding of a legally binding certificate called Duty of Care. This issue becomes inflamed when

non-Indigenous principals and teachers assume that AEWs will ‘take care of’ Indigenous students, despite the fact that they do not hold Duty of Care.

The improved working conditions of AEWs represented by the Handbook infers that something is being done to overcome discrimination, yet AEWs remain trapped by the presumptions inherent in the ‘disadvantage’ model. They are not granted institutional rights to change discriminatory practices in schools and are not granted formal legal recognition. AEWs’ care work remains invisible and their roles are limited by legal restraints, but they are still expected to perform caring roles when required by the school. In this sense AEWs’ status and working conditions have not improved significantly since the 1970s, despite efforts by Buckskin, Hignett and others.

Conclusion

This chapter has revealed AEWs’ working conditions have improved, but this has not led to a higher status for AEWs. When Anangu Teaching Assistants were first employed in 1940 at the Ernabella Mission School, there was no evidence of formal employment conditions or wages. During the 1960s Aboriginal Teacher Aides were not guaranteed reasonable working conditions or recognition of their linguistic, cultural or familial knowledge. In the 1970s Aboriginal School Assistants (the former Aboriginal Teacher Aides) became a focus of the Australian Education Union and the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, which culminated in the 1987 Industrial Agreement, representing an improvement in the working conditions of AEWs. In 1996 the enterprise agreement included a re-classification that supported further training and development for AEWs. Through the efforts of the Australian Education Union and the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, successive generations of AEWs have slowly experienced better working conditions than their predecessors.

However, what remains repeatedly unexplored is AEWs’ experience in terms of the profound ignorance among non-Indigenous teachers regarding AEWs’ role. There has been no substantial recognition of AEWs’ skills and knowledge. This issue is of paramount concern in relation to equality in educational practices in schools. Whilst

there have been reforms in terms of workplace agreements, AEWs continue to experience indirect discrimination in schools as a result of this general ignorance.

Whiteness theory is useful to illuminate how discrimination operates in Australia. The theoretical framework provided by whiteness that is discussed in the following chapter allows for the analysis of the patterns of discriminatory practices in schools. Whiteness theory offers a conceptual tool to engage with the macro-formations and micro-formations of racism that operate in schools. The following chapter broadly outlines the theory of whiteness to develop insight into why efforts to improve AEWs' working conditions were not matched on the ground.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The previous chapter was an overview of the history of AEWs' working conditions from the 1940s at Ernabella Mission School to the present day. Significant political and social shifts occurred in Australia throughout that period regarding Indigenous rights. Based on the findings from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, the *Ara Kuwaritjakutu projects* were designed to respond to AEWs' poor working conditions. The projects highlighted a number of anomalies between AEWs' job specification and their experiences in the workplace. It is necessary to examine why reforms detailed above did not culminate in a better working environment for AEWs. An examination of AEWs' experiences in schools through the prism of whiteness will be contextualised in this chapter to highlight the limitations of these reforms.

The theoretical framework for this thesis uses whiteness theory to examine discriminatory institutional patterns and social relations in education that impact on the current position of AEWs. The thesis is concerned with the way in which white race privilege operates structurally and epistemologically through innocence and ignorance which converge to produce an absence of recognition of AEWs in schools. Whiteness as a theory provides a tool to view non-Indigenous teachers and researchers' positioning of AEWs, and standpoint theory (Collins 2004; Harding 2004) is used as a methodology, method and mode of examining AEWs' counter-narratives and sites of resistance in relation to their roles in schools. Standpoint theory as outlined in Chapter Five (Harding 2004; Kincheloe & McLaren 2000) provides a means of highlighting counter-narratives to the formations of power that limit equal rights.

Whiteness theory

This thesis has been shaped by postmodernism and poststructuralism. Applied to dominant constructions of knowledge those theories have the power to deconstruct macro and micro formations of power and knowledge. Firstly, postmodernism (Benhabib 1995) breaks down constructed truths that serve to marginalise, whereas poststructuralism (Foster 1984; Spivak 1987b) has a deconstructive basis by analysing the way language and systems operate in dominant culture.

Another possible theoretical framework for this thesis is that of feminism. This theory alone does not allow for a complex analysis of the mechanisms of marginalisation experienced by many Indigenous employees in Australia. Gender is addressed throughout this thesis, but the debate concerning white race privilege remains in the foreground. Sexism, classism and racism operate synergistically, but all of the AEWs (both men and women) interviewed presented stories that were concerned with an absence of recognition of their complex roles in schools and therefore whiteness theory (Frankenberg 1993; Moreton-Robinson 2000) is the most appropriate theoretical framework for this thesis.

Whiteness theory challenges normative assumptions. Its focus as a theory is concerned with how white race privilege functions through institutional systems and social relations inside the power/knowledge nexus. It is a discursive space and as Nakayam and Krizek claim: '...white' is a relatively uncharted territory that has remained invisible as it continues to influence the identity of those both within and without its domains' (1995, p. 291). As the principal theoretical framework for this thesis, whiteness theory focuses on the invisibility of white race privilege as the means by which power and knowledge continue to marginalise those who are excluded from the centre of dominant culture.

Despite the usefulness of whiteness theory to map unseen acts of discrimination experienced by AEWs this chapter also challenges this theory. This section and the following section of this chapter discuss the complexity of the theory of whiteness in order to address what it is, how it functions and its problems. Links between representation and culturalism in relation to whiteness theory are outlined in the third

section, and in the fourth, the implications of representation and culturalism in education are viewed through the prism of whiteness theory. Whiteness and white defensiveness by non-Indigenous teachers are examined in the final section of this chapter to provide a framework of analysis in relation to patterns of whiteness.

Whiteness shares with its theoretical predecessors a slippery definition and has been ‘conceptualised in a number of different yet not mutually exclusive forms’ (Garner 2007, p. 2). Frankenberg’s definition has been cited most commonly and refers to ‘a location of structural advantage of race privilege...a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed’ (Frankenberg 1993, p. 1). This definition points to hidden social values and cultural capital codes that are required to succeed in contemporary westernised societies. Whiteness theory as used throughout this thesis does not address the variations of the ‘internal border between the more and the less white’ (Garner 2007, p. 63). Instead, it maps the embodiment of whiteness (Dyer 1997, p. 14). The ‘cultural register’ of whiteness that operates invisibly in the relationships between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers is one of the sites of analysis (Dyer 1997, p.14). The aim of whiteness theory is to engage with an anti-racist epistemology to raise consciousness and overturn often unseen racist practices (Freire 1990).

Whiteness theory: Problems and issues

There is a need for caution using whiteness theory as I am a non-Indigenous researcher who worked as a teacher with AEWs on the APY Lands, and I include my own standpoint epistemology in relation to this experience. It is argued that whiteness theory can re-inscribe the very thing it seeks to destabilise. As Fine et al. state:

we worry that in our desire to create spaces to speak, intellectually or empirically, about whiteness, we may have reified whiteness as a fixed category or experience; that we have allowed it to be treated as a monolith, in the singular, as an “essential something” (1997, p. xi).

Gunew cautions researchers to be vigilant in their research practice in order to avoid this slippage (2007, p. 141). Some theorists argue that whiteness is omniscient and cannot be transcended (Ahmed 2007). This phenomenological perspective argues that whiteness functions as the positive space, while the 'Other' operates as the negative space (Ahmed 2007). The challenge of using whiteness theory is the danger of re-inscribing the very thing it seeks to critique.

Wiegman (1999) argues whiteness operates through innocence as 'the white subject's claim to non-white particularity can be asserted only from the position of the universal, since it is in the space of the universal, and never the particular, that the theoretical mobility of political identification by definition takes place' (1999 cited in Gunew 2007, p. 145). Wiegman (1999) and Ahmed (2007) encapsulate the challenge of the researcher: to develop the ability to play with the epistemologically and ontologically socio-historical cultural identity as an un-fixed site. The question of whether this is a real possibility always remains a self-reflexive enquiry and includes Derrida's challenge in *Structure, Sign and Play* where deferral of meaning involves the 'unfinalised, untotalised, not continuous, not linear, where truth is never arrived at, is always involved in a play of differences that keep deferring its arrival, its full presence' (Docker 1994, p. 133). Derrida dismantled structuralism's logocentric construction of a fixed centre that opened the possibilities explored later in whiteness theory.

Moreton-Robinson (2004) argues against the possibility of the deferral of whiteness by those that are Anglo-European. She claims that whiteness functions at the centre as a normalised category and thus non-Indigenous researchers are fixed and we/they can never operate outside whiteness epistemologically. Arguably, her claim moves towards essentialism and ignores the possibilities of people's experiences transcending their own whiteness. However, when researchers rely on structuralist epistemologies that are logocentric, then her argument is upheld. Transcending essentialism always remains a challenge as linguistic terms such as 'white' or 'Indigenous ethics of care' used in this thesis move towards defining and fixing categories (Young 1995). However, it is not my intention to homogenise and re-create fixed categories, but to highlight how certain patterns of behaviour are privileged. The manners and social practices inducted to children by caring adults

reflect their cultural codes of behaviour. The patterns that emerge from these practices tend to be different between nuclear and extended families and between races and classes. For example, the rules and regulations for young children's behaviour that are implemented inside nuclear and white ethics of care are based around white middle class Anglo-European manners and mores, such as the performance of politeness and restrained generosity. We can all move in and out of these as they are not fixed categories, however the cultural capital that is rewarded institutionally reflects the white middle class.

Extended families, particularly in relation to the child-rearing patterns still observed by many Indigenous families across Australia, implement less rules and advocate more independence and resilience (Malin, Campbell & Agius 1996; Malin & Maidment 2003). A collaborative research project conducted by Malin, Campbell and Agius revealed that Indigenous children were given greater opportunities to learn by mistakes, that 'indirect methods' of disciplining children were used in child rearing practices and that children were raised to be 'emotionally resilient' to prepare them for their future. However, these methods of raising children are seen as problematic by many service providers, including teachers (1996, p. 47).

Child rearing varies substantially across families. Using the terms Indigenous or white ethics of care is not an attempt to create homogenous categories. However, it is necessary to map the patterns that come from these sites of care in order to outline how whiteness functions and is privileged in schools. To do so moves towards privileging one thing which necessitates excluding another. The tendency of non-Indigenous teachers to fix Indigenous identity through deficit models is part of the process that facilitates the exclusion of both AEWs and Indigenous students. Unpacking essentialist and binary constructions of race in relation to care is necessary to the understandings of how differences are perceived. Deconstructing representations that have led to culturalist assumptions is the first phase of this analysis.

Representation and culturalism

The politics of representation is 'predicated on difference and diversity' (Hall 1992a, p. 258). In most Australian schools whiteness remains centralised and difference is positioned as diversity (Ang 1996). The sanguine representation of diversity in Australia ignore Langton's claim of the 'dense history of racist, distorted and often offensive representation of Aboriginal people' (1993, p. 24). The normalising function of whiteness (Thompson n. d.) positions difference as Other. The Other is negated (Grosz 1995, p. 53) and exists outside the framed borders and boundaries (Hone 1994, p. 2) of whiteness in Australia.

Cowlshaw coined the notion of Aboriginalism as a field of knowledge that constructs the Indigenous Other in a particular way. Cowlshaw (1987) argued that in the field of anthropology Indigenous people were constructed through the notion of the urban, rural and 'full-blood Aborigine'. The 'true Aborigines' were represented on postcards holding spears in desert settings. These essentialist representations ignore complex racial formations (Young 1995) and led to the construction of Aboriginalism that was used to define and subsequently control both the public vision of Indigenous people, as well as government control over Indigenous people. Jordan (1988) claims that Indigenous education has been a key site where Aboriginal identity has been represented in positive ('real') and negative ('inferior') terms (cited in Gale, P 1996, p. 12). The terms 'full blood' and 'mixed blood' are pseudo-scientific racist terms (McConnochie, Hollinsworth & Pettman 1988). These terms frame and represent Indigenous peoples in particular ways, and are deployed as a manner of knowing that often remains unchallenged inside educational settings.

Culturalism is used to 'refer to the use of particular anthropological notions of 'culture' by which 'Indigenous culture' enters the field as 'already read' (Mishra 1996 in McConaghy 2000, p. xi). Culturalism stems from the field of anthropology, and is a bioproduct of Oriental Studies (Said 1978). Said argues that Christianity operated as the normative framework of Oriental Studies by which other cultures were defined (Said 1978). Similarly, Shore argues 'dominant representations of whiteness are, in part, expressed through paradigms of embodiment that are intricately connected to Christianity' (2001). Warren goes further and argues that

whiteness is spiritually sanctioned (1999, p. 187) as the normative paradigm of moral values.

'Whitely' value systems (Frye 1983 cited in Thompson n. d.) are inculcated through white ethics of care and are reflected in the codes of conduct expected to be performed by students in Australian schools. It is at this juncture that the cultural and social reproduction of whiteness reproduces inequality. Moran argues that:

...white cultures, privilege and practice are reproduced as dominant, without the intention of domination and oppression necessarily being present in the minds of white social actors. This argument does not excuse whites from their role in the participation in, and reproduction of racialised privilege, nor does it preclude social actors from self-reflexive or rational calculation in relation to the intended outcomes of their social actions. It simply highlights how unconsidered structural consequences flow on from social praxis, resulting in the constant remaking of social relations (Moran 2004).

The 'unconsidered structural consequences' (Moran 2004) impact on Indigenous students and AEWs who reflect the codes of conduct embedded in Indigenous ethics of care practices. The white middle class ethics of care models are centralised and white social actors routinely perceive Indigenous students and AEWs through essentialist notions developed by deficit theories. The socio-historical constructions of Indigenous identity, coupled with the invisible power of whiteness in social relations, serve to marginalise AEWs often unconsciously by white social actors.

The influence of deficit theory in educational theory from the 1960s onwards (detailed in Chapter Four) was perceived to be substantiated through both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The commonsense assumptions that emerge from educational theory are webbed in white epistemologies. The essentialist culturalist constructions come from an epistemology grounded in whiteness. There is a link between McConaghy's notion of culturalism and the theory of whiteness. McConaghy states:

Culturalism has been the dominant tradition of knowing Indigenous issues in Australia for most of this century, influencing both government policy and service delivery. It has been particularly influential in liberal notions of multiculturalism and in all areas of Indigenous education and social policy. The consequences of culturalism have been numerous, most notably the institutionalisation of colonial authority, logics, discourses and values in all aspects of our work. Culturalism is so integral to the discipline that its technologies have entered 'our commonsense' (2000, p. 44).

This commonsense informs the decisions that are made by educators and policy makers. The outcome focused approach used in educational rhetoric to increase Indigenous students' retention rates and learning outcomes is a case in point. What remains ignored in these seemingly commonsense decisions are the process by which to achieve the goals. It is in the classroom where AEWs work with these students, yet their work is regulated without consultation by the largely non-Indigenous teaching force. Their social behaviour and acts of engagement with Indigenous students and AEWs stem from their understandings of cultural difference. Crowley states:

The notion of culturalism refers to an ideology that informs the way in which most teachers think about cultural difference. It relates to the manner in which they use the idea of culture to explain social relations and construct relations of pedagogy and curriculum (Crowley 1993, p. 35).

Without delving into the complexities of the diversity debate, what remains clear is that 'colour blind' (Wilder 1999) teaching practices remain when teachers construct diversity from 'fixed and universal beliefs' (King 1991, p. 340). White norms and values systems remain sanctioned and untouched. 'Dysconscious racism is a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges' (King 1991, p. 338).

The reasoning used in the discursive regimes (McConaghy 2000, p. 1) that maintain this seemingly commonsense approach to what is perceived as the ‘Indigenous problem’ is a form of impaired consciousness (King 1991, p. 338). This consciousness uses the commonly held beliefs enshrined in the language of deficit, deprivation and disadvantage. To represent Indigenous people through this language only highlights the position of privilege to view them in this way. This intertwines with culturalism which ‘emerges as a powerful mode of knowing which contributes not only to the practice of Indigenous education, but to each of the social institutions and academic fields which make up the colonial state’ (McConaghy 2000, p. 52). Culturalism and whiteness are not synonymous, but there are some important points of intersection.

Indigenous education in Australia has been shaped by epistemologies grounded in whiteness. The term ‘Indigenous education’ is constructed in a binary that is managed and controlled by ‘social institutions and academic fields’ (McConaghy 2000, p. 52). The mechanisms of representation define Indigenous education both inside whiteness institutionally, and outside whiteness as the negative space (Ahmed 2007, p. 157).

Whiteness theory as the theoretical framework for this thesis capitalises on these understandings of the mechanisms of racialisation (Gunew 2007). Culturalism and representation operate under the umbrella of whiteness and impact on social relations in schools. A theoretical framework that applies the deconstructive elements of whiteness theory is useful to examine white-centred pedagogy and the values and ethics of care practices that support this pedagogy.

The unexamined privilege of whiteness in Australian educational settings

The theme of invisibility is a key factor in whiteness theory. There has been no research published in Australia that examines the invisibility of the privilege of white ethics of care and how this impacts on the recognition of AEWs in schools. There has, however, been research examining whiteness in relation to pre-service teachers in several countries (Aveling 2004; Levine-Rasky 2000; McIntyre 1997). The research reveals the similarities between American and Australian non-Indigenous

teachers' universalist assumptions (Aveling 2004; McIntyre 1997). As Wiegman (1999) states, this universalism operates through the innocent belief of not feeling the need to particularise or locate themselves.

White social actors are in the majority in the Australian education system. However, non-Indigenous teachers' ethnicity is generally 'danced around' in the literature on Indigenous education (Connelly 2002). Connelly calls for 'more extensive research than exists for non-Indigenous teachers concerning the subject of race/ethnicity and its juxtaposition with pedagogy' (2002). This thesis responds to this call and analyses the way whiteness operates in the social relations between non-Indigenous teachers and AEWs and the 'consequent flow on from this social praxis' (Moran 2004). An examination of the interconnections between the macro institutional framework and the micro social relations among AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers is useful. Wellman argues that 'the concrete problem facing white people is how to come to grips with the demands made by blacks and whites while at the same time avoiding the possibility of institutional change' as this change will disrupt and affect white social actors (1977 cited in King 1991, p. 338). This unexamined position morphs into an unwillingness to disrupt the social order which develops into a form of silent ignorance. This is the workings of whiteness and as Moreton-Robinson claims, 'belonging to the 'mainstream' means white people can choose whether or not they wish to bother themselves with the opinions or concerns of Indigenous people' (Moreton-Robinson 1988, pp. 39).

The absence of recognition of Indigenous people in mainstream Australia plays out in classrooms between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers. As long as the 'dominant discursive constructions' (Moran 2004) of Australian white nationhood exist, the issues of cross-cultural class room practices and cross-cultural collegial relations will remain subject to whiteness. Such a claim is not warmly received and the first response is one of defensiveness.

The complexity of whiteness and white defensiveness

Educational practices and pedagogy in western countries are being re-examined by a range of whiteness theorists (Aveling 2004; McIntyre 1997; Roman 1993; Sleeter 1996). Standard research practices in these areas include qualitative research methods such as Participatory Action Research (PAR). McIntyre used this participatory and ethnographic technique to examine white pre-service teachers' understanding of whiteness in *Making Meaning of Whiteness* (1997). She engages in critical whiteness pedagogy as a tool to examine the way teacher educators can enhance white students' understanding of their privilege in pedagogical practices in schools (McIntyre 2002, p. 32). Her PAR project began with semi-structured interviews that examined white pre-service teachers' perceptions of privilege and the impact of whiteness in schools. The responses she received were what she defined as white defensiveness. McIntyre states these students use 'white talk' to protect their space and privilege (1997, pp. 45-46), particularly when they described their own disadvantages.

The ideas expressed by McIntyre have also been canvassed by Thompson. She highlights some of the complex ways white defensiveness operates through seemingly rationalised thought. This process of expressing positions through personalised narratives is often met with agreement from white pre-service teachers. Thompson's quote maps this process well:

All whiteness theories problematize the normalisation and naturalisation of whiteness. Rejecting the notion of white values as a generic or colour-blind norm, they point to how the very status of whiteness as a norm is a privilege. When, for example, whiteness is the norm in the U.S. high school curriculum, the history of whites in America counts as "just plain old American history," whereas the history of non-white groups (and white women) is a special case of or even a departure from American history. Hence, there is no expectation that all Americans should know that history.

Paradoxically, even while whiteness is invisible as the backdrop of meaning, it may be hypervisible as either a preferred or a threatened status. It is treated as a threatened status when whites feel that we are losing the privileges to which we are entitled, such as control over the history books. It is treated as a preferred status when whiteness is associated with the highest cultural values such as the so-called Protestant work ethic in contrast to supposed black or brown laziness and lack of ambition (Thompson n. d.).

The narratives and contexts that support whiteness are often linked to nationalism and the values of the nation. These values are routinely presented by ‘whitely people [who] generally consider themselves to be benevolent and goodwilled, fair, honest and ethical’ (Frye 1992, p. 154). This performance of whiteness ‘works to constitute and re-constitute itself through everyday embodiments and practices’ (Warren 1999, p. 187).

These everyday embodiments may contain restrained generosity, or operate through the goodwill of teachers. However, the privilege to engage or not engage with AEWs is a case in point that highlights the centrality of whiteness. Therefore, whiteness as an act or a performance is an element of the theory that provides a framework of analysis that unpacks patterns of indirect discrimination. Whiteness theory provides a theoretical framework that examines what is perceived to be polite or normal behaviour but is experienced as an act of indirect discrimination.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the complexities of whiteness theory in order to outline the theoretical framework used for this thesis. Whiteness theory is not hermetically sealed, but provides a conceptual tool to map the mechanisms of indirect discrimination. The examinations of culturalism and representation as discussed in this chapter highlight how Indigenous people have been homogenised and positioned negatively in education. The key ideas that emerged from McConaghy and Hall regarding culturalism and representation respectively have informed whiteness

theory in relation to the construction of identity. The use of whiteness theory as a theoretical framework in this thesis allows for a deep analysis into why the improved working conditions for AEWs have not enhanced equality in the workplace.

Therefore whiteness theory as a lens gives insight into the micro and macro systems that place AEWs subject to the goodwill of non-Indigenous people in educational settings.

Negative constructions of identity that have defined Indigenous students and AEWs as deficit continue through the complicitous silence (Cockburn 1991, p. 170) of many non-Indigenous teachers and remain unexamined due to the prevailing 'power relations and hierarchies' (Moran 2004) in education. Moreover, the hegemony of white ethics of care as the performance of pedagogy in schools by non-Indigenous teachers functions without challenge or coercion (Cockburn 1991, p. 168) and this chapter has developed an appropriate theoretical framework to measure and map this pattern. Whilst AEWs may resist non-Indigenous teachers and their representations, their status and power does not shift in schools. As Moran (2004) argues 'ignorance, or repressed awareness' maintains racialised systems that serve to marginalise.

Whiteness, culturalism and representation have historically worked synergistically and have been central to the qualitative research process in Indigenous education. As the following literature review demonstrates, qualitative researchers are informed by their ontology, epistemology and methodology (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, p. 19). The next chapter analyses how researchers' standpoint positions inform their 'results' and 'findings' in relation to the role and status of AEWs in education.

Chapter 4: Literature Review

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the key components of whiteness theory and its conceptual utility for analysing sites of discrimination. This chapter applies whiteness to the analysis of the research literature on AEWs, providing a lens to understand how research findings are shaped by the position and world view of the researcher. The range of research studies that are examined here are historically located in structuralism, where ‘a structure is conceived of possessing a centre; a fundamental ground, which supposedly explains everything’ (Docker 1994 p. 132). Structuralist researchers use the ‘objective gaze’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, pp. 11-15) as a means to dispatch unintentional bias, however fail to acknowledge the complexities of their research subjects’ position, and thus have a direct impact on the group under observation.

The first section of this chapter addresses issues concerned with the position of the researcher. This is followed by a review that locates AEWs in Indigenous education research from the 1960s to the 1980s. It highlights the qualitative methodologies used by Watts (1971), Penny (1976) and others who researched AEWs (known as Aboriginal Teacher Aides during that period). Those methodologies were reflective of their time and uncritically founded on a universalist epistemology (Wiegman 1999, p. 149, 150). Consequently, that research markedly shaped the value and status of AEWs’ current position in schools, contributing to their representation as deficit.

Watts and Penny were among the first set of researchers in the late 1960s and early 1970s to include an in-depth analysis of AEWs. Penny focused on Aboriginal Teacher Aides in remote communities in the APY Lands, and Watts’ research on Aboriginal Teacher Aides was embedded into a range of documents concerned with Indigenous education. Their work informed teachers’ and researchers’ perceptions of AEWs’ roles in schools in a way that profoundly shaped the subsequent status and use of AEWs in schools. Watts and Penny used theoretical frameworks that applied

the deficit models of the time. Consequently, AEWs were assumed to be inadequate and required further training and development to be useful in schools.

The third section of this chapter focuses on AEWs in contemporary research from the 1980s to the present. The 1980s experienced a shift in qualitative research practices in Indigenous education. This shift emerged from research developed in the USA, UK and Canada and was signified by a crisis of representation, where constructed notions of race, class and gender were questioned (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, p. 16). In Australia, Peter Gale notes that, 'the critical focus on Anglo constructions of Aboriginality such as Cowlshaw (1986; 1987), and Morris (1988a; 1988b) is reflective of a significant shift in the way 'race' and 'ethnicity' is theorised' (1996, p. 12). Despite this shift many of the non-Indigenous researchers discussed in this section, such as Warren, Cooper and Baturo, remained analytically trapped by the deficit models of old that were maintained through the culturalist ideologies inherent in whiteness.

The texts by AEWs in the fourth section of this chapter include booklets, articles and video interviews that challenge the mis-representations developed by earlier qualitative researchers. The final section of this chapter highlights the different positions taken in the literature depending on the qualitative approach of the researcher. The anomalies and gaps in results by researchers are summarised in this section and compared to those issues raised by AEWs in the literature.

Not all recommendations or secondary materials that refer to AEWs in published documents are discussed in this literature review. The relevance of the material determined whether it was included for analysis within this chapter. Moreover, the relevant material that relates to AEWs does not include documents from Catholic and Independent schools.

The focus of the following literature review is the position of the researcher and the way he or she constructs knowledge in relation to AEWs. The use of qualitative research methods are examined through the lens of whiteness theory. This provides a deeper insight into the way in which AEWs have been positioned in educational research.

Positioning the researcher

This section of the literature review addresses qualitative research and the themes that emerged in Indigenous education, particularly in relation to AEWs. Qualitative research is a ‘field of inquiry’ that crosses disciplines and subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, p. 2) to generate evidence and data through themes. These themes are based on observations and interviews. The researcher selects themes based on their understanding of the data and then presents them as findings and results. However, as Frankenberg states there is a ‘link between where one stands in society and what one perceives’ (1993, p.8). Thereby, the privilege of whiteness, when unchecked and unexamined by researchers, significantly shapes their findings. This section therefore interrogates the hegemony of whiteness inside Indigenous education (Smith D in Campbell & Gregor 2004, p. 14).

Three broad periods are discussed in this chapter to identify common themes and the position of the researcher/authorial voice that represents these themes. The first period and the focus of analyses is the 1960s-1980s, when the literature focused on how to solve the ‘problem’ of disadvantage and assimilation (Gale, P 1996, p. 106). In the second period, from the 1980s onwards, two common themes emerged; the idea of Indigenous empowerment and cultural domain separation (Harris 1988a, b in Gale, P 1996, p. 106). A third and intersecting period, from the 1970s to the present, represents the emergence of the authorial voices of AEWs in the literature. The texts by AEWs challenge the results and findings in the majority of the work presented by non-Indigenous researchers since the 1960s.

The dearth of research about AEWs signifies and compounds AEWs’ low status in the field of Indigenous education. Arguably, the views of AEWs are not generally considered worthy of inquiry. They are marginalised in the literature by non-Indigenous researchers. AEWs are marginalised by their almost complete absence in the plethora of literature on Indigenous education. Yet, when they have been researched, their position became hyper-visible as deficit in the findings of those researchers whose methodologies were shaped by whiteness. Consequently, the ‘authorized view’ of the researcher (Campbell & Gregor 2004, p. 22) significantly shaped the current status of AEWs in schools.

The perceived lack of literacy and numeracy skills of AEWs were cited consistently in the research that related to AEWs, but their roles in relation to ethics of care and their prior learning skills, as well as their Indigenous knowledges were ignored. Moreover, the socio-historical reasons why many AEWs had low literacy or numeracy skills were not raised in the research. Arguably, the training and development recommendations that were routinely cited as the solution for AEWs was appropriate on one hand, yet on the other, the hegemony of education in Australia remained unchallenged. The following section canvasses deficit and cultural deprivation theories present in the analysis of AEWs by researchers from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Locating AEWs within Indigenous education: 1960s-1980s

AEWs were (generally) called Aboriginal Teacher Aides from the 1960s to the 1980s. During this time there was a range of literature regarding the role and efficacy of Aboriginal Teacher Aides. This literature contributed, in part, to the larger body of theory concerned with Indigenous education. The privileging of white epistemologies, ethics of care practices and educational practices remained central in Australia and was signified by the White Australia Policy that was unexamined well into the 1970s (Harris 1980, p. 27).

The majority of researchers who analysed Aboriginal Teacher Aides during this period were non-Indigenous academics. In general, their methodologies lacked self-reflexivity about the place of privilege and consequently whiteness remained central to their analysis and methods. This is to be expected considering trends in educational research in Australia.

Deficit theory and environmental deprivation theories during this period were pervasive and were represented as intrinsic by non-Indigenous scholars in relation to Indigenous education. Osborne and Tait later revealed that:

All the research that framed this literature supported various explanations ("theories") of underachievement. In the process of his

search, Barry [Osborne] discarded cognitive deficit theory ("They haven't got it [namely ability or motivation]"). He discarded cultural disadvantage theory ("They don't have the books at home", they don't have the support at home", or "They don't use the right kind of language at home") (1998, p. 88).

Osborne and Tait's research on Indigenous education highlighted the prevalence of theories in the 1960s-1980s that were informed by deficit and cultural deprivation theories. Deficit theory was applied to Indigenous students and cultural deprivation theory blamed Indigenous parents and community mores for low student learning outcomes. The 'epistemic authority' (McConaghy 2000, p. 128) of these theories normalised a disadvantage model to represent Indigenous people as lacking or as incapable of education. Conversely, schools were uncritically examined in this context and were portrayed as neutral sites. Low Indigenous student learning outcomes were compared with white middle class students who were positioned as the benchmark of successful learning.

Deficit claims were made across disciplines and were included in a range of authoritative documents. In the annual report of the N.S.W. Annual Welfare Board, it claimed that, '...Aboriginal children, as a whole, do not possess an intelligence quotient (IQ) comparable to that of their white counterparts...' (Duncan 1969, p. 194). These statements were normalized through the authority of such documents and such comments represent how Indigenous students were constructed as deficit. Deficit theory is based on the 'psychological premise' inherent in 'cultural deprivation theory', which involves the notion of 'critical periods' in 'mental growth' (Thomas & Sillen 1972, p. 79). The claim is that students who come from poor backgrounds have missed the 'critical periods' that would otherwise prepare them for school. The psychological testing for the 'critical periods' theory stems from animal testing and was transferred to educational theory by psychologists in the United States. This theory filtered throughout western education and was used to explain low Indigenous student learning outcomes in Australia. It was packaged in the form of the impact of 'developmental psychology', that was re-enforced by Piagetian 'stages and standard developmental norms' (Urwin 1985, p. 183). The

theoretical framework for much of the research concerned with Indigenous education was shaped by these ideas that informed cultural deprivation theories.

Aboriginal Teacher Aides in the 1960s-1980s were defined by culturalism as it was argued that they were ineffective employees in a school site due to their perceived absence of knowledge. The deficit models were a strong influence on non-Indigenous teachers, who subsequently failed to give recognition to Aboriginal Teacher Aides' work as legitimate in schools. The absence of a formal qualification signified a perceived lack of knowledge and ability to work in schools. However, it was the environmental deprivation theories that impacted significantly on Aboriginal Teacher Aides, as they were positioned by non-Indigenous teachers as *parents in situ* of Indigenous students. By this association they were assumed to be inadequate in the way they responded to and cared for Indigenous students as a result of their culture, race, class and poverty. In the following analyses Watts and others uncritical application of environmental deprivation and deficit theories generated findings that were presented as commonsense. Despite efforts to address what was defined as Indigenous educational disadvantage, they further entrenched the low status of Aboriginal Teacher Aides.

Watts: Analysing qualitative research through the lens of whiteness

Watts made a significant contribution to Indigenous education during the 1970s and early 1980s (Watts 1971, 1978, 1982). She was the most systematic researcher in relation to Aboriginal Teacher Aides and an advocate for their roles. However, her analysis culminated in a negative representation of Aboriginal Teacher Aides' roles in schools. In *The National Workshop on Aboriginal Education*, Watts claimed 'environmental deprivation' (1971, p. 53) is the cause of low academic achievement by Indigenous students. As a result of applying an environmental deprivation theoretical framework in her work, her findings are not surprising. By implication, those findings assumed that children who were defined as being culturally deprived could be compensated through education. The aim of education for Indigenous students was to 'compensate for their "deficient backgrounds"' (Nicholls, Crowley & Watt n. d., p. 3). Cultural deprivation was used as the 'commonsense' assumption

that explained low Indigenous student learning outcomes. Efforts were made to address this through the employment of Aboriginal Teacher Aides.

Watts highlighted the importance of developing links between schools and parents as a means to respond to issues concerned with cultural difference. Based on her observations of Indigenous communities Watts developed a model that represented the 'educational progress of Aboriginal children' (1971, p. 2). The role of parents was addressed in relation to the self-worth of Indigenous students (1971, pp. 5-6). As a result of these findings Watts stated in *The National Workshop on Aboriginal Education* 1.2 (c) that 'the employment of suitable Aboriginal residents for liaison between school and community' (1971, p. 8) was necessary for Indigenous students. Watts explained that 'members of the Aboriginal communities have a wealth of knowledge' (1971, p. 83). She recognised the need for Aboriginal Teacher Aides in this context to be a link between the school and parents. The outcome of the National Workshop was, in part, the employment and recognition of Aboriginal Teacher Aides.

Moreover, Watts asserted that Aboriginal Teacher Aides needed to be more academic if they were to assist Indigenous students. She recommended that 'pre-service and in-service courses for Aboriginal Teaching Aides should be developed, or extended where they already exist' (1971, p. 84). That point of view was read in a number of ways, and led many non-Indigenous teachers to confirm their views of Aboriginal Teacher Aides' inadequacy. However, others saw it as a step to equality in relation to access to in-service training (C Nicholls, 2008, pers. comm., 5 January). Similarly, Penny (1976), who conducted research in relation to Aboriginal Teacher Aides on the APY Lands, maintained that Aboriginal Teacher Aides needed further training and development. *The Training of Pitjantjatjara Aborigines for Greater Teaching Responsibilities in South Australian Tribal Aboriginal Schools* was based on an argument similar to Watts. There was an initial recognition of Aboriginal Teacher Aides, but this collapsed into the default position where literacy and numeracy signified the only legitimate objective of education, and therefore rendered Aboriginal Teacher Aides as inadequate. Penny also ignored the fact that 25 years earlier, Anangu Teaching Assistants were successfully teaching Indigenous students' literacy and numeracy skills (Edwards 1969, p. 280; see Chapter Two). Penny

implied that western education on the APY Lands went through a radical ascension when the Government took over from the missions.

Penny (1976) analysed the ability of Aboriginal Teacher Aides to support students in schools and his observations in classrooms led him to conclude that students were more likely to attend schools when Aboriginal Teacher Aides were present. However, he argued that their lack of qualifications reduced their effectiveness in schools. Socio-historical and political issues in this period made it difficult for Indigenous people to attain an education, let alone a qualification on the APY Lands and this still remains an issue of equality today. Penny couched his recommendations in the context of what is 'reasonable' (Billig 1988 cited in Rizvi 1993, p. 135), thereby rendering the complexities of Aboriginal Teacher Aides' roles, responsibilities and subjectivities in simple terms.

Penny's analysis ignored Aboriginal Teacher Aides' socio-historical context in relation to access and equality inside education. Aboriginal Teacher Aides were perceived to lack the appropriate cultural and social capital necessary to assist in the educational outcomes of Indigenous students. Moreover, there was no recognition of Aboriginal Teacher Aides' abilities to work between the borders of the community and the school as a legitimate role. However, six years later Watts recognised this aspect of Aboriginal Teacher Aides' roles. In *Aboriginal Futures*, she concluded that Aboriginal Teacher Aides have problem solving skills beyond those of 'team-teachers' or school staff (1982, p. 149). Having acknowledged Aboriginal Teacher Aides' roles and skills, she immediately assigned these skills to cultural considerations and negated the recognition she purported to offer:

In this clarification of roles it is important, I believe, for there to be the clearest possible recognition of the contributions that the aides, as Aborigines, are able to make; they bring to the school situation an intimate knowledge of their own community and its ways and its priorities, of the children's experiences and motivations, but it must be equally clearly recognised that they are not fully qualified teachers (Watts 1982, p. 151).

Watts' focus returns to the lack of capacity of Aboriginal Teacher Aides in an educational context, thereby overlooking significant issues in relation to Aboriginal Teacher Aides' transference of ideas through language to students, ethics of care and emotional labour. Her theoretical framework in relation to the recognition of Aboriginal Teacher Aides was influenced by debates of the time regarding Indigenous students, for example Harris' *Culture and Learning* (1980), which advocated Aboriginal Learning Styles. Whilst that text was influential, it maintained a binary lens by which Indigenous people were viewed. The generalization that Indigenous students learn differently from non-Indigenous students emerged from the cultural deprivation theories. Harris' theoretical position regarding this matter has been defended (Malin 1997, p. 6), yet a critical perspective was absent in his influential theory (Partington 1997, p. 14).

Watts also polarized Indigenous (Aboriginal Teacher Aide) and non-Indigenous (teacher) positions without addressing issues concerned with structural inequalities associated with the lack of agency of Aboriginal Teacher Aides in schools. The socio-historical impact that led to the low literacy and numeracy levels of Aboriginal Teacher Aides of the time was largely ignored. Discrimination legislation had been enacted by the mid 1970s and Watts, as a Professor in Indigenous education, would have been aware of the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975, (Cth). The following argument reveals Watts' choices about her position and reflects the centrality of whiteness in her methodology:

There have been, over the years, some statements by both Aborigines and non-Aborigines that alternative routes to recognition as teachers for Aborigines should be accepted - that, in effect, their Aboriginality confers a particular qualification upon them. This argument is never propounded in the case of non-Aboriginal people; their knowledge of their own people and their culture is not accepted as a substitute for professional training...Aboriginal Teacher Aides or assistants are also clearly in need of appropriate training if they are to fill adequately the specialist roles described by their advocates (Watts 1982, p. 153).

Watts' argument fulfils the expectations of academic texts as her position includes a premise, a paradigm and a teleological argument. Watts concluded that Aboriginal Teacher Aides were not academically qualified (1982, p. 684) and needed to be re-analysed due to their 'low scholastic achievements' (1982, p. 684). Her position reflects the privilege of whiteness in the academic canon, school curriculum and pedagogical practices in schools. It simultaneously ignores reasons for Aboriginal Teacher Aides' low literacy and numeracy whereas they were of a high standard in the previous era of missionary schooling. Her final position was a response to the Report on the QAITAD project by Valadian and Randell (1980) who advocated greater status for Aboriginal Teacher Aides.

An analysis of Aboriginal Teacher Aides by Valadian and Randell

The *Aboriginal and Islander Teacher Aide In-service Program* (Valadian & Randell 1980) focused on the efficacy of Aboriginal Teacher Aides and how best to use them in schools. Valadian and Randell argued that Aboriginal Teacher Aides should play a more 'significant role' in schools (1980, p. 32). Valadian was an Aboriginal woman who understood the dynamics of extended family, as well as academic educational discourse. Valadian and Randell highlighted that Aboriginal Teacher Aides taught in schools in many situations and contexts as educators and members of the extended family. They were considered particularly significant in bilingual schools, where they were 'responsible for daily programming and instruction' (1980, p. 32). Whilst Valadian and Randell were referring to the instruction of small groups of students, one is reminded of Watts' insistence in *Aboriginal Futures* (1982) that Aboriginal Teacher Aides should not be seen as substitute teachers.

Valadian and Randell identified the need for Aboriginal Teacher Aides to provide support for students by acting as cross-cultural mediators between the schools' values and those upheld by Indigenous parents/extended families in the communities (Courtney 1984). However, the debate on Aboriginal Teacher Aides swung back to Watts' position (1982) and Valadian and Randell's work was largely ignored. By constructing Aboriginal Teacher Aides as lacking in efficacy and capacity as the result of an absence of formal western education and qualifications, Watts (1982) and

Penny (1975; Assad, Cheese & Langford 1977; Bedford 1978; Dwyer 1976; More 1978) immediately rescind any status provided to Aboriginal Teacher Aides.

These discursive regimes position western schooling as an homogenous body where knowledge is acquired. This knowledge is represented as an Aristotelian idea of truth and happiness. Yet, the educational focus in Australia was and continues to be limited to specific literacy and numeracy skills. Giroux's border pedagogy (2005) and Apple's (1996) theories on literacy were yet to be realised in academic educational discourse. Instead, the debates in the 1960s-1980s regarding Aboriginal Teacher Aides highlight what knowledge was privileged, as well as the 'conditions of institutions and the effects of institutions' (Spivak 1990 in Giroux 2005, p. 21). Moreover, these assumptions reveal the asymmetrical power relations between the status of Indigenous knowledges (represented by AEWs in schools) and white/western knowledge (represented by non-Indigenous teachers and researchers). Converse to the privilege afforded white education, many Indigenous people challenge western education and the construction of knowledges (Moreton-Robinson 1999; Ngarritjan-Kessarlis 1992; Puruntatameri 1991; Rigney 1999; Sarra 2003).

The powerful culturalist assumptions that centralised white knowledge constructed Indigenous students and AEWs as deficit. Indigenous students statistically did not match the educational outcomes of their non-Indigenous counterparts. Aboriginal Teacher Aides during this period were seen in part to bridge this gap for Indigenous students. Yet, due to the focus on the perceived absence of knowledge signified by limited literacy and numeracy skills, Aboriginal Teacher Aides' support work in classrooms, schools and communities later became largely invisible in Indigenous educational research.

Analysing qualitative research and the privilege of white ethics of care

The following section highlights the methodologies that were based on a qualitative approach that assumed unspoken researcher objectivity inside the academic canon. The call for Indigenous educational equality was espoused by Watts and Henry (1978), who investigated the relationship between Indigenous parents and children in order to attempt to understand Indigenous student needs in schools. Watts and Henry

(1978) conducted a significant case study and interviewed Indigenous mothers (the profile of Aboriginal Teacher Aides then) in order to explore ‘the teaching competence of urban Aboriginal mothers’ (1978, p. 102).

The project revealed that these women operated in an extended family model as opposed to a nuclear family model. The researchers focused on the concept of ‘warmth’ (1978, p. 102) and concluded that Indigenous mothers and grandmothers were lacking in their capacity as parents due to their extensive responsibilities as carers (1978, p. 72). However, Watts and Henry failed to thoroughly examine the hectic and chaotic world caring for many children in one place at one time; mothers and grandmothers who were being researched and observed whilst trying to talk over screaming babies is a difficult situation for anyone. They also failed to understand Indigenous nurturing mores whereby children are given much more latitude, which is a key difference from white ethics of care models. Watts and Henry concluded that only one mother displayed ‘warmth’ (1978, p. 102). Such a finding represents the centrality of white ethics of care in their observations where ‘warmth’ represents a very sanitised and sanguine ‘imagining’ of motherhood. It also ignores the tensions, but also the abilities and advantages of Indigenous carers inside extended family models of care. Moreover, it reveals insensitivity to the damaging effects of the Assimilation policy where children were taken from families on the grounds of poor parenting styles only eight years prior to the research.

Valadian and Randell (1982) demonstrated a deep understanding of the socio-historical contexts of Indigenous students and they emphasised the importance of Aboriginal Teacher Aides in relation to care. Yet, the majority of researchers during this period raised questions and developed themes that reflected their world view and understanding and experiences of ethics of care. The researchers were grounded in whiteness, yet perceived their position as objective. This so-called objectivity limits research outcomes, because the projects are grounded in disadvantage paradigms and interviewees are less likely to engage with researchers who do not understand or respect their cultural mores. Therefore, the researchers’ positions are open to critique when they are grounded in unexamined whiteness (Campbell & Gregor 2004, p. 16). The following section addresses issues concerned with qualitative

approaches that incorporated a deeper understanding of the impact of hegemonic practices in Australian education.

AEWs in contemporary research: 1980s-2008

Attitudes in Indigenous education shifted significantly after 1980. These shifts were broad and integrated a deeper understanding of the machinations of dominant culture in Australian schools. Multiculturalism emerged and the deconstruction of Australian culture as Anglo-centered was partially examined (Jupp 1998). The policy of Assimilation in the 1960s moved to self-determination in the 1980s. Self-determination appeared to offer hope, yet critical curriculum theorists revealed how western education remained hegemonic (Keefe 1992). Institutional educational objectives often included a commitment to multicultural and Indigenous education that reflected the values of pluralism and equality. Yet, the Indigenous education literature remained trapped by the 'prevailing assimilatory logic' (Rizvi 1994, p. 54), with deficit and environmental deprivation theories embedded within it.

Much of the qualitative research in the 1980s shifted focus to the schools where broader sociological concerns were examined. McConnochie (1982) addressed deficit values and followed Maslow's (1964) understanding of the impact of poverty and how it affected Indigenous student learning. Sherwood (1982) also addressed the impact of poverty on Indigenous learning outcomes in the 'Fitzgerald Report' (1982, p. 34). Watson, on the other hand cited 'alienation' (1982, p. 7) as the reason why Indigenous students absconded from schools. Folds (1987) identified the impact of negative stereotypes, as well as racism in schools for generations of Indigenous parents in his radical discourse on remote Indigenous schools. By the 1990s, theorists such as Groome (1994, p. 168) confirmed this and revealed how the deficit theories of the 1960s re-enforced negative stereotypes.

Malin (1990) focused on the impact of cultural difference on Indigenous students in schools. Malin cited differences between the experiences of Indigenous students at home and at school. She argued the behavioral conflicts that arose at school were assumed to be the result of clashing cultural values. When non-Indigenous teachers constructed their classroom they automatically assumed western values and

attempted to socialise their students accordingly. Groome (1994) also argued that education was positioned as an assimilatory and colonizing tool by parents as culture and language were not valued. He claimed that Indigenous parents felt a general resentment towards schools. Many of these texts canvass the issues that perpetuate Indigenous inequality in education, yet there was little mention of AEWs as an essential group of people in overturning this state of affairs in school settings. Instead, their arguments focused on the broader issues concerned with hegemonic practices of western education in Australia.

The absence of recognition of AEWs involvement in Bilingual Education, Learning Styles and Two Way Education

New modalities and teaching practices were developed to address low Indigenous student learning outcomes. (Chronologically, these three methodologies slip between the two time periods discussed, however they represent the move towards addressing hegemonic practices in Australian schools and are thus located in this section of the chapter). The emergence of Bilingual education (Buschenhofen 1979), Aboriginal Learning Styles (Harris 1982, 1984) and Two-Way education (Moellner 1993) became popular in Australia during and after the 1980s. It was within these modalities that AEWs played a substantial role on a practical level, yet their contribution to Indigenous educational reforms was not acknowledged in the discourse. Other Indigenous educators, such as Yunupingu (1990), a principal at Yirrkala, introduced Indigenous sovereignty and rights into the curriculum. It was an attempt to move towards anti-colonial schools where Yolgnu (Aboriginal) power took over Balanda (European) power (Gale, P 1996, p. 111). In this case AEWs constituted only part of the 'bigger picture', yet arguably their role in the school was central to Yirrkala's aims.

AEWs played key roles in translating words and ideas in Bilingual education programs. They also informed schools about Indigenous knowledges in two-way education and they informed Aboriginal Learning Styles. AEWs, as the 'absented voices, [were] making "the voyage in"' (Said 1993 cited in McConagy 2000, p. 24). However, they were absent from the rigorous debates regarding their contributions to

Indigenous students and their learning outcomes. Instead, AEWs were positioned as 'value-added' (Hughes, 2003, interview 2 February).

Nevertheless, AEWs were central to the aims of bilingual education. AEWs, particularly in remote Aboriginal schools, developed resources with non-Indigenous teachers and were involved in curriculum development. The team-teaching relationship between teachers and AEWs was not raised in great detail in the literature, nor was the fact that non-Indigenous teachers had to rely heavily on AEWs for language skills. However, as Buschenhofen states:

While team-teaching is advantageous in a mono-lingual school, it is absolutely essential in a bi-lingual school. Accordingly, for non-Aboriginal teachers to be professionally and educationally effective, personal relationships must be developed between him/her and his/her Aboriginal team-teacher (1979, p. 13).

This is one of the few mentions of AEWs who in remote communities, particularly in relation to bilingual schools and two-way education, played a vital role in the school. Despite this, the position of the non-Indigenous teacher remained central and this is confirmed by the use of personal pronouns that claim ownership of the teacher over the AEW. This further demonstrates the centrality of whiteness in the team-teaching roles between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers, despite the fact that non-Indigenous teachers relied heavily on AEWs to respond to what were defined as Aboriginal Learning Styles.

The theory of Aboriginal Learning Styles became common knowledge for teachers and academics involved in Indigenous education. This modality represented affirmative action and a practical solution to solving low Indigenous student learning outcomes. Yet, the institutional value of AEWs was not recognized and remained hidden behind the voices of academics whose theory was represented as panaceas to Indigenous inequality in education. Whiteness operates on multiple levels whereby the theorist is privileged through the academic canon and his/her information transpires into a pedagogy practiced by largely non-Indigenous teachers. Non-

Indigenous teachers are seen to acquire the ability to teach to Aboriginal Learning Styles, whilst AEWs' contributions remain ignored.

Whiteness further operates through the use of culturalism where white and Aboriginal are constructed as a binary in relation to Aboriginal Learning Styles. Indigenous students are required to move to the centre of whiteness to attain an education. Peter Gale argues that learning styles are informed by dichotomies of 'Aboriginal and "white"' (1996, p. 108) and claims that:

Domain theory, whether in the work of Harris or Hughes represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and Indigenous cultures generally as a non-western 'Other'... This representation of Aboriginality constructs the problem of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in terms of a dichotomy between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous domains and the tension between teaching Indigenous Australians to operate effectively in the western cultural context without abandoning their own culture and identity (1996, p. 109).

These representations construct Aboriginality in a traditional/non-traditional binary that is reductionist and essentialist. Despite the enormous impact Aboriginal Learning Styles and cultural domain separation (Harris 1988a; 1988b) theories had on Indigenous education, AEWs remained largely absent in academic literature. However, when AEWs were addressed as they were by Warren, Cooper and Baturu in the following section, they were constructed through the same culturalist binaries inherent in domain theory.

Warren, Cooper and Baturu: Maintaining white methodologies in qualitative research

Warren, Cooper and Baturu (2004) focus on the team-teaching relationship between AEWs and teachers with an emphasis on learning styles. It is clear that they were influenced by Harris' learning styles theory as they state:

...differing learning styles can also affect success in the classroom. It is believed that Indigenous students' preferred learning style is one of observation and imitation, rather than verbal, oral or written instruction (Clarke, 2000; Collins, 1993; Eibeck, 1994; Jarred, 1993). Indigenous students have little patience with an atomized curriculum (Barnes, 2000), preferring a holistic approach to learning, appreciating overviews of subjects, and conscious linking and integration (Christie, 1994) (Warren, Cooper & Baturu 2004, pp. 37-38).

Indigenous Students and Mathematics: Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of Teacher Aides (Warren, Cooper and Baturu 2004) is one of several papers by those authors that address the relationship between non-Indigenous mathematics teachers and Indigenous and non-Indigenous aides in the classroom. The hegemonic discourse (Nicholls, Crowley & Watt n. d., p. 1) on learning styles present in this paper largely ignores the 'socio-political reality of Aboriginal people' (Nicholls, Crowley & Watt n. d., p. 1). Cooper, Baturu and Warren's (2005) research included longitudinal studies conducted over three years, and was focussed on non-Indigenous teachers' perceptions of teacher aides in three schools in Queensland. The three case studies included two rural schools and one regional school. The researchers observed teacher aides and non-Indigenous teachers' interactions with Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher aides in classrooms, some of which was video-taped. They interviewed twelve non-Indigenous teachers and teacher aides and conducted professional developmental days where all interviewees attended. They also conducted preliminary and follow up interviews each year and focused on the non-Indigenous teachers' and aides' 'beliefs re learning and teacher-aide partnerships' (2005, p. 267).

The aims of their research included developing strategies to achieve an 'integration of mathematics into Indigenous cultures and experiences' (Warren, Cooper & Baturu 2004, p. 38). Their theoretical framework took a liberal approach, yet there were inconsistencies in their theory and the interpretation of their data. They stated that there was a lack of Indigenous cultural awareness on the part of the non-Indigenous teachers and in line with QIECB (2003), they argued that:

...it is suggested that many of the teachers do not enter these communities with the cultural capital necessary to appreciate concepts within Indigenous Australian societies, and they often bring attitudes, values and beliefs that must be deconstructed before they accept reality (Warren, Cooper & Baturu 2004, p. 38).

However, Warren, Cooper and Baturu homogenise Indigenous student learning and offer no deconstruction of whiteness in relation to power and knowledge in educational settings. Nor is there a connection to cultural capital mentioned again or an integrated analysis of Bourdieu's (1977) work on cultural capital in relation to habitus and education (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990). However, they do raise some important issues of concern regarding AEWs.

Warren, Cooper and Baturu's (2004, p. 38) research often links common themes about teacher aides and their efficacy. The overall research focus was concerned with the use of teacher aides and their role in academic support. Regarding the issue of low literacy and numeracy levels of teacher aides, Warren, Cooper and Baturu (2004) claim that non-Indigenous teachers' appreciation of teacher aides increases with the aide's literacy and numeracy skills. Based on the 12 semi-structured interviews, they found that non-Indigenous teachers granted teacher aides a higher status and level of responsibility in the classroom according to the level of development of their math skills. They state that '...as a result of teacher aide in-service on mathematics learning, teachers' perception of the Indigenous teacher aides changed, resulting in each being given greater responsibility for student learning' (2004, p. 37).

Their analysis covered Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher aides. Eighty three percent of the Indigenous teacher aides were seen to 'effectively assist' the non-Indigenous teacher with behaviour management issues in class, compared to only 50% of the non-Indigenous aides (Warren, Cooper & Baturu 2004, p. 43). They concluded that:

...both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher aides had achieved similar levels of schooling, and yet the non-Indigenous teacher aides

were considered to be more capable with regard to directing student learning and the Indigenous teacher aides were afforded greater authority when it came to behavior management, especially when dealing with the Indigenous students (Warren, Cooper & Baturu 2004, p.45).

However, this observation was not analysed in relation to the overuse of Indigenous teacher aides in relation to behaviour management, instead it was accepted uncritically. The notion of delegating greater behaviour management to Indigenous teacher aides indicates the maintenance of cultural stereotypes and the on-going renegeing of responsibility of non-Indigenous teachers to perform behaviour management with Indigenous students. Moreover, it signifies the structural inequality experienced by Indigenous teacher aides despite training and development that saw their qualifications commensurate with their non-Indigenous counterparts.

Warren, Cooper and Baturu's findings indicate that non-Indigenous teacher aides' status increased marginally when their academic levels improved. However, this status was measured by the perception of the non-Indigenous teacher and was represented by how much behaviour management responsibility in the classroom the non-Indigenous teacher granted the aides. Thus, the position of Indigenous teacher aides is perpetuated as a result of the mechanisms of racialisation (Gunew 2007).

Indigenous teacher aides were largely granted authority over behaviour management and not student learning activities. The non-Indigenous teachers' perception of Indigenous teacher aides relates to behaviour management and not learning despite the fact that the same levels of education were achieved by the non-Indigenous and Indigenous teacher aides. This is in accord with the unequal power relations exposed by whiteness theory.

This finding warrants deconstruction in the context of whiteness. Non-Indigenous teachers often see Indigenous teacher aides as less than helpful in a classroom except in relation to behaviour management, even though they have the equivalent learning levels as the non-Indigenous aides. In brief, Indigenous teacher aides are racialised through the field of difference by the non-Indigenous teachers and the researchers.

The insider status of the researchers when interviewing non-Indigenous teachers remains unexamined in the analysis and why Indigenous teacher aides are positioned as the behaviour managers is not critically investigated by the researchers. The complexity of ethics of care is positioned as neutral and Indigenous student complicity in relation to Indigenous teacher aides also remained unexamined by the researchers. Arguably, despite commensurate learning outcomes as demonstrated in Cooper, Baturu and Warren's (2005) findings, Indigenous teacher aides remained marginalized in their support role because they do not appear to pertain the habitus and social capital represented by the non-Indigenous teacher aides. Moreover, the epistemological framework of the researchers is uncritically accepted as normal, and therefore the research transpires in a particular way that matches Watts' and Penny's earlier research.

The focus on training and development to build stronger literacy and numeracy skills deserves recognition, but alone, it ignores the socio-historical and contemporary issues that impact negatively on Indigenous teacher aides. It also overshadows what Indigenous teacher aides bring to the school regarding pedagogy and ethics of care. Moreover, the structural disadvantage that operates through an absence of recognition of Indigenous teacher aides' prior learning (Woods 1996, p. 24), ethics of care and knowledge is absent in the articles. The following section discusses a research project that moved beyond a structuralist analysis of Indigenous teacher Aides.

Malloch: Challenging normative white methodologies

Malloch's Honours' thesis researched the teacher and teacher aide relationship in classrooms, and drew different conclusions regarding the role and efficacy of teacher aides to those of Cooper, Baturu and Warren. He focused on the 'teacher and tutor complementation during an in-class tutorial program for Indigenous students in primary school' (Malloch 2000). Garbutt State School in Townsville won funding in 1988 from DEETYA to trial an in-class intervention program. The aim of the project was to increase Indigenous student learning. They hired Indigenous adults from the community to work in the classroom and they were called tutors. Malloch

interviewed 'ten informants' (Malloch 2000), held informal conversations at the school, and observed two classrooms. Both classroom teachers were female, one was Indigenous and one was non-Indigenous. The Indigenous teacher from classroom (A) worked with two tutors. One was an Indigenous male and the other was a Torres Strait Islander male. The non-Indigenous teacher from classroom (B) worked with an Indigenous tutor who was female (Malloch 2000). This is a small sample to investigate teachers' aptitude and the impact of AEWs in school, yet the nature of his analysis and the issues raised were significant.

The model of delivery in the classrooms included teachers presenting information on the board for the students and tutors. The tutors were able to confirm information with the teacher both in and outside class time. The tutors worked with the students individually and in small groups when necessary in class time. The students who were required to attend the after hours homework centre resented having to spend extra time after school, and resisted going to the centre, which was suggested to culminate in low academic results. Malloch observes that the:

...change to in-class tutoring was fundamental to the emerging recognition of Indigenous people as legitimate educators in a school system which otherwise relegated black educators to the periphery and did not recognize their cultural and community standing as elders (2000).

Malloch's poststructuralist framework encompassed a particular focus on theoretical binaries and formations of power in schools. He addressed the power relationships between teachers and teacher aides, and the low status of teacher aides within that relationship. He examined the binary representations of teacher training qualifications as legitimate and Indigenous knowledge as illegitimate. By this means and through his ethnographic approach he identified previously unrecognized strengths of AEWs/tutors, such as being valued as a tutor, the use of Creole or Broken English by tutors as a supplementary delivery approach within classes, and complementary team-teaching in classrooms. Malloch's findings revealed that compatibility between teachers and tutors was achievable in Garbutt State School's in-class tutoring program, because the tutors' use of Creole to

translate ideas to students was accepted by the teachers in the class. This was seen not only as a legitimate process, but also a valuable way for tutors to communicate concepts to students.

Malloch's research is important because it reveals teachers' institutional power versus the tutor/AEW's lack of such power. This power dichotomy is challenged in so far as the role of the tutor is legitimated, due to an expanded notion of pedagogy whereby Creole by tutors is accepted as a method in the transference of ideas in class. Malloch's findings are insightful, particularly in regard to ethics of care and the role of Indigenous elders in the school. As he states, 'the role as an elder in the community extends into the school system for those Indigenous adults employed as tutors' (Malloch, 2000). He quotes Henry (a tutor) who outlines Indigenous ethics of care and the extent of people involved in educating children:

We're a society, Indigenous society, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, we operate on a kinship structure, so it's not going to be just a mother and father having interactions...it's going to be grandparents, uncles, from their extended family, involved as well (in Malloch 2000).

Malloch does not include an analysis of ethics of care and normative structures in relation to whiteness in the classroom context. However, he does suggest that these tutors, as members of extended families, are responsible for Indigenous students in a caring and pedagogical capacity. This is one of the first pieces of research to give recognition to the role of tutors in the context of the extended family. Moreover, Malloch's research methodology reveals a strategy to interrogate the low tutor/AEW status in schools. Malloch's use of poststructuralism reflects the shift in qualitative research practices in Indigenous education in the 21st century.

Malloch's research reflects how Indigenous education moved along a continuum from the use of deficit models in the 1960s-1980s to a more critical analysis of hegemonic educational practices. Despite this shift, there was still evidence that the disadvantage model was applied by non-Indigenous researchers well into the 21st century, for example in the work of Warren, Cooper and Baturu (2004). During the 1980s there was a shift in qualitative methods which led to a deeper understanding of

the impact of representation of Indigenous people. Despite those shifts, the equity theme present in much of the policy documents continued to be embedded in a disadvantage model (Gale, P 1996, p. 104).

In summary, Malloch's work on AEWs signalled a shift in qualitative research practices in Indigenous education and a deeper understanding of Aboriginal tutors/AEWs. His poststructuralist methodology employed methods of investigation that moved from methodologies that were bound by the limitations of binaries and sophistic arguments to an in-depth analysis of the formations of power and knowledge in school sites. While qualitative research has undergone a range of developments, AEWs have been discussing their standpoint position in schools regarding the effects of racism, caring and the issue of recognition. The following section canvases AEWs' perspectives.

AEWs: Indigenous perspectives

Aboriginal Education Workers' Personal Reflections (Buckskin, 1993) is a collection of essays and stories by AEWs, written by Heather Agius, Josie Agius, Rosemary Agius, Margaret Clarke, Rosslyn Colson, Bronwyn McGrath, Jane Nelson, April Newchurch, Colin Ross, Gloria Sumner and Winnie Warrior (Buckskin 1993, p. 6). These women focus on the links AEWs have with Indigenous students and their community, and the importance of their role (Buckskin 1993, p.7). All the contributors reflect Indigenous ethics of care values represented by their caring focus, and ongoing commitment to students in schools and the community.

Colson for example, worked for over twenty years as a Teacher Aide/AEW and stated she played a surrogate mother role in the school (1993, p. 8). Her aim was to get the 'Nunga kids through school' (1993, p.8) and to develop a club at school where Indigenous parents would feel welcome. Josie Agius argues that many Indigenous parents are 'hampered by low self-esteem' as a result of the damaging effects of societal expectations that are generated from schools and the wider community (1993, p. 9). This publication draws out the importance of supporting and caring for Indigenous students in an extended family context.

This theme was also raised in Nicholson's reflections as a Teacher Aide (Nicholson 1980, pp. 36-37). Nicholson believes her presence in school allows students to feel safe because she is not only an employee of the school, but also a member of their community. Nicholson states that students' parents 'are glad to talk to someone of their own kind who they know understands their personal needs and problems' (1980, pp. 36-37). Nicholson's position in the community is an important link for the parents who 'can relate to [her] more easily than to someone else from the school' (Nicholson 1980, p. 37). AEWs are often identified as members of the community who provide a sense of belonging in schools for Indigenous parents and caregivers.

The AEWs' link to the community is defined more deeply by Rogers in *The Aboriginal Child at School* (1977, p. 46), who maintains that AEWs and Aboriginal teachers are essential for bi-cultural education. Rogers is a Yolngu man from the Wandarung group and believes that the Yolngu teacher or AEW must act as an 'in-between' person (1977, p. 45) who must also have respect through moiety (1977, p. 46). Rogers feels the status associated with moiety is not recognised by many non-Indigenous staff (1977, p. 46) and the effect of this lack of recognition is culturally damaging. As the principal of Ngukurr in the lower part of Arnhem Land, he argues that AEWs' or Indigenous teachers' involvement in decision-making processes in the school is hampered by non-Indigenous teachers' ignorance of their status in their own community. By implication, ignorance of Indigenous ethics of care practices reduces AEWs' status in schools. Rogers highlights the dominance of 'white' knowledge and power in schools as one of the key inhibiting factors for Indigenous teachers and AEWs.

Kemp (1987) argues that her role as an AEW could only be successful if AEWs were given recognition for their diverse roles in schools. She believes that AEWs should be able to read, write and contribute to sport. Moreover, she believes that their talents should be recognised in relation to art, liaison work between the community and school and assisting in administrative tasks. Kemp asserts that '[non-Indigenous] teachers should have a general understanding of the social life, culture and economic issues' (1987, p. 19) of Indigenous students. She also stipulates that AEWs

play a specific support role in schools that should be given recognition by both the school and the community. Teachers should also be aware of cultural protocols, such as shame, as this inhibits student learning outcomes (Kemp 1987, p. 18). Shame can be invoked on many levels, including failing to recognize moiety status. Her overall concern was Indigenous students' needs and AEWs' accountability in schools.

Some of the main issues to be raised by the AEWs in texts such as those discussed above and in the 'notes' distributed throughout the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission* website include a lack of recognition of their roles in schools, a lack of status in schools, a subsequent lack of decision making power and yet, at the same time, high expectations. The high expectations include addressing truancing and behaviour management, and breaking in 'green' teachers continuously due to the high turnover of staff in rural and remote schools. There was also an expectation that they would include Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum, however as an AEW stated, 'But, of course, we know as Murri workers that's not happening. We're all out there trying, but it's definitely not happening' (*Moree Aboriginal Education Workers and Others* 1999, p. 1).

The reflections of the AEWs reveal issues concerned with status, recognition and ethics of care in relation to their role. The *Same Kids Same Goals* (2006) project was an attempt to bridge the gaps between AEWs' experiences and school expectations. *Same Kids Same Goals* (2006) includes video interviews of AEWs. This was developed as part of the Dusseldorp Skills Forum and Dare to Lead Partnership. (funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training Indigenous education program). In the video interviews, AEWs discuss their roles and how schools can work more productively with them. The interviewees argue that AEWs are essential for successful educational outcomes for Indigenous students. However, the lack of clarity regarding their role inhibits productive working relationships in the school. There was a particular focus on the need for support from principals. Matthew Harris, an AEW from Belmont City College, argues that AEWs are important because they help Indigenous students feel like they belong and help them to build confidence. Tanya Cavanagh, an AEW from Swan Valley High School in Western Australia argues that she sits next to students and supports them. However, she calls for recognition of her role by teachers as this is essential for successful team-

teaching. The need for recognition of AEWs' role was raised by all of the interviewees, as well as the importance of Indigenous knowledges in relation to the students and their lives (*Same Kids Same Goals* 2006).

The voices of AEWs revealed in *Same Kids Same Goals* (2006, 2007) and Buckskin (1993) reveal particular points of view regarding their role and position in the school. They were calling for a better understanding of their work by teachers in schools and for greater collaboration between AEWs and principals. *Same Kids Same Goals* (2007) was structured in a way that allowed AEWs to speak continuously and this information was recorded and presented via video. This interview format enabled the AEWs to have a voice in a public context, something that was previously denied. The AEWs who were interviewed revealed both the diversity of their experiences, but collectively called for greater understanding of their roles and the need for greater collaboration with staff in schools. This differs markedly from the research from previous periods.

The section titled 'Locating AEWs in Indigenous education: 1960s-1980s' revealed how the supposedly objective approaches used by Watts, Penny and others were limited by whiteness. Denzin and Lincoln state qualitative research is '...a situated activity that locates the observer in the world' (2000, p. 3). The researchers' interpretive practices that were based on the traditional qualitative approach produced findings that were not consistent with themes raised by AEWs. The evidence claimed in the earlier research findings reflects an empirical framework couched in whiteness. The 'observer[s] in the world' were non-Indigenous researchers who equated efficiency with numeracy and literacy skills. The policies that emerged, particularly from Watts' work, culminated in the atrophication of AEWs' roles in schools. The value of AEWs, 'based on research', was considered limited and had to be reconsidered. Few researchers in Indigenous education reconsidered this role and therefore their position was rendered largely absent within the literature on Indigenous education.

However, new issues emerged as a result of a shift in qualitative research practices during the 1980s. The deficit and environmental deprivation theories were still present. For example, Cooper, Baturo and Warren raised some significant issues,

however they did not canvass the structural inequalities faced by AEWs in schools, as a result of their seemingly objective qualitative methodologies. However, in ‘AEWs in contemporary research: 1980s-2008’ it was revealed that the poststructuralist methodologies used by Malloch challenged these theories. Moreover, *Same Kids Same Goals* (2006, 2007) discussed in ‘AEWs: Indigenous perspectives’ illuminated a different approach, using video interviews that provided information specific to the experiences of AEWs. These interviewees and the texts written by AEWs in Buckskin (1993) raised similar themes. They all advocated their role as one that is fundamental to Indigenous students in schools. Efficacy in this context was measured through successful relationship building, which led to a sense of belonging and an increase in student attendance at school.

Conclusion

A broad range of literature concerned with AEWs has been addressed in this chapter. Of particular concern is the authority of position held by most of the researchers, that serves to marginalise the role of AEWs as a result of methodologies that are grounded in whiteness. The ‘objective’ position of Watts and Penny led to highly specific recommendations regarding training and development of Aboriginal Teacher Aides. The focus of much of the research in the 1960s-1980s reflected deficit and deprivation theories. Consequently, during this period, Aboriginal Teacher Aides’ efficacy was equated with literacy and numeracy skills. Valadian and Randell, on the other hand, took a different approach and gave recognition to Aboriginal Teacher Aides’ care and pedagogical work in bilingual schools.

However, the majority of the literature in the 1960s-1980s followed traditional methodologies that supported Watts’ theory regarding the use of Aboriginal Teacher Aides. Watts’ fieldwork was in-depth, yet reflected culturalist models of research that ignored broader socio-historical issues. This debate remains important as an example of whiteness in qualitative research practices. The majority of the findings from this period were developed through deficit theories that led to omissions regarding the value of Aboriginal Teacher Aides’ Indigenous ethics of care practices, knowledges and social capital.

The methodologies from the 1980s onwards were more reflexive. Even so, they did not highlight Aboriginal Teacher Aides' role and value in school. Although the findings of Cooper, Baturu and Warren were important, they tended to perpetuate a homogenized view of Indigenous learners through the notion of learning styles. Furthermore, there was an absence of a critical perspective in their findings in relation to the differing perceptions of teachers towards Indigenous teacher aides and non-Indigenous teacher aides, despite both having achieved the same level of education.

Malloch's critical analysis examined the tutor/teacher relationship in the context of a poststructuralist framework. The teachers' position was examined but not centralized and the potential of the tutor's efficacy was highlighted in relation to the use of Creole as a necessary process for students to understand content and ideas in school, as well as the value of extended family members in schools. The videoed interviews of AEWs support Malloch's findings, and moreover, there was an emphasis on the relationship requirements of their role. In general, most AEWs articulated their positions as keeping students in schools, building confidence, addressing problems and their educational, personal and community support to students. This aspect was overlooked in detail in the majority of the literature of the 1960s-1980s.

The general absence of recognition felt by AEWs that was addressed in this chapter is arguably the outcome of previous research that marginalised their role. This issue is explored thoroughly in Chapter Six and highlights a factor that is not just concerned with a perceived lack of knowledge by non-Indigenous staff, but also an absence of inquiry into engaging with Indigenous knowledges, such as language use and ethics of care models. White race privilege operates inside the field of Indigenous education through discursive regimes that are limiting. This chapter highlighted the process whereby the position of the non-Indigenous researcher and the use of qualitative methodologies grounded in whiteness have historically inhibited the recognition of AEWs' work in schools and their communities.

In Chapter Five I call for a broader methodology that employs the use of standpoint theory. A standpoint methodology provides greater scope to understand the history of being positioned by deficit theories and creates a space for a deeper analysis of

AEWs' voices that is raised in Chapter Six. The following chapter on methodology and method is an attempt to address the anomalies that were raised by AEWs in the literature review and to develop a more democratic process of understanding AEWs' voices, as well as the patterns of marginalisation.

Chapter 5: Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapter canvassed issues concerned with qualitative research practices and the position of the researcher. The methodologies and methods historically used to research AEWs have revealed a pattern of results that reflect the perceptions of the non-Indigenous researchers. The findings from researchers whose methodologies are grounded in whiteness are not consonant with the literature and texts outlined by AEWs and researchers who challenged logocentric epistemologies as a consequence of their different standpoints. However, the views of the non-Indigenous researchers have impacted significantly on the contemporary experience of AEWs in schools. When their research focus was concerned with matching AEWs' skills with the educational role of a teacher, AEWs' status remained low. Simultaneously, the dearth of literature supported this prevailing logic as AEWs were not seen as significant in transforming Indigenous student learning outcomes. Meanwhile, AEWs were caring for, and supporting Indigenous students in schools. Postmodern and poststructuralist research methodologies offer greater support for AEWs' diverse experiences and an opportunity to map the common themes.

The methodological approach in this thesis is informed by standpoint theory and utilises interdisciplinary and cross-cultural strategies to explore the position of AEWs in order to examine their 'situated knowledge' (Davies & Seuffert 2000, p. 265). I am not intending to create a *truth* (Foucault 1977a, p. 27) regarding the position of all AEWs, but instead explore the themes raised by AEWs in order to develop a critical insight into the manifestations of whiteness in schools. The methodologies that I have used include standpoint theory, a deconstructive analysis of the literature regarding AEWs, as well as a contextualised analysis of AEWs views that emerged from videos, interviews and articles. These methodological tools are supported by the use of ethnography that emerged from a participant-observer approach based on my own experience as a teacher working with AEWs. This experience was the catalyst that shaped the research for this thesis and is 'a form of

social research that relies on first hand knowledge of social processes, gathered *in situ* by the researcher' (Gerrish 2003, p. 80). These methodological approaches accord with standpoint theory as the overarching methodology that examines and echoes the situated and local knowledge of AEWs and their experiences.

This chapter is divided into four broad sections. Firstly, there is a discussion regarding the position of the researcher and issues concerning authorship. This is followed by a critique of the use of standpoint theory as a methodological tool, which recognises the need to analyse one's own standpoint as a researcher inside the context of whiteness theory. In so doing, the opportunity is provided to respond to interview data in a self-reflexive social-historical context. This is explored further in the third section of this chapter, which examines my standpoint in the context of whiteness that interrogated my own privilege. It was necessary to move from my race blindness and ignorance before I could engage with the complexities of differences, ethics of care and my structural location. Race or colour blindness is 'parasitic upon racism' whereby 'it is only in a racist society that pretending not to notice color could be construed as a particularly virtuous act' (Thompson 1998, p. 524). This necessary shift in consciousness emerged through my own experience as a teacher, who worked with AEWs and examined sites of resistance to what I perceived at the time as normative caring practices in the classroom. The fourth section of the chapter is concerned with the methods used to collect the data, the questionnaire techniques used throughout the interviews, the processes involved in ethics approval and the use of pseudonyms. In-depth, semi structured interviews were used as the method to support the standpoint of the interviewees. This approach supports the position of the interviewee who is considered the 'situated knower' (Harding 2004), that is, who occupies the position of knowing through experience in a particular context.

The position of the researcher

The position of the researcher has remained a self-reflexive one throughout this thesis. Consequently, I use standpoint theory as a methodology and method to address the concern of authorship, which arises from the constraints of an academic

thesis. To create a thesis that employs qualitative research the researcher has to choose a topic and select themes based on interviews or observations. This information is then embedded into the structures of a thesis framework, which usually includes literature reviews, methods, methodologies and results that prove one's chosen premise. The researcher purportedly generates 'validity' through the 'epistemological basis of their work' (Ribbens & Edwards 1998, p. 3).

However, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argue that a postmodernist approach to qualitative research resists hermetically sealed truths. Conversely, Rice and Ezzy argue this approach is criticised for its breadth, and as Snow and Morrill claim, traditional methodologies and methods are necessary to frame the research (1995 cited in Rice and Ezzy 2002, p. 21). Bishop and Glynn argue that it is possible to break the authorial power through collaboration with the 'subject' (1999, pp. 112-115). Nevertheless, Ribbens and Edwards argue that qualitative research will remain bound by the researcher's power when western methodologies frame the research project (1998, p. 3). Ribbens and Edwards also argue that self-reflexive research practices risk marginalising voices (1998, p. 3). However, self-reflexive research practices can also highlight voices when they have been muted and mis-represented in particular ways. As a result of the complexities of representation this thesis uses a range of case studies (Leedy & Ormrod 2005, p.135) based on the interviews with AEWs regarding their standpoint epistemologies in an attempt to map their experiences.

Leedy and Ormrod argue case studies are useful when there is limited information regarding the subject (2005, p. 135). As demonstrated by the literature review in the previous chapter the dearth of literature concerning AEWs was one issue and the second issue was the western epistemological frameworks used to examine AEWs. This thesis attempts to address both flawed methodologies and issues of authorship and representation through the use of standpoint theory to engage with AEWs' subjectivity more thoroughly.

Standpoint theory

Standpoint theory provides an opportunity to understand the world based on the local experience of a subject who reflects their situated knowledge. Situated knowledge is based on a particular perspective that has developed from one's experience in the world. Standpoint theory incorporates the epistemology of the situated knower. Sawicki claims that standpoint theory is theoretical pluralism which 'makes possible the expansion of social ontology, a redefinition and redescription of experience from the perspectives of those who are more often simply objects of theory' (cited in McNay 1992, p. 111).

Standpoint theory as a methodological approach supports the emergence of a dialogical relationship between interviewers and interviewees. It advocates an understanding of the interviewee's personal experience as an act of engagement (rather than one of objectification) that arises through the metaphor of conversation (Bishop & Glynn 1999, p. 109). This conversation is deployed in the semi-structured, in-depth interview which 'probes beneath the surface, soliciting detail and providing a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view' (Patton 1990 cited in Bishop & Glynn 1999, p. 109). However, problems can arise if the social context in which the experience emerged is ignored (Olesen 2000, p. 227) or when the interviewer engages literally in 'everyday conversations' with the interviewee which leads to a lack of clarity or direction (Patton 1990 cited in Bishop & Glynn 1999, p. 109). Striking a balance in the interview is equally as important as interpreting the data. Arguably, the 'experience is at once already an interpretation and in need of interpretation' (Scott 1991 cited in Olesen 2000, p. 228) and ethnographic understandings of locations and social contexts are necessary in the interpretation process.

In Chapter Six my interpretations of the interviewees are informed by the interview data, my experience as a teacher who worked with AEWs, coupled with research and teaching pre-service teachers a compulsory final year topic called 'Teaching Indigenous Australian Students' at Flinders University from 2005 to the present. These three elements led to an understanding of how whiteness functions and this knowledge provides insight into the socio-political context of the interviewees.

Understanding the context of AEWs in their local communities is also part of a process that facilitates AEWs' standpoint epistemologies to emerge. The in-depth semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity for AEWs to tell their stories that reflect their experiences and world views. The stories that emerged were based on their experiences in schools and in their communities. As Harding states:

...Valuing knowledge which explicitly acknowledges location or standpoint epistemology is valuable as a strategy. We value located knowledge and the 'view from below' partly because we believe that these approaches currently provide more rational criteria for judging knowledge than the spurious claims to objectivity of traditional legal knowledge. Additionally, these approaches have the elementary political and ethical values of recognition and respect for others (cited in Davies & Seuffert 2000, p. 273).

Standpoint theory in this thesis is used to deepen an understanding of AEWs' marginalised voices in dominant Australian culture. Whilst Davis and Seuffert refer to the 'view from below' in a legal context, it is equally relevant to the context of institutionalised educational knowledge. Understanding the 'view from below' provides insight into how indirect discrimination operates in education. In particular, the 'privilege of ignorance' (Thompson 1998, p. 523) that operates through the absence of recognition of AEWs' work in schools by non-Indigenous teachers is explored in the interview data.

Standpoint theory offers a politically grounded agenda for 'the "epistemic privilege" of the 'view from below' (Brown cited in Davies & Seuffert 2000, p. 268). This 'view from below' provides the understanding that can be used to map appropriate methods of recognition in order to overturn often unconscious forms of oppression. As Taylor argues:

The demand for recognition in these latter cases is given urgency by the supposed links between recognition and identity, where this latter term designates something like a person's understanding of who they are, of their fundamental defining characteristics as a human being.

This thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by the recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (Taylor 1994, p. 25).

The AEWs' stories that emerged from the interviews discussed in Chapter Six reveal how this misrecognition occurs in the workplace. Moreover, historical misrecognition by researchers has led to AEWs reduced agency in schools. Standpoint theory is useful as it foregrounds the views of the interviewees' experiences, thus facilitating their act of engagement with and resistance to misrecognition.

Standpoints and the interpretation process

Standpoint theory requires 'strong reflexivity' regarding the 'researcher's own part in the research' (Olesen 2000, p. 229), thereby reducing the risk of further misrepresenting people. What is attempted through the methodology of standpoint used in this thesis is a movement from the centre of whiteness to a 'wide-angle' vision of people's experiences (Ladson-Billings 2000, p. 262). Moreton-Robinson argues that 'whiteness serves to normalise and situate both the researcher and researched through their race privilege...[and] is a signifier that operates to neutralise race as part of the research process' (2003, p. 73). However, AEWs' narratives based on their experiences challenge this stranglehold over research, particularly where there is a wide angle epistemology and a self-reflexive ontology that includes a deconstructive basis. This provides an opportunity to create a 'broader politics of engagement' (hooks 1989 cited in Giroux 2005, p. 73) that is necessary to understand the formations of whiteness that continue to inhibit equality of recognition of AEWs' work in schools.

Burns claims qualitative research reflects people's 'ongoing daily life' (1997, p. 292). However, 'when we do interpretations, we bring our own knowledge, experience, and concerns to our material' (Borland 1991, p. 73). Whilst this is true, standpoint epistemology gives recognition to this as a legitimate process when grounded in strong reflexivity and addresses the 'phenomenon it represents' (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 23). At the same time this should not ignore Moreton-Robinson's (2003, p. 73) previous challenge to researchers that operate inside the paradigm of whiteness.

As a non-Indigenous teacher and researcher the challenge to overturn my 'structural complicity' (Jolly 1991, p. 55) is always necessary. The intent to examine sites of indirect discrimination through standpoint theory is not an apology (Patai 1991, p. 149), or an attempt to claim insider/outsider status (Vidich & Lyman 2000, p. 47), but is part of the process of unmasking inequality inside the field of whiteness. All people are 'filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity' (Denzin & Lincoln 1998, p. 19), and therefore a mindfulness of 'false universalism' (Eisenstein H 1984, p. 132) remains central to my analysis.

Standpoint theory incorporates some of the tools of analysis used in poststructuralism. The guiding feature of poststructuralism is the deconstruction of the interrelationship between power, knowledge and language. Deconstruction is a 'methodological tool' that examines sites of constructed knowledge that are maintained through this synergistic interrelationship in dominant cultures (Foster 1984, p. 19). It is therefore necessary to undergo an examination of our socio-historical location, because we exist within a 'field of cultural terms' (Foster 1984, p. 19) that have been shaped by constructed ideologies. Standpoint, whiteness, postmodern feminism and poststructuralism are all theories concerned with understanding the 'negative narrative orientations imposed by the mores of the larger society' (Cannon 1988, pp. 76, 77).

Standpoint theory includes the possibilities raised in poststructuralism regarding eclectic narratives that challenge the 'socially constructed or semiotically posited' (Kincheloe & McLaren 2000, p. 293). Elam applies the principle of the *mise en abyme*, 'a structure of infinite deferral', as a process used when interpreting individuals' experiences (n. d. p. 27), that is the interpretation of experiences depends

on the reader of the experience. Spivak suggests that any attempt at constructing a 'speaking voice' by using strategies such as poststructuralism in a text contains 'underlying persistent essentialism' (cited in Ashcroft et al. 1995, p. 7), yet this limits the possibilities of unpacking acts of indirect discrimination towards AEWs that are packaged in their stories and detailed in the interviews.

Accepting heterogeneity provides the opportunity to address the complexities of AEWs' experiences in different locations across South Australia. Standpoint theory incorporates the poststructural focus on multiplicity and disrupts universalist epistemologies (Wiegman 1999, p. 149). As Fine et al. state:

Following a poststructuralist emphasis on contradiction, heterogeneity, and multiplicity, we produced a quilt of stories and a cacophony of voices speaking to each other in dispute, dissonance, support, dialogue, contention, and/or contradiction. Once women's and men's subjectivities are considered and sought after as if multiple, varied, conflicting and contradictory, then the "data elicited" are self-consciously dependent upon the social locations of participants and the epistemological assumptions of the method...multiple methods and a deep commitment to engaging with differences (particularly between researchers and researched) form the core of provocative, politically engaged social science (2000, p. 119).

The interrelation between the theoretical framework and the methodology should operate synergistically. The tools deployed in this thesis combine to support each other in highlighting sites of indirect discrimination. The located knowledge and experiences of AEWs' are examined inside the context of whiteness where power structures operate invisibly. This examination includes my own standpoint position as a matter of principle. Kum Kum Bhavnani states that:

...[we] cannot be complicit with dominant representations which reinscribe inequality. It follows from a concern with power and positioning that the researcher must address the micropolitics of the conduct of research and...given the partiality of all knowledges,

questions of differences must not be suppressed but built into research (1993 cited in Fine et al. 2000, p. 119).

Using standpoint epistemologies that emerge from in-depth semi-structured interviews provides the opportunity to reveal the diversity of the AEWs interviewed, as well as the collective themes. The use of standpoint theory as a methodology offers a perspective and not a fixed truth. As Burns states, this qualitative methodology is an 'explication of "meaning" rather than the isolation of truth' (1997, p. 4). This theory therefore provides an opportunity to explain how indirect discrimination operates as a performance of whiteness and how this impacts on AEWs' status and position in schools.

This thesis is anchored by the intention to examine the operations of whiteness that serve to marginalise AEWs by examining their narratives. However, it is also necessary to interrogate how the AEWs and I have been influenced by 'the habits of institutional (as well as forms of racial, gender, and class-specific) privilege that buttress' our positions (Giroux 2005, p. 27). Here, a postmodern perspective remains useful as it offers a 'politics of possibility that can be used to rewrite the narratives of subordinate groups not merely in reaction to the forces of domination but in response to the construction of alternative visions and futures' (Giroux 2005, p. 59). The interviewee, who is a willing subject, engages with the research project to offer insight into visions and futures based on their experience. The analysis of the interviews in Chapter Six reveals the different situated knowledges of the interviewees.

The politics of difference canvassed in postmodern feminism also provide opportunities 'to develop a theory of difference that is not static, one that is able to make distinctions between differences that matter and those that do not' (Giroux 2005, p. 61). Distinguishing between AEWs experiences is one site of difference, and the second is concerned with the patterns of Indigenous and white ethics of care. Both require a critique that does not position AEWs as passive subjects, but rather as participants involved in change. These theoretical concerns of authorial voice are significant as they inform the analysis presented throughout the thesis.

The following section outlines my own standpoint, that was shaped by both experience and theory. This included a move from ignorance to a greater awareness of the relationship between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers.

Personal standpoint epistemology: My experiences as a non-Indigenous teacher on the APY Lands

I interweave some observations that draw on reflections of my work with AEWs on the APY Lands when I was a teacher in 1997. This is a 'limited' standpoint epistemology that is not 'universal' but relates directly to my experiences. As Davies and Seuffert explain:

...[I]t is the existence of the standpoint which is important, but it is vital that any standpoint be limited to its actual context, and not taken as universal. Attributing a broad content of knowledge to any one group without appreciation of the range of power differences will result in empirically unsatisfying and potentially dangerous re-stereotyping. Feminist standpoint epistemology remains useful if we recognise that the knowledge produced by oppressed people is not better than knowledge produced by oppressors because it is more 'objective'. Rather, we are making a value judgment that the position from which the knowledge is produced provides the knowledge producers with a different and often more complete understanding of the oppression (2000, p. 271).

My standpoint epistemology developed fully with the benefit of hindsight and research. I worked as a teacher throughout the 1990s in rural and metropolitan schools in South Australia, and I have also tutored pre-service teachers in a subject called 'Teaching Indigenous Australian Students' from 2005 until the present. My work-related experiences supported the research findings regarding whiteness in education. My standpoint is used to reveal how innocence and ignorance operate to exclude and deny equality of recognition of AEWs' work and ethics of care practices in schools. This is not always intentional, but it is routinely excused and silenced by

principals. My experience coupled with my research have given me a more 'complete understanding' of this process (Davies & Seuffert 2000, p. 271).

I had no training in what is widely known as cultural awareness throughout my undergraduate degree or my Graduate Diploma in Education. After I won the position to teach on the APY Lands I received a video on cultural awareness which included happy [white] teachers declaring their pleasure at receiving such a cultural experience on the APY Lands. However, in my role as a non-Indigenous teacher on the APY Lands I witnessed daily practices of direct and indirect discrimination towards AEWs that were informed by 'colour blind teaching practices' (Wilder 1999, p. 356). Many of the non-Indigenous staff's racially innocent narratives 'inoculated' them against the 'contamination of guilt' (Thompson 1998, p. 539). The privilege of ignorance meant that they could remain in Frankenberg's (1993) second stage where '[s]uch colour blindness, rather than being non-racist is a form of racism because it denies the identity of the Other and at the same time it ignores power structures that privilege one group over another on the basis of their race' (Aveling 2002, p. 124).

This position led many non-Indigenous teachers to justify their treatment of AEWs as lackeys, by ignoring them in the classroom as they were not identified as key agents in the classroom. They routinely used derogatory terminology about the value of AEWs and delegated photocopying and behaviour management to them instead of including AEWs in curriculum planning. Moreover, AEWs' experiences in the community were subject to complex politics and protocols inside extended family networks that were routinely dismissed as 'Aboriginal business' by non-Indigenous teachers thereby relegating them to Otherness.

I also unwittingly committed acts of indirect discrimination as a result of cultural assumptions that were masked by whiteness. I was also privy to conversations by non-Indigenous teachers in the staff rooms and their homes where stereotypes and cultural deprivation theories flourished in relation to the Indigenous community, AEWs and Indigenous students. I was anti-racist, but I did not challenge the insensitive and culturalist accusations regarding AEWs and the Aboriginal teachers' role in the school. My world had been mapped by whiteness. My family and friends

were white middle class. My environment included suburbs, the beach and the country side. Whilst there are layers left unspoken regarding the complexities of my family life, my world was shaped by the values of politeness, of success, of external appearance and the performance of ‘normal’ behaviour. Chapter Seven canvasses the values of the white middle class that are acculturated through white ethics of care through normalising practices. My experience on the APY Lands as a teacher challenged my values and brought about the slow deconstruction of my own whiteness. It is not surprising that when I first arrived in the remote Aboriginal community I went into a form of shock and uncertainty. This shock came from the unusual experience for me of being under surveillance, both by the Indigenous community and by the other non-Indigenous teachers. The uncertainty emerged from my own constructed ‘imperial eyes’ as Pratt calls it (1992, p. 15), yet in this new minority position, my ‘false universalism’ (Eisenstein H 1984, p. 132) was disrupted.

I was in charge of the Child Parent Centre (CPC) and was required to teach Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE), English, Art and Physical Education (PE) in the Junior Primary section of the school. I had limited teaching experience, whereas the AEWs with whom I worked had over twenty years experience working in the school and in the CPC. The AEWs with whom I worked had seniority in the community. Yet they were on Level 1 of the AEW pay scale, which was not much higher than unemployment benefits at the time. It became clear that I was privileged by the institutional framework where qualifications supersede experience disproportionately.

Ignorance of Indigenous cultures and histories is very common amongst the majority of the non-Indigenous teachers working with Indigenous students and with AEWs as a result of a lack of education in these issues. The lack of education in Indigenous politics is a feature of whiteness. The omission of such issues in the curriculum signifies how certain knowledge is privileged. The majority of the employees of this school were white middle class female teachers who were expected to teach as professionals, yet our profound ignorance on so many levels was varnished over by our institutional status.

My ignorance included a lack of awareness about ‘shaming’ students in the classroom by asking open questions and using appropriate behaviour management strategies. I did not know that girls and women went to ceremony in the first half of Term 1 and were absent for that reason. I did not recognize that women who had children had a higher status than a woman like me who was childless. Nor did I understand that some women who had no biological children held status through classificatory children. I could not speak Pitjantjatjara, which was the first or second language of the majority of the students in the class. I did not have cousins in Australia and I could not conceive that a cousin could be a brother or a sister through kinship. I had no idea that there were family protocols to be observed or that the community itself was divided by family politics. This division was the result of government policies placing disparate groups into an artificially constructed community under the guise of the Protection policy. The principles of the Protection Board, where the ‘Chief Protector had legal guardianship of all aboriginal children, displacing the rights of the parents’ (Graycar & Morgan 2002, p. 279) were either not discussed or were positioned as in the best interest of the child.

I was 'broken in' by two AEWs whose pseudonyms are Josie and Jessie. The breaking in process is standard practice on the APY Lands and usually begins with the new teacher taking control over the class without consultation from the AEW they are asked to work with. The teacher soon reaches crisis point (generally within their first week) and then they begin to ask AEWs questions. Non-Indigenous teachers generally and reluctantly resort to relying on AEWs, particularly for behaviour management in class (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 79). They are quick to realise their professional training did not equip them with the strategies necessary to cope in the classroom. New teachers generally begin to be ‘broken in’ by AEWs on the APY Lands due to the need to rely on someone who is routinely proficient with managing, communicating and caring for the children in the classroom.

Many AEWs sit at the back of the classroom and wait for the non-Indigenous teacher to come to terms with the complexity of the classroom situation, which includes facing a language barrier. The act of sitting at the back of the classroom is often two-fold. Many AEWs who routinely sit at the back of the classroom are often not

granted status or power in the class to engage with the class. Sitting at the back of the classroom also allows the teacher to take the reins and invariably fall; an appropriate strategy considering few questions are asked of the AEW by the teacher to until they fall.

Deconstructing my own ethno-narrative

My white values indicated that if you went to work on time and you worked hard, you were doing your job. The main values that had been instilled in me included a work ethic and gratitude. Considering these were the two main values that I lived by, I could not believe that Josie and Jessie did not always arrive at school on time and that no one said thank you. This is not an attempt to dismiss these protocols and values, as these are also important to learn, it is instead used to reveal how values may be shared but are represented and practised according to cultural influences.

I always said a hopeful 'thankyou' after I handed the students fritz sandwiches. My patronising thank you was a form of epistemic violence as I had failed to recognize that in general, many things, particularly food, were shared in this community. My position as benevolent dictator of fritz sandwiches was occasionally met with a thank you. I only challenged my attitude towards gratitude when I realised that I thanked people with more emphasis when they were institutionally above me. I realised then that I was trying to construct around me a framework of respect along the lines of colonial formations where respect correlates with status inside a hierarchy of white institutional and social values. Conversely, Josie and Jessie operated on a more egalitarian level and this consistently held the respect of the students, which was represented in a myriad of ways. Indeed, the children's behaviour was manageable in the classroom because of their respect for the AEWs. Students also attended class out of respect for the AEWs or because they had been brought to the school by an AEW. Teachers being 'broken in' often ignore the dimensions of AEWs' roles and often frame this respect in culturalist terms, rather than acknowledging that this respect has been built over time and as a result of their status in AEWs' own community.

Initially, when Josie or Jessie arrived late to class, I felt annoyed. It was the ‘same rule for all’ assumption. This assumption is used routinely as a form of white defensiveness. It is rarely contextualised into local situations. It was not until I realised why they were late that I resolved this problem. Jessie often collected students before school to bring them to class. She routinely resolved crises relating to families during the night and before school. This reveals how AEWs who are both Indigenous and women are often faced with extra emotional labour. They are expected to resolve emotional issues, as well as attend to the practicalities of reducing truancy. Therefore, their role extended to both emotional and physical labour requiring time and care.

Respect is often represented by being on time, particularly in Anglo culture. This ‘whitely value’ (Thompson n. d.) system can be understood more broadly as a reflection of the Protestant work ethic. Furthermore, the link between respect and time management informs the boundaries of the school. So when Indigenous students arrive at school late, this represents a perceived form of disrespect towards the non-Indigenous teacher. The non-Indigenous teacher reacts against this perceived lack of respect in a number of ways, including completely disengaging with the students. This aspect of their work is rarely deconstructed by non-Indigenous teachers. Instead, AEWs necessarily respond to this through their continual support of Indigenous students and through ensuring the presence of students in schools. However, when AEWs are late due to the fact that they have been collecting children from home, they are also often dismissed by the non-Indigenous teacher through the complete absence of recognition of their presence in the classroom.

Seven Key Competencies: Who is really competent?

I was instructed by the principal of the school that I had to teach Josie the Seven Key Competencies (DECS n. d.), which were developed by DECS. I had to refer to the range of skills that were designed to create competency in certain skills necessary for employment. Josie was required to learn these before she was granted incremental wage gains. This is a perfect example of how power relates to knowledge where ‘organisational literacy...[is] constructed in ways that control and disempower

people' (Campbell & Gregor 2004, p. 22). I used the large folder supplied by DECS that encased the Seven Key Competencies to teach this information.

When I read the text aloud while we sat together, Josie glanced upwards. This was an act of resistance which challenged my position as someone who was meant to be a professional, despite the fact that I was not an authority in the Seven Key Competencies. The brief to educate a senior woman was inappropriate and my colour blind teaching methods resulted in complete resistance by Josie. It was shameful that I continued to read the rhetoric and lists from the Seven Key Competencies.

The process of challenging my white race privilege in this relationship involved re-examining my status. It also involved questioning whose knowledge was privileged. This complex position led to a choice I had to make. It required abandoning the expectations of the principal, which interestingly led to a sharp decline in social engagements previously requested by my non-Indigenous colleagues. This experience of marginalisation also coincided with the evening painting sessions held at my place with Indigenous women and children from the community.

The act of glancing upwards was used again when I questioned Josie about an Aunt who would frequent the CPC. Many of the parents and members of the extended family became involved in classroom activities over time. I challenged Josie as to why a particular woman came and ate the fritz sandwiches. She was an Aunt in an extended family context, but was not biologically related to any of the students. When I questioned Josie about her right to be in the classroom she looked up again.

I felt at first that Josie's inclusion of members of the extended family was positive and appropriate for the students. Yet, I felt that the Auntie did not really have a right to enter as she was not biologically related to any of the students. This reflected my understanding of the meaning of family and the weight I put on biological constructions of family. On a professional level, I welcomed the presence of students' families in the classroom, until another non-Indigenous staff member entered the classroom. On a number of occasions, it was made clear through facial expressions by non-Indigenous staff that my classroom was out of control. This

signified to me that I was not a professional on both a conscious and subconscious level. Yet, I also knew that I was responding to the environment in which I taught. A slippage occurred here where I felt less responsible to have a classroom in control as the general ethos of the school and the non-Indigenous staff was one of apathy, as well as a belief that I should respond appropriately to the environment in which I taught. However, the apathy in the school meant that my professionalism was not really the issue, but instead whether I was able to endure living as a teacher in a remote community. Whiteness operates on many levels, where there are intersections between the unspoken low expectations of teachers in remote Indigenous communities by DECS and the values of professionalism as a facade. This intersection is constructed inside the perceived unworkability of remote Indigenous schools.

Moreover, the construction of identity through race, class and gender were operating in a way that was invisible to me on many levels, until I began to move into the spaces of resistance. This ethno-narrative offers examples that demonstrate how uncritically examined values operate, yet are masked by whiteness. It also reveals the necessary process of letting go of power. This letting go leads to discomfort that emerges as the result of resistance by AEWs and Indigenous students. A response to this discomfort involves either leaving the environment that causes the discomfort or addressing the issues that annoy, frustrate or discomfort. The following section addresses the methods chosen to address the interstitial spaces that emerge in relationships between non-Indigenous teachers and AEWs.

Methods: In-depth semi-structured interviews

This section details the data collection process, namely interviews with AEWs and a range of people who are involved in Indigenous education. My research project was granted ethics approval from Flinders University and DECS in 2001. This meant I was able to conduct interviews between 2001-2006 with a broad range of people who were AEWs or who worked with AEWs. The ethics approval process took over one year to resolve due to the complexities of schools, AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers.

Twelve in-depth interviews were conducted with AEWs. Three of the AEWs were male and nine were female. Three principals were also interviewed. One was a retired male non-Indigenous principal and the other was a retired female Indigenous principal who had also been an AEW. The other male principal had also been the Superintendent of Anangu education. These principals had many years experience working in predominantly Aboriginal schools. One non-Indigenous house-parent who worked in a remote Indigenous community school and four non-Indigenous administrators were also interviewed. Further interviews were conducted with the convenor of the AnTep program at the University of South Australia, the previous director of Yunggorendi at Flinders University, an employee of the Australian Education Union who was directly involved with the implementation of the 1987 AEW Industrial Agreement, two ex-staff members from the Education Department and one staff member from the Aboriginal Education Unit. Twenty-nine interviews were conducted in total.

Each interview required a signed consent form and a written letter of introduction from my primary supervisor. The recordings and transcriptions of the interviews were returned to the interviewees. Letters were sent annually to the interviewees regarding the thesis. The interviewees were given the opportunity to respond to the themes raised based on the interviews, and I remain close friends with many of the interviewees who were AEWs and continue conversations regarding issues raised in the thesis. The collection of primary interview data was conducted over the whole of South Australia, including metropolitan Adelaide, Port Lincoln, Port Augusta, the Riverland and Murray Bridge.

The interview process began with phone calls to the Aboriginal Education Unit and discussions regarding the thesis. I was sent a list of the schools where AEWs worked in South Australia. I rang twenty schools, and I was generally directed to the principal to speak about my research project. The principals responded well to my request to interview the AEWs who worked in their schools, except one who hung up on me after making disparaging remarks about AEWs' value in schools. This screening by principals was pragmatic, but couched in whiteness as I was not able to speak directly to AEWs in schools without the consent of the principal. Having gained the permission of the principal, I then rang the AEW, discussed the research

project and asked if she/he would like to be interviewed. I followed this with formal letters and consent forms that were filled out and we each kept a copy. On two occasions the principal demanded that I discuss the interview questions with them and the AEWs together.

Interviews and the interviewer-interviewee relationship

The use of semi-structured in-depth interviews as the underlying method for this thesis supports the explanatory approach used in the methodology. Standpoint theory, coupled with whiteness theory, is used to interpret the data that emerges from the interviews as an 'explanatory theory, but also prescriptively, as a method or theory of method' (Harding 2004, p. 1). The use of poststructuralism as an ontological and epistemological basis for the thesis provides an opportunity to recognise that 'any attempt to gain insight into the life of another individual or group is inevitably filtered through the researcher's language, gender, social class and ethnicity' (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Gerrish 2003, p. 82).

Patton (1990) and Reinharz (1992) argue that in-depth interviews which are semi-structured allow for interviewees' 'ideas, thoughts and memories' to emerge (cited in Bishop & Glynn 1999, p. 109). The interviews for this thesis were 'interviewee guided' (Reinharz 1992), thus allowing 'situated knowledge' to emerge from the interviewees' local experiences (Davies & Seuffert 2000, p. 265; Harding 2004). The reflections in Chapter Six are 'observations that are socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed' (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Gerrish 2003, p. 82). The in-depth interviews with a semi-structured design allowed for 'symmetrical relationships' between interviewer and interviewee (Haig-Brown 1992) where a 'relationship based on mutual trust, openness and engagement' developed (Bishop & Glynn 1999, p. 109). This 'open' technique was metaphorically like a conversation that 'probes beneath the surface, soliciting detail and providing an holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view' (Patton 1990 cited in Bishop & Glynn 1999, p. 109). As Rigney, Rigney and Hughes state:

The semi-structured interview process ensured that a diversity of interests was represented and all participants could respond freely. In

this manner, the guiding rather than fixed questions provided the flexibility to explore interpretations while allowing for unanticipated responses to be developed. Thus related issues could be explored within a broad, but relevant, context (1998, p. 5).

The oral process allows for free association, whereby issues that have not previously been addressed can be raised in a fluid manner, but at the same time within the framework of the interview itself (Vansina 1965, p. 164). I was aware, as Borland states, that '[we] are forever constructing our own identities through social interactions' while simultaneously, 'we similarly construct our notion of others' (Borland 1991, p. 72). I therefore tried to re-visit questions where I was unsure of aspects of the narratives throughout the interviews. As a result, the interviewees re-phrased the context and described their world and the interpretations of their experiences (Taylor & Bogdan 1984, p. 5).

The interviews with AEWs were usually conducted in classrooms or a Nunga room and lasted between 1-2 hours. Nunga rooms are allocated rooms for Indigenous students in a school that are often used by Nunga students during free time or for particular lessons. In the first few interviews I asked questions concerned with racism, such as, 'Do you experience racism?' However, no one responded to these questions as they were presented as statements of fact. The shift from closed questions to open questioning emerged in conjunction with a deeper theoretical understanding of the complexities of whiteness inside the interviewer and interviewee.

The language of racism is complex and is based on situated knowledge. As a result of my shift in understanding of appropriate techniques, such as open-ended questions, ethnographic techniques, whiteness theory and language use, I moved from direct questioning to presenting themes that were based on my own experiences of mis-communication between AEWs and teachers. This ethnographic approach was useful as an ice breaker where the setting and location of the issues to be discussed were understood by the participant, as well as, the researcher. 'Ethnography is a form of social research that relies on first hand knowledge of social processes, gathered *in situ* by the researcher' (Gerrish 2003, p. 80).

I then moved into what is termed in postmodern mixed genres, 'crystallisation'. Crystallisation involves light being metaphorically refracted, which allows for threads of complex ideas to emerge within dialogue. This process moved away from definitive answers and responses within the interviews and into the interviewees' stories about their experiences. 'Crystallisation, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of "validity" ...and [it] provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic' (Richardson 2000, p. 934).

Crystallisation shares the ethnographic approach whereby the starting point of the researcher and the participant is shared regarding the landscape of the topic in question. This process was supported by more formal structures such as ringing the interviewees on several occasions before the interview. These conversations included confirming that they were free to raise issues they felt comfortable with, that their information was confidential and only pseudonyms would be used in the thesis and future publications. I also explained that I had worked on the APY Lands as a teacher and that I worked closely with AEWs in the schools. I also explained that with hindsight I could recall the mistakes and assumptions that I had made when working with AEWs as teachers. My partisanship and an acknowledgement of my mistakes as a teacher in team-teaching roles opened out the interviews so that they became 'interviewee guided' (Reinharz 1992). This methodological tool therefore provided 'perspectives, and observers in a single study' which adds 'breadth, complexity, richness and depth' (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, p. 5). It was possible to 'draw conclusions from the data presented' by each interviewee (Leedy & Ormrod 2005, p.100). This is the nature of standpoint epistemology, as interviewees direct the nature and content of the interviews which produce the themes. The themes emerged from the 'thick description' (Leedy & Ormrod 2005, p.100) generated by the interviewee and they were validated by the interviewees in post-interview conversations.

The main theme arising from the interviews was the issue of recognition, specifically the desire for recognition of AEWs' role in schools, the recognition of the complexity of community relationships for AEWs and the recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices. These themes did not emerge as one homogenous concept in the

interviews; instead, they were layered within the text, but largely addressed directly. However, the term ethics of care was not raised as a theoretical concept, but rather as the primary stated reason to be an AEW in schools, that is to 'be there for the kids'. Other and often disparate themes arose, such as the desire to be a teacher, the desire to be a better AEW, and the desire for training and development in behaviour management. However, the most consistent theme linking all of the others was the notion of recognition of AEWs' roles by other staff members in the schools.

The real names of AEWs in this thesis have been replaced by pseudonyms and schools are not identified. The oral format coupled with the knowledge of their anonymity provided the interviewee greater opportunity to express their thoughts more freely. Prior to the interviews I advised the interviewees that they would remain anonymous according to Flinders University ethics guidelines. However, the interviewees have copyright of the interviews and thus can choose to re-develop or allow other researchers to use the data themselves at a later date in a context of their own choosing.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the range of methods and methodologies that are applied throughout this thesis. Standpoint theory is the primary methodology employed, however it is also used as a method because the interviews were interviewee directed, thereby creating the space for their situated knowledge to emerge through narratives.

The integration of methodologies was necessary in order to address issues concerned with subjectivity and misrecognition. Such an approach provides the opportunity to analyse the impact of whiteness, rather than reconstruct AEWs as a single homogenous entity. Standpoint theory, in combination with poststructuralism and postmodernism also provides a breadth of knowledge and illuminates the misconceptions that have led to the continued indirect discrimination experienced by AEWs.

The in-depth semi-structured interview method of data collection provided interviewees with opportunities to raise themes that were meaningful and relevant to them. Nevertheless, any presentation of data in texts can be problematic in poststructural terms as the researcher's position must always be challenged in the construction of ideas. However, with insight into whiteness, poststructuralism and postmodernism, the fields of difference discussed in the following chapter are not grounded in essentialism, but instead in 'strategic essentialism' (see Spivak 1987b, p. 205) in order to examine the process and patterns of racism.

It is necessary to utilize the principles of these theories in order to uncover the multiplicities of identities, avoid furthering inequality and at the same time offer insight into factors concerned with equality of recognition of AEWs as a group (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p. 45). The care giving role discussed in the following chapter reflects AEWs' standpoints. These vary in relation to their role as aunties or uncles, however for all of the AEWs their role is informed by being Indigenous and 'knowing' the impact of racism in Australia (Harding 2004, p. 7). AEWs reflect a 'view from below' (Davies & Seuffert 2000, p. 273) that is based on their experiences inside educational institutions. The absence of recognition of their care giving role in relation to students in schools, as well as their ambitions and desires for change, are canvassed in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Every day work: Occupying the border zones between schools and Indigenous communities

Introduction

The previous chapter canvassed the use of standpoint theory as a method and methodology that was appropriate for responding to the views and experiences of AEWs. In this chapter the perspectives of five AEWs are explored in detail as they illuminate Indigenous ethics of care practices that are deployed to mediate the expectations of Indigenous parents/caregivers/communities, Indigenous children in school and non-Indigenous teachers. In this chapter I will:

- identify sites of indirect discrimination related to care practices in schools;
- illuminate the centrality of whiteness in care practices based on the interviewees' experiences;
- show that ignorance inhibits equality of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices by AEWs as revealed by their stories and
- highlight and discuss the key themes in relation to recognition that emerged from the interviews.

The five AEWs come from diverse situations and backgrounds. Sue is currently working as an AEW in a country school. She has an extensive working history as an AEW. She also has experience in administration as a Level four AEW. Harry has worked for over twenty years as an AEW and also works in a rural school. He combines Christian beliefs and Indigenous ethics of care practices whilst at school and is the local pastor of his Indigenous community. Lucy has worked in a range of school sites throughout South Australia but she is currently working in an urban boarding school for Indigenous students from remote communities. Lucy works in the boarding school as a house parent and in the school as an AEW. Matthew has worked as an AEW in metropolitan Adelaide for over five years and is currently training to be a teacher. He has been heavily involved in the Australian Education Union as an AEW. Alison worked as an AEW for many years and has since

completed a range of studies including a Bachelor of Aboriginal Studies and a Graduate Diploma in Education. She worked as a teacher and later became an academic. Her set of reflections emerged in the light of her study and work.

All of the interviewees highlighted fractures and discords that reveal the impact that whiteness has on AEWs' work in schools and the constant pressure of working in border zones. Border zones are the spaces between the centre and the margin. They are spaces in which those who are not privileged in the centre are forced to negotiate and relate to 'white' people who are 'colour blind' to their own privilege (Wilder 1999). Rosaldo argues that borderlands are 'not analytically empty transitional zones but...sites of creative cultural production' (1989, p. 208). Border zones and borderlands are metaphors for negotiated spaces between people. In the context of the work of AEWs the border zones include language, values, protocols and expectations of both the school and the community. AEWs must develop the ability to work between these spaces which at times conflict with one another.

Working in border zones for AEWs generates emotional responses such as feelings of non acceptance, of being uncomfortable, of unnecessary accountability, of the desire to be accepted and understood in an environment that grants only the privileged space to speak. Border zones are the spaces AEWs occupy in order to work towards achieving the needs of students, their parents/caregivers and community ideals, and the needs and values of schools and the broader community. These spaces are sites of tension for many Indigenous people as values, ideals and beliefs conflict where white race privilege ideologies dominate. AEWs' interviews revealed some Indigenous methodologies they employed to overcome this tension and work in border zones through a 'critical insight about how the dominant society thinks and is structured' (Harding 2004, p. 7).

AEWs are the familiar face for Indigenous students and they express behaviour that is of familiarity (Buckskin & Hignett 1994). They are also a role model for students (Gordon 2006, interview, 25 September). These ideas were also raised by the majority of the AEWs interviewed. Many of the AEWs are called 'auntie' or 'uncle' in the school by students. Being called an auntie or uncle signifies the Indigenous ethics of care practice based around the model of an extended family. The care

giving role as auntie and uncle in schools and the community was reflected in AEWs' 'fluid system' of caring (Graycar & Morgan 2002, p. 286).

AEWs' knowledge, like any group or individual, is 'socially situated' and this knowledge is informed by being Indigenous and 'knowing' the impact of racisms in Australia (Harding 2004, p. 7). The 'view from below' (Davies & Seuffert 2000, p. 273) is a phrase that implies marginality that is not 'objective'/ 'traditional' knowledge, but instead an experiential knowledge that is 'culturally mapped' (Davies & Seuffert 2000, p. 281). This cultural mapping was expressed in diverse ways by AEWs in the interviews. However, the majority of the AEWs argued that despite a developed capacity to work in border zones between community and school expectations, values and protocols, their efforts were marginalised when non-Indigenous teachers and principals were ignorant of Indigenous ethics of care practices and protocols.

The following interviews raise the difficulties of the emotional frontier of dealing with non-Indigenous teachers' expectations on one hand, and community expectations in regard to following Indigenous protocols on the other. The students also expect AEWs to be present and consequently AEWs are carrying out emotional labour in three different codes: one for the Indigenous adult/family/carer community, one for the Indigenous students and one for the non-Indigenous staff who often expect emotional labour to be conducted in the paradigm of the white ethics of care model that is embedded in the school. The following transcripts by AEWs represent 1) Indigenous ethics of care practices in relation to emotional labour, and 2) indirect discrimination in schools as a result of non-Indigenous' teachers absence of recognition of AEWs' caring roles in schools.

Sue

Sue has been an AEW for 22 years in the South East of South Australia. She was originally called an Aboriginal Teaching Assistant before being renamed an AEW in 1981. She began her career as an Aboriginal Teaching Assistant on canteen and library duty. She obtained her AEW classification Level 4 after studying and

working for many years. Since then she has conducted extensive Training and Development at school sites and is consequently a highly qualified AEW.

Sue sees her role as a surrogate mother. 'I feel the AEW's role is like a mother to all of these kids and the kids see you as that' (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February). The term mother, in Sue's case, was used only once and throughout the rest of the interview she used the term auntie in response to her position as a member of an extended family. The interchange of mother and auntie is not seamless; however, the Indigenous role of auntie is closer to that of mother than would usually be in the case in a white middle class family. Of course, this is not always the case, but many nuclear families rely primarily on the mother as the key caregiver, who performs this role largely alone. This issue is discussed in detail in Chapter Seven. Whether aunt or mother, Sue's priority throughout her career has been to 'be there' and 'care for' Indigenous students and this is represented throughout the interview.

The maternal feminists (Manne 2005; Reiger 2001, 2002; Rossi 1977) argue that current research in child-care raises cause for alarm as the loss of an 'attachment figure', often perceived as the mother figure, leads to depression and anxiety (Bowlby 1981, 1988; Manne 2005). AEWs operate as an 'attachment figure' for Indigenous students. As Sue indicates throughout her interview, most Indigenous students see AEWs as a person who cares. It is through spending time with students and their families that attachment develops and feelings of belonging and care are created in the context of the AEW. According to Sue:

AEWs can make a huge difference for an Aboriginal child in school. They are that link that has to happen and they are the link for kids as well. They show that somebody cares. Because any kid will say, 'Oh, my teacher doesn't care', but with an Aboriginal person in the school — and they talk to that person; they know that person cares—they know that person is going to be there for them and that is really important for any kid (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February).

As discussed in Chapter Seven, Noddings argues that reciprocity is a necessary vehicle for the student/teacher relationship in a classroom context (1984, pp. 15-20,

33-34). Rolón-Dow (2005) takes this point further and supports Wilder's (1999, p. 356) claim that culturally sensitive classrooms are necessary in order to generate reciprocity between teachers and students. Sue's quote highlights a lack of reciprocity between Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous teachers, which is routinely bridged by her work as an AEW. This is only possible because she is part of the community and a member of the extended family network. Sue elaborates this point regarding Indigenous student/AEW reciprocity:

...[B]eing an Aboriginal person they make that connection really quickly. I have been out of the school for nearly 2 years, I had been here 3 years prior to that as an AEW and took on another position for 20 months and have come back into it and I feel like I have never been away —They say, ' Oh, —auntie Sue is back', and 'Oh she is here'. They will come up to you. It is that instant connection because it is an Aboriginal face that they connect to. My honest belief is that if you didn't have AEWs in schools -somebody that the Aboriginal kids can have a connection to, because they have that connection with each other, and they have that support from one another, but having an adult at school that is a familiar face to them, that they know and feel comfortable with is enormous with their learning to feel safe, secure and happy...One of the biggest things is having a relationship with each individual child so that they know who you are and where they come from and that you are there for them. That is why I am here. I always say to the kids, 'I am here for you, that is why I am employed at the school - I am here to support you with your learning'. And I also let them know that I am here to support your whole family -so mum and dad have someone to have and talk to and things when they are having difficulties. Or whenever they just want to have a chat about anything. So one of the things I feel, one of the biggest roles of AEWs is that connection into the community that non-Aboriginal people don't have (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February).

Students recognise 'auntie Sue' as an auntie within an Indigenous ethics of care framework. According to Dr Beth Gordon, aunties are like mothers who play a

pedagogical role in a child's life. Aunties and uncles share parental obligations because raising children is a shared responsibility (Gordon, 2006, interview, 25 September).

AEWs' often unacknowledged role as aunties or uncles in school, pre-school, child-care and Kindergarten extends to a bridge between the school and the community. AEWs are the mediators between Indigenous parents, Indigenous communities and the school as an institution. Sue is a bridge for the adults in the community as many of the parents/carers, aunties, uncles and grandparents continue to identify the school as a threatening and unsafe place as a result of past experiences of racism. Sue states:

It is so important that you are there for the kids and the families. I think people who aren't in a school setting really honestly don't understand that at all. I went out like I said for 22 months [as a level 4 AEW administrator] and it hit me like a ton of bricks. Wow! This is how it happens, this is the grass roots. This is where the kids are learning. This is where you shape their future and for an AEW to be part of that is just fantastic. We are constantly battling to have parent participation in the schools; it has been a constant battle since I started in the education system. You are constantly working on it; you are always trying to find new ways to do things different so that Aboriginal parents can become a part of their children's learning. The next best thing is to have an AEW in the school for Aboriginal children because they may have mum and dad's support but you ask any Aboriginal parent they want the best for their kid. They want the best education there is, but if they put their own personal reasons and their own personal fears and aren't able to be part of their child's learning well then the next best thing is the connection they have with the AEW in the school. And they know that that AEW is looking after their kids, doing what is best for their kids. And supporting their kids and working with the teachers to support their children. So they see you; you are doing their job in the school (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February).

Their job in the school involves layers of emotional labour conducted to create the best environment for the students. This emotional labour occurs in many ways depending on the AEW, as well as on other factors. Included among these is the number of students there are to look after and how well resourced the AEW is able to support the families and students. Various levels of communication occur between the parents and AEW and the time spent relationship building represents an expression of care. Sites of discrimination occurred when non-Indigenous teachers left all the emotional work, behaviour management and problem solving with Sue as the AEW. AEWs act as the conduit for non-Indigenous teachers' communication with families. However, complexities arise when there is lack of clarity regarding the role of AEW. As Sue explains:

You get teachers come up to you and ask you to wash this child or could you take them home or make contact with mum. I'll stop and say, 'that is not in my role', or I would question them, 'have you made contact with the care-giver?' 'Have you tried to?' and I will say, 'I think it is best if you try to first and if you want my involvement I will help'. Some teachers think that because it is an Aboriginal child it needs to be an Aboriginal person dealing with that. No, I don't operate like that. AEWs are actually being told more and more that that is not their role. It is actually the classroom teacher's responsibility for those twenty odd kids in their classroom and she needs to treat that Aboriginal child exactly the same as any other of the kids and go through the same processes. So if she has an issue for the non-Aboriginal child that she needs to talk to their parents she will ring them. So if the same thing happens for the Aboriginal child and there is an issue she needs to talk to the parents about, then she needs to ring their parents and not come to the AEW. In those instances I will always say, have you made contact, here is the number, I will always put it back on the classroom teacher. Unless it is a crisis I will not take on the classroom teacher's responsibility. Well that's their role and that's what they get paid to do. I get paid to do my role. But I always say I am quite happy to support you. So once you have

spoken to mum or dad they come to me and tell me what the outcome is and I will support you but it is their responsibility (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February).

There is often an expectation by non-Indigenous teachers that AEWs will address all of the issues and concerns that relate to Indigenous students. This tendency demonstrates a lack of recognition of AEWs' role. Ignorance of AEWs' role diminishes their value and status in the school. Moreover, as a result of this, the AEWs' power and authority in the school and community is reduced. Sue responds to this by arguing for the same treatment of Indigenous students as non-Indigenous students (in general) by allocating the responsibility for the student back to the teacher. Yet, she also maintains that the lines of communication must remain open between her and the teacher. She argues that she needs to be consulted throughout the process, because it can place her and her students in an awkward position, particularly hers in relation to her roles and responsibility to Indigenous families. Sue says:

A lot of teachers will say I rang such and such mum the other day and we had a chat and they will tell me we had a chat about an Aboriginal child in their class and say I have already talked about it. One of the things I stress to teachers is that they must inform me about the contact of the parent of the Aboriginal child and please let me know because if it comes back I need to know - because I don't want the parents coming in here and saying, 'Didn't you know?' Well I didn't know that. They say, 'What are you doing?' Parents will say that...That information flow has to be open so we can all do our jobs. Like I said we are there to support the kids. It is the role of the AEW and the teacher and the AEWs and the leaders in the school all working together and communicating effectively to support those Aboriginal kids in the school and if those lines of communication are broken they don't get the support they need (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February).

Like all relationships, relationships in the school context work best when the lines of communication are open. These lines of communication break down and truancy rates escalate when Indigenous students' needs are not met. On the one hand, it is an abuse of Sue's role in so far as she is expected to solve all of the Indigenous student issues, yet, at the same time, she has to be aware of, and informed of, any decisions that relate to Indigenous students so that the families know she is 'doing their job in the school' (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February). On the other hand, her colleagues may expect a lot of Sue because of her capacity to solve issues. This does not excuse overusing Sue in ways that go beyond her position as an AEW. This is the complexity of working in border zones, and it is particularly exacerbated when the minimum student:AEW ratio is 20:1.

Issues are further complicated when non-Indigenous leaders and teachers expect Sue to negotiate with the community regarding student and parent participation, but in so doing she has to traverse Indigenous community politics. The main sites of discrimination for her at school relate to the ignorance surrounding the difficulties and challenges she faces in undertaking her position in the Indigenous community, as Sue points out:

An AEW's role is very complex because your role is to be a liaison person between home and school and to gain confidence of Aboriginal parents within your school community, to be able to come in and meet with teachers and meet with principals and discuss their child's education and so you are that link. So it is a very complex role and one of the things I said was to these two people [non-Indigenous leader and non-Indigenous teacher] was that I live in this community. Most AEWs live in the community that they are working in and I have been a part of this community for a long time so therefore one of the things I find that gets very difficult some times is that you are related to a lot of people in the town and one of the things that I find difficult at times is that they- when you have to deal with your own immediate family or very close family or, - because you then have to, I believe, step back and allow somebody else in the school and take that role on- because I have had to work with my sister's children and I am too

emotionally attached. And I have said to schools then and some schools find it hard that I am not prepared to work with this family because I am too emotionally attached. And I need to step out and someone else needs to take control and do this. So I suppose in that sense that would be the only thing I would not want to do as an AEW.

And also within your Aboriginal community you have politics, you have families that don't get along with other families and for some AEWs it may be your family, your mum and dad, your auntie, uncle or cousin who doesn't get along with that family, so it is hard for you to make that connection with that family. I would still support the child at school but I won't go out and do a home visit to that family. That's where you really need the support of the school and the support of the staff and talk to them directly and say this is the reason. You don't have to give them all of the information but –[saying] 'I am not comfortable with this family for personal reasons, so therefore you need to make the connection with home'. That is the responsibility – to make the connection with any parent. If they need the support then they need to get the support from the counsellor or principal (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February).

AEWs act as mediators between schools and communities but this role is never neutral. Sue draws attention to the ignorance of non-Indigenous teachers and leaders regarding Indigenous communities. This ignorance is due to culturalist assumptions (McConaghy 2000) where AEWs are defined by their culture alone. The 'commonsense assumption' in Sue's context is that she, as an Indigenous woman who is a member of the community, is able to solve Indigenous problems. The lack of critical analysis of this position comes from making generalisations. Firstly, as a woman, her role is seen to be of someone who cares and nurtures. Secondly, Sue is Indigenous and is perceived to be the person who should automatically deal with all Indigenous students' needs. Thirdly, as an AEW her role lacks the requisite power to negotiate issues as they arise, or to make 'rulings' on the outcome.

On the other hand, Sue highlights the complexities of ethics of care that occur in all caring paradigms, as care is not neutral. A second complexity that Sue raises is the tension between her role as an AEW who works for the school, and her own role as a member of a large extended family. She is required to work in the border zones of the values, codes and behavioural expectations of the school, as well as of the community, but feels she is not supported when they conflict. Finally, Sue reveals that all relationships are complex and at times impossible to fulfil satisfactorily in her community, as is the case in any community.

AEWs become exploited workers when non-Indigenous teachers and leaders perceive all issues that relate to Indigenous students to be cultural in origin and think that in this case, Sue should solve them. Sue argues that, 'I am not a trained counsellor' and that children sometimes need 'a child psychologist, somebody who is trained' (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February). Sue is seen as someone who will fix Indigenous students, thereby exploiting her as a labourer, rather than bringing in professional help. Whilst Sue has deep concern for the children she works with, she also recognises that her capacity as an AEW does not extend to that of psychologist. This common sense of exploitation was raised by Buckskin and Hignett in the following:

AIEWs [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker] can be excused for a level of scepticism or even cynicism about how much they are exploited. Some have said that they think they are 'just a cheap way to solve a problem.'

The education of Aboriginal students is a major concern within areas of the education sector as they attend less, are retained less and achieve less than any other group within the community. As a result State or Territory education systems are under pressure from Aboriginal communities and from others to improve the situation.

AIEWs can be seen to be an easy way of placating Aboriginal adults and of appearing to be doing something without pouring huge amounts of money into the process (1994, p. 80).

This 'cheap' way of addressing Indigenous education is emotionally taxing on AEWs. They are seen as care providers that can be controlled by the normative paradigms of caring, and the school views their role as a surrogate for the care undertaken by many Indigenous parents and caregivers, which is not legitimated and seen as deficit.

Working beyond this negation, AEWs continually choose in their work to develop strong relationships among Indigenous students, the parents and the school and ensure students' safety and security. As Sue states:

... No one can replace their role. No counsellor, no principal, no AERT [Aboriginal Education Resource Teacher] or anybody like that. The Aboriginal person in that school who is making that connection with the Aboriginal kids is critical. It is the link that has to happen (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February).

Yet, AEWs continue to suffer indirect discrimination because of ignorance that is maintained through culturalist assumptions, homogenizing them in the eyes of their colleagues. This leads to a lack of distinction among the strengths and weaknesses of their performances in the subtleties of their role. This form of homogenising operates through a binary, where AEWs as team teachers play a subordinate role in the classroom and in the school to non-Indigenous teachers. This role is marginalized through an absence of acknowledgement of AEWs' presence which maintains their lowered status. This functions through privileging teachers' centralized status in schools and AEWs' position remains invisible. Sue poignantly describes this position based on her own experience:

...one of the things that I find difficult is that staff members in your sites, not just in this school, they never really understand what your role is, and over the last 20 years that hasn't changed at all. We still have teachers saying, 'What is it that you do?' We have done T & D [Training and Development] about roles on AEWs or around the Ab.ed. [Aboriginal Education] teams within schools and in particular what the roles of AEWs are. And we have been very clear about what

their roles are and the T & D. And even when you are working one to one with someone they still say, 'Can you come and do this?' and I will actually say, 'No that is not part of my role. If you need that to happen you may need to speak to the classroom teacher or the school counsellor or the school principal within the school'. So I think over the last 20 years that hasn't changed.

You still feel like you are hitting your head against a brick wall saying, 'Don't you know what we do in a school, don't you know what we are employed to do...'. It is about teachers' value-whether you are valued in the school. This is what I think. If the teachers value the work you do and you are a part of the staff and you are a part of the school and inclusive within the school, then they take the time to find out what it is you do and they want to know what you do and they will ask you individually, so they will take an interest. If you aren't valued then they basically don't want to know and that is what they say all the time, 'What do they do? They are never here'. You will hear those negative comments coming out, but if you are a valued member of the staff they will take the time to find out (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February).

Sue discusses the different ways in which AEWs are treated by non-Indigenous staff. She reveals how the confusion, misconceptions or ignorance about the role of the AEW have not changed dramatically over the last twenty years. Those teachers who show a genuine interest in AEWs generally understand and respect their role. Ironically, such goodwill is one of the greatest 'visible acts of hindrance' (Skinner 2002, p. 18) for AEWs because their position is subject to goodwill and as Skinner states, 'dependence on the goodwill of others serves in itself to restrict our options and thereby limits our liberty' (2002, p. 18).

As long as white ethics of care remains unchallenged, AEWs are subject to the goodwill of the staff and teachers at school. However, greater recognition by non-Indigenous teachers of AEWs' emotional labour in an Indigenous ethics of care framework can provide the vehicle towards greater substantive equality for AEWs in

schools. This is dealt with further in Chapter Nine. The following interview by Harry reveals more a descriptor standpoint regarding the issues raised by Sue.

Harry

Harry has been an AEW for twenty-eight years and is a Ngarrindjeri man living in South Australia's Riverland. Harry's parents met and married in the mission where he grew up. He cannot speak his language fluently. As he states, 'My mother and father were not allowed to speak our language, and our language died out with them' (Harry, 2001, interview, 6 May). However, as an AEW Harry teaches students the basics of his language, as well as taking them to the mission site and other significant areas of his childhood throughout the Riverland. Harry's position reveals the impacts of policies and generational disadvantage faced by Indigenous people. Despite this, Harry maintains Indigenous ethics of care practices that are represented through his involvement with the community and school. Like Sue, Harry's ethics of care practices do not relate to gender but instead to being Indigenous and present in his community. His work is a long-term commitment to students, even after they have left school. He sees his students as individuals needing to be recognised and he believes that:

Kids are like a rare fruit and each one you know has something special about them and if you know and work out how they go and not go and give them the right options that will help them and make them feel good-like polishing a lantern. Once you polish a lantern and put a wick in and a bit of fuel they light up. It burns, it shines (Harry, 2001, interview, 6 May).

Harry is also a minister and therefore he often refers to the values inherent within his Christian beliefs. He couches these within the context of his connection to country and his community. His Aboriginal theological teachings are embedded within his ethics of care approach to students and central to this is a notion of caring for others within the context of maintaining and keeping his Indigenous identity strong (*Aboriginal Christianity* n. d.). Harry incorporates his Aboriginal theology and connection to country in his school/community educational play, *Landed. The Play*,

which was performed at the 2006 Adelaide Fringe. In this he explains the impact European development has had on his 'culture, lifestyle and connection to land' (*Landed. The Play* n. d.).

The basic moral values of Christianity are fairly generic in relation to the notion of care, but how care is enacted varies according to individuals. Harry's key ethics of care practice is to develop and maintain respect with students. As an elder of his community he demonstrates his level of commitment to his students through his presence and the way in which he develops relationships. He does this by:

Being there for the kids. Helping them to achieve even the smallest thing. Even sharpening their pencils. I find that rewarding. Even tying their shoelaces for them. Showing them the right numbers, etcetera. You see their faces light up when they do their work (Harry, 2001, interview, 6 May).

Sharpening pencils has been defined by other AEWs, lecturers and superintendents as sundry work, yet for Harry, in this particular context, he is meeting the needs of the students. These are junior primary students that need a particular form of care that involves time. Harry maintains that successful student/AEW relationships are defined by recognition of the value of each student, as he says:

[B]eing Aboriginal in the school helps you, and with the kids and I they feel a connection with the spirit and they seem to see that connection. We are all walking on soft grass. On the most beautiful parts. When they don't get the same connection, kids get restless and don't trust anyone. You can see it (Harry, 2001, interview, 6 May).

Harry's ethics of care is articulated through the connectedness he feels with the students, which is built on trust and is reciprocated by the students. This connectedness is fuelled by his spiritual belief as outlined in the following:

The spirit is all around us, there are good spirits and bad spirits all around us. If you are doing good, the good spirits help you achieve

the right thing to do. They show you what is right. Well, it does for me (Harry, 2001, interview, 6 May).

A spiritual belief system sometimes informs people's relationships as well as personal levels of accountability in terms of perceived rights and wrongs. Such a spiritual position informs choices on how to conduct relationships. In this context, Harry maintains relationships with students throughout their life as a form of emotional labour between himself and his students. He believes students need AEWs, as AEWs offer them the opportunities and confidence to realise their full selves. According to Harry:

AEWs need to be put where there are Aboriginal children even if there are only a couple of them. They are valued for those two, it would give them that little step for victory and throughout their life they will cherish that till the day they become an adult. Now, every now and then the kids say that has gone. I say they still could pick up on things, go back to TAFE or whatever, and do it again. I still give them good advice. It is just having that time at school; if you give them the right when they are young it goes on. It is just like learning anything. To give them that confidence to build on. Once they start building on it they just motor along. Like a car. Put fuel in it – they will motor along (Harry, 2001, interview, 6 May).

Harry states above that 'every now and then the kids say that has gone'. He later confirmed that he meant that the teenagers who have left school regret not completing school. This reveals Harry's continuation of emotional labour with former students and the way he continues to encourage them to find other avenues, such as, 'go back to TAFE' to complete their education. His ethics of care involves a long-term commitment where emotional labour is maintained over time. However, another form of emotional labour that Harry shows is his sensitivity towards parents and caregivers about their children. He is also realistic about what needs to be addressed to produce outcomes at school. Harry claims that:

Most parents don't like getting negative feedback about their kids. So you've got to mix up the positive and negative. And if it is all negative, parents seem to get upset. Need to keep it balanced. Secret of good business (Harry, 2001, interview, 6 May).

'Good business' also means understanding the students, yet this can be difficult as many AEWs are stretched between two schools. Harry works between two schools and he feels that he is not able to be a consistent figure at either school. He states that in relation to DECS he is just a 'dot, comma, slash' (Harry, 2001, interview, 6 May), particularly in relation to the expectation that he could achieve necessary outcomes and support for students across two schools. Sue also raised her feeling of being exploited in her role as an AEW. Whilst Sue's criticism refers to the need to employ professional help for certain issues, she does however share Harry's discontent regarding the lack of recognition of work involved in emotional labour. Harry feels that in order to win the trust of students, AEWs need to be present with students in schools and criticises DECS for the 'band-aid' approach towards AEWs, thus:

I would like to see that where there are Aboriginal children it doesn't matter about numbers, there should be a decent AEW working...Now they have a band-aid to cope and fill in the dips and support Aboriginal kids like a bandage where they get doctors and nurses in medicine- but not so - kids are suffering. Until they put an AEW and keep them - if they did it right it would work really well for the kids. They've just got bandages, six months here and six months there. Even a year is not that much for those kids. First you've got to win their trust and then they test you out and if you are genuine about them they know and if not they play up (Harry, 2001, interview, 6 May).

Harry is heavily involved in the community and he continues to support students despite particular feelings of discrimination in relation to the lack of recognition for AEWs' role by DECS. It could also be assumed that his position is taken for granted on many levels because of the institutional structure of the education system. This

further demonstrates that the role of AEWs, particularly when they are more heavily involved in emotional labour than pedagogical work, is located outside of necessary or professional work (Begley 2005). It is therefore outside of the regimes of educational discourse as a valued and legitimate form of pedagogy. However, based on the principles inherent in white ethics of care, student learning outcomes are achieved through reciprocity and emotional labour conducted by teachers (Noddings 1984, pp. 15-20, 33-34). Yet, Harry's connectedness with students and emotional labour is not legitimated in schools because the social organisation of the school sees Harry's activities of daily care as value-added (Campbell & Gregor 2004, pp. 28-29). Matthew, in the following interview argues for greater recognition of his role in schools, particularly in relation to classroom support.

Matthew

In order to generate successful student learning outcomes many AEWs argue they need to work closely with Indigenous students in classroom support. Matthew, who has worked as an AEW for five years, voices this idea:

Kids need support or they react. They feel like they don't have any support and they feel ashamed to go anywhere else. That's why they start to drop off in certain areas... Sitting down and helping them, just having a chat with them, they like that. At least they know someone is there they can talk to and when they get into trouble, they've got someone they can go to...Once they know they've got that support they enjoy school more. They want to come to school. They want to learn and they want to make something of themselves. A sense of personal achievement (Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April).

Matthew worked as an AEW in an Adelaide school that educates Indigenous students from the APY lands. Those students tend to speak English as their second or third language, and thus their needs and life experiences differ from Indigenous students who live in rural and metropolitan areas. However, it is necessary to be mindful of Peter Gale's (1996, p. 216) comments regarding constructions of identity through

representations of urban/rural distinctions that lead to essentialised educational practices. These constructions have routinely ignored site specific differences and instead homogenised differences. Matthew highlights this distinction when he argues for the support and care needed by AEWs for Indigenous students from the APY Lands who come to Adelaide. As Matthew points out:

...[O]ur students in particular, who are from a different environment-their learning environment is a totally different learning environment altogether. Like the opposites on a spectrum. They really rely on people like myself to help them as much as I can, so I definitely feel appreciated when it comes to needing my help in the work. Also with the relationships as well, it is important to have good relationships with the kids. That is valued as well. Without that relationship it makes it hard for me to help them as well. You are not going to ask someone to help you if you don't like them. You have to be a likable person as well (Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April).

Matthew does not refer to himself throughout the interview as an uncle, yet he shares similar views regarding the intensity and necessity of building positive relationships with the students he works with. He also argues that a strong relationship is one of the most important aspects in relation to his work in this particular school. He explains:

I am here fundamentally for the kids so I am in the class room - and helping the kids if they struggle and helping those that are outside the classroom with other activities, not necessarily curriculum based. It could be they want to go to a meeting, [or] like sports, and they feel like they need that extra support and I try and offer that. As well as forming some sort of relationship beyond a teacher figure, like a friend. And I try to encourage that and I find that successful (Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April).

Matthew's role has developed throughout his working career at this particular school. He has become a union representative for AEWs. He also demonstrates his desire to play a greater pedagogical role in the classroom:

There have been times particularly in health lessons where I have been working with a group of boys. I worked with a teacher on sexual health and, as well as general health. I got the opportunity there to team-teach and take a leadership role and deliver lesson plans and actually drawing up my own plans, and last year we did some tobacco education with some older boys and again we got that opportunity, and generally I am the support person. I come into the class and I'm working with kids that need that extra help but that is something I would like to see change, because you fall out of the pattern after a while. As a person who doesn't have teaching experience it can be challenging to be up in front of a classroom and talking about a subject and delivering a lesson, giving activities, and so it is good to keep doing that even in some minimal context. So you don't feel so nervous when you do it again (Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April).

In this context, Matthew was teaching in the Indigenous section of the school. He does however articulate problems that he encounters when he enters the mainstream section of the school. Matthew's feelings of being dominated by non-Indigenous staff in the mainstream section of the school stem from a lack of recognition of his curriculum support role as an AEW. Matthew is required to work in classrooms within a team-teaching role but he explains the awkwardness of his role when he introduces himself to the teacher:

... [T]hey look at me strange and I say, 'I am an AEW - it's like I have to help these kids'. I have to really justify my role. In a way I would like to think everyone would know what our role is...
Sometimes I feel quite dominated by the teaching staff. People have their job to do and they want to do the best job possible-and it is not always inclusive of you. It is not always easy to convey that message to people, like - I think that's why I take on other roles as well, not

only just to challenge myself but also to give myself something to be in charge, or something to be a leader of. I don't want to be seen as a servant, or the assistant, or the educational slave, the disposable staff member. I want to be valued as an AEW for the uniqueness of my role. And I don't think that is always the case. I can be dominated quite harshly sometimes by some teaching staff and I think it has to do with not totally understanding our roles. I think there needs to be something there –right? If you are having an AEW there, you have to allow for some sort of partnership and I don't think that happens. You sort of get stuck into a school and you are expected to know your role, which you do, but then you sort of have to be a chameleon and adapt to different classrooms and different rules. It is not always good. One classroom has a lot of expectations and then you have to adapt to another lot of expectations in another classroom. There is no freedom in that, it is quite daunting...So when you go into a classroom with a different teacher you can be unsure - say this works that day and something different is happening the next (Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April).

Matthew argues for clarity and recognition as the difficulties of explaining one's role is disempowering and difficult to address as the hierarchy of the school and the ethics of care practices often remain uncritically examined. Moreover, as Sue demonstrated in the first section, even when there are clear induction procedures and Training and Development around the role of AEWs, many non-Indigenous teachers continue to rely on AEWs as an 'educational slave' or 'disposable staff member' (Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April). Matthew argues about the difficulty of this frontier as it is or can be emotionally humiliating when in fact, he has been employed to team-teach with teachers:

Then, 'what is my role now?' You sort of stand in the corner and wave my arms around. I think it needs to be really defined when you start in a work place -what exactly are the needs of the AEW in the workplace. 'What do you need from me?' And let everyone know that, and this is my role, and this is what I do, and anything above and

beyond that is - we will negotiate - but this is the fundamentals
(Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April).

Matthew highlights the link between being valued as a staff member and the misconceptions about the role of AEWs. He also raises the issue of team-teaching and the difficulties faced when entering a new classroom as the power structures are already presumed regarding the status of AEWs and teachers. As he states:

I guess - it makes me feel a bit weird sometime because it is not knowing what an AEW is - there is always a turnover of staff and they might not know what an AEW is or they have seen you around but they don't know what the hell you do - the first 30 seconds are awkward (Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April).

The previous superintendent of Anangu Education Services argues that: 'if you can get the relationship between the teacher and the AEW working then you will always have a great class' (Johnson, 2005, interview, 7 September). Arguably, this depends on the level of the relationship and the abilities of the AEW and teacher. The lecturer of AnTep (Anangu Teacher Education Program) argues, 'in terms of team-teaching with AEWs, you still have AEWs who have been working in the school for 20 years and who are still sitting in the classroom sharpening pencils and involved in behaviour management' (Rodney, 2006, interview, 4 April). The issues concerned with pre-ordained status structures in schools immediately place AEWs low on the ranks and Matthew argues this subjugated position is both frustrating and limiting as it breaks people's confidence to achieve necessary educational and social equality. As he states:

People don't know what the hell you are doing. They are either going to ignore you or they are going to invent something for you. I'm the sort of person who doesn't like to be told what to do necessarily. I think a lot of people are like that in the sense that they don't like to be dominated. I was taught when I was going to TAFE that you are not the photocopy man, you are not the coffee man, not the cleaner, or - you are the educator and you need to be quite assertive when you are

articulating that with people that you work with. When I first started I fell into that trap and I think people, - they think, sure I will do that for you since I am not doing anything better. But you are sort of feeling out your role especially when you first start. Then you start to then say, 'Hey, this is what I was taught' and I should start standing up and say - so I started saying, 'Hey I'm not going to do that', expressing how I felt and taking more of a firm stance and belief in my role (Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April).

Matthew developed a critical insight into his position as a result of his role in the Australian Education Union. He began to identify levels of discrimination within the workplace in the mainstream section of the school. He also recognised that his role as an AEW could be expanded, particularly in relation to being a role model for Indigenous students.

I would like to have some leadership role in the classroom and I think it would help my relationship with the kids. In the sense that they see me not just as the AEW, but also they see me as a strong educator who is able to be next to them but also the person who is up the front teaching them. I think that would be the major thing for me (Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April).

Matthew articulates the broader potential of AEWs and the limitations placed on them by ignorance and mis-conceptions. He also reveals the desire to be a leader and a teacher. At the same time he articulates the need to be present and acting in a way that students can look up to and honour. Whilst this is not necessarily an expression of ethics of care, from Matthew's perspective he aligns success with modelling leadership skills for Indigenous students, rather than perpetuating a subjugated role in the case of many AEWs who continue to be dominated by non-Indigenous staff. Moreover, he recognises and attempts to overturn the cultural stereotypes that continue to inhibit Indigenous student learning outcomes. He argues that:

Cultural education is really important in schools whether you have a high number of a particular minority or not. I am not just talking

about Aboriginal people, I'm talking about any race of people. I think it is important to have that education and celebration of cultural events. It brings an awareness of people and it breaks down the mystique behind different cultures and brings about an acceptance and I know in particular with the school I work with now, the Aboriginal culture is not the thing, as in, not many people know about it-they know the norms and the misconceptions but they don't know the reality. They know what they have seen on the TV and read in the paper, but it's not the most reliable source of information. Cultural education is extremely important particularly for people who work with Aboriginal people.

I am in charge of Aboriginal Cultural Week because I choose to be. And that is a form of celebrating Aboriginal cultures. But it can't be just that - there needs to be some sort of T & D [Training and Development] where people are at least aware. There are people who are racist and there are people who would find it easy not to have to deal with their students and a lot of them think those particular teachers can abuse their situation in getting rid of students in their class just because they don't like them. They don't want to understand the problem they just want to erase it, so I think that is a hard thing to deal with. I have faith in the human spirit and I would like to think they would take the time to understand that, to make the learning environment a better place (Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April).

Matthew's work embodies an ethics of care that incorporates a leadership model for students and a political agenda regarding re-educating non-Indigenous teachers about the complexities of cultural issues. This lack of recognition of cultural and social issues continues to not only disadvantage the knowledge and insight AEWs offer, but also acts as an inhibiting factor for Indigenous students.

Lucy also works in the school where Matthew works and expressed similar feelings associated with a lack of recognition of her work in the mainstream section of the

school. However, she also feels that at times, certain non-Indigenous staff members did recognise her role through an understanding and integrated approach to her classroom support. Nevertheless, like the majority of the AEWs interviewed, there was a general theme that Indigenous ethics of care practices were not recognised in the hierarchy of schools.

Lucy

Lucy has been an AEW for sixteen years and she has worked in a range of schools across the state. She is currently working with students from remote Indigenous communities in an urban school. The students stay in a boarding house during term time and return to their communities during the holidays. She believes that her role is vital as she acts as an auntie (Lucy, 2002, interview, 1 June) for the students. She not only works at the school, but also at the boarding house as a support person where the students live. Lucy feels she is responsible for students all of the time, as she states:

That responsibility never leaves you even though you are not on duty if you see a kid out on the street and they need your help. They often come up and ask for help: 'I don't have a dollar, or can you find mum, or so and so is in trouble.' You actually do and find yourself going over and trying to help them. Their parents rely on your support outside of school (Lucy, 2002, interview, 1 June).

Lucy is seen as auntie in the same context as Sue and Harry. She is deeply involved in the community, the school and the students in the boarding house in which she works. She does however argue that she has had difficulty in the past conducting home visits. That is similar to Sue's experience. Moreover, Lucy argues against non-Indigenous teachers' ignorance of AEWs' roles and highlights the layers of discrimination as a result of this ignorance:

There are a few teachers that are ignorant and that is because they don't know the kids and they don't know the program. But with steps

we are changing that. We've got morning tea and we're inviting them over and our kids, students, they quickly learn because we push issues all the time. In mainstream education I think they are ignorant because they want to be ignorant so they are like that. If you're not an AERT, or a teacher, or if you're not an AEW, or you are not involved with that person every day, they don't really care what you do. They have their attitudes, which are really awful, which can make school life really difficult. There is no need to do it because if they took the time to plan with these people [AEWs] they could benefit and not only them but also other students in the class, because sometimes when you go into the classroom you are not always with that child. You help that child understand something in maths and that child will happily do something else. Sometimes 20 or 30 minutes when you are just sitting there saying yep, yep. You are saying this for nothing when you can go off and help other students so you know - so you will support happily, as the group is happy so you are free to go and support another child. It would work both ways. A lot of people are too ignorant...I think that is why we have a lot of problems because the role is not clear - a lot of teachers will ask what is your role? And what is your title? Where do you fit in? No one knows what your title is. You're not a teacher and you are not this or that... Because you are one person in the school with so many teachers and other staff and it is really hard to fight sometimes (Lucy, 2002, interview, 1 June).

The ignorance regarding the roles of AEWs by non-Indigenous staff is perpetuated because AEWs are a minority within an institutional framework. Lucy has chosen to 'be there' at the school and the community level for the students, yet her labour is underutilised in classroom support. She argues however, that her services could be capitalised on further if there was a deeper understanding of her role and capacity as an AEW. The role of AEWs in the classroom as support people for Indigenous students is often sabotaged by AEWs' lack of confidence to challenge non-Indigenous teachers' classroom practice by suggesting and offering further services to other students as mentioned by Lucy. Moreover, non-Indigenous teachers' poor

understanding of how team-teaching with AEWs productively within a classroom environment further erodes the AEWs' authority and effectiveness.

The neo-colonial structures of the school system further maintain the servant/indentured labourer position. Lucy highlights this when she argues that the first thing she would change, 'Is that I'm not a gofer. Ha.Ha' (Lucy, 2002, interview, 1 June). Through an absence of recognition of Lucy's role in the mainstream section of the school, her work is positioned in an oppositional and meaningless space as, '...the absence of recognition is a strategy that facilitates making a group "the Other"' (hooks 1997, p. 339). As Lucy argues, many non-Indigenous teachers don't 'understand anything about AEWs, or how a school should work with an AEW' (Lucy, 2002, interview, 1 June). Yet, the relevance of her work is explained by Lucy in the following:

Once you've got a routine as an AEW, parents usually come to you and they rely on you to talk to the teachers and principals. And a lot of the time, I used to find myself in meetings, because when they had trust with you at school, they come to you for support and that help outside. When I was in Whyalla that used to happen a lot. I used to find myself at 10.00pm at night chasing students all over the place (Lucy, 2002, interview, 1 June).

Part of the ignorance of non-Indigenous teachers regarding the role of AEWs may be due to the invisibility of the emotional and physical labour conducted outside of school hours. All of the AEWs argued that they were 'there for the students'. The ethics of care practice of 'being there' for someone implies that the carer intends to watch, guide, listen, help, nurture and care for the whole well-being of that child. Moreover, there was a further hidden role where AEWs 'protect their kids' from racism in a form of emotional labour that builds children's resilience in regard to racial awareness (see *In the Marriage of B and R* 1995, 19 Fam L R, pp. 605, 601, 602). Those acts of emotional labour are present in the interviews and throughout the literature by AEWs. However, when engaging emotional labour, Lucy reveals that working outside of the school is a more relaxed site to conduct business. As she states:

School issues are the school issues. Then when you get home I leave this fence, it is a different feeling. People may come up to me for this or that help, but it is a totally different feeling from there. I am actually more relaxed and I say, I don't just go and do this and that like at school where you only have a certain time to do it. We can go and have a coffee, and make our own decisions. You've got the parents (Lucy, 2002, interview, 1 June).

The limitations of the school system are resisted by AEWs when they make decisions with parents/caregivers outside of the school. Home visits can work well in general. However, when AEWs are directed by teachers or leaders to make home visits to address truancy or poor behaviour by students, difficult situations arise. As Harry argues, the 'secret of good business' is to keep information to parents balanced, that is, don't just discuss poor behaviour or negative issues regarding the student (Harry, 2001, interview, 6 May). However, home visits are problematic for some parents and the position of AEWs can be compromised, as Lucy explains:

I believe that AEWs should not do home visits on their own... That is what happens a lot with AEWs. I don't do it personally, I refuse to do it unless the classroom teacher or someone comes with me. They are open for abuse. And most of the time it is your own family. Not only are you having a conflict through school with your own family, you have a personal conflict as well. And that can go on for years. Who wants to argue with her family (Lucy, 2002, interview, 1 June).

As Sue indicated, home visits are political for many AEWs, yet the issue of safety was only raised by female AEWs in the interviews for this thesis. All of the AEWs who were male supported home visits uncritically, implying that the issue of safety is gendered. AEWs often experience occupational violence and verbal abuse and these inhibiting factors are ignored or defined as cultural (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 52; Williams & Thorpe 2003, p. 86).

Tension emerges when AEWs are positioned as 'educational police' used to control 'difficult' Aboriginal students (Williams & Thorpe 2003, p. 87). Consequently AEWs have requested and highlighted the need for Training and Development in conflict resolution skills. As Lucy argues, she feels as if she is the behaviour management person, emotional and curriculum support person and medical officer. These are aspects of her job that she has learnt throughout her sixteen year career as an AEW without training or support. However, Williams & Thorpe's (2003) study observed that the misuse by non-Indigenous teachers and principals of AEWs' role in relation to behaviour management issues was an Occupational, Health and Safety hazard:

AEWs in this study referred to this issue of over-use for Aboriginal student behavioural control. This is similar to the conflict in roles experienced by Community Constables. The latter are there for purposes such as to prevent Aboriginal deaths in custody but are over-used to do patrols and control Aboriginal people. Some (non-Aboriginal) teachers could also try to make the AEWs completely responsible for student attendance. This enforced role as 'education police', rather than facilitators of greater cultural sensitivity and understanding put AEWs at risk of attracting hostility from Aboriginal parents. One AEW in a rural area recounted a recent incident where a fellow AEW quit his job because the Aboriginal community accused him of being part of 'bringing our children up as white fellas'. It was this kind of situation that intensified the AEWs' sense that they were the 'meat in the sandwich' between the two communities and illegitimately so, because it was not a main function to be agents of non-Aboriginal directed discipline. This AEW also regarded it as verbal abuse when a different tone was used by principals and teachers to ask them to do things that were outside their role (Williams & Thorpe 2003, p. 87).

There is unquestionable evidence that AEWs are a bridge between the community and the school. Yet, when the boundaries of care practices and protocols are denied recognition, AEWs risk being targeted by the school and the community. As has

already been explained, AEWs work in the border zones of school and community expectations and these border zones are fraught with tension. This tension is fuelled by dissonance among members of the family or extended family who expect to AEWs protect the students at school. Non-Indigenous teachers and leaders, on the other hand, regard the role of home visits by AEWs as a culturally neutral zone as it is visualised as 'Aboriginal business'. Yet, this only highlights the structural discrimination that Alison explores in the final interview.

Alison

Multiple levels of discrimination emerge from the interview by Alison, a Murri (Queensland) educator/ mother who moved to Adelaide with her family. She was first an AEW, then completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Aboriginal Studies and a teaching degree, is currently completing a Masters and is employed as an academic.

Alison's story draws attention to the layers of discrimination that occur as a result of systemic racism and teacher ignorance regarding Indigenous ethics of care practices and protocols. Alison worked as an AEW for ten years, she later became a teacher, and is currently now completing a Masters degree in education. Alison's perspective is enriched by all of these experiences and further study. Here, she reflects on her teacher-training work as a teacher and postgraduate researcher. She stated that when she worked as an AEW:

...I didn't teach. I would mainly take the kids. I would have to explain to the teachers and get the kids to talk to me and interpret in a way. Even though I didn't speak their language, I tried to interpret what the teacher wanted...and more or less try and get the kids to do the work (Alison, 2004, interview, 6 July).

Alison argues she was able to assist the students to come up with their own solutions and their own understanding in relation to curriculum issues. Alison's approach is grounded in a specific cultural context (Rolan-Dow 2005, p. 87) and her approach reflects Thompson's (1998, p. 527) view in so far as Alison is aware that her students

have experienced life, are not raised in racial or gender innocence but in fact come to class with prior knowledge that needs to be drawn out rather than suppressed:

When I was an AEW there was so much to teach. As an AEW I did a lot of work. I did explain. I took them out of the classroom and took them under a tree and they could do whatever they wanted to do to feel comfortable and they would tell stories and they would talk about science. I said: 'How do you tell your stories?' Here we are talking about the earth and forms and shapes and you have your own way of deciding how things work. I asked them what they thought. So I try and get them to understand that there is another way they could learn this stuff. Because I didn't have this experience as a teacher that was just me as a person and as an educator in a different way. I mean I do that with my kids when I read and talk to them. Or when I go out walking it was just the way I do things. When I look back as a teacher I know there are different ways of doing things. Not just with Indigenous kids, with any kid and I think with any child there are different ways to learn, not just one (Alison, 2004, interview, 6 July).

The pedagogical value of AEWs is often ignored because there is a perceived lack of education by non-Indigenous teachers. Conversely, Alison highlights that there is a lack of education by non-Indigenous teachers regarding AEWs' work, yet this remains unchallenged. This lack of knowledge is one of the key forms of indirect discrimination for AEWs. Alison explains:

It's funny because first of all I wanted to become a teacher because I didn't like the way they treated me as an AEW. So there were a few incidents when I worked as an AEW. So I started with the....program and I worked with kids that had been going through all sorts of stuff...Just the attitude and the crap...I am really aware of the body language and the racism and stuff. I try very hard not to say it is racist but it is so 'there' that you can't say that it is not. So coming from a secondary program where I had worked with kids who had their language and their own ways of doing things. There was a bit more

tolerance for these kids. Soon as I went into the mainstream at 'A' and 'B' Primary School [pseudonyms used], it was like that tolerance was not there. So I thought –are they saying that these aren't really Aboriginal people? I think at the time I was studying and doing my B.A. in Ab. [original] Studies. So I was starting to look at things and learn new things and look at that stuff about who is a true Aboriginal and who isn't. I started to see the shift in people's attitude from the girls who I worked with who knew – and had obligations. And the teachers accepted that. At secondary school – if someone had died they would have to go away for a long time and there would be sorry camp and all that sort of stuff. There was an understanding that there were all these teachers in secondary school who had heard about Indigenous peoples and their obligations and ceremony - it was accepted more by the 'Camber' mob [pseudonyms used].

When I went into the mainstream there was no acceptance of that. They would say that child goes from place to place – where is that kid –one minute he's over here- there was all that sort of stuff...I would have to explain that there had been a death in the family and they have to go home. He or she might not come back and there are things that they have to do. They came from Ceduna or Yalata. They also have obligations. Teachers would say things to me like, so and so is really tired today- I don't know what to do-I said that well maybe there is something going on at home. You know. You have all these programs going round and you are not thinking –...I don't know if it is lack of awareness or total ignorance. I'm getting depressed at the thought of it. (Alison, 2004, interview, 6 July).

At times this ignorance transfers into overt forms of discrimination. Alison reveals the nature of a range of discriminations that occurred to her as an AEW. First, Alison reveals a lack of space and respect provided on a collegial level for AEWs within the school; second, there continues to be race-based stereotyping by non-Indigenous people in representations inherent in culturalist research (McConnochie,

Hollinsworth & Pettman 1988, pp. 3-18). Alison highlights how race-based stereotypes operate in some staff rooms:

A lot of AEWs don't go into the staffroom. I think they should because it is in the staff room that you hear the true shit that comes out of people's mouth. I learnt it all. I defended people in the classroom. So I walked out and made a big fuss so that I would let them know that they had offended me. There was one time I was in the kitchen and this teacher [an AERT] came up to me and she said, 'You speak really good English' and I'm going 'What!!' I said, 'Yeah, I do don't I –I'm so glad you noticed.' This is 1994. For goodness sake. What is going on? (Alison, 2004, interview, 6 July).

Non-Indigenous teachers' ignorance of Indigenous perspectives is highlighted by AEWs. This ignorance is a continual cause of frustration for AEWs and Indigenous students, parents and members of students' extended family. In addition, there is an expectation that AEWs are responsible for overturning all issues concerned with conflict. The amount of emotional labour required to do so is not reflected in their salary. For example, the AERT, in the following excerpt ignores protocol that Alison had been following:

This woman [the AERT] had gone to this woman's house. I had to try and work out ways to get the kids to school. She lived just across the road so I could pop over and say what about this or that and try and raise ways to get the kids to school. Even if the child came three days a week- we were hoping that she would stay there from 9 to 1 or I would come over and grab her. So I was trying to work out strategies to get this particular child in school. And every time we had a meeting. It is usually the AEW and the principal and the school counsellor. This woman happened to be the AERT and the school counsellor. The AERT and counsellor often are the same. Social justice! They were big around social justice then. They tried to do everything but not in practice. This woman said, 'OK, I went over there this morning to try and find her and the woman just swore at me

and she was about to hit me'. And I went, 'Hold on! I'll take it-you stupid woman.' She would have hit - then you would understand - how could you not know that you've offended her. 'Who the hell do you think you are going in there making demands? You think your job is just to do this and all that sort of stuff'. She was the same one who said I speak very good English. What do you expect when she is the AERT. She thought she could take it on because she was ready for deputy and she didn't give a shit. Had to work with Nunga kids so what do you do – this is what you can do - demand, demand, demand (Alison, 2004, interview, 6 July).

Alison is an educator who is grounded in experiences and life, yet she is denigrated, humiliated and discriminated against by the AERT on the basis of ignorance; an irony considering the job specification requires sound knowledge as an Aboriginal education resource teacher.

bell hooks (1995) argues that ignorance feeds racisms and Langton (1994, 1981) argues against the historical representations of Indigenous peoples that perpetuate discrimination by non-Indigenous people. The AERT in this example has systemic advantages through white race privilege despite her limited knowledge base of Indigenous issues (Tannoch-Bland 1997). She is able to win positions that are linked to a 'knowing' about Indigenous students, yet in real terms she lacks emotional, psychological and cognitive intelligence in the area. Her lack of awareness of Indigenous ethics of care practices such as building relationships with people through following protocol exemplifies another site of discrimination towards Alison and the community. Alison on the other hand, as an outsider to that community, had to spend time and emotional labour, such as, 'having a cuppa', spending time with parents and care givers and developing trust to encourage students back to school (Alison, 2004, interview, 6 July). The depth of understanding regarding issues of absenteeism and working with Indigenous students and the community was understood within the context of Indigenous politics that went by unrecognised by the AERT (Groome 1994, pp. 161-177).

The AERT in this context demonstrates the weight of her white social capital, however she lacks an ability to engage appropriately with members of the Indigenous community. Her social capital is mobilised by a willingness to be employed as an AERT. However, it appears that her lack of awareness of the issues involved in such a position was overlooked by her employees; her willingness to be employed in this position being enough for the school. However, it is not enough and consequently caused a range of serious violations of Indigenous protocols. Bourdieu (1977) defines social capital as a network system that is institutionalised through relationships among people who recognise each other collegially and socially. ‘An individual's social capital is determined by the size of their relationship network, the sum of its cumulated resources (both cultural and economic), and how successfully (quickly) the individual can set them in motion’ (Hayes n. d.).

The AERT's social capital was supported through institutionalised whiteness. It was therefore not necessary that she worked in the border zones building relationships between the school and the Indigenous community. When the AERT arrived at the house and was yelled at, this response came from someone perceived by the AERT as an aggressive parent, but Alison saw the mother as someone who expected the AERT to follow protocol and build trust before acts of reciprocity could emerge. The AERT's response represents the arrogance of the majority of non-Indigenous teachers that is supported by the leaders in the school. In contrast, AEWs such as Alison are required to work in border zones, particularly in ethics of care practices where emotional labour is multi-dimensional. The work of AEWs requires an ability to code-switch among non-Indigenous staff, Indigenous students and varying members of Indigenous communities and organisations. The complexity of the role of AEWs is further exacerbated by the need for a high level of sensitivity and subtlety in the execution of their duties.

Conclusion

This chapter has revealed that AEWs in South Australian schools do conduct Indigenous ethics of care practices in the border zones between schools and

communities. AEWs are required to develop trusting relationships with students, engage in tactful relationship building with members of the community and develop the ability to code-switch to attend to negotiations and relationships with non-Indigenous staff in the school.

Firstly, the role of AEWs includes emotional labour that is expected by students. Indigenous ethics of care practices include caring in ways that reflect an understanding of Indigenous students' experiences, which often exist inside extended families. As a result of these relationships, students cooperate with AEWs due to a sense of familiarity. The support role in this context extends from curriculum support to emotional support that is maintained through on-going connections between AEWs and students in their communities. This role is often undermined by the need for some AEWs to work between two schools as Harry articulates. This reflects systemic institutional discrimination regarding the working conditions of AEWs and highlights AEWs as exploited labourers as their emotional labour and additional out of hours workload is not legitimated in the education system.

Secondly, it is necessary for AEWs to build relationships with parents and caregivers in Indigenous communities in order to gain support for the work they do with their children in the school. There is often an expectation that AEWs will protect students through their role as auntie or uncle. However, this position is compromised when AEWs are positioned as 'educational police' by family members when AEWs inform parents of negative behaviour by students. The role of AEWs is further sabotaged when leaders and non-Indigenous teachers assume AEWs' role in the community is neutral. Sue and Alison's position, for example, was complicated when a non-Indigenous teacher communicated with parents without consulting them. Sue's position is compromised when this situation occurs as parents and caregivers question her capacity as an AEW as they assume she has not been involved with their child's issue. When the community perceives Sue has not fulfilled their expectations as an auntie, parents or members of the extended family will say to her, 'What are you doing?' (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February). She argues that the 'information flow has to be open so we can all do our jobs' (Sue, 2000, interview, 2 February). The general lack of communication between non-Indigenous teachers and AEWs indicates ambivalence towards AEWs' position in school. This lack of recognition

creates dissonance between AEWs and the community as they are positioned as not doing their job at school.

The third form of emotional labour demonstrated in this chapter is concerned with AEWs' work with non-Indigenous teachers. The majority of the AEWs discussed in this chapter, as well as others interviewed for this thesis, argue that there is a general lack of recognition of AEWs' work in and outside of the school. There is an expectation by many non-Indigenous teachers that AEWs are a 'lucky' for the teachers and whilst this may not be identified by the non-Indigenous teacher, it has been discussed and felt by the majority of AEWs. This is further perpetuated when non-Indigenous teachers do not recognise the amount of work conducted in maintaining Indigenous ethics of care practices with individual students and the community. This general lack of recognition of emotional labour, such as visiting parents, having a 'cuppa' in order to address truancy within a safe space, or emotional and pedagogical support in the class and at school, is disregarded as unimportant. This relates to the general lack of recognition of care work in dominant society and is discussed in Chapter Eight.

AEWs remain exploited workers as a result of this lack of recognition regarding their roles as they are expected to perform a range of tasks that go beyond their job specification. Whilst AEWs are required to conduct emotional and pedagogical support, as well as home visits, a lack of clarity regarding these positions means that AEWs are undervalued and/or dismissed by their non-Indigenous colleagues as offering little to the workplace. Because the emotional work undertaken by AEWs is not identified by many non-Indigenous teachers, the cultural capital of AEWs' work within an Indigenous ethics of care framework is marginalised in the school. However, the cultural capital carried by the AERT in Alison's interview is granted weight and recognition despite her inability to fulfil her role appropriately.

The level of pedagogical support, after hours workload and emotional engagement required to perform the role as an AEW includes operating between the border zones of schools and communities. This overarching hidden responsibility remains invisible in the school. Moreover, the general themes that emerged from this chapter include: 1) Indigenous ethics of care practices are conducted by AEWs in schools

and, 2) there is a general lack of recognition of these practices, and as a result, the layers of emotional labour conducted by AEWs are not granted legitimacy within schools. As a result, they become invisible thereby limiting AEWs' status and providing fertile ground for the exploitation of AEWs as workers.

In the following chapter I analyse ethics of care and the theory concerned with this field. It is necessary to analyse the construction of white ethics of care and substantiate how this has attained a universalist privilege in education in Australia. Universalism generates inequalities for those who operate outside the framework of white ethics of care. It is also necessary to map Indigenous ethics of care practices in the following chapter in order to canvass AEWs' positionality, as well as highlight how they are denied recognition when they do not operate from a white ethics of care framework.

Chapter 7: Ethics of care

Introduction

The previous chapter canvassed the standpoint epistemologies in relation to AEWs and highlighted some of the complexities of the notion of emotional labour. The AEWs' experiences and stories varied, but consistent themes emerged. The hidden privilege of white ethics of care needs to be explored in this chapter to understand how it impacts on AEWs' caring roles in schools. Ethics of care is an influential and exciting field that explores the often unspoken emotional frontier, behaviours and mores of society, and in particular schools and the relationships between adults, such as AEWs and teachers with their students. Ethics of care has been broadly represented as a specific modality that includes underlying expectations and responsibilities, how it is embedded into values systems and how it is performed through acts of caring.

The concept of ethics of care has been framed and defined by a number of key theorists in the United States and United Kingdom (Baier 1985; Diller 2004; Gilligan 1982; Noddings 1984, 2001; Rolón-Dow 2005; Rose 2004; Thompson 1988). This chapter applies strategic essentialism (Spivak 1988) to ethics of care, acknowledging that not all Indigenous people care in the same way, and not all white people operate through white ethics of care. The general differences between the two (and they do not apply to all) include two broad paradigms, namely a white nuclear model of care and Indigenous extended family model of care that involve differing levels of responsibility. The white nuclear model of care is shaped by an asymmetrical relationship between the mother as the primary care giver and the father as the provider of the wife and children. The mother holds the responsibility for the care of her children. Indigenous extended family models of care disperse the responsibility of care of children across adult members of the immediate and extended family. In this chapter I attempt to map the differences between ethics of care models in order to reveal how hegemonically constituted white ethics of care is privileged socially and institutionally in countries like Australia.

The need for recognition of care in the learning process is addressed in the first section of this chapter to highlight how care is central to pedagogy. This is followed by an analysis of white ethics of care theory. Issues of concern in this section include the historical and political position of white ethics of care, ethics of care theories, and the enactment of white emotional labour. The section titled *Noddings' construction of care: an examination of whiteness* is central to the debate on white ethics of care, as Noddings has been one of the most prominent theorists on this subject. The 'Primary Caregiver Presumption' discussed in the last part of this section relates to the Australian context, yet it links to the analysis on Noddings' nuclear models of care.

The final section on 'Indigenous Ethics of Care' is concerned with kinship practices and models of care present in a range of communities throughout Australia. The extended family model of care is linked to Indigenous ethics of care practices as this remains common among many Indigenous families. It has also been cited as an act of necessity and 'in fact, family and community bonds in Indigenous communities have proven supremely resilient given the ferocity of assimilation policies which have been pursued by state, territory and federal governments over the last century' (Boyd, Rhoades & Burns 1999. p. 18). This chapter also focuses on some practices of care that includes a land ethics of care. This is discussed in the final section as caring for country is an intrinsic part of some Indigenous families' ethics of care. Indigenous ethics of care practices are discussed in the latter half of this chapter. Some of the issues that have led to the marginalisation of extended family models of care, expressed by many AEWs, are outlined in brief in the following.

Ethics of care and its relationship to education

AEWs are most commonly known by students as auntie or uncle within schools and are generally part of the Indigenous extended family model. The need for recognition of caring practices in the teaching/learning process is important. Where there is ignorance regarding the diversity of care practices, non-Indigenous teachers who are grounded in whiteness assume any resistance to their care is due to the perversity of the Other. As Partington argues:

Our belief that our forms of knowledge are best, our belief that our teaching strategies are best, our belief that our child rearing practices are the best all hinder our listening, learning and understanding and hence hinder our teaching (1998, p. 193).

Groome argues that Indigenous parents have historically attempted to incorporate Indigenous caring practices into schools (1992, 1994). Groome did not use the term ethics of care, but discussed notions concerned with matching an understanding of familiar modes of conduct of behaviour that involved ethics of care. Despite efforts by Groome, there has been resistance to this intersection by non-Indigenous teachers. This resistance involves a complex process by which the neutrality of white ethics of care operates to inhibit the possibilities of exploring, understanding or integrating Indigenous ethics of care. In this context Indigenous ethics of care is absent, unseen and therefore removed from the concerns of non-Indigenous teachers.

Caring is informed by values and mores that are expressed through acts of engagement, such as between a student and a teacher. When values and mores match between two subjects it is more likely that reciprocation between the two individuals will feel normal. The dissonance of acts of engagement between non-Indigenous teachers and Indigenous students has been canvassed for many decades (Gale, F 1983; Gale & Binnion 1975; Groome 1992, 1994; Malin, Campbell & Agius 1996; Malin & Maidment 2003).

The Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Committee (ASSPA) model was an attempt to bridge the discord Indigenous students experienced at school. The ASSPA committees that were funded by the Commonwealth in the 1990s lacked a governance structure (*A Matter of Survival*). The current Yurrekaityarindi governance committee, which superseded ASSPA in 2007, was another intervention program established by the Aboriginal Education Unit for Indigenous parents and caregivers in South Australia (*DECS Aboriginal Education Strategy 2005-2010*). Yurrekaityarindi means listening circle and represents an opportunity for Indigenous care givers and family members to voice their concerns to AEWs who are required to direct them to the school. Yurrekaityarindi members have to be Indigenous and,

unlike previous committees, the group is focused on self-governance. Indigenous parents and caregivers continue to be involved in education on varying levels, but the opportunities to bring about change are limited. Even so, the concern regarding Indigenous students' experiences of racism still remains central to Yurrekaityarindi members. However, challenges arise for AEWs to develop a dialogical relationship with non-Indigenous teachers and Yurrekaityarindi members regarding teaching and caring practices. Despite attempts to change this situation Groome's statement regarding the 'lack of care for Aboriginal students' (1990, p. 47) in the following has yet to be resolved:

[T]he majority of parents...including those who were involved with schools, were dissatisfied by the educational experiences of their children...[moreover] they were concerned about the high levels of racial prejudice which came from both students and teachers, about the general lack of care for Aboriginal students (Groome 1990, p. 47).

Complexities arise because Indigenous ethics of care practices are diverse, and this leads to a sense of frustration for non-Indigenous teachers as there is no package to learn in order to teach. The desire for homogeneity stems from a desire to be able to deal with a complex issue as if it were one 'problem'. The pre-service non-Indigenous teachers I teach in their final year at university argue that they need a tool kit to teach Indigenous students. However, there is a general failure to question (a) why they want this tool kit, (b) why they do not want to be seen as doing something wrong as a teacher and (c) why they often fail to see their complicity in racism as a result of white race privilege.

A non-Indigenous teacher's race-blindness in caring practices inhibits Indigenous student learning outcomes on many subtle and unseen levels, by lowering expectations, not code-switching between differing values systems, and maintaining stereotypes and misconceptions regarding behaviour management (Wilder 1999). Care is the mediating factor in pedagogy and race-blindness is maintained through the normative paradigm of white ethics of care in Australian schools. Conversely, Indigenous ethics of care practices are generally grounded in extended family relationships and are often specific to country and community. There are 'various

tasks' in 'growing up' a child that are commonly 'distributed amongst family members' (Boyd, Rhoades & Burns 1999, p. 19). Each community has its own set of protocols that may be shared across language groups. Indigenous ethics of care practices and protocols have been historically subject to misrepresentations that have positioned Indigenous people as deficit and Other (Hall 1997). Indigenous mothers, in particular, were historically not seen fit to look after their children (Groome 1994, p. 167). This assumption stems from a white middle class gendered view where the mother is positioned as the principal carer of her child/ren (detailed thoroughly in Chapter Eight).

The construction of motherhood and care has influenced teaching practices since the 1960s (Urwin 1985, pp.182-3). 'Developmental psychology', re-enforced by Piagetian 'stages and standard developmental norms' has framed a seamless interchange between the role of mother and teacher as normative in white ethics of care. The caring that supports the stages of development of the child is largely defined as absent in working-class mothers (Urwin 1985, p. 183). This assumption was also inferred by researchers in relation to Indigenous mothers (Watts & Henry 1978). Consequently, many non-Indigenous teachers who work with female AEWs who operate as a mother *in situ* pathologise them as unfit carers/pedagogues.

Australian schools continue to reflect white middle-class values that inform and homogenise white ethics of care. As Marsh argues, the 'development of the white, middle-class child is projected as the standard for all children' (2002, p. 457). In schools, teachers are expected to teach knowledge through a curriculum that maintains and elevates normative structures and ideologies (Apple 1996; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2001, pp. 71-72). This pattern of whiteness is firmly embodied in the rhythms, rituals, and customs of everyday life. Indigenous students and AEWs remain trapped by *différence* (Derrida 1978, 1994; Moreton-Robinson 1999) which is positioned as deficit in Australia. The following section addresses this issue and how white ethics of care became a hegemonic caring practice.

White ethics of care: History and theoretical underpinnings

White ethics of care theory is a feminist discourse that has emerged in response to a justice-based moral ethics (Baier 1985; Gilligan 1982; Noddings 1984, 2001). Gilligan's research and publication *In a Different Voice* (1982), generated a paradigm called womancentred moral philosophy that was concerned with ethics of care. This led to a theoretical framework arguing for greater recognition of women's position inside patriarchy (Larrabee 1993, p. 5). That response has created a body of knowledge that substantiated the centrality of white ethics of care in education.

Broadly, children are identified under western law as property, in much the same way as women are defined as property in the Christian church and the law (Sevenhuijsen 1998, p. 100). This model of care is granted legal and spiritual sanctity and is central to western culture and law. The practice of caring is positioned as women's work in this patriarchal model. Despite the fact that liberal feminists resist this model, the drive to raise care to a status commensurate with justice has reinvigorated the status debate regarding care/justice along gendered lines.

Indigenous extended family ethics of care practices tend towards community responses to care that do not readily separate the private and public domain as extended family usually includes many members of the community. A community approach differs from the individualistic approaches to care that embody liberalism's focus on separating the public domain as a site of government intervention and the private domain which remain separate and under the jurisdiction of the male patriarch (Leiboff & Thomas 2004, p. 115). The debate on ethics of care and justice has ignored extended family models of care and focused primarily on the justice/care debate; where mother signifies carer and male patriarchal institutions frame justice. White feminists have borrowed the Master's tools (Lorde 1984) to raise the status of care to make it commensurate with justice. In so doing they have re-built a house that reflects the white middle-class norm. The feminists who have responded to traditional and patriarchal ethical and moral theories (Baier 1994; Card 1991;

Friedman 1993; Gilligan et al. 1988; Held 1993, 1995; Noddings 1984; Okin 1989) were well intentioned, but their whiteness has remained unexamined.

Gilligan's work has been of particular significance in the care/justice debate as she challenges patriarchal values that position women and caring practices as secondary to justice. She raises the question of why hegemonically constituted forms of justice are privileged over more feminised notions of caring and nurturing. *In a Different Voice* (Gilligan 1982) centralises caring for others as equally important to the masculinised position of justice that is signified as a political and public form of care (Beauchamp & Childress 2001). Similarly, Baier's work in *What Do Women Want in a Moral Theory* (1985) challenges the traditional notion of ethics of care as a form of social obligation (Beauchamp & Childress 2001, p. 371). These feminist academics have attempted to use theoretical and philosophical models to examine the low status of care.

Held asks, 'How does the framework that structures justice, equality, rights, and liberty mesh with the network that delineates care, relatedness, and trust?' (1995, p. 128). Such a question highlights a western moral philosophical paradigm that is sustained through binary positions such as male/female, justice/care, public/private, and black/white. It is not my intention to detail the historical discourse on care/justice, but rather to highlight how discursive regimes and epistemological frameworks operate to marginalise Indigenous ethics of care. Arguably, the 'field of knowledge' (Foucault 1977, p. 27) in academia is inherently structured through variations of opposites. Yet, it is possible to reconfigure debates through a constellation of power relations, rather than on binaries alone.

White ethics of care theory developed in parallel with white feminist sisterhood discourse (Parry 1995, p. 40). Black or Indigenous ethics of care practices in these debates have been positioned as the Other (Said 1978, p. 106) through their exclusion from this significant development of ethics of care theory. However, in this thesis I argue that the 'discursive conditions of dominance' in relation to white ethics of care theory can be used as grounds for 'intervention' (Bhabha 1995, p. 35). It is therefore necessary to reconfigure the debate to examine how the centrality of white ethics of care leads to the marginalisation of Indigenous ethics of care work by AEWs.

Ethics of care has been broadly represented as a specific modality that is performed with underlying expectations, values systems and performative functions which involve relationships. In white ethics of care theories, the female nurse and patient relationship, or female teacher and student relationship are often the sites for analysis. What is interesting about the following analysis of ethics of care theorists is the underlying maintenance of the gendered and classed position of white ethics of care.

A range of theorists have been extremely influential in educational discourse on ethics of care. Many tertiary education degrees tend to focus on the work of prominent white academics such as Noddings and Gilligan when teaching concepts regarding care (for example in McInerney & McInerney 2002). The voices of Indigenous and Black feminist theorists who challenge or disrupt the underlying theories of white ethics of care in these texts have 'long occupied marginal positions' (Collins 2004, p.103). Moreover, the homogenised moral perspective (Vogt 2002, p. 251) presents emotional labour as universal, which in turn inform white ethics of care practices (Poole & Isaacs 1997, p. 536).

The enactment of white emotional labour

Hochschild (1983, 1993) identifies the 'smile' of an air-hostess as a specific action inherent in emotional labour (Smith & Lorentzon 2005, p. 638). 'Polite' behaviour is assumed to be universal. Polite behaviour is not universal, but it is taught and it is reflected in manners such as the term thank you. There is a slippage in relation to the performance of manners, as thank you indicates gratitude. The value of gratitude may be shared across cultures, but the performance of gratitude may vary. 'Surface acting', through the performance of manners is the embodiment of white ethics of care (Smith & Lorentzon 2005, p. 638) and it is something that is taught through ethics of care.

White ethics of care is not limited to manners nor is white emotional labour limited to smiling. However, performances of emotional labour in general often involves body language and is expressed differently across cultures. Surface acting, such as

performing manners is coded and operates seamlessly among synonymous caring relations. Surface acting exists in all cultures and classes, but often takes different forms.

Surface acting may involve spending time with people and the AEWs interviewed stressed how important it was to be involved in the community and have a 'cuppa tea' with students' families. This activity is coded and understood as an important act of bridge building in social relations. AEWs need to win trust from the community and the individual students through relationship building processes that are culturally safe. Cultural safety is:

... an environment which is safe for people; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity, and truly listening (Williams 2002, p. 1).

AEWs are often partially measured by the community in regard to their commitment to *spend time* having a 'cuppa' with families or *spend time* in the community with students and their families: a longitudinal commitment to building relationships that moves beyond surface acting. AEWs are generally granted the privileges of operating inside students' extended family networks after trust has been built. Once trust has been established it also has to be maintained. Non-Indigenous teachers are assumed to be trustworthy because of their structural location inside education. From a parent's perspective, a female non-Indigenous teacher, particularly in primary schools, is generally assumed to be aligned with the kind, polite and giving maternal mother. 'She' takes the responsibility of emotional labour almost single-handedly throughout the day, and it is assumed that the mother takes over after school.

Walkerdine states that, even in more contemporary movements such as progressivism, '[t]hrough the figure of the maternal teacher, the harsh powers of the authoritarian father will be converted into the soft benevolence of the bourgeois mother' (1992, p. 16). Walkerdine argues that the promise of progressivism as a

liberation pedagogy was achieved at the expense of the self-sacrificing loving female/mother/teacher (1992, p. 15). This supports the underlying perceptions that the mother/child relationship is synonymous with the female teacher/student relationship in white ethics of care. Yet, there are no expectations that teachers will extend this relationship outside of school hours. Conversely, AEWs are often expected by the community to extend their relationship with students outside of school hours. White ethics of care is structured differently from extended family/community ethics of care models and different expectations and protocols are followed (Casey 1990, p. 316). However, only white ethics of care is positioned as an acceptable model of care in schools in Australia, and thereby AEWs' work in community is not identified as work. The white ethics of care model as a centralised and normalising privileged space has been an issue in the broader community.

The absence of recognition of extended families as a legitimate model of care has been an issue of contention for migrants who rely on extended family kinship systems when migrating to Australia. Indigenous families have felt the direct impact of this in their country, but migrants also have experienced the limitation of the normalisation of the nuclear family model, both on a legal and social level. The following quotation reveals the legal boundaries by which nuclear families are positioned in Australian society:

Family migration schemes ensure that a nuclear family is reproduced through policy and although the categories of kin eligible for assisted migration have occasionally been relaxed, immigration policy generally permits only immediate dependents (wives, children) and occasionally elderly relatives. All other categories of kin usually require an Assurance of Support as with other sponsored migrants. This situation is catastrophic for those migrant women who come from countries where kin provide a ready network of support, particularly female support, and few have found any adequate alternative here. In addition, the absence of family networks leaves them unprotected from domestic violence or desertion, particularly as crisis services available to women in Australia are both minimal and under-resourced (Martin 1984, p. 117).

Family migration schemes are another legalised system that inhibits the possibility of operating through extended family models. The process of de-legitimising extended family models of care is achieved through institutional ethnographies in Australia that map social relationships, such as documents that do not grant permits to non-immediate dependents as outlined in the above quote (Campbell & Gregor 2004). In this context ethics of care is shaped by institutional ethnographies, and in turn the obligation to operate through nuclear models of care becomes an entrenched normalising practice.

The incommensurate 'black/white race binary in schools' (Miller 2000, p. 481) produced by discursive regimes governing ethics of care debates needs to be examined in relation to AEWs who act 'in loco parentis' (Woods 1990, p. 55). AEWs' responsibility and accountability to respond to students' needs is measured by the community. AEWs have to know students to a far greater extent than non-Indigenous teachers in order to respond to their needs. The need for AEWs to develop trust with Indigenous students is pivotal and is often created through their association with Indigenous students as members of Indigenous communities. Non-Indigenous students share this privilege of location with non-Indigenous students as trust is assumed by their professional location. However, these two locations remain asymmetrical where AEWs are subject to non-Indigenous teachers' authority to dictate decisions in relation to the students..

As Willmont (1981) illuminates, there is a need to acknowledge institutional dissonance between Indigenous communities and state schools in Australia. Willmont (1981, p. 11) also claims that, whilst many Indigenous parents wanted to be involved in schooling throughout the 1940s, hope for this had been lost by the 1980s. Arguably, as contemporary scholarship 'keeps itself pure' (Said 1978, p.13), so do the patterns of institutional normalising practices that are based on the premise of universalism that led to this loss of hope.

Noddings' construction of care: An examination of whiteness

Nel Noddings is a white American ethics of care and educational philosopher, whose universalist theories are frequently discussed in ethics of care discourse (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001; Diller 2004; Noddings 1984, 2001; Walkerdine 1992). It is important to analyse some of Noddings' most significant contributions to the understanding of ethics of care, as they maintain the 'fabric of values that has helped to perpetuate classism, racism, sexism, and heterosexism' (Thompson 1998, p. 530). As Thompson argues, ethics of care is not 'a freestanding set of domestic values uncontaminated by the oppressive values of the public spheres' (Thompson 1998, p. 530). Rolón-Dow also argues against Noddings' colour-blind ethics of care model due to her neutral focus on interpersonal relationships (2005, p. 86).

Noddings maintains that her experience as a mother, wife and teacher inform her ethics of care. She goes so far as to develop a 'universal caregiver model' (2001, p. 29) and attempts to elevate the status of care within this universal moral theory. She argues:

A universal caregiver model would be designed to prepare both girls and boys for the work of care giving. As both parents become breadwinners, so must both be caregivers. Of course, care giving involves much more than watching the children for a few hours. It involves knowledge, energy, and organizational skill to maintain a home that will nurture all of its members. Another possible benefit of a universal caregiver model might be the elevation of care giving occupations to a status congruent with their value (Noddings 2001, p. 29).

Noddings applies a white liberal feminist model and pitches her vision of a world where care is commensurate with justice. For her this is achieved through the training of boys and girls in the work of both care giving and 'breadwinning' (Noddings 2001, p. 29). This model assumes the attainability of gender equality through early training. Her premise suggests a lack of knowledge about the world of extended families, where older children are often given the responsibility of caring

for younger children. She also maintains the nuclear family paradigm whereby there is equal opportunity for employment as a result of education, training and networking, which is largely a middle-class privilege. These seemingly transparent assumptions have inadvertently maintained and strengthened a heterosexual, normative and white middle-class discourse for caring. The Protestant work ethic is also represented by the organizational skills of the parent, whereby 'care giving involves more than watching the children...it involves knowledge, energy and organizational skill' (Noddings 2001, p. 29), thus implying success and/or wealth and/or access to work. Good health is represented as 'energy', which is assumed to come from being well fed and having a safe place to sleep. Finally, Noddings' most flawed assumption is that one can construct a 'universal care giver model', an inherently white and dominant form of homogenizing that represents a colour-blind methodology.

Noddings claims that caring includes both 'engrossment' and 'motivational displacement', thereby further entrenching the ideology of a white ethics of care. 'Engrossment' means the connection to an individual child (which can include students), whereby the caregiver feels and desires to build a meaningful relationship based on trust and reciprocity, yet this reciprocation often only occurs as a result of synonymous caring paradigms (Rolón-Dow 2005). 'Motivational displacement' is more concerned with a substitute parent generating the necessary motivation in a child to engage with learning. These practices involve an intimate level of cerebral engagement in the form of guidance and instruction (Noddings 1984, pp. 15-20, 33-34). However, her call for 'engrossment' and 'motivational displacement' is based on relationships that are shaped by white ethics of care practices. Her ethics of care is thus defined within a nuclear paradigm that does not acknowledge an ethics of care that is based on a communal approach to raising children. The responsibilities inherent in Noddings' claims are limited by her perceptions, which are grounded in whiteness and are also inherent in the 'Primary Caregiver Presumption'.

Primary Caregiver Presumption

The primary caregiver model is a legal model in Family Law in Australia (Boyd, Rhoades & Burns 1999, p. 6). The primary caregiver model is mostly a 'code' for

mother, who in this context is assumed to be 'natural', 'universal', 'white' and middle class (Boyd, Rhoades & Burns 1999, p. 15). The '*rules of recognition*, those social texts of epistemic, ethnocentric, nationalist intelligibility' (Bhabha 1995, p. 33) are framed by the Australian legal system. This legal definition substantiates white ethics of care used in schools. However, as Boyd, Rhoades and Burns argue in relation to the primary caregiver model, it is both gendered and racialised:

My concerns are twofold. First, while the concept of long-term care giving aptly describes the labour given by the majority of white women in nuclear family households, it risks misconstruing the care giving situation in many Indigenous families. Secondly, insofar as the unfitness proviso is mired in notions of “good-mothering”—a corollary of the primary caregiver ideal—it might be applied in ways that adversely affect Indigenous women and their children. Moreover, the presumption has a nonsensical quality about it in relation to Indigenous women: if Indigenous mothers care for their children within a framework of multiple care giving, why assess their fitness as primary caregivers? At the heart of both these concerns is an uneasiness about the extent to which a primary caregiver presumption is not only gendered (indeed, that is the point) but ‘racialised’ (1999, pp.17,18).

The primary caregiver model limits the legitimacy of extended family models of care in Australia. This presumption is based on a 'universalist model of reason' (Giroux 2005, p. 87) and fails to address difference, thereby supporting the hegemony of white ethics of care. The legal and social nuclear model of care is normalised in dominant culture in Australia. Therefore, any ethics of care that functions differently from white ethics of care is marginalised legally and socially.

This section has revealed how white ethics of care practices are centralised through universalist concepts and normative assumptions that are supported institutionally and substantiated through the law. These exclude extended family models where the levels of responsibility and caring for children are distributed differently and this will be outlined in the following section.

Indigenous Ethics of Care

This section canvasses a range of Indigenous ethics of care practices that have been and/or continue to be present in Australia. This is not an exhaustive analysis of all Indigenous ethics of care practices. Rather, it is an example of the diversity of Indigenous ethics of care practices with a focus on land-based ethics of care and the extended family model of care. Many AEWs operate in an extended family model of care in all areas throughout Australia. There are also a range of enactments of emotional labour that emerge from obligations depending on one's location, connection to country and family.

Kinship systems

The kinship system is complex and there are expectations from community members, depending on relationships inside the system. Kinship is based on 'the principles of reciprocity, obligation, care and responsibility' (Groome 1992, p. 42). However, kinships systems throughout Australia have been affected by the institutionalisation of children during the assimilation era (Mattingley & Hampton 1988, p.135). Kinship relationships form the parameters of extended families. Boyd, Rhoades and Burns discuss the extended model of care in the following way:

One of its basic principles is the equivalence of same-sex siblings so that, for example, the sisters of a child's biological mother are also considered to be the child's mothers. A child's grandmother may also be referred to as the mother of the child. While the system varied amongst traditional Indigenous communities, and has since been modified and adapted in response to the pressures of colonialism and contemporary life, it is still very much in evidence amongst many Indigenous communities. In fact, family and community bonds in Indigenous communities have proven supremely resilient given the ferocity of assimilation policies which have been pursued by state, territory and federal governments over the last century. In many ways, the devastating impact that colonial dispossession has had upon Indigenous communities has created a need in itself for Indigenous

people to be able to rely on the support of other family members to care for children (1999, p. 18).

The extended family model has been sustained by many Indigenous families as it provides the means by which to cope with racism and supports and sustains self identification. However, this does not ensure or mean that all extended families function in a sanguine environment. Nevertheless, due to the fact that there are a range of carers to call on inside an extended family, including AEWs, children have more opportunities to develop a broad section of relationship to provide a sense of belonging and nurturance. Whether the connection is symbolic or through relatedness, its power is equally weighted as demonstrated by Dr Beth Gordon.

The views of Dr Beth Gordon

Gordon was raised in an extended family situation. She worked as an AEW, later became a teacher and then became the first Indigenous principal at Kaurna Plains in South Australia. She explains her experience of growing up which highlights the extended family model of care:

Well you look at the structure for kinship ties. My mother's sisters were my mothers too. So you see—there were about ten of them. I've got ten of them. It's not like a nuclear family. Like you've got one, you've got ten. It's lovely because everyone looks after you and you never go without. It's a beautiful setting. I actually failed at school for one year because I was doing my cultural bit, because I was living with all my aunties, well my mothers. And that was absolutely wonderful because I wasn't able to go into the local white town, I would be living on the banks of the river in a scrub shelter— and I did that for 12 months and I failed that year at school. I knew I had to go back to it, because I knew I had to make something of my life. I went up to Gerard and I went over to my uncle and lived over there behind the church, then I went up to Swan Reach. My auntie lived there. Then I went up to Blanchetown, for my husband's mother was there and we stayed with them for a while, then I went up to Berri. We

lived down on the banks of the river, because you weren't allowed to live in the town. Then I went out to Gerard to live because my aunties were there. All the way along they were able to tell about the family structures, the Dreaming. They used to talk to us about the 'Mulyawongk' Dreaming down in Ngarrindjeri country, because that was a protection against falling into the water and drowning. It was just magic, because everywhere you went, you were taught something about culture. So it was a wonderful time and I would never miss it for the world, but I went back to school (Gordon, 2006, interview, 26 August).

Gordon's experience highlights some of the processes that were built around a strong extended family network. When she was an AEW she was called an auntie, and as a principal at Kurna Plains School she integrated the values of support that are often identified in extended families. Moreover, she incorporated the Kurna language and culture into the curriculum when she was a teacher and a principal.

Ngarritjan-Kessariss: Her standpoint as a child raised in an extended family

Many other Indigenous Australians report experiences that reflect Gordon's perspective. Ngarritjan-Kessariss' insights reflect her position in relation to Indigenous ethics of care in *Memories of a Milner Kid* (1992). The books, magazines and classroom discussions at her school in the Northern Territory were about neat, tidy, suburban, clean, white children and this conflicted with her own and her sister's upbringing and her 'crazy, mixed up family that did things upside down' (1992, p. 52). Her grandmother raised her for the first seven years of her life. Her mother and grandmother shared the responsibility of their upbringing, but 'Nana' was the 'Boss'. As Ngarritjan-Kessariss states:

The books at school only showed nuclear families who visited the grandparents for short periods. It seemed that Grandparents were supposed to be on the edge of the family relation and had no real say in the children's upbringing. This very precious relation which I was

privileged to have with my mother and grandmother did not seem to fit a 'normal' Australian family situation. Somehow we were a little abnormal. Later as an adult enrolled in Aboriginal studies at university, I learned that it was customary for Aboriginal grandparents to play a major role in the day to day responsibilities of looking after grandchildren. So too with Uncles and Aunties. They also had major obligations to their brother's and sister's children. This was certainly the case for us because our cousins were more like our brothers and sisters. I realized then that we had been doing things the right way all along. We weren't abnormal (1995, p. 52).

In most Indigenous communities throughout Australia, aunties and uncles often share the responsibility of raising children, which includes parental authority (Moeckel 1983, p. 105). The role of AEWs is an extension of this model of care conducted in schools, which is often supplemented in the community.

In the APY Lands, AEWs often have kinship connections similar to those of an adoptive or foster parent. Dousset states that in Indigenous communities an adopted child is 'recognised as having identical ties to the community or locale to which her own children affiliate, for adoption is considered to create similar ties to birth ties' (2003, p. 24). Kinship connections and correlating mutual obligations go beyond 'blood' ties and incorporate country and location in many communities. Adoption in this context does not carry the negative connotations of being rejected by a mother as it does in western culture.

Moisseef (1999) discusses the concept of foster care by Anangu in the Port Augusta region of South Australia. She believes that the term 'foster' is an inappropriate term as it connotes a giving up of the child. Yet, the mothers in this situation sited 'fostering' as an important form of care. As Moisseef states:

Indeed, at a very early age, children are allowed or even invited to stay with their cousins for more or less long periods of time. This is especially the case for single children or if the child has no same-sex siblings. In the same way that children are sometimes sent to keep a

single adult company...a child who feels lonely is entitled, even encouraged, to go to a household where he/she can play with his/her peers. The children concerned may eventually choose to stay there. It is thus accepted that one can not force a child to stay in or to go to a place which he/she does not like. The mobility of children from one household to another is consequently a typical feature of Aboriginal communities. From an Aboriginal point of view, this parental attitude is generally a reflection of caring for children rather than neglect (1999, pp. 69-70).

The structure of Indigenous ethics of care models, that is, in relation to a generic acceptance of multiple caregivers and adopted children, does not match white middle class models of care legalised through the 'Primary Care Giver' model (Boyd, Rhoades & Burns 1999). This is revealed further in the case of *Re Cp* (1997), 21 Fam LR 486, 499, where an expert witness was called in a custody case regarding a Tiwi Islander's child. The judgement stated that:

[The expert] said that many children are raised by people other than biological parents. She said it was not unusual for Aboriginal children to move freely and frequently. The raising of children for Aboriginal people involves more than merely physical and emotional care, but involves the issue of cultural heritage. Adoption is rare amongst Aboriginal people, whereas in Torres Strait it is a common, and highly valued, social practice. Adoption refers to the transfer of a child from one kin grouping to another (in *Re Cp* (1997), 21 Fam LR 486, 499).

Many non-Indigenous teachers often do not see fostering or adoption in general as a positive ethics of care. This is because of the often-referred to notion of 'genealogies' as 'scientifically justified representations of the transmission of "blood", one of the metaphors for identity' in white ethics of care (Dousset 2003, p. 21). Dousset argues that Indigenous kinship systems should be clearly distinguished from western notions of genealogies (Dousset 2003, p. 21). She refers to the Ngaatjatjarra-speaking group in the Western Desert and discusses the 'inalienable link (or identity) between people

and locales on the one hand, and between relationships and routes/tracks on the other' (Dousset 2003, p. 19). It is therefore important to recognise that the concepts of genealogy and identity are not universal.

Adoption and fostering by some Indigenous groups are seen as positive aspects of identity formation when it is structured along Indigenous ethics of care lines. The Federal Government's past policies of the removal of Indigenous children on the grounds of inappropriate models of care was unacceptable (*Wilson Report 1997*). These were 'systemic attempts of destruction' by the Federal government to break down extended family models of care (Gray, Trompf & Houston 1994, p. 117). Despite this, many Indigenous families still operate through extended models of care.

In many Indigenous communities the concept of extended family as an ethics of care practice ensures that people are protected and are not lonely. For any cultural group, living in extended families provides emotional and physical support from a range of other members of their group. This generally makes raising children easier and is reflected in the practice of sharing resources. Gray, Trompf and Houston argue that:

...[k]inship allegiances through these networks enhance the viability of the group, and the family can offer emotional and economic support, and act as a buffer against prejudice, hostility and the ethnocentrism of the wider society. Group membership generates a sense of belonging, of comradeship and security: 'Belonging is a pleasure and often a matter of defiant pride. Consequently the policy of assimilation [when interpreted as dispersal and disappearance of Aboriginal groups] has little appeal (Langton, 1981, 155). A large proportion of Aboriginal households in Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane are composed of extensive and extended family groups, which are fairly fluid in their composition (1994, p. 100).

Nevertheless, living in an extended family is not part of the experience of all Indigenous families and difficulties occur in relation to the roles and responsibilities of living in a community. Yet, all except one of the AEWs interviewed for this thesis stated that they were part of an extended family network, even if the area in

which they worked was not their country. It is therefore significant that Indigenous ethics of care practices be positioned within the knowledge that culture is not static, nor homogeneous, nor clearly defined. However, there are still patterns of behaviour that stem from maintaining protocols, such as having a 'cuppa' and being present amongst the community.

The relationship between land and ethics of care

The connection to land/country and the way it informs kin relationships is not a feature of the ethics of care practised in dominant white culture. Issues concerned with sovereignty and land rights will not be addressed here as they fall beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, caring for country as an ethics of care will be outlined. This is not an attempt to re-construct an anthropological and voyeuristic representation of all Indigenous people association to Land. It is an attempt to highlight how people's experiences and our activities of daily living shape their ethics of care framework. The values that shape our locatedness also inform our patterns in caring relationships. These patterns therefore become a central feature of ethics of care. Caring for country has many layers and is not limited to Indigenous people living in remote areas. However, the following section focuses on Indigenous ethics of care practices that reflect a land ethics of care.

A land ethics of care involves an understanding of one's direct environment and the practices implemented to care for country on a range of levels, both spiritual and physical. However, the physical may not include 'cleaning up' rubbish, but instead cleansing country through rituals. The premise behind a land ethics of care is something not just 'imagined or represented, it is lived in and lived with' (Rose 1996, p. 2).

Women caring for country was noted in early citations by Leopold in 1949 in a text called *Sand Country Almanac* (Rose 1988, pp. 378). Whilst some of these views may be seen as idealised they do signify the context of caring for country within an Indigenous ethics of care framework. Rose incorporates Leopold's notion of caring for the environment 'as a moral community' (Rose 1988, pp. 378) and articulates the associated responsibilities, which include:

Keeping the country 'clean', i.e. burning it off properly. Using the country by hunting, gathering, fishing, and generally letting the country know that people are there. Protecting the country's integrity by not allowing other people to use country or Dreamings (in ceremonial contexts) without asking. Protecting the country, particularly Dreaming sites, from damage. Protecting the species related to that country. Protecting dangerous places so that harm does not come out of that country. Providing a new generation of owners to take over the responsibilities for that country. Learning and performing the ceremonies which keep country and people *punyu* (Rose 1992, pp. 106-7).

Rose is referring to the responsibilities of the Yarralin people. In particular she refers to the carer of the country who is called *ngurramarla* (the person who is physically taking care of country) (Rose 1992, p. 107). This is the relationship between land and an ethics of care that is concerned with the spiritual, physical and emotional. It is practiced by many Indigenous communities throughout Australia and it is also often gendered.

Women are central to maintaining a land ethics (Leopold 1949 in Rose 1988, p. 378), although this has not been made clear in the anthropology of the past (Conkey & Spector 1984, p. 13). A land ethics of care involves nurturing that informs authority and status (Bell 1983). Indigenous ethics of care practices usually involve separate practices between men and women regarding caring for country, as Bell explains:

To understand this concept of nurturance, which is so different from that of Western culture, we must look to Aboriginal religious beliefs and practices. When women hold aloft the sacred boards for their country, when they dance hands cupped upward, they state their intention and responsibility to 'grow up' country and kin. This wide-ranging and broadly based concept of nurturance is modelled on the Dreamtime experience, itself one all-creative force. For Aboriginal women, as the living descendants of this time, the physical acts of

giving birth and of lactation are important but are considered to be one individual moment in the much larger and total design of the *jukurrpa* (Dreamtime) (Bell 1983, pp. 21-22).

In this context ‘caring for country’ is a very conscious practice. It involves the processes of life, which include giving birth, lactating and raising families. It is not limited by the demarcation of spaces, such as the private/public realm embodied for women who are shaped by their domesticated spaces. This includes all women who operate inside an ethics of care that reflects the nuclear white middle class model, whether they be Indigenous or non-Indigenous. It is necessary to distinguish here between the acts of engagement with country and the systems that support this process, rather than limit this argument directly to a binary debate on racial differences, as there are unlimited differences inside Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

The complexities of kinship relations are embedded in a land ethics of care. Rose explains the interconnection between family and land in relation to the Aboriginal land rights claims of the Victoria River country (Yarralin and Lingara):

Allen Young explained to me, as he later explained to the lawyers and finally to the judge, that real traditional owners are the *ngurramarla* (‘ngurra’ means country; ‘marla’ is not productive of meaning in itself but relates to concepts of dweller; in this context, to permanent dwelling and belonging). Sometimes he identified the Dreaming creators as the *ngurramarla*, sometimes as undifferentiated sets of ancestral people/Dreamings, and sometimes his own direct ancestors. Another person in the area explained: ‘he’s the *ngurramarla* when he’s dead-to take care of the country’ (2004, p. 167).

In this context, *family* means both physical and non-physical relations who are part of the land/country. Rose claims that people are connected through relationships as much as they are connected to land, because the land breathes and needs to be cared for. If relationships between people and country share a similar weight of responsibility to those between people, then here the landscape is central to many

Indigenous ethics of care models. A land ethics of care also includes managing 'sea country, land country or sky country' (Rose 1996 cited in Anderson 1998, p. 48). To honour country is to pay respects to country and this is an emotive act. The experience of being present in the landscape shapes the importance of caring for country as central to an ethics of care. Connections to country continue to be very much part of many Indigenous peoples lives, whether they are lived or whether they are re-enforced through remembering.

As a teacher in a remote Indigenous school in the central desert area of Australia I attended a range of ceremonies on the APY Lands that were connected with the 'growing up' (Bell 1983, p. 22) of children and country, as well as love ceremonies. As a result of participating in these ceremonies I began to understand and appreciate the connection the AEWs had to the children with whom we worked. The children's learning environment was not psychologically situated within a 'whitefella school' (Folds 1987), but instead embodied a far wider understanding of education in the central desert. He argued that:

Pintupi parents have a perfectly clear idea of the society into which they are socialising their children, and the personal qualities they will need to prosper within it. Their parenting is not mistaken, or perverse, merely because it does not match the expectations of outsiders. It is designed to produce adults who are good Pintupi citizens, who will be successes in their own society. It is a source of constant amazement to most whitefellas that, while Pintupi caregivers want their children to have mainstream benefits (such as a western education), they will not compromise their ability to function in their own society to gain these (2001, p. 46).

Whilst many of Folds' ideas were contested he raised points that continue to be explored today. In particular, that interconnections among kinship systems, language, community and country need to be more centrally located in learning paradigms. Learning one's kin and country remains embedded in many Indigenous ethics of care practices, because 'cultural knowledge determines how people evaluate

all of their varied relationships and actions' (*Australian Indigenous Languages* 1996, p. 61).

Galtha Rom: Theory and Practice

An understanding of this cultural knowledge is represented well in the Galtha Rom Theory. Cultural knowledge in this context also reflects the environment of a Yolgnu land ethics of care. Marika-Mununggiritj explanation of the Galtha Rom Theory was an early attempt to create a 'both ways' learning model that would respond to the needs of the students at Yirrkala Community Education Centre in February 1990. What is of interest is that the environment and the metaphors based on observations of the landscape shape the ideological make up of educational practices that would be synonymous with Yirrkala students. Marika-Mununggiritj explains:

When we talk of 'both ways' we do not have an idea of dualism. We view "both ways" in terms of Yolgnu word "garma". This is an open word used by both Yirritja and Dhuwa clans describing the format where a Yolgnu learning environment begins. Garma implies negotiation between the two moieties—the Yirritja and the Dhuwa, and the coming to agreement about what will happen in the teaching and learning in the garma episode. Some Balanda [white people] still deny that this sort of 'both ways' education is possible. They deny that it can be applied when we are in the process of its application (Marilka-Mununggiritj 1990, p. 43).

The Dhuwa and Yirritja, as explained by Marika-Mununggiritj, represents an ethics of care that is connected to country and kin: 'In the Dhuwa tradition we use the metaphor of *Milingurr* or *Gapu* (water)...It is renewed in individual *marrngal* (inside heads, minds, brain)' (Marilka-Mununggiritj 1990, p. 48). This metaphor is an excellent way to demonstrate the transmission of knowledge; it is a pedagogy that reflects the environment of the students attending the school. '*Milngurr* is the fundamental principle of teaching and learning' (Marika-Mununggiritj 1990, p. 48):

When the tide is high the water rises to its full. When the tide goes out the water reduces its capacity. In the same way *Milngurr* ebbs and flows. In this way the Dhuwa and Yirritja sides of Yolngu life work together. And in this way Balanda and Yolngu traditions can work together. There must be balance, if not either one will be stronger and will harm the other. The *Ganma* Theory about teaching and learning is Yirritja, the *Milngurr* Theory is Dhuwa (Marilka-Mununggiritj 1990, p. 48).

Marika-Mununggiritj illustrates two principles. The first is the organic nature of learning and sharing knowledge with the ebb and flow of information, and the second is the need to give space for this knowledge to be shared. This land ethics of care reflects the context of the location of Yolgnu. This model is more appropriate than a model that only reflects a white middle class ethics of care embedded in the curriculum in schools. It is therefore necessary to contextualise the way in which ethics of care operates and when the context of the environment is ignored, disregarded or omitted in the learning/teaching process an imbalance occurs. This point is explained further in the following:

Dhurrwara-wulkthun (low level of water in the water-hole) and *Melwawutj* (high level of water in the water-hole). Another way of saying this is “*Bala/lili*” (give and take; reciprocity) talking about the interactions of the tide and the spring, the fresh and salt water interactions of the *Milngurr* [ancient people]. This is an abstract Yolngu conceptual framework from the Dhuwa tradition, which can apply to theorising the teacher/learner interactions. Ebb can mean it’s full of ideas of conceptual framework in order for it to Flow out into the minds of others for them to transform their minds (Marilka-Mununggiritj 1990, p. 49).

The above describes a pedagogical framework by which manners, customs and respect for land/country are informed through metaphors that reflect the environment. This is an attempt to bridge white knowledge and Yolgnu knowledge

and pedagogy. This epistemological framework shapes a Yolgnu land ethics of care that was hoped to be achieved through ‘both ways’ education.

Kooniba on the West Coast

Caring for country is also part of the ethics of care structure at Kooniba on the West Coast, where land, identity and kinship are interconnected. The following stories represent the Coleman sisters’ story in relation to one of the Dreamings relating to their country:

The Seven Sisters story is also believed to relate to the rock holes from Pureba to Jellabinna, possibly including Koonibba, Munjela, Inila, Yumbarra, Bulgatha, an ‘un-named’ rockhole, Dinah and Jellabinna. The ‘footprints’ which can be seen in some of the rock outcrops are believed to be those of the giant and in one instance, those of Yabi Dinah. The Coleman sisters believed that the Seven Sisters story relates to the older seven Coleman sisters (i.e. Pearl and her sisters), as well as the younger six (i.e. Colleen and her sisters) and that this interpretation has been handed down from Yabi Dinah, through Melba, both tribal women. Each sister has a different story, which is all connected, to produce a larger story, relating to the Seven Sisters and the rock holes. It is believed that passing down different stories to different sisters was also a way of maintaining the whole story (Anderson 1998, p. 45).

According to Anderson, ‘the Coleman women considered themselves custodians’ (Anderson 1998, p. 48). If one is a custodian, then it is important to maintain and protect sites. The Coleman women protect and maintain the waterholes and clay pans on a regular basis. The children are also taught how to ‘clean the holes and maintain the area in the region’ (Anderson 1998, p. 48). In this way the children become acculturated to a land ethics of care. Involving children in activities of daily living such as cleaning, cooking, discussion on what is meaningful, cleaning clay pans all reflect the processes involved in an ethics of care.

This process does not conflict with Noddings' 'engrossment' and 'motivational displacement', as carers guide and instruct their child/ren. The difference is what and how things are done and what is valued. When aunts and uncles teach their children, they may also incorporate instruction about caring for country through making repeated links and connections to the land and kin. Therefore, the difference of enactment occurs through what knowledge is valued and transferred. This has serious implications for Indigenous students who have been brought up in an extended family that is shaped by a land ethics of care. At the same time, as some of the AEWs raised in interviews, they have to face the issues of sexual and/or family violence when Indigenous ethics of care breaks down.

Not all Indigenous people maintain land or extended family models as central to their ethics of care practices. Despite this, there are still many associations and references to country that are common knowledge. For example:

In the urban context, children face the conflicts engendered by being Aboriginal in a sea of non-Aborigines. One way to gain strength and confidence to face this challenge is to know where their parents' ancestral land is located, and where they were born. Even in the urban context, there is a preoccupation with education about identity, home and country, and it is invariably older people who fulfil this function (Gray, Trompf & Houston 1994, p. 118).

Every experience of raising children is different. Maud (an Indigenous parent from Adelaide) for example, feels that 'there are no special Aboriginal behaviours; however, 'there are important values, kinship obligations, respect for older people, sharing with others' (cited in Groome 1990, p. 48). AEWs represent and reinforce these at school. It is the shared experiences that provide AEWs with a deeper understanding and empathy that informs their ethics of care practices in the school environment. This is part of the necessary border pedagogy that AEWs perform in schools that reinforces positive identity, particularly in the context where 'border pedagogy must provide the conditions for students to engage in cultural remapping as a form of resistance' (Giroux 2005, p. 25). AEWs' presence in schools creates a sense of belonging that replicates the extended family network. Groome argues:

Parents were concerned to preserve and extend the cultural identity of their children. Many saw the need to maintain identity as a positive and pro-active means of belonging and pride, and not to allow it to become a negative reaction, merely a defensive response against prejudice...Most of the parents saw the home as a strategic place for inducting children into the culture. The pattern of this induction appeared to be a subtle re-enforcement of values and the continual reminders of kin affiliations, through continuing encounters with family members (1990, p. 48).

This reinforcement plays a key role in confidence building, a reaffirmation of identity and a feeling of belonging. As demonstrated by the AEWs in Chapter Six, these acts of emotional labour positioned in an Indigenous ethics of care model were significant for Indigenous students. 'Community is essential for reconstructing ideology, as it may provide the context and validation for rejecting negative stereotypes and developing new ways of knowing' (Thompson 1988, p. 532). The term community itself carries weight and significance for all people. However, how we engage in community is often significantly different between Indigenous groups who operate within an extended family and those from a white middle class nuclear family background.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted areas of difference between white and Indigenous ethics of care. More importantly, through the analysis of the variation between extended family models and nuclear models, this chapter reveals the substantial disadvantages experienced as a result of difference, and how white ethics of care is normalised and legalised. Indirect discrimination occurs when AEWs' work and ethics of care practices are made absent or denied recognition inside the field of education.

AEWs' expression of ethics of care through emotional labour goes by unseen by non-Indigenous teachers. Yet, to achieve and maintain 'connectedness' with students, they have to perform emotional labour both in and outside of school hours.

Conversely, many non-Indigenous teachers perform emotional labour inside classrooms alone and often share Noddings' universalist understanding of care that is sanctioned by the Primary Care Giver presumption. The ethics of care practices conducted by AEWs are denied recognition because white ethics of care is the normative model under which schools operate.

As a result of the privilege of whiteness, an ethics of care that is grounded in country, or living with aunts/uncles or grandmother in an extended family model is marginalised and positioned negatively, both legally and socially. Indirect discrimination practices towards Indigenous ethics of care most commonly occur through ignorance. In particular, the ignorance around AEWs' roles and their involvement with communities often leads to their invisibility in schools. Their role is underestimated in the eyes of non-Indigenous teachers as their emotional labour is not identified as work.

Chapter Eight discusses how the complex role of care has been constructed through social trends in Australia. It unpacks how the role of care is associated with the mother/teacher role and is framed in particular ways. Race, class and gender in Australia has, in fact, shaped the views of many non-Indigenous teachers who apply these patterns and perceptions to their work. This limits their understanding of the diversity of Indigenous ethics of care and the complex roles and responsibilities of AEWs.

Chapter 8: AEWs and the social structure: Occupying the intersections between race, class and gender.

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the history and construction of white ethics of care by white feminist theorists (Gilligan 1982; Baier 1985; Noddings 1984, 2001). These white feminists constructed a moral philosophical framework for care, and called it an ethics of care. Their aims were to challenge the privilege of the masculinised construct of justice and develop a woman-centred philosophy of care that would be commensurate with the status of justice in liberal theory and law. The ontological basis of this theory was founded on a universalist belief that all women shared this aim. As revealed in the previous chapter, Indigenous ethics of care is diverse, but are often grounded in the extended family model. Any theoretical framework that is based on liberalism's premise of individualism, such as the aforementioned white ethics of care, will by definition exclude community/extended family models of care.

Ethics of care that is couched inside the language of a nuclear and gendered family operates as a form of whiteness. However, white feminist theorists seem to have 'little or no understanding of white supremacy as a racial politic, of the psychological impact of class, of their political status within a racist, sexist, capitalist state' (hooks 2000, p. 133). This form of ignorance impacts on AEWs' daily life in their interactions with non-Indigenous teachers when the latter invoke a white ethics of care model as a universal framework for pedagogy and practice in education in Australia.

The performance of gendered whiteness and its operation through white ethics of care will be discussed in this chapter. In particular, there will be a focus on behaviour management in schools and the act of resolving conflict inside a white ethics of care framework. The framework of conflict resolution in schools is a gendered patriarchal site as women are identified as the ones who resolve conflict

inside a caring paradigm. In schools, the final authority over the conflict is deferred to those in power who are largely male principals and administrators. White ethics of care applies moral reasoning that is couched in emotive and gendered language regarding conflict resolution. Behaviour management is used to demonstrate gendered whiteness in white ethics of care. The section on behaviour management reveals how it generates discord for AEWs when they are stretched between the school and the community protocols regarding conflict resolution.

The gendered division of the teaching force and the debate regarding the ‘feminised’ state of education in primary schools is raised in the first section of this chapter. This section is used to reveal the subordinated status of both non-Indigenous teachers and AEWs who are female due their association with ‘women’s work’ in primary schools. The second section of this chapter outlines the historical relationship between white women and Indigenous women who occupied a shared domesticated site. This is used as an analogous situation to AEWs current role, as Indigenous women were the incommensurate binary opposite, in the form of a working class servant or low paid domestic, to the middle class white woman (Grimshaw et.al, 1994, p. 144). The female AEW and the female non-Indigenous teacher relationship routinely mirrors this binary role which has become normalised in schools. The intersections between gender and the habitus of the white middle class that functions through whiteness will be examined as the third intersection of discrimination for AEWs who are women.

The final section of this chapter will discuss the micro-politics among AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers who are females. A link between conflict resolution and ethics of care is made to demonstrate how white ethics of care is privileged in the micro-politics between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers. This section demonstrates the problems associated with discordant ethics of care frameworks, that is, between the school and the community, in relation to AEWs’ roles. To begin however, it is important to outline the gendered state of education.

The primary school as a gendered site

AEWs share the same gender ratio as non-Indigenous teachers in schools. In 1994, 80.2% of AEWs were women (Buckskin & Hignett 1994, p. 32) and this had declined by 2005 to approximately 70% (Aboriginal Education Unit n. d.). The majority of AEWs work in primary schools. In 1994, 22% of primary school teachers were male (with only a slight decrease of approximately 1%) to 2004 (Smith 2004, p.160). This reflects the gendered business of education in primary.

AEWs share the same gendered fate as non-Indigenous female teachers in primary schools. AEWs' role in early childhood and primary school is considered 'women's business' and the perception that primary school teaching is 'women's work' (Whitehead 2000, p. 2; Smith 2004, p. 74) is normalised through the language and ideologies of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men. John, an Indigenous teacher, (2001, interview, 4 May) who worked in an Independent school in the APY Lands, stated that young men were removed from school for a number of reasons that were couched in gender and cultural terms:

For the female side of things, as we have so many females who have gone on to better things. Once they get exposed to the teaching practice they think this is great and they can help their people and away they go. But with the male side of things there is a big shortage of male staff at the moment because of men's business. The young boys get pulled out of school and education stops...I want to talk to some of the elders in the community. I had some brilliant boys in the community and they went away to men's business and now they have become men and they think they can't come to school-the education stops and they are brilliant boys. I can't change that because that is the cultural side of things (John, 2001, interview 4 May).

This intersection of culture and gender reveals the limitations placed on the possibilities of education as a result of the perpetuated idea that schools are women's domain. As a consequence, education becomes a contracted site by its association with 'women's work'. Indigenous women who are AEWs on the APY Lands are

seen to have found their employment niche, but they are lowly paid and have low status in the school. Until recently their wages paralleled unemployment benefits, but they continuously manage conflict resolutions, truancy and attend to families' and students' needs. Whilst employment in the school may be seen as carrying its own status in the community, and be seen as something that men cannot access due to the gendered roles in primary school, AEWs' work remains shaped by the 'multiplicative nature of ... race x class x gender' (Brewer 1993, p. 16).

The perpetuation of gendered education is evident in teacher education programs in universities that reflect the values of the white middle class and is also represented in government reports, such as the Junior Secondary Review (JSR) that reproduce and normalise the white middle class female teacher as an appropriate nurturing pedagogue for children in primary schools (Whitehead 2000). These constructions have entered the commonsense of many professionals who perpetuate the gendered nature of schooling uncritically. A previous non-Indigenous Superintendent of Anangu education re-affirms this gender divide in relation to the gendered construction of teaching on the APY Lands:

Like, you've got in schools AEWs, but how many blokes are there?
Why aren't there blokes there? What are guys doing about it?
Because if you don't have blokes there, then kids will perceive it as women's place. Boys say stuff this, I am a man now and you have to keep pushing it...You need after hours, so you need teachers with different conditions, then you have to go through the Law (Johnson, 2005, interview, 3 April).

His suggestion of after hours schooling hints at an expanded educational framework, but the issue of gender remains unexamined. The anomaly in this debate occurs when wage increases, as in 2005, led to a 10% increase of male AEWs. Moreover, Anangu Teaching Assistants (previous name of AEWs) on the APY Lands worked in schools in the 1940s as outlined in Chapter Two (Edwards & Underwood 2006, p. 108).

It is clear that inequality remains as a result of the construction of schooling as a gendered location. There is also evidence to suggest that gendered whiteness operates in schools when female non-Indigenous teachers demarcate their lines of power over AEWs based on race. The following examines the historical relationship between white middle class women and Indigenous servants and domestic labourers. This brief outline is necessary as the past informs the present (Whitehead 2000). This section also provides the backdrop for a later discussion regarding the micro-politics between AEWs and non-Indigenous female teachers.

The impact of colonial relationships: AEWs as servants in primary schools

Low paid or unpaid domestic Indigenous labourers were used in Australia to develop the colony. Women played a significant role in this development where ‘white women generally stood in the relationship of employer to black women, who performed a wide range of domestic labour for them’ (Grimshaw et al., 1994, p. 144). Aboriginal girls who were taken from their families between 1915-1965 generally became low paid domestic workers for white middle class women (*Bringing Them Home* 1997).

When Aboriginal girls and women were sent into domestic service, they found that the “boss” was almost invariably a female. White female employees also designated their white domestics as unequal, but Black workers were held in even lower regard. At times, close bonds did develop between white and Black women, but the boundaries of the unequal relationship were clearly defined by the former along the lines of class and race (Huggins 1988, p. 29).

Dixson (1990) argues that white women built a national identity on the creation of a white gendered middle class. This developed through the notion of female ‘ultrarespectability and ultradomesticity’ (Dixson 1990, p. 19). The urge to expunge the convict past and Indigeniety coincided with the desire to re-create a pure white middle class woman; thus generating their status and prestige in a geographically isolated land. The Indigenous domestic servant was constructed as incapable because of her Indigeniety. 'Aboriginal incapacity' was used to exclude Indigenous

people ‘from full participation in economic and political spheres’ (McConaghy 2000, p. 67) and was ‘underpinned by ideas associated with biological inferiority, impurity and pollution’ (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. 27).

This shaping of national identity through class and race was an active process. This practice continues to be played out in a range of ways. Dixon argues that constructions of gender and class involved white middle class women who were ‘active historical agents colluding in class projects - about as consciously as actors ever execute their projects’ (1990, p. 19). These constructions of gender and class endure in the micro-politics in schools between female AEWs and female non-Indigenous teachers. This relationship emerges as a neo-colonial relationship; the white female employee of Indigenous domestic servants in a contemporary institutionalised location. The enculturation of the views and values of the non-Indigenous teacher is one aspect of neo-colonialism (Altbach 1995, p. 453), as are the power relations between female AEWs and female non-Indigenous teachers. AEWs, who are largely women, often experience this neo-colonial relationship in the classroom through the nexus of race, class and gender. Although some positive relationships form between AEWs and non-Indigenous female teachers, this nexus defines the default position for these relationships.

AEWs are routinely reduced to the status of domestic workers for the non-Indigenous teacher. One of the most common complaints by AEWs is that ‘I am not a gofer’ (Jane, 2002, interview, 15 June); ‘I am not a lackey’ (Lucy, 2002, interview 1 June); ‘I don’t want to be seen as a servant, or the assistant, or the educational slave, the disposable staff member’(Matthew, 2002, interview, 5 April). Both men and women who are AEWs resist this status. However, the power of neo-colonialism in the form of educational frameworks and knowledge further seals AEWs’ low status. Status is maintained through the systems of knowledge that privilege academic knowledge as the most superior form of knowledge and is demarcated through the binary of the educated middle class professional from the working class manual or practical worker. The response to this is outlined by a district AEW who stated that she felt that:

They oversee us, and I believe that's because of who we are. Because we don't have that academic to the level that they think we should of, I find that's also a part of it (racism) as well as the Aboriginality (Williams & Thorpe 2003, p. 77).

Indigenous knowledges are not included holistically in the school curriculum and the combination of a gendered role and a perceived lack of education routinely provide fertile ground for the mis-recognition and mis-treatment of AEWs in schools. The micro-politics between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers in classrooms are shaped by the professional status of non-Indigenous teachers. Non-Indigenous teachers' frame of reference as professionals includes a folklore that they uphold the institutional framework as torch bearers of truth and knowledge. This folklore has a specific gendered tradition that emerged during the colonial period. Harper argues that white middle class British women first tended to the 'working-class women in religion, morality and hygiene but with imperialism her sphere expanded to anywhere the British flag was flying' (Harper 2002, p. 19).

Harper's (2000) work explores the problematics of white women teachers in remote Australian and Canadian Indigenous communities. As gatekeepers of the institutional framework, non-Indigenous teachers feel obliged to ensure that children are cared for, managed and controlled. AEWs' role is therefore relegated to following non-Indigenous teachers' authority, which generally leads to a mis-treatment of AEWs in the delegation of tasks that include photocopying and routine manual labour, such as cleaning up or setting up activities on behalf of the non-Indigenous teacher. Non-Indigenous teachers performance reflect their training, where they are socialised by the externally structured systems that make up the institution of education. Most teacher education training institutions reflect middle class values, norms and practices (Whitehead 2000). However, it is the enactment of controlling and managing AEWs that is embodied internally in the form of western values and norms (MacGill 2003) which weave the fabric of neo-colonial relationships. It is in the controlling of the classroom space that the micro-politics occurs between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers that are marked along racial and class lines. Power operates in this location as it has done historically. Power operates through a web of interactions between non-Indigenous teachers and AEWs

whose subjectivities are shaped by the systemic formations of patriarchy and its correlating institutional structures.

The impact of the mothering discourse: AEWs as mammy in primary schools

The intersections between class, race and gender operate synergistically. As discussed above, white women shaped a national identity through ‘ultrarespectability and ultradomesticity’ (Dixson 1990, p. 19); Indigeneity operated as the classed and raced Other from this location. Schools are institutionally and socially shaped by these historical constructions that re-enforce gendered and classed whiteness. Whitehead (2000, p. 9) argues that the discourses of care in primary schools, where most AEWs work, are based on constructs of the white middle class. In her analysis of the report of the *Junior Secondary Review (JSR)* she challenged the historically constructed gendered space of the primary school:

The JSR identifies interpersonal nurturance and care as the core construct in primary schools and it claims that junior primary classrooms in particular are like nuclear families, albeit with one parent, the teacher. Teaching in this context is contextualised as an extension of mothering. It ‘relies on “natural” female characteristics and talents’ rather than being intellectual work (Miller 1996 cited in Whitehead 2000, p. 2).

The good mother legitimated and supported the authority of the school, as the school was and continues to perpetuate white middle class values through white ethics of care. The good mother and wife have an extensive history. Teaching runs in parallel with the gendered constructions of the good mother/ wife that are played out through white ethics of care. White ethics of care conducted by non-Indigenous female teachers was and continues to be identified as the naturalised state of pedagogy in primary schools where AEWs work. Harper (2000) accords that non-Indigenous female teachers in primary schools see themselves as an extension of the mothering role inside the classroom.

Walkerdine states when children are seen as problematic the mother's subjectivity comes under scrutiny if they do not support the teacher (1998, p. 22), as they are seen to be disciplining their child inappropriately. The discourse of mothering (Manne 2005) re-enforces white ethics of care ideologies that question any variation to its normative set of beliefs. This is enacted when non-Indigenous female teachers decide whether a child is normal. They have the privilege and authority to construct a child as environmentally or culturally deprived if the student does not engage with the non-Indigenous teacher or acts inappropriately. Stereotypes regarding environmental or cultural deprivation lingers in education from the Assimilation era (Malin & Maidment 2003). Indigenous parents argue that non-Indigenous teachers have 'insufficient cultural awareness and lack understanding of the social barriers to Aboriginal children's learning' (2003, p. 91). Malin, Campbell and Agius (1996) examine the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous child rearing practices. They observed child rearing practices based on a study over four years including interviews and video footage of activities, such as an Indigenous and a non-Indigenous mother having a picnic with their children in a park. Dorothy, a Nunga Indigenous woman who was the mother of six children and had trained as an AEW observed that the non-Indigenous mother, Ann and mother of four had different child rearing practices. This sentiment was also felt by Ann (1996, p. 43).

Malin, Campbell and Agius acknowledge that their findings are generalisations, but Campbell and Agius as researchers and Indigenous mothers substantiated that the values commonly held in Indigenous child rearing practices include encouraging children to be 'independent, self-regulating and self-reliant' (1996, p. 47). Indigenous children are also expected to look after kin at an early age and Indigenous parents and adult members of the extended family use 'selective attention, non-intervention, modelling and loaded conversation' (Malin, Campbell & Agius 1996, p. 47) as behaviour management strategies. The use of 'teasing and scaring' were also used to develop emotional resilience in order to prepare children for racism (Malin, Campbell & Agius 1996, p. 47). Ann saw Dorothy's child rearing techniques as inappropriately supervised and Dorothy perceived Ann's behaviour management strategies as stressful as she had to have things 'just right' (Malin, Campbell & Agius 1996, p. 44). Both viewed each others caring and child rearing practices as different

from their own, however due to the privilege of white ethics of care, Ann's child rearing practices are synonymous with those practised in schools.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argue that the school is one of the main places where hegemonic behaviour management practices perpetuate class based structures. White ethics of care practices such as behaviour management are used to inculcate good habits, which is embedded in schools. Cultural capital is transmitted through the acculturation of 'normal' white middle class behaviour in schools (Wadham, Pudsey & Boyd 2007, p. 84). Porter further highlights how hegemonic practices are created through the hierarchy of educational achievement, which is based on the habitus of the middle and upper classes:

... not only does the education system maintain and stabilise the class structure but that it does this, together with the family, by inculcating within the growing child a system of dispositions, or 'habitus' which will facilitate the ability to behave in the class-appropriate ways in later life. Furthermore, the kinds of acceptable knowledge, attitudes and behaviour that belong to the upper classes are the same as those that are increasingly required the higher one goes in the educational system. Conversely, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour that are prevalent in the lower classes are increasingly less acceptable within the education system the further up one goes. In addition schools mask their arbitrary nature and appear 'natural' – they just reward merit —thus legitimating not only themselves but the whole social structure as well (Porter 1986, p. 4).

AEWs perceived lack of appropriate habitus and social capital is seen as a deficit by many non-Indigenous teachers. Consequently, many AEWs conduct business outside of school hours or refrain from seeking collegial support in the staff room. 'School issues are the school issues. Then when you get home I leave this fence, it is a different feeling. People may come up to me for this or that help, but it is a totally different feeling from there' (Lucy, 2002, interview, 1 June). Or, they do not enter the staff room: 'A lot of AEWs don't go into the staffroom. I think they should because it is in the staff room that you hear the true shit that comes out of people's

mouth' (Alison, 2004, interview, 6 July). 'The true shit that comes out of people's mouths' is the derogatory treatment of the constructed Other (Said 1978); that is, AEWs and Indigenous students who do not perform the habitus of the school that includes a strict adherence to behaviour management guidelines. The white middle class habitus operates in the classroom and is upheld in the staff room where it is self-regulated and constantly under surveillance. In this way white pedagogy and practice moves horizontally through schools into the wider community as a normative ontological model. It is alive in the minds of those that enact it, and of those who resist it. However this thesis will not explore this phenomenological perspective, but limit it to the patterns that serve to make AEWs either invisible or hypervisible in the eyes of non-Indigenous teachers and principals. This paradox of seeing AEWs in this way occurs through the normative structures inherent in the white middle class.

The privilege of white ethics of care is to construct the rules for behaviour in particular ways that serve to perpetuate the white middle class and raced habitus of the school. This practice is the foundation of the inception of mass schooling and as Walkerdine argues:

The school was the arena for the development of one set of techniques for "disciplining" the population. The emergence first of popular and then compulsory schooling related specifically to the problems of crime and poverty...Schooling was seen as one way to ensure the development of "good habits" which would therefore alleviate these twin problems...Education was developed historically into a place where they used pedagogy "according to nature" (1992, pp.16-17).

Nature is used synonymously with natural which leads to the perception of that which is considered normal. Whiteness operates as a 'set of normative cultural practices' (Frankenberg 1993, p. 228). It is patterned and perpetuated through the privileging of white middle class normative behaviour. This behaviour is demarcated through a gender and racial divide inside white ethics of care, particularly in relation to AEWs' role of managing behaviour in school. This point will be clarified in the final section of this chapter.

AEWs' role was officially created to address Indigenous students' needs in recognition of a lack of synonymous caring paradigms in schools; Watts stated in *The National Workshop on Aboriginal Education* 1.2 (c) that 'the employment of suitable Aboriginal residents for liaison between school and community' (1971, p. 8) was necessary to address Indigenous students' needs. However, students' position is constructed inside a deprivation framework, constrained by the boundaries of white ethics of care and controlled by the authority of the non-Indigenous teacher. AEWs' role is limited by their gendered and racially differentiated status that is commonly played out in schools in essentialist terms. Lucy resists this and she argues that:

I believe Aboriginal kids should be treated as any other kid in your school. I think that it should be highlighted because that is where a lot of AEWs - sometimes that is their only role. To do home visits. Every day-or chase kids - because we have a lot of truanting kids- that's not right (Lucy, 2002, interview, 1 June).

AEWs are required to manage truancy and solve crises for Indigenous students as non-Indigenous teachers do with non-Indigenous students, despite that being the responsibility of the non-Indigenous teacher. AEWs' emotional labour is not measured as it is constructed outside of the school and is unseen in the classroom. AEWs' care for the community that they are required to maintain in order to manage students, is unseen and is not measured within the framework of the school.

Instead, AEWs are expected to perform roles that reflect the mammy. The mammy originally looked after white children. The mammy was a domestic slave whose image 'serves to replicate the superior white/inferior black relationships, exactly the intention behind the creation of the mammy image' (Good 2000, p.111). This metaphor is extended here to respond to the way in which AEWs are expected to acculturate Indigenous students in ways that reflect the white middle class habitus. Good argues that:

The mammy image is important because its aim is to shape black women's behaviour not only as women but also as mothers - that is,

black women are encouraged to transmit to their own children the deference behaviour they exhibit as they live out the mammy role. By teaching black children their assigned “place” in white power structures, black women who internalise the mammy image potentially become effective conduits for perpetuating racial oppression. Therefore, the mammy image is an extremely important psychological means by which the white dominant culture can keep present AND future black women subservient, docile, and accepting of their racial and gender oppression (2000, p. 111).

Johnson states that the image of the mammy is ‘prominent in Western cultural memory’ (1994, p. 412) and hooks argues that the mammy is expected to ‘nurture’ and ‘sustain’ others (cited in Johnson 1994, p. 413). They are seen as the ‘carer who is expected to care’ as that is seen as their ordained station in life. In much the same way non-Indigenous teachers expect AEWs to care for Indigenous students in school.

AEWs are expected to inculcate good habits which reflect the white middle-class. When Indigenous students resist the processes of normalisation that occur in the classroom, AEWs are expected to manage what is identified as poor behaviour. Behaviour issues are relegated to AEWs and often they are identified as educational police by members of the Indigenous community.

AEWs as educational police

AEWs are *requested* to manage Indigenous student’s behaviour when they step outside the boundaries of ‘normal behaviour’. As designated behaviour managers AEWs are expected to restrict and discipline students in particular ways that reflect the standards of the school. AEWs are simultaneously not granted control of non-Indigenous students’ behaviour thereby limiting their role within a culturally constructed location. AEWs routinely resist this by managing and monitoring behaviour by connecting to the parents in the community:

I drive kids home. Parents think their kids have done something wrong, but I say no-little Johnny has done something good-so their

parents, grandparents, aunts-I'm bringing them home to show them good. Show them the balance of good and bad (James, 2004, interview, 6 July).

Effort by AEWs is made to manage the on-going problem of the perception of Indigenous students in schools. This practice informs the community service necessary to build social capital that can be used when managing behaviour. However, this is a difficult balance to strike, as AEWs can be perceived as occupational police by the community. This image of the police has its own history in Indigenous communities and is one that is used to offend AEWs. The role of 'education police' puts AEWs at risk of being charged as 'bringing up children as white fellas' (cited in Williams & Thorpe 2003, p. 87). AEWs negotiate within these borders. The expectation that AEWs will manage Indigenous students is framed by 'a different tone...used by Principals and teachers to ask [AEWs] to do things that [are] outside their role' (Williams & Thorpe 2003, p. 87). The complexities of managing behaviour in discordant caring paradigms are not seen by many non-Indigenous teachers and this absence of recognition leads to high rates of work-related injury and illness (Williams & Thorpe 2003, p. 84). Stress due to the internal and unseen conflicts that AEWs are left to resolve. At times AEWs' role to manage conflict stands beyond their training and job specification:

Sometimes you are at risk of not just physical risk. Sometimes this was the case when you got abused and threatened, even though I have had that happen to me once and Aboriginal people wanted me sacked because they believed that I was going against them. It was an emotional thing too. It was really hard, I probably reckon my blood pressure is due to my work (Metropolitan AEW 2003 cited in Williams & Thorpe 2003, p. 84).

The emotional labour conducted by AEWs is compounded for women in home visits as raised in Chapter Six. The majority of the women who were AEWs felt unsafe doing home visits in their attempts to resolve conflicts. The risks faced by many AEWs are of serious concern:

Another one we got called to was a parent that threatened the school and said that they were gonna come in and smash the place up. The guy that I was with he knew this person, so we both went into the school and he met the guy and he calmed him down...I had my life threatened at work by a parent, a relative actually, and he rang my superintended up and told him outrageous stories and said that he was going to kill me (Metropolitan AEW 2003 cited in Williams & Thorpe 2003, p. 84).

These types of experiences are unseen by non-Indigenous teachers in the school who interact with AEWs often without consideration of the complexity of their AEWs in and liaison with the community. White ethics of care operates through the advantage of not having to be concerned; that is, through the privileges of ignorance and simultaneously of not having to know. The gendered whiteness inherent in the micro-politics between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers in primary schools has been institutionally ignored.

The roles of AEWs are further limited when resolving conflict in schools, as they are not granted Duty of Care. Such a legal status inside the school is discussed in Chapter Nine in relation to indirect-discrimination. However, the discursive regimes of whiteness have substantiated a general mistrust of AEWs' roles and thereby delegitimizes any authority granted in the job description. As Jodi, an AEW located in a metropolitan area, states:

I think one stumbling block I really have is the fact that we do not have Duty of Care. It still restricts us from doing our job. I had a situation where I wanted to get a break dancer in at lunch time for the kids-and I got thrown at me -you don't have Duty of Care. I thought well... (Jodi, 2003 interview, 24 June).

This reflects McConaghy's point raised earlier regarding the notion of 'Aboriginal incapacity' (2000, p. 67) that was used to justify the restriction of Indigenous people from parity of participation in the workforce as discussed in the following chapters.

These methods of control stem from the colonial master/slave relationship that framed the deficit/deprivation theories of education.

Godfrey et al. (1998) argues that many AEWs also use the language of cultural deficit/deprivation theories themselves in regard to Indigenous students, but this discounts that in fact, AEWs are operating in far more complex sites when using conflict resolution strategies. In most cases, the interviews explored by Godfrey et al. (1998) may borrow the language of deficit theory to code switch for the sake of the non-Indigenous teacher, thereby satiating a sense of connection with them. Arguably, AEWs' aim to resolve conflict or sites of dissonance between non-Indigenous teachers and students overrules these linguistic issues; they may also carry different meaning to the same term used by a non-Indigenous teacher (NADRAC 2006, p. 12). Instead, counter-hegemonic practices and resistance (Gramsci cited in Luke 1992, p. 28) by AEWs include establishing social capital in the community and resolving conflict in the community inside an Indigenous ethics of care framework. Nevertheless, the price paid by AEWs is the impact of stress on their daily lives.

AEWs as negotiators: Gendered whiteness and conflict resolution claims.

Conflict resolution is a complicated site that is situated inside ethics of care. AEWs' lack agency to respond to conflicts in schools in an Indigenous ethics of care framework. Whilst they are requested to manage student behaviour, it is expected that it will occur inside the normative framework of the school. Gendered whiteness operates through an expectation that AEWs will resolve conflict and do it in a particular way that reflects white ethics of care.

Women are identified as having a special approach to resolving conflict in white ethics of care; Gilligan argues that 'preserving actual human relationships' (Held 1989 cited in Singer 1994, p. 168) trumps a masculinised notion of justice as it is central to people caring for those whom they are responsible for, such as children. Resolving conflict in this context is articulated through the nuclear family model where, for example, a mother may ask her children to be nice to each other and

forgive each other. Usually, they are asked to say sorry and move on. This conflict resolution approach is mirrored by the non-Indigenous teacher. Any behaviour that transgresses the 'norm', such as violence or non-compliance, becomes an issue for the principal who is generally a non-Indigenous male. The frame of reference in white ethics of care is for it to be managed within the structure of a nuclear family model (which includes the non-Indigenous teacher's position as an extension of this space), and if unresolved, the conflict is handed over to the authority of the father figure or the law/principal. In this case, conflict resolution is structured along gendered lines where women are expected to manage conflict inside the paradigm of ethics of care. Obligatory kindness and sensitivity is encouraged by the non-Indigenous mother/teacher figure. When conflict moves to a site of resistance by a student or child, the authority of the father figure/law/principle determines an end and an outcome to the conflict.

There is scant recognition on an institutional level of the complexities of conflict resolution in extended family models. Conflict resolution is often identified as a community issue rather than positioned as isolated incidences performed by certain in-compliant children/people to be resolved by an authoritarian figure (Braybrook 2004). Folds argues that Pintupi parents generally express no 'overt discipline or control where the will of one generation is pitted against that of the next' (2001, p. 46). Shaming and telling stories rather than directly reprimanding children is common across Indigenous communities. Although reprimanding directly is also common when for example, 'children playing on the roofs of settlement buildings rarely provoke adults to intervene, even though they would not only be grief-stricken, but also severely punished by other relatives, if an injury occurred (Folds 2001, p. 46).

Conflict resolution in western culture operates along a nuclear family and gendered continuum where the mother or non-Indigenous teacher will resolve the initial stages of conflict inside the language of an emotional landscape and will be dealt with by the authority of a patriarch (authoritative figure/the law) if the student/child refuses to acquiesce. Whilst white ethics of care theorists, such as Gilligan (1982) and Baier (1985) challenged the justice/male versus emotional/female dichotomy, but in attempting to raise the status of women's caring role they restricted the debate to

attributing emotion to the field of women. Whereas men were assigned the role of controllers and thereby naturalising these constructed gendered positions. This parallels the 'feminisation' of the teaching force debate discussed earlier in this chapter. Held states:

Rather than interpreting moral problems in terms of what could be handled by applying abstract rules of justice to particular cases, many of the women studied by Gilligan tended to be more concerned with preserving actual human relationships, and with expressing care for those for whom they felt responsible (Held 1989 cited in Singer 1994, p. 168).

Preserving human relationships is considered here to be an art form that is gendered. It is positioned as a feminised emotional response to conflict; yet generally the conflicts of concern are couched in the private site and concern children. Moreover, the frame of reference in white ethics of care is constructed inside liberalism; the atomistic individual who dictates right from wrong in terms of habitus and appropriate behaviour. The frame of reference for many Indigenous ethics of care models is community, who resolve conflict on multiple fronts inside an extended family model, often conducted publicly. Alison articulates the complex issues that AEWs deal with day by day:

I was working 32 hours and not getting the money for the job. Most of my work was after hours and before. Teachers may have expected or schools may expect that AEWs need to work within the time frame of those hours but it doesn't work that way. Every time I tried to contact the parents I had to phone their office. Or I would have to search them out and I had to know. The art of having successful students or having parents interacting in whatever school stuff would happen was that I actually had to go and visit and sit and have a cup of coffee. I had to follow protocol. I couldn't just go in. Teachers wanted to meet and go in and demand. I wouldn't do that. I know what the people have gone through. I know their history. I wasn't going to demean or make people feel funny or try and make out that I

was better because I wasn't. I would have cups of coffee and tea and I walk the talk like a Murri and, 'You fellas, what you up to?' So I wouldn't go in and think I was hot shit. If that makes sense. If I couldn't do it, if I didn't succeed, or I had been working behind the scene, or it wasn't done there or then the AERT [Aboriginal Education Resource Teacher] would go out and point the finger and the person at the door would say, 'What you want bitch?' I was invited in at the door to have a cup of coffee and tea and have a laugh and carry on a bit. Like family stuff. The AERT was left at the door. So she couldn't or he, it was she, she couldn't get her foot in without me. I thought nup. Sometimes I wanted to be protective and I didn't want to take her with me (Alison, 2004, interview 11 February).

To maintain enough community status to resolve conflicts when they arise, AEWs use strategies that stem from a frame of reference that includes trust and an understanding of context. An understanding of context is significant, as it provides the opportunities to resolve conflict appropriately inside the community. This demonstrates an approach to managing conflict often not required by non-Indigenous teachers in schools because they are structurally supported by the authority of the institutional framework. Operating from a standpoint that reflects Indigenous epistemologies that included the notion of trust was present in all the interviews with AEWs. However, in the quote above, trust is not established by the female AERT and Alison's resistance to her was couched in protection for the mother and the community with which she worked. Conflict resolution therefore becomes far more complex inside extended family contexts that are raced and classed.

The focus on gender in white ethics of care regarding the states of men's control and women's nurturing continues to be naturalised in schooling in Australia (Whitehead 2000). Investigation into the way gender intersects with whiteness in schools is examined in the following. Held argues that care displayed in conflict resolution is constructed as intuitive rather than shaped by race and class:

The caring relationships important to feminist morality cannot be understood in terms of abstract rules or moral reasoning. And the

‘weighing’ so often needed between the conflicting claims of some relationships and others cannot be settled by deduction or rational calculation. A feminist ethic will not just acknowledge emotion, as do Utilitarians, as giving us the objectives towards which moral rationality can direct us. It will embrace emotion as providing at least a partial basis from morality itself, and for moral understanding (Held cited in Singer 1994, p. 169).

The ‘weighing up’ used in conflict resolution is the site to examine here. ‘Weighing up’ in the context of resolving conflict inside an emotive based model depends on who is doing the ‘weighing up’. When it is conducted inside a white ethics of care model the non-Indigenous teacher will privilege those that demonstrate recognisable habitus. The ‘weighing up’ of conflict claims by AEWs are not granted the privilege of authority in schools to resolve conflict as they are positioned as employees of the school and therefore are forced to rely on the hierarchical power relations that govern the final resolution regarding conflict. There is no space to practise conflict resolution within an Indigenous ethics of care framework in schools. This is signified by the extent to which AEWs are requested, in *different tones* (Williams & Thorpe 2003, p. 87) to respond to students who have been identified as difficult. The positionality of Indigenous students who are seen as difficult and who create conflict generally emerges from the experience of being misunderstood and misrepresented at school. AEWs often share a standpoint from the 'view from below' (Davies & Seuffert 2000, p. 273) with Indigenous students and therefore often try and resolve conflict outside of the school boundaries.

The absence of cultural safety within schools leads many AEWs to resolve conflict claims outside of school. Part of their role is to go into the community, collect truant children and to resolve conflicts. As demonstrated by the female interviewees in Chapter Six, their role in this space is often violated by the combined and often conflicting expectations of the community and the school. Moreover, when conflict is addressed by AEWs, as demonstrated by Alison in the quote below, they are not granted to the privilege of their point of view being understood. Instead, AEWs’ voices are silenced and the possibilities of challenging this results in yet another site

of conflict. Based on the following conflict claim it becomes evident how gendered whiteness is privileged by the non-Indigenous principal of the school:

You pulled me into the office and you said, if those two over there, the Bursar and the people over at the canteen and they talk about the Aboriginal staff and the Aboriginal kids and how they get money – try not to worry about it too much – you know – they just don't mean it. And I said – you pull me in and explained to me and you didn't once pull them in and say how dare you - and explain about that funding and explain about the need for it – but no, it is better for you to pull me in and explain to me to be silent and not to worry about their racism. I have never forgiven you for that. I did a good job and I have never forgiven you for that. He said, for what? I said you re-enforced their racism. You didn't demand that they know...and that is what I have been talking about at every school I ask, where is the anti-racism policy, what's the stuff you want taught and I did it every day...(Alison, interview, 11 February, 2004).

The structure of the school allows for racism to operate top down, despite anti-racism policies. The non-Indigenous male principal maintains gendered whiteness through his position, authority and the process by which he privileged the two non-Indigenous women. Whiteness and gender operate through silencing such conflict when it is experienced by the AEW. This silencing becomes a form of collusion that further dis-empowers AEWs when managing conflict with Indigenous students.

AEWs are low paid workers, and therefore positioned within the working class social level. The 'entrenched folklore' about working class parents by non-Indigenous teachers means that they are perceived as parents *in situ* who are 'incapable of providing a firm foundation at home [or at school] for their children's learning' (Levin 1987, p. 274). AEWs who are women are also referenced 'in relation to a norm which is male' (Weedon 1987, p. 2), thus are limited by this incommensurate binary that, for AEWs, is further positioned by race; a 'double colonisation' (Young 1995, p. 162). This triad of subordination is systemic (Cockburn 1991, p. 1) and

means that AEWs' position in schools lacks agency even before they enter the school gate, due to the layers of race, class and gender (Brewer 1993, p. 16).

Schools are not culturally neutral spaces (Wilder 1999, p. 358). Schools create 'imagined communities' that rely on homogeneity. They 'send into symbolic exile all of Them-'the Others'- who are in some way different-'beyond the pale' (Hall 1997, p. 258). Indigenous ethics of care practices are 'beyond the pale' in schools and this reflects 'gross inequalities of power' (Hall 1997, p. 258). The hegemony of white ethics of care is normalised through institutional patterns which exclude the recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices. This signifies the cyclical pattern of whiteness that position AEWs' as illegitimate carers, and the discursive regimes that construct white ethics of care as normal is a mechanism of marginalisation (Rizvi & Crowley 1993, p. 148).

Conclusion

The intersections of race, class and gender operate on multiple levels and impact on AEWs' lives significantly. Reconciling the needs of the school, the community and Indigenous students is a daily challenge. The impact of this expectation to resolve conflict as mediators and carers can lead to high levels of stress. This stress is compounded by a complete absence of recognition of the complexities of their role as liaisons between community and school protocols. The privilege of whiteness in conflict resolution claims includes protocols that are gendered and are couched in discursive regimes that define normative behaviour. However, conflict resolution and 'healing' in Indigenous ethics of care frameworks are often defined by community protocols, whether it be 'having a cuppa' or developing social capital in the community.

AEWs' relationship to non-Indigenous teachers is demarcated along the lines of gender, class and race. Historically, white female employees hired Indigenous domestic workers. This relationship developed in conjunction with the rise of nationhood and was framed by racial superiority of white social actors. The extension of this neo-colonial relationship is played out in the everyday working

lives of AEWs. The micro-politics between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers are often based on an incommensurate relationship of power. The absence of AEWs' autonomy inside this relationship leads to the mistreatment of AEWs as behaviour managers and domestic servants.

Synonymous caring paradigms between AEWs and Indigenous students provide the glue to facilitate resolving conflict in Indigenous ethics of care framework. Due to a general lack of cultural safety in schools, AEWs need to resolve conflict inside a community context. AEWs also need to maintain enough community status to resolve conflicts when they arise, and do so through ongoing community work and a frame of reference based on trust. On the other hand, the non-Indigenous teacher has the privilege to resolve conflict in classrooms inside relationships of recognition. Such a position reflects the gendered state of non-Indigenous teachers' white ethics of care paradigm. The mother figure who manages conflict at home in a particular way is then performed and re-enforced by the non-Indigenous teacher at school. This normative paradigm provides the ground for the on-going misrecognition of AEWs' complex role in relation to conflict resolution. This is a form of indirect discrimination that will be discussed in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Nine addresses the nature of indirect discrimination and how it operates through misrecognition. It examines the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975, (Cth) in relation to the recognition of Indigenous ethics of care. Chapter Nine also links theories concerned with indirect discrimination and whiteness to unravel the impact of ignorance. It argues for greater recognition of AEWs through an understanding of parity of recognition of AEWs' work in schools by non-Indigenous teachers. The difficulties of applying the law in order to achieve justice are also canvassed through an examination of whiteness.

Chapter 9: Justice and the recognition of Indigenous ethics of care

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, AEWs have been misrepresented through constructions of race, class and gender. Whiteness and white ethics of care are privileged in schools and its 'complex set of values structures' remains normalised (Tronto 1993, p. 116). As discussed in the previous chapter, care is largely 'devalued as work' because it is aligned with 'women's work' (Tronto 1993, p. 117), which further entrenches AEWs' caring role through its alignment with gender. The intersections of race, class and gender operate synergistically and serve to limit the full extent of AEWs' roles. This chapter addresses the issue of care at the institutional level and calls for a deeper understanding of care as an 'integral moral and political concept' (Tronto 1993, p. 124), where the 'importance of care requires a paradigm shift and a redrawing of moral boundaries' (Kent 2000, p. 91).

I argue for recognition of extended family models of care at an institutional level and a postmodern ethics that moves towards 'equality within a field of difference' (Rose 1996a, p. 3) where there is a 'pluralist vision of mutual recognition between different systems' of care (Lavarach 1996 cited in Rose 1996a, p. 3). As shown previously, AEWs routinely operate within extended family models of care that require 'recognition of a special status as citizens of the postcolonial state' (Poole 2000, p. 1). A radical shift in understanding ethics of care can occur when the 'behavioural expectations associated' (Sault n. d.) with white ethics of care share the central platform of care with Indigenous models. A decentred approach which supports local needs specific to communities is the first phase toward a radical shift in the valuing of diverse ethics of care paradigms.

At present, Indigenous ethics of care is not identified as a system of appropriate care in schools. White ethics of care is normalised and its caring practices are embedded in non-Indigenous teachers' work. AEWs' role as support people and carers exists

inside this uncritically examined paradigm of whiteness. The general absence of recognition of AEWs' caring roles in schools has led to the perpetuation of indirect discrimination practices by staff in schools. There are no consequences for non-Indigenous teachers who ignore AEWs, or who do not create space to listen to AEWs. This absence of recognition expressed in Chapter Six by AEWs is entrenched by the process of misrecognition. As Fraser states: '[t]o be misrecognized...is not to suffer distorted identity or impaired subjectivity as a result of being depreciated by others. It is rather to be constituted by institutionalized patterns of cultural value in ways that prevent one from participating as a peer in social life' (2003, p. 29).

In this chapter I firstly define indirect discrimination in the context of the law and how it relates to the current position of AEWs in Australia. Secondly, the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975, (Cth) is used to highlight potential legal ramifications of discrimination against cultural practices in public spaces, such as schools. Thirdly, Fraser's definition of recognition is discussed in brief, as she argues that a shift in recognition theory is a tool that expands the 'concept of justice' (Patton 2001, p. 81). Fourthly, the politics of recognition is analysed in the context of the *same/difference* approach (Bacchi 1990). The complexities of identity politics are discussed in this section in relation to addressing indirect discrimination on a practical level. This is followed by an examination of equality of recognition and Fraser's (2003) participation of parity and status model are linked to recognition theory in general. This provides the grounds to advocate recognition of Indigenous ethics of care models, and the work AEWs conduct, on an equal footing to that of non-Indigenous teachers.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination, according to Ronalds, needs an in-depth analysis in order to determine 'whether the operation of the requirement or condition appears on the face of it to be neutral and applies equally to all persons, but in fact disadvantages a particular group' (1998, p. 36). Behrendt argues that indirect discrimination occurs in 'difference blind liberalism' (2003, p. 81), where differences are ignored and dominant culture is privileged. In Australia, this may result in limited access to

health and education, and participation in the economy. On the other hand, substantive equality is outcome-based liberalism and measures ‘equality by results and impacts rather than the formal application of the same rules’ (Behrendt 2003, p. 82).

The articulation of substantive equality emerged from the landmark US Supreme Court indirect discrimination case: *Grigg v. Duke Power Co.* (1971) 401 U.S. 423. In this case, African American employees lodged a class action against their employer, Duke Power Company. The company expected its employees to have a high school certificate and an ‘adequate’ test score in order to gain higher positions within the company. Prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 only white employees were able to attain these positions. However, after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the new requirement to fulfil such a position was a high school certificate and a successful test score. These ‘neutral’ criterion excluded African Americans from senior posts because a far higher proportion of the white males possessed the necessary requirements. African Americans were disadvantaged because they did not have the same opportunities to attain a diploma.

The Supreme Court decided that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was deficient as it lacked recognition of those groups in society who did not possess an equal starting point with the white male majority. The landmark decision made by the court was advocated as a ‘disproportionate/disparate adverse impact’ theory to assist in circumventing this inequality. Traditional liberal rights were thus exposed as inadequate and forced employers to acknowledge past discriminating practices, and to be pro-active in addressing the effects of past social and economic discrimination for which they were not directly responsible. As was stated in court:

Under the Act, practices, procedures, or tests neutral on their face, and even neutral in terms of intent, cannot be maintained if they operate to ‘freeze’ the status quo of prior discriminatory employment practices (401 U.S. 423 at 429-430).

Thus the Court expanded the limits of the Civil Rights Act by introducing a theory of substantive equality. The judge recognized that in order to achieve real equality, it must be understood that people differed in their circumstances.

The position of AEWs parallels this landmark case in relation to the ‘disproportionate/disparate adverse impact’ (*Grigg v. Duke Power Co.* (1971) 401 U.S. 423). AEWs experience indirect discrimination as a result of past policies and practices that have limited their educational opportunities. Until recently few AEWs have had the opportunity to acquire higher degrees. Institutionally and socially, educational qualifications correlate with status. The ‘neutral’ criteria by which such status valuations are constructed ignore the historical disadvantages outlined in *Grigg v. Duke Power Co.* (1971) 401 U.S. 423.

Educational institutions do not recognise Indigenous ethics of care. It could be argued that, based on Section 9(1)a of the RDA, 1975, (Cth) that an absence of recognition of such practices is a denial of a basic human right on two levels: firstly, as a lack of opportunity to acquire an education that would lead to higher education degrees. Secondly, in the form of an absence of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices, outlined in the following section.

Section 9(1)a of the RDA, 1975, (Cth)

Section 9(1)a of the RDA, 1975, (Cth) is based on Part 1, Article 1, of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and utilises the principles of indirect discrimination. The following passage explicates the term racial discrimination:

... the term “racial discrimination” shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic,

social, cultural or any other field of public life (Section 9(1)a, RDA, 1975, (Cth)).

By favouring, both explicitly and implicitly, a white ethics of care over an Indigenous ethics of care model, the Australian school system is denying AEWs the opportunity to address Indigenous students' needs. This is a form of indirect discrimination (de Plevicz 2007). This penchant for approving a white ethics of care involves adopting a 'distinction...[and] preference', 'based on race colour, descent...or ethnic origin', that has the 'effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition', 'on an equal footing', of Indigenous cultural values. Given the general application of the definition of racial discrimination under the RDA (Section 9 (4), RDA), it is not unreasonable to suggest that a right to cultural equality in relation to ethics of care may be described as a 'human right or fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life' (Section 9 (1)a, RDA).

By failing to recognise an Indigenous ethics of care, DECS (Department of Education and Children's Services) may be in breach of the concepts that underlie the RDA. The concepts may be found in Article 1.1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Ronalds 1998, p. 18). Indirect discrimination is intertwined here where AEWs experience systemic inequality through an absence of recognition in schools, as well as their historically limited to educational opportunities. Furthermore, 'hidden barriers to educational success' remain a form of indirect discrimination for both AEWs and Indigenous students (de Plevicz 2007, p. 54).

Due to the inherent whiteness of the legal system it is difficult to prove that a lack of recognition is in fact a form of race discrimination. As Nielson argues, the notion of racial discrimination is couched in 'unlikely behaviour that is the sole domain of the 'guilty'' (Nielson 2006). The complainant in the case of an AEW arguing against such acts of discrimination would be subject to the Briginshaw test. Such a test is considered a universal tool and by definition becomes conflated as a whiteness tool, where 'discrimination cannot be inferred when more probable and innocent explanations are open on the evidence' (*Western Australian in Alone v Homes West*

(1992) EOC 92-392 at 78, 789), in Nielson 2006). The prevailing conditions of whiteness inherent in the law provide an easy way out of discrimination based on the notion of innocence. In this way whiteness operates through misrecognition and leads to unseen acts of indirect discrimination. The absence of recognition on a collegial level is a violation or breach, and is felt both on a personal level and through engagement with public life, as the 'withholding of recognition can be a form of oppression' (Taylor 1994, p. 36). In this case, the withholding of recognition remains a condition of the 'position of structural superiority' of non-Indigenous teachers compared to AEWs (Thornton 1995, p. 2).

Recognition theory

Recognition in the western sense implies a 'codification in a statutory form or written form' of institutional arrangements (Davis & McGlade 2005, p. 4). The original meaning of recognition was to be 'made one of the family' (Blunden 2005). Hegel's initial theory on recognition, in its most diluted form, was to be recognised by one another as equals and this has been further developed (Fichte, Rousseau, and later liberal theorists such as Rawls and Barry; see Williams 1997 for a detailed analysis). Fraser's adaptation of recognition theory includes parity of participation through a status model. Fraser attempts to avoid fixing identities as homogenous and unchanging subjects in her status model. Fraser argues for cultural recognition through a 'post-socialist' framework (Fraser & Honneth 2003, p. 117). Issues arise in Fraser's analysis in relation to overgeneralisations of 'identity politics', but in her section of this book, she is able to 'define the axes of status subordination' (Fraser & Honneth 2003, p. 57) that operate through stereotypes.

Terms such as Indigenous ethics of care and white ethics of care also fall subject to criticisms of over-generalisations. However, as argued throughout this thesis it is necessary to highlight the axes of indirect discrimination, and to do so it is necessary to highlight patterns that emerge from care giving models that differ in certain areas. There have also been calls by elders of Indigenous communities to be given recognition of Indigenous customs and Law (O'Donoghue 1995, p. 3). Elders from the North Kimberley region, for example, argue that recognition of Indigenous Law assists in the 'transferral of Aboriginal lore to their youth and significantly

address[es] the dislocation of Aboriginal youth from their culture' (cited in Davis & McGlade 2005, p. 1). Indigenous ethics of care practices may include the extended family model or it may call for recognition of a land ethics of care.

Same/difference: A brief overview

In order to achieve recognition on an equal footing in regard to ethics of care practices, the initial stage of the process requires the acknowledgment of different needs, in particular the difference between extended and nuclear models of care. Bacchi's (1990) same/difference argument is useful in that it necessitates people are valued equally in the debate of difference. Bacchi explains that what remains important is how we 'interpret' differences and what the 'implications' of these differences are (1990, p. x). When individuals are valued and respected equally misconceptions are eradicated.

One of the greatest problems faced when using same/difference arguments is when those differences conflate into a 'difference-blind social space' (Taylor 1994, p. 40). This occurs particularly in educational and legal sites where legal arguments have historically reinforced racism through focusing on culture difference without considerations of culturally privileged groups (McRae et al. 2003, p. 417). The process of recognition is further blurred when different needs require different treatment as a form of substantive equality (McRae et al. 2003, p. 417). Behrendt argues that these needs must be contextualized in relation to the individual and the group. In order for the state and its institutions to manage the complexities of protecting the rights of the individual and the group, Behrendt outlines a 'two pronged' approach:

...the development of targeted services for specific needs and improved access to mainstream services. It requires the identification of the factors that exclude people (their Aboriginality, racial prejudice, poor and ineffective policies) and the countering of those exclusions, providing pockets for participation and inclusion as well as continually working to ensure access to mainstream services. Mechanisms for effective participation transcend the constraints of

strictly defined groups and promote a broader and more complex notion of difference by allowing the individual to organize with group affiliations. But they do not confine the individual to those groups (2003, p. 83).

The National Aboriginal Education Policy (1989) adopts the view that educational equality can only be achieved through recognizing the different backgrounds of Aboriginal students, and tailoring teaching and learning, curriculum, resources and organizational structures to address those differences. Yet, if those differences do not recognize the play of whiteness at each location, that is, difference is couched in whiteness that positions and maintains subordinated groups, then educational equality in schools is unlikely to be achieved. Fraser argues it is important to recognize the ‘two-dimensionality’ of ‘subordinated groups’ (1997, p. 19). Yet, AEWs suffer from subordination on three dimensions, that is, AEWs are positioned through ‘economic structures’ (class) and the ‘status order of society’ (Fraser 1997, p. 19), yet the status order in society has two levels; gender, and race. Race, class and gender discrimination impacts on AEWs interdependently of each other, that is ‘subordinated groups suffer both maldistribution and misrecognition in forms where neither of these injustices is an indirect effect of the other’ (Fraser 1997, p. 19). A lack of understanding regarding the tri-dimensional impact of discrimination in affirmative action policies has led to the demise of equality of recognition of AEWs in schools as outlined in the following section.

Equality of recognition

The position of Teacher Aides and the later Industrial Agreement of 1981 regarding the employment conditions of AEWs were based on affirmative action principles. The distribution of improved employment conditions was the first step, followed by further training and development for AEWs. However, as Ronalds outlines:

Laws which make certain acts of discrimination unlawful in the area of employment only address part of the issues concerning on-going inequalities in the labour market. Specific targeted programs are required to address other structural issues which support lack of equal

opportunities in employment for particular groups such as women or Aboriginal people. These types of programs are known as “affirmative action” or “equal opportunity” programs (1998, p. 210).

Whilst the premise of affirmative action may be positive it can be limited due to the framework of white institutions that does not recognise and support differences equally, despite the initial recognition of indirect discrimination outlined in the *Grigg v. Duke Power Co.* (1971) case. Behrendt’s argument for a two pronged approach can only be achieved when the institutional framework supports its employees through training and development in an understanding of whiteness. Therefore, whilst the position of AEWs is seen as necessary and creating the position reflects greater equality in the workplace, it is nevertheless necessary to examine the silent acts of exclusion that operate through a lack of recognition of AEWs by non-Indigenous teachers and principals. Affirmative action cannot transform issues concerned directly with the non-Indigenous teacher/AEW relationship that are limited by white race privilege.

This is an important debate as it also raises issues regarding essentialism, allowing recognition politics to be criticised by poststructuralists (Fraser & Honneth 2005, p. 11). Justice from a poststructuralist position is constantly deferred, and in a sense can never fully be realised (Derrida in Patton & Smith 2001, p. 82), that is, the pursuit of equality for AEWs can end in inequality when equality and justice are framed inside a field of whiteness. If for example Indigenous ethics of care models are incorporated in education, they may be represented as a homogenous concept, and many local needs will be ignored. It is necessary to have a decentralised social justice framework that incorporates difference inside pluralism where whiteness is decentred. However, in order to achieve this, it is first necessary to understand the development of recognition theory from Hegel’s original and problematic position.

Ethics of recognition stems from Hegel's work on Recognition (Anerkennung), which underpins his themes such as freedom, the master/slave relationship and ethical life (Williams 1997, p. 1). Hegel's work provides a theoretical model in relation to the recognition of personhood. Yet, his standpoint is limited due to a perceived notion of the family as gendered (Williams 1997, p. 7) and the notion of

recognition as a contract that is based on ownership of property (Williams 1997, pp. 140, 141). As Williams states: ‘The Annerkanntsein of contract involves the mutual recognition between individuals and thus incorporates a sense of legitimate and justified individuality in the rational forms of ownership’ (1997, p. 152). Thus, the contract of recognition can only be useful if recognition of personhood is understood in the light of whiteness, race, class and gender, as historically contracts were only made between white men of status. A contract of recognition could be achieved if connection to Indigenous Country was seen as equal to [white] property ownership. However, this is clearly not the case.

On the micro level, a shift is required in the asymmetrical relationship between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers. In recognition theory, their relationship is signified through the master/slave position. ‘The master is essential, substantive, while the slave is inessential, accidental. The relationship is defined by the intersubjective social shape of domination and submission...’ (Williams 1997, p. 62). The master/slave dichotomy is further rendered harmful according to Hegel’s notion that ‘the paradox of mastery is that it has “won” the recognition of a slave, whom it considers too inessential and unimportant’ (Williams 1997, p. 63). Therefore, this relationship is fuelled by a sense of futility, because the master does not value the slave’s recognition, because the slave is not recognised by the master.

Many non-Indigenous teachers ignore AEWs because they are positioned as the subordinate/slave inside the ‘status order of society’ (Fraser 1997, p. 19). This relationship is also presented by AEWs who routinely refer to their position as ‘slave and dogsbody’. Non-Indigenous teachers’ absence of recognition fuels AEWs’ low status in schools because they are perceived to hold no value to the non-Indigenous teacher. AEWs’ lack of status represents the denial of human rights, as Indigenous knowledges and ethics of care are not allocated inside the structural framework of educational settings. Such human rights issues are the concern of recognition, as Williams argues:

Right, like the concept of spirit, has its existential genesis in the process of recognition. Right without freedom is meaningless. Right is recognition of freedom, not simply as or by a particular subjective

will, but by the general will. That is why the validity and legitimacy of right are fundamentally a matter of the 'We', that is, of objective spirit. Objective spirit signifies in part the securing of freedom and right through and by means of recognition, that is *Anerkannstein*, or being-recognized. Objective spirit is the ensemble of the conditions and institutions necessary for freedom to be actual in the world (Williams 1997, p. 111).

To feel freedom in the context of relationships unbound by trans-generational stereotypes, and in social and institutional structures that are embedded in whiteness, is a human right and a matter of justice. Movement along the continuum towards equality of recognition can only occur through deeper understandings of the socio-historical constructions that have been generated through the binary of black and white Australia. The negative stereotypes used to define Indigenous peoples, have entrenched AEWs' lowered status in schools. Recognition of identity is a matter of justice, as Fraser states:

To view recognition as a matter of justice is to treat it as an issue of *social status*. This means examining institutionalized patterns of cultural value for their effects on the *relative standing* of social actors. If and when such patterns constitute actors as *peers*, capable of participating on a par with one another in social life, then we can speak of *reciprocal recognition* and *status equality*. When, in contrast, institutionalized patterns of cultural value constitute some actors as inferior, excluded, wholly other, or simply invisible, hence as less than full partners in social interaction, then we should speak of *misrecognition* and *status subordination* (Fraser 2003, p. 29).

In Australia, this misrecognition is reflected in the wider community. This view is linked to AEWs thus making them 'wholly Other, or simply invisible' (Fraser 2003, p. 29). Their work is not contextualised and they are homogenised by their Aboriginality, rather than appraised on their individual merits as AEWs. Therefore, both good and bad AEWs are not distinguishable by their non-Indigenous colleagues as they are all identified as AEWs alone. Of course, this is a generalisation that is

not upheld by all non-Indigenous people. Yet, the default position remains whereby the non-Indigenous teachers have the privilege of choosing whether or not to engage and work with AEWs.

Status model and parity of participation

Misrecognition occurs when ‘institutions structure interaction according to cultural norms that impede parity of participation’ (Fraser 2003, p. 29). To participate equally with non-Indigenous teachers AEWs’ roles need to be valued. Recognition also includes AEWs’ ability to engage with the needs of the community and the school and provide insight into the issues that arise, but this can only occur when they have been heard appropriately, that is, when they are valued by non-Indigenous teachers. A dialogical relationship is required for creating the possibility of understanding issues and differences between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers. However, it requires institutional recognition that supports AEWs’ autonomy.

AEWs lack authority to make decisions for Indigenous students due to the fact that they do not have Duty of Care. Complex tensions occur when AEWs are required to attend to the issues of Indigenous students inside an Indigenous ethics of care framework that reflects the community in which they engage. AEWs often solve issues outside the school boundaries to avoid the complex tensions that arise in the school. The cultural norms established in schools inhibit parity of participation of work status with non-Indigenous teachers as AEWs do not have the authority to manage all aspects of their caring role as they do not have Duty of Care.

Whiteness operates through ethics of care in schools as AEWs are routinely left to resolve complex issues that require authority to resolve conflict. They are expected to resolve issues and conflicts that relate to Indigenous students and they are meant to liaise with the community and families. However, the lack of agency demonstrates the way whiteness operates through slippages of meaning, as well as misrecognition regarding care. There are two notions of care operating and one is a legally constructed notion of white ethics of care that is understood within the context of a school and the second is Indigenous ethics of care whereby care is embedded within

the community, and children are positioned in the context of mutual and extended family obligations. Yet, in practice, there is an absence of recognition of the difference between ethics of care practices and the subsequent privileging of white ethics of care leaves AEWs without status and authority to realise their full potential as employees. The status model permits ‘one to justify claims for recognition as morally binding under modern conditions of value pluralism’ (Fraser 2003, p. 30). It also ‘conceives misrecognition as status subordination’ (Fraser 2003, p. 31). In order to overturn misrecognition it is necessary to ‘deinstitutionalise patterns of cultural value that impede parity of participation’ (Fraser 2003, p. 31).

This creates a need to re-educate non-Indigenous policy makers, teachers, educators, lecturers in education and leaders in the formations of whiteness that operate and function through normalising institutional practices. These practices are reflected in the relationships inside institutions such as schools, whereby indirect discrimination is maintained through the value systems that support non-Indigenous principals and teachers’ ethics of care models.

In order to argue for parity of participation it is necessary to reveal that participants, in this case AEWs, have not been provided with adequate institutional support to ‘work on a par’ (Fraser 2003, p. 38) with non-Indigenous teachers. To do this, ‘recognition claimants must show that the institutionalized patterns of cultural value deny them the necessary intersubjective conditions’ (Fraser 2003, p. 38). In what way does DECS, for example, provide the tools ‘for educators to interrogate their own complicity with forms of domination that connect and reconfigure the centers and peripheries of power?’ (Giroux 2005, p.16). Challenging the ‘politics of representation’ (Giroux 2005, p. 17) that creates misrecognition is possible through decentering whiteness by re-education, as will be suggested in Chapter Ten.

The potential for reconfiguring the status of AEWs through parity of participation can be achieved with a values shift after traditional educational paradigms are critically examined. In particular, there needs to be a re-examination of normalising practices that operate through white power and knowledge, such as white ethics of care. Educational dissemination is necessary for non-Indigenous teachers to understand and engage with the complexities of AEWs’ location. This requires a

values shift and a willingness to deconstruct white ethics of care. This is a process which leads to greater parity of participation for AEWs, whereby parity signifies ‘the condition of being a peer, of being on a par with others, of standing on an equal footing’ (Fraser & Honneth 2003, p. 101), which leads to greater status equality.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have canvassed principles of indirect discrimination, as well as recognition theory. I have shown that affirmative action can be limited when it fails to overturn the formations of whiteness. Legal arguments such as *same/difference* (Bacchi 1990) and the deconstruction of white race privilege can be effective points of departure that lead towards parity of recognition and participation of AEWs on an equal status to non-Indigenous teachers. As long as the absence of recognition of AEWs’ roles and responsibilities by non-Indigenous staff and teachers in schools continues, AEWs will be subject to indirect discrimination practices. As revealed in this chapter, the neutrality and universality of a white ethics of care that impairs ‘recognition’ of Indigenous cultural values ‘on an equal footing’ (Section 9(1)a, RDA) remains a form of indirect discrimination.

This chapter was concerned with the philosophical dimensions of equality of recognition and the following implements a map for recognition through dismantling whiteness on the collegial and institutional level. It is necessary to overturn indirect discrimination practices on both levels before equality of recognition can be achieved. A critical pedagogy of whiteness is deployed as a vehicle towards achieving this parity of participation and recognition of AEWs in schools.

Chapter 10: A map for recognition

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, the status and recognition of AEWs' care work requires changes on the collegial and institutional level. Is it possible to move towards a greater understanding of Indigenous ethics of care practices and thereby recognition of the work AEWs do in schools and in the education system? This chapter explores ways in which non-Indigenous teachers and institutions can move towards greater recognition of Indigenous ethics of care models. In order to achieve these goals, this chapter argues for a values shift and raised awareness regarding whiteness on the collegial and institutional level.

In the first section, I focus on the relationships between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers at the school level. Harper's (2000) research is used to demonstrate the historical relationship of colonising practices employed by many non-Indigenous teachers in remote Indigenous communities. Her work reveals the deeper levels of dysconscious racism (King 1991) that operate through white ethics of care. Through deconstructing and critically examining patterns of whiteness that operate inside the field of care in classrooms, I argue race consciousness can be achieved by non-Indigenous teachers. It is also necessary to understand that neither non-Indigenous teachers or AEWs are fixed identities. The discussions concerning them are partial and shaped by the constraints of using consistent nomenclature and generalisations that serve the argument. However, the privilege of whiteness is the pattern critiqued throughout this chapter.

The second section of this chapter addresses the broader issue of the institutional structures that serve to inhibit equality of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices in schools. The metaphor of the cultural *mestizaje* (Anzaldúa 1999) is offered as a way for non-Indigenous teachers to understand how to operate as border workers and thereby appropriately engage with negotiating the complexities of Indigenous ethics of care.

This chapter also outlines the need to understand the inter-relationship of values on a personal and institutional level. This chapter calls for an institutional values shift that includes addressing structural discrimination that serves to perpetuate the misrecognition of AEWs in schools. A values shift involves a move away from structures that serve to limit AEWs, such as the systems that freeze AEWs in low paid positions on the grounds of an absence of academic knowledge. Instead, a values shift would include the recognition of Indigenous knowledges as equally valuable as traditional academic knowledge.

The third and final section of this chapter includes recommendations to bring about the necessary changes required to achieve equality of recognition of AEWs' work as carers, as well as Indigenous ethics of care practices in schools. This concludes with an overview and a synthesis of the main ideas raised in the thesis. To begin, this chapter explores representations that signify the underlying historical constructions that have linked education and white ethics of care practices.

Map on the collegial level

Harper (2000) refers to the traditional constructions of the 'Lady Bountiful' and 'Lady Traveller' and applies these representations to the contemporary position of white teachers in remote communities in Canada. She examines the gendered and racialised colonial practices of the past where female teachers travelled to remote areas to Christianise and civilise Indigenous peoples in remote communities. Lady Bountiful was the 'representation of the white lady missionary or teacher' whose duty was to 'civilize' during British imperialism (2000, p.131). 'Lady Traveller' served the empire and 'she is the consummate researcher and teacher' (2000, p. 132). Her position was rarely challenged as she was positioned as the benevolent teacher. Arguably, Harper's analysis could also be applied to men, but she focused on female teachers and missionaries because they were used in representations to assuage the violence of colonialism. Harper connects the traditional and contemporary roles of female teachers through a critique of hegemonic caring practices.

Harper addresses non-Indigenous female teachers' sense of ownership towards students. She refers to an incident of a white female teacher who was offended when she was reprimanded by an Indigenous mother for referring to a student as 'her child'. The teacher was shocked by the Aboriginal mother and interpreted the situation as a form of ingratitude. This example reveals the hidden practices of white ethics of care that remain uncritically examined by many non-Indigenous teachers. Harper states:

This local incident plays out a power struggle between the white mother-teacher and the Aboriginal mother over her children that is occurring on a larger scale as First Nation peoples seek greater control over the education of their children. In the history of Aboriginal education it has been the white transient female and male teachers who, as agents of the Federal government, have been central in the educational decisions for and about Aboriginal children. It is a difficult position to relinquish. Lady Bountiful and the white Lady Traveller are seductive images. It is difficult to resist the desire to be central in someone's life, and to be given the illusion of transcending one's social and historical location and one's own privilege to "know" and "help" others (Harper 2000, p. 239).

The Lady Bountiful and Lady Traveller personae operate through apparent goodwill and innocence in the form of white ethics of care. The performance of white ethics of care as mother/teacher is granted sanctity from criticism as the historical constructions of seemingly charitable women are couched in the language of righteousness. Resistance by AEWs and the Indigenous mother mentioned in the above quote is positioned as an Indigenous problem.

The most routine act of whiteness performed by non-Indigenous teachers occurs through a lack of critical critique at the intersections of resistance. Non-Indigenous teachers' fear of being called a racist leads to them silencing or ignoring potential conflicts. These acts make the issue invisible but what remains is an underlying lack of engagement between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers. This absence of engagement is an unspoken privileged norm and it does nothing to overturn racism as 'a slippery subject, [that] evades confrontation' (Aveling 2002, p. 119).

The challenge to be self-reflexive in site-specific situations and build relationships that can cope with resistance and conflict takes courage for all those involved. This is not encouraged at any level within the institution of education, as the values inherent in politeness are performed as the appropriate modes of engagement. The act of silence and omission is part of the performance of politeness. In this way the practices entrenched in the values of the institution fail to allow for addressing conflict or resistance. A critical pedagogy of whiteness encourages engagement in these complex sites that exposes the issues that arise from this critique.

‘The reproduction of racial inequality’ in the classroom has been critiqued thoroughly (Hyland 2005, p. 429). While teachers are not identified as being the only cause of this, there is a participatory relationship between teachers, texts and students (Johnson 1994, p. 412). A critical pedagogy therefore becomes essential in terms of justice for students but also for AEWs who work with non-Indigenous teachers.

A critical pedagogy of whiteness: Shifting the privilege of white ethics of care

A critical pedagogy of whiteness is concerned with social and political substantive equality (Kincheloe & Steinberg 2000, p. 26). It is a critical state that is conscious of the formations of power that privilege whiteness in schools. A critical pedagogy of whiteness requires self-reflexive practices which lead to personal transformation, and overturn discriminatory practices and injustice are tenets of a critical pedagogy of whiteness (Rodriguez 2000, p. 14). Kincheloe and Steinberg argue that individual identity is emancipated from the restraints of restrictive cultural norms:

This re-conceptualization of identity is focused first and foremost on the critical theoretical notion of emancipatory transformation - not in a modernist sense, where the new identity becomes final and authentic, but more in a poststructuralist articulation that understands the new identity as a transitional phase of an ever-evolving notion of self. A pedagogy of Whiteness, therefore, seeks to engage students, teachers, and other individuals in an ever-unfolding emancipatory

identity that pushes the boundaries of Whiteness but always understands its inescapable connection to the white locale in the web of reality. Such a location demands forms of political analysis and introspection that move Whites to examine, for instance, the privilege of white identity even after they abandon unexamined Whiteness (2000, p. 24).

Understanding how white ethics of care operates through privilege is important in order to overturn patterns of discrimination. Ethics of care is acculturated and therefore an entrenched aspect of identity. The performance of ethics of care is played out through mores and behaviours that are culturally coded. A critical pedagogy of whiteness would involve an examination of the link between behaviour and identity. In many ways AEWs' role provides the opportunity for non-Indigenous teachers to engage with a critical pedagogy of whiteness in order to become effective colleagues with AEWs.

An understanding of ethics of care provides the possibility of exploring the ways in which we have all been acculturated. Moreover, it provides the language to understand how the values of the white middle class that are acculturated through white ethics of care create the 'habitus' (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977) necessary to achieve 'the higher one goes in the education system' (Porter 1986, p. 4). Performances of politeness and good behaviour are entrenched practices of white middle class habitus that facilitate success at school. A critical pedagogy of whiteness deconstructs the value systems that enforce the privileged white middle class 'habitus'. Nevertheless, this does not mean that people should abandon these value systems entirely, but instead they should be able to explore safely and without judgement their own resistance. A critical pedagogy of whiteness provides the dialogical space where non-Indigenous teachers' authority and seemingly neutral location moves towards the 'both ways' Yolgnu framework where the teacher/student or AEW/teacher relationship is based on reciprocation and trust that can endure an exploration of resistance and difference.

In order to overcome indirect discrimination it is important that sites of power, such as those spaces that are invested with white middle class social values, are

understood in the context of dominance. The social values that are informed by white ethics of care are particularly difficult to unravel for many non-Indigenous teachers, as they are central to their identity. As Fuss states:

Nowhere are the related issues of essence, identity, and experience so highly charged and so deeply politicized as they are in the classroom. Personal consciousness, individual oppressions, lived experiences – in short, identity politics – operate in the classroom both to authorize and to de-authorize speech. “Experience” emerges as the essential truth of the individual subject and personal “identity” metamorphoses into knowledge. Who we are becomes what we know; ontology shades into epistemology (Fuss cited in Johnson 1994, p. 409).

There is a slippage between non-Indigenous teachers’ experience in the context of whiteness that limits an ability to transcend their locatedness as it is at this location their personal identity is informed. In this context it appears unjust to claim any act of intentional racism on behalf of non-Indigenous teachers. However, ignorance regarding Indigenous protocols and values is used to excuse non-Indigenous teachers’ covert racist practices. Conflicts arise among non-Indigenous teachers, AEWs and Indigenous students when values conflict (Malin 1997, p. 143), which is frequent because dominant values, such as ethics of care, are framed by whiteness (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2001, p. 282). Schools are grounded in the values of whiteness (Foley 2000, p. 48) without need for accountability because it is invisible. It is in this way that ignorance and innocence operate to protect and privilege non-Indigenous teachers.

Aveling’s (2004) and McIntyre’s (1997) research on non-Indigenous teachers illuminates the process of examining ‘the privilege of white identity’ (Kincheloe & Steinberg 2000, p. 24). McIntyre (1997) interviewed pre-service teachers over the course of a semester, whilst Aveling gathered data from three cohorts of pre-service teachers between 1996-1998 who studied the subject she taught called *Aboriginal and Multicultural Education* (2000, p. 120). They developed similar findings in an action-based research model. Both uncovered the unexamined nature of whiteness and the masks and disguises used to resist interrogation about it. The aim was to

develop insights into the socialization process and how white pre-service teachers locate their own whiteness (McIntyre 1997, p. 5), as well as to understand and dismantle racism (Drurie 2002 cited in Aveling 2002, p. 121). This research is useful to demonstrate the formations of whiteness and how it functions in disguise and operates through values.

McIntyre's work focused on white teachers and their perceptions of African-Americans. Of particular interest, in McIntyre's work, was the function of naiveté of white teachers in racially diverse classrooms in their practicum. The 'transmission model of teaching' (McIntyre 1997, p. 117), where white ethics of care practices operate in exchanges between teachers and students, remained unchallenged by the white teachers. This was also evident in Harper's findings (2000) where 'oppressive structures that ensure the sanctity of the dominant group's power, privilege and ideology' (McIntyre 1997, p. 117) remained unexamined in their teaching practice. The ethics of care model that facilitated this was born out of naiveté, innocence and goodwill. As McIntyre highlights:

The participants are caught up in a rhetoric of care that fails to address the fact that no amount of caring - if that caring is situated in hugs, pats on the back, and stickers on tests - is going to dismantle the foundations of racism that hold our schools intact. The participants' paternalism mutes a critical discussion of racism and teaching. Instead, it frees them, as white teachers, to "love" *all* students, while at the same time, relinquishing them from taking responsibility for confronting the conditions that keep people in poverty and ignorance (McIntyre 1997, p. 131).

White ethics of care theorists such as Nodding's (2001) reflected an uncritically examined understanding of the systemic privileges inherent in white ethics of care as a normalised category. On the other hand, Rolón-Dow's (2005) critique of the absence of an understanding of synonymous caring paradigms in ethics of care theory is also raised by McIntyre (1997). However, after McIntyre's research was completed, most of the studied group developed a 'bricoleur consciousness' (1997, p. 145), meaning they were able to read whiteness and be actively engaged in working

against it. This shows that it is therefore necessary to employ a critical pedagogy of whiteness that can be used as a general tool to deconstruct one's own position within whiteness, as well as the broader structures that maintain the centrality of whiteness in educational practices. This provides non-Indigenous teachers the opportunity to map how whiteness operates inside their teaching practices.

Mapping a critical pedagogy of whiteness: Towards parity of recognition of AEWs

Mapping one's own whiteness through deconstruction and re-education is a transformational methodology. However, moving through Frankenberg's 'three historical moments' from essentialised racism to race blindness to a radically defined understanding of difference is a necessary, but challenging process for non-Indigenous teachers (Aveling 2002, pp. 123-5). Yet, how do we move from the 'privilege of ignorance' (Thompson 1998, p. 523) in relation to this process to a critical pedagogy of whiteness? McIntyre argues that:

[E]ducating ourselves about Whiteness, racism, oppression, privilege and their relationship to education is not just about attitude change, improving human relationships, and being sensitive to children. It is about participating together...developing pedagogies and research methodologies that challenge 'the curriculum': that body of knowledge accompanied by practices and structures that privilege certain groups and to examine the system of Whiteness and how it manifests in education (2000 cited in Connelly 2002, p. 7).

In this way the collaboration between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers reflects a critical pedagogical approach that was also outlined in the Yolgnu conceptual framework of 'both ways' in Chapter Seven. Collaboration is one of the few vehicles to create a critical state, but it involves being open to re-education and a new way of seeing for both AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers. A critical pedagogy of whiteness is a critical state. It requires a transformative process, which includes awareness of the operations of stereotypes and how they marginalise AEWs through essentialist constructions of race. It also involves the complexities of recognition of

AEWs' ethics of care practices by non-Indigenous teachers. This can only succeed in a shared space where all knowledges and systems of care are equally valued.

Through the process of understanding ethics of care, it is possible to dismantle the constructions of a homogenous Indigenous identity that has been created through stereotypes, as well as the associated stereotypes of the mammy outlined in Chapter Eight. Moreover, collaboration among AEWs, non-Indigenous teachers and principals in the schools allows for the opportunity to respond to Indigenous students' needs appropriately. However, this cannot be achieved without de-centring whiteness.

AEWs are required to cross borders between schools, communities and students. They are required to consider the needs of the students, operate through the school values and at the same time maintain and build trusting relationships that are achieved through following community protocols. The cultural *mestizaje* (Anzaldúa 1999) is also a metaphor for critical self awareness. The focus of awareness is on the acts of engagement between individuals who are culturally, socially and historically located. In this state, it is possible to work in the border zones and code switch to the values, mores and practices necessary at the time. This is the direction in which non-Indigenous teachers and leaders must head, as AEWs have to do this work as a matter of necessity.

A cultural *mestizaje* (Anzaldúa 1999) is the ability to view situations and contexts that are refracted and partial. Complete understanding is not always necessary, but an openness to engage in the process of change is vital, which necessitates trust. A critical pedagogy of whiteness urges non-Indigenous teachers to manoeuvre inside a cultural *mestizaje*.

The term "cultural *mestizaje*," often used as a concept challenging existing racial categories and representations, can be employed as a heuristic device that induces teachers, students, and cultural workers to study the ways cultural interaction and exchange take place. In a critical context, *mestizaje* becomes not an educational goal as much as

a category for careful scrutiny into the forces that reshape culture and influence identity (Alcoff, 1995; Haymes 1996; Keating 1995; McLaren 1993; Wellman 1996 cited in Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2000, 25).

The *mestizaje* is where non-Indigenous teachers become ‘critical educators’ (Giroux 2005, pp. 24-5) who are able to read their acts of engagement with AEWs and Indigenous students through self-reflexive practices. The *mestizaje* leads to equality of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care through understanding pluralist subject positions, and through positive acts of engagement among non-Indigenous and AEWs. It is a reciprocal relationship that requires trust and is built with the intention of equality that can also endure resistance and misunderstanding. The aim of equality of recognition is overturning the *dominance* approach to care, whereby equality of ‘results’ (Townshend-Smith 1989, p.19) is created through collaboration. A critical pedagogy of whiteness overturns the power imbalance that perpetuates indirect discrimination practices towards AEWs in schools. In order to move from white ethnocentric models of relationships, Aveling argues that we also need to move towards race consciousness and follow Tatum's notion of the white ally. As Tatum explains:

The role of the ally is to speak up against systems of oppression, and to challenge other whites to do the same. Teaching about racism needs to shift from an exploration of the experiences of victims and victimizers to that of empowered people of colour and their white allies, creating the possibility of working together as partners in the establishment of a more just society (1994, p. 474).

It is necessary to ‘challenge oppression’ (Yamato 1990, p. 423) through transforming the machinations of whiteness via a critical pedagogy. Collaboration leads to knowledge for non-Indigenous teachers, non-Indigenous principals, AEWs and Indigenous students. This is a process that occurs in open relationships based on trust and as Aveling argues ‘it is more useful to think in terms of a continuum that moves from dys-consciousness at one end of a continuum and consciousness at the other’ (Aveling 2004). This continuum leads to recognition of personhood and can

only be achieved through disrupting white centred pedagogy and practice. The majority of AEWs in this thesis argued that there was a lack of recognition of their role and their personhood in the workplace. I support Gaita's notion of 'equality of respect', where access to justice includes the treatment of individuals as citizens who have the right and opportunity to reflect themselves fully without fear of misrecognition (2000, p. 72). A critical pedagogy of whiteness is a process of discovery that explorers need to experience. It therefore theoretically has fewer barriers, but instead is concerned with individuals' intentions to overturn racial discrimination. This is a collective responsibility that needs to be supported institutionally.

Map for the institutional level: The need for structural support to facilitate change

Indigenous people have long been fighting against institutionalized ethnocentrism (Davidson & Jennett 1998, p. 24). Dodson states that, 'Aboriginal people stand outside the real control and decision-making arenas, but are abused and condemned as guilty when outcomes from the perspectives of public expenditure are not what is expected' (cited in Davidson & Jennett 1998, p. 24). AEWs do not produce measurable outcomes, and underlying this perceived failure to fulfil expectations is the assumption that Indigenous people will be mobilised to operate through mainstream structures. AEWs face this perception in schools, and as Huggins states:

From an Aboriginal point of view, the system had failed and had a lot to answer for in the teaching of Aboriginal students. The system as it was operating at the school created the alienation of Black children from the culture of their parents, and it assumed that European culture was superior to Aboriginal culture and hence avoided relating to the latter. The children and their parents were never consulted about what and how they would like to be taught and therefore making the process entirely white ethnocentrically determined (1998, p. 112).

The institutional framework is grounded in whiteness that remains invisible to non-Indigenous teachers. Davidson and Jennett state that, 'when governments and service

agencies provide a particular service only in the standard ways available to the general population, where cultural insensitivity and ignorance among service staff is widespread' (1998, p. 24). Structural racism operates as it is perceived as neutral. Institutional racism operates through a matrix of hierarchically-established power relations. Schools are institutional systems that have clearly demarcated power structures and AEWs are positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy. Chambers and Pettman (1986) state in the following:

Institutional racism refers to a pattern of distribution of social goods, including power, which regularly and systematically advantages some ethnic and racial groups and disadvantages others. It operates through key institutions: organised social arrangements through which social goods and services are distributed...Social institutions like school, the judicial system and health care have their own cultures, specific ways of operating based on narrow understandings of what is normal or proper (cited in Hollinsworth 1999, p. 54).

The matrix of power relations that is normalised through the hierarchical arrangements in schools is maintained through whiteness. AEWs, as individuals, routinely operate across and between borders of language, culture and values. However, they have to operate in a hierarchical structure that is shaped by whiteness. This model is so normalized that AEWs' relationships are dependent upon the goodwill of non-Indigenous principals and teachers in order to be given recognition of their roles in schools.

McCrae argues that it is possible to shift structural discrimination in schools through autonomous models managed and controlled by Indigenous people. The ASSPA committees and more recently the Yurrekaityarindi (the listening circle) model provides space for parents and members of the Indigenous community to 'feel comfortable, which is 'their own' (McCrae 2000, p. 8). AEWs play a central role in ASSPA committees and the Yurrekaityarindi model. Yet, if these sites remain on the margins of the school, where school is represented as a 'universal and fixed social' (Henderson 2005, p. 307) site, then these committees and models remain locked outside of institutional power.

In order to move towards the goals of equality of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices, a values shift at the institutional level is necessary. Hall developed the Hall-Tonna inventory to measure institutional values. This culminated in workshops for institutions and organisations world wide. Hall (1994) claims values 'are the ideals that give significance to our lives, that are reflected through the priorities that we choose and that we act on consistently and repeatedly' (Hall 1994, p. 21). He also states that the values of an institution or organisation are reflected at all levels of an organisation. However, what is most significant is that the macro values of an institution become the internalised 'personal value systems of the people who work in that organization' (Hall 1994, p. 36).

Rockeach also believes that 'values are standards that are to a large extent derived, learned and internalised from society and its institutions' (1979, p. 6), which means that those working in the institution require a values shift, as well as the institution itself. The institution of education seamlessly reinforces whiteness through its value system and therefore requires a shift on the macro and micro level.

Values can be measured and examined, as values are 'designated by special code words in the spoken and written language, and experienced through our feelings and imagination' (Hall 1994, p. 39). Deconstructing the codes and language of whiteness is necessary to facilitate a values shift. The Hall-Tonna inventory was used to successfully shift institutions and organisations to become more productive. The results of the values shifts generally created a deeper understanding of each others' roles and clarity regarding expectations. It is therefore important to examine the values in white ethics of care, how whiteness operates through normative behaviours and how these are institutionalised.

By overturning whiteness through understanding the historical representations of the Lady Bountiful and the Lady Traveller it is possible to disrupt white ethics of care practices that inhibit equality of recognition of caring practices in schools. Moreover, deploying a critical pedagogy of whiteness and operating within a *cultural mestizaje*, will led to parity of recognition between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers.

Equality of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices also requires a readership (Taylor 1994, p. 32) that has learnt to 'hear' rather than 'know' objectively. In this way, dialogic relationships can develop. However, through the processes of asserting change it must be remembered that power and knowledge are mutually constitutive (Aschcroft 1992, p. ii) and the machinations of racism (Spivak 1988) must continually be assessed when using indirect discrimination tactics to dismantle misconceptions in relation to cross-cultural relationships.

A values shift is required on the institutional level. To allow the space for this, schools and DECS move from racially blind values and develop an awareness of AEWs' diverse roles and needs. In order to achieve a values shift on an institutional level it is also necessary that those who create policy or are involved in the direction and management of education become aware of their values and the values of the institution through critical self-reflexivity.

Equality of recognition of AEWs must provide a safe space for AEWs to present their voices and facilitate necessary changes for Indigenous students to achieve positive learning and behavioural outcomes at school. This involves operating in the extended family model of care where necessary, in order to encourage and engage students and provide a school environment that is free from racism. Moreover, where intervention is necessary it gives AEWs the opportunity to voice concern under the jurisdiction of Indigenous ethics of care models, but legally supported on an institutional level. Equality of recognition of AEWs leads to the improved status of AEWs in schools. However, in order to achieve this it is necessary to deconstruct whiteness on all levels in education. This could be achieved through the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Workshops for non-Indigenous teachers

Indigenous ethics of care will be at the fore-front of the discussion and the themes for discussion in workshops would include:

- Showing how indirect discrimination operates through the absence of recognition

- Demonstrating how whiteness is privileged in schools through an analysis of Indigenous and white ethics of care practices
- Outlining a critical pedagogy of whiteness
- Developing a *cultural mestizaje* relationship model.

Recommendation 2: Workshops for AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers

Themes to be explored in the workshops:

- Supporting and developing the Yurrekaityarindi model
- Deconstructing the bureaucratic structure of institutions
- Explanation of AEWs' work in the border zones between schools and communities
- The implications of the absence of recognition for AEWs
- Expectations in team-teaching roles
- Critical pedagogy of whiteness
- Developing a safe space for dialogical relationships to emerge in schools

The following recommendation includes necessary changes in DECS in order to achieve the goals of recognition towards AEWs' work.

Recommendation 3: Institutional equality of recognition

- Workshops for leaders such as non-Indigenous principals, policy writers and researchers regarding the formations of white race privilege in institutions
- A values inventory of DECS
- Public service awareness on whiteness
- Inclusion of AEWs in policy writing exercises
- Policy changes to structurally support Indigenous ethics of care practices
- Funding to employ more AEWs in schools

Equality of recognition requires the recognition of AEWs' work in schools, which includes recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices that are location-based and reflects community needs in schools. Equality of recognition of Indigenous

ethics of care practices also includes an understanding of Indigenous and non-Indigenous race relations in Australia, and an understanding of how indirect discriminatory practices that emerge from stereotypes based on race, class and gender constructions affect Indigenous people negatively in Australia.

Conclusion

The significance of this thesis has been to reveal the inequality of recognition of AEWs with respect to non-Indigenous teachers through a previously unexplored examination of the privileging of whiteness and white ethics of care in schools. Both of those serve to limit AEWs' status and their potential to meet the needs of Indigenous students. As a result, this thesis offers a significant contribution to the understanding of indirect discrimination and how it operates in Australian schools.

The history of AEWs since the inception of the role in 1940 was reviewed in Chapter Two. Over the intervening period, the efforts of the Australian Education Union and the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee have resulted in the implementation of a number of enterprise and industrial agreements. As a result, successive generations of AEWs have experienced better working conditions than their predecessors. However, this has not led to higher status for AEWs. There has been a priority from DECS to overturn discriminatory practices, but there is no evidence that structural shifts have been made to enable AEWs to be involved in this process, reflective of a general lack of recognition of AEWs' skills, experience and knowledge. As a result, AEWs remain marginalised, under-recognised and without parity of participation in their workplace. This issue is of paramount concern in relation to equality in educational practices in schools.

This thesis is argued from the theoretical perspective of whiteness. Standpoint epistemology was the core methodology. I have argued that using whiteness and standpoint theory are essential to illuminate the operations of racial discrimination, allow entry into the fields of difference and examine patterns that emerge through local experiences. While acknowledging the limitations of those theories, I contend that they offer the best conceptual tools to engage with the micro formations of

racism that operate in schools and the macro reflections of this in Australian society. In this thesis those methodologies enabled me to address the complexity of AEWs' role and Indigenous ethics of care as a non-Indigenous researcher, and facilitated insight into why the aforementioned reforms to improve AEWs' working conditions were not matched on the ground.

Whiteness, culturalism and representation have historically worked synergistically and been central to qualitative research about Indigenous education. A critical analysis of the research literature on AEWs exposed how methodologies epistemologically based in whiteness that were used by non-Indigenous researchers homogenised AEWs and positioned them negatively as the 'Other'. Simultaneously, the dearth of research literature on AEWs supported this prevailing logic as AEWs were not seen as significant to Indigenous education.

In the meantime, AEWs support Indigenous students' emotional, physical and psychological engagement within schools, yet their emotional labour needs to be given status to be recognised positively. To give recognition is to value their input appropriately. Establishing AEWs' standpoint epistemologies through interviews was the methodological approach employed to support AEWs' diverse experiences and allow an opportunity to map common themes. In Chapter Six, I employed this approach to develop a more democratic process of understanding AEWs' voices. The standpoints of five AEWs were explored in detail, and while their experiences and stories varied, consistent themes emerged and were reflected throughout all of the interviews with AEWs. They displayed a dedication to supporting Indigenous students to be secure and succeed in the wider society. At the same time they expressed frustration at the way in which they are hampered in this role by the lack of recognition or misrecognition by non-Indigenous school staff.

The interviewees' narratives illuminated the Indigenous ethics of care practices that they used to mediate the expectations of Indigenous parents, caregivers, communities and Indigenous students. In response to those expectations, AEWs develop trusting relationships with students, engage in tactful relationship building with members of the community and at the same time develop the ability to code-switch to negotiate relationships with non-Indigenous staff in the school. AEWs therefore operate in the

border zones between the expectations and values of schools and Indigenous communities and develop resistance strategies to protect themselves and Indigenous students from further misrecognition and marginalisation.

The extended family model that operates for AEWs and their communities acts as a site of resistance against the hegemony of white ethics of care practices, which is typified by the nuclear family and is normalised and legalised through institutional frameworks. Indirect discrimination therefore occurs when AEWs' work and ethics of care practices are denied recognition inside the field of education. For example, the privilege of whiteness in conflict resolution claims includes protocols that are gendered and are couched in discursive regimes that define normative behaviour. However, conflict resolution and 'healing' in Indigenous ethics of care frameworks are often defined by community protocols, whether it be through 'having a cuppa' or developing social capital in the community.

The complexities of care and the invisibility of whiteness, in particular the construction of care as 'value-neutral' both in schools and educational theory, were examined in Chapter Eight. I discussed how the complex role of care has been constructed academically and socially through the universalist beliefs of white feminist theorists. This critique has shown how non-Indigenous teachers' view of AEWs has been shaped socially and historically by stereotypes such as the 'mammy' and the Indigenous domestic servant. This view limits non-Indigenous teachers' recognition and understanding of the diversity of Indigenous ethics of care and the complex roles and responsibilities of AEWs.

In Chapter Nine I argued for greater recognition of AEWs through an understanding of parity of recognition of their work in schools by non-Indigenous teachers. I showed how misrecognition of AEWs constitutes a contravention of basic human rights according to the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975, (Cth), while at the same time whiteness operates to prevent the application of the law in order to achieve justice. As a means of working towards a more commensurate power relationship between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers, I argued that a critical pedagogy of whiteness can facilitate recognition and thereby provide a deeper understanding that

leads to collaborative and dialogical relations between AEWs and non-Indigenous teachers.

In this thesis I have argued for formal recognition of AEWs' important contribution in the realm of ethics of care. I argued that it is necessary to shift from white ethnocentric frameworks that appear to offer equity, towards structural support to achieve equality of recognition of AEWs' work in schools. I have argued for a values shift to achieve institutional change regarding the recognition of AEWs. A number of tools were offered to support this shift, such as a critical pedagogy of whiteness, engaging with the white ally and the cultural *mestizaje* model, to map ways to effect change through collaborative and productive relationships. This could be achieved through a series of the workshops such as those outlined at the beginning of this chapter. It is hoped that such workshops would facilitate change through enhanced understanding of how whiteness operates and the acknowledgement of Indigenous ethics of care, in order to allow a transformational understanding of AEWs' role in schools.

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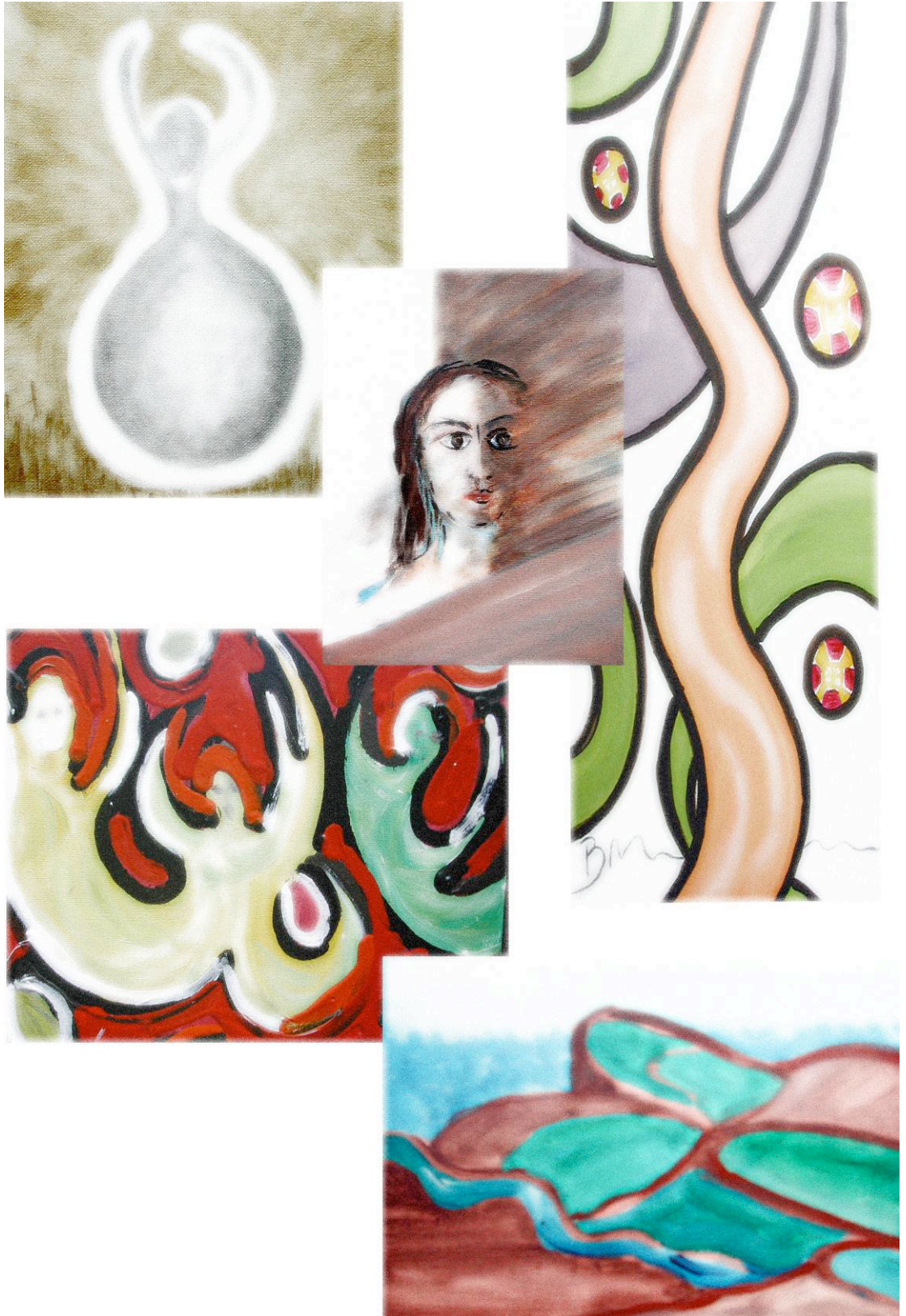
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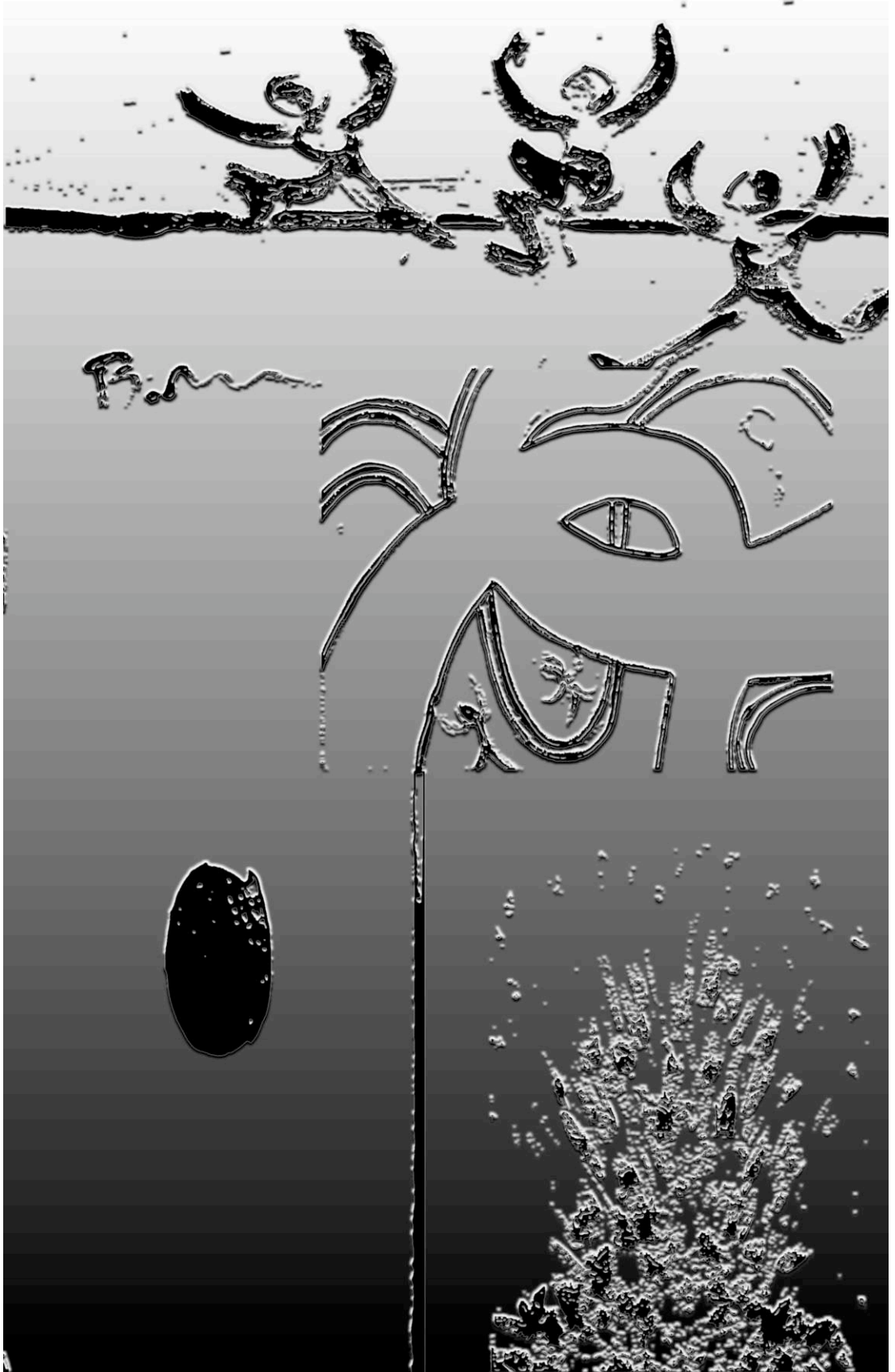
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Appendix 1









Appendix 2

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION WORKER CAREER STRUCTURE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Retrieved from http://www2.nexus.edu.au/ems/enfieldnew/8_aews.html on 9 December, 2007

Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) is used to refer to the para-professional workers employed to support the education of Aboriginal students within the school and pre-school sectors in South Australia under the terms of the Enterprise Agreement signed in 1997. They are employed by the Department of Education Training and Employment and are classified as Aboriginal Education Workers Level 1 to Level 5.

AEWs are deployed in schools within the metropolitan, country and remote areas of South Australia. The Department, on the basis of 1 AEW for every 60 Aboriginal students, makes allocation of AEW hours to schools. An allocation of AEW time is made to schools with a minimum enrolment of 20 students.

AEW employees are classified according to the following criteria:

Aboriginal Education Worker-Level 1

An AEW at this level will:

- Have the capacity to develop a range of skills and knowledge including literacy and numeracy skills, computing, interpersonal and other skills necessary at this level.
- Work under close direction with limited requirement for exercising discretion and initiative in the provision of support to students, schools/preschools and parents.

- Work in a team environment, to develop a range of skills and knowledge to support the educational needs of Aboriginal students.
- Develop an understanding of the Plan for Aboriginal Education in Early Childhood and Schooling, particularly the goals and milestones that relate to improving Aboriginal student achievement.
- Assist teachers in the classroom in the key learning areas particularly literacy and numeracy.
- Communicate effectively and demonstrate a commitment to and rapport with the Aboriginal community, liaise between home and school to contribute to an improved learning environment for Aboriginal students.
- Undertake the Aboriginal Education Workers Accredited Course or equivalent to acquire the knowledge, skills and ability to perform the functions required at this level.

Aboriginal Education Worker-Level 2

An AEW at this level will:

- undertake work of a more responsible nature in terms of scope and complexity than that required of level 1.
- work under general direction with a requirement for exercising initiative, discretion and judgement.
- work in a team environment to develop strategies to improve the achievements of Aboriginal Students in the key learning areas, particularly literacy and numeracy.
- have responsibility to undertake discrete components of the Plan for Aboriginal Education in Early Childhood and Schooling, particularly the goals related to student achievement.
- assist teaching staff in the classroom by actively participating in making collaborative decisions with teachers that relate to the educational needs of Aboriginal students.
- use effective home school liaison strategies which contribute to an improved learning environment for Aboriginal students.

- collaborate effectively with Aboriginal parents and community members, support Aboriginal Students Support Parent Awareness [ASSPA] committees and encourage parent involvement in school policy/decision making.
- undertake the Aboriginal Education Workers Accredited Course, Anangu Teacher Education Program [AnTEP] or equivalent and apply the ideas gained from training to benefit Aboriginal students in the school.

Aboriginal Education Worker-Level 3

An AEW at this level will:

- work under limited direction with a requirement to exercise initiative, discretion and judgement in the coordination of programs to support the educational needs of Aboriginal students in the school.
- have a high level of understanding and demonstrated commitment to the teaching and learning priorities identified in the Plan for Aboriginal Education.
- work in a team and demonstrate the skills, knowledge and ability to provide direction, advice and leadership to assist with the coordination of Aboriginal Education services in school.
- establish consultation processes to encourage parental involvement in the development and implementation of strategies related to improving student achievement, as identified in the Plan for Aboriginal Education.
- work collaboratively with teachers to develop and implement strategies to improve student achievement particularly in the key learning areas of literacy, numeracy and technology.
- in collaboration with teachers/student counsellors, provide a comprehensive counselling service to Aboriginal students on school related matters.
- work collaboratively with other service providers to support the development of strategies to meet the educational, social and other identified needs of Aboriginal students.
- liaise and consult with government and non-government agencies on services provided to and for Aboriginal students and parents.

- undertake the Aboriginal Education Workers Accredited Course, Anangu Teacher Education Program [AnTEP] or equivalent to acquire the knowledge, skills and ability to perform the functions required at this level.

Aboriginal Education Worker-Level 4

An AEW at this level will:

- exercise responsibility for the Aboriginal Education Worker employment group in the district and district operations, including the coordination, oversight and management of resources.
- assist in setting of priorities and procedures relating to Aboriginal Education for that particular district as they relate to the goals and milestones of the Plan for Aboriginal Education in Early Childhood and Schooling particularly student achievement, employment and access.
- have a high degree of autonomy to work collaboratively with teachers and other service providers within the district.
- coordinate work in a team environment to develop work plans, negotiate the resolution of issues and concerns and provide initiatives specifically for Aboriginal students in schools.
- have a commitment and rapport in working with Aboriginal parents and the local community to establish effective arrangements for the participation and involvement of Aboriginal parents in educational decision-making, including supporting Aboriginal Students Support Parent Awareness [ASSPA] committees in schools within districts.
- display advocacy and commitment to a shared vision to improve the educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and the inclusion of Aboriginal parents and community members in the decision making structures are essential components of this level.

Aboriginal Education Worker-Level 5

An AEW at this level will:

- manage the Aboriginal Education Workers employment group within the group of districts.
- advise senior management Aboriginal Education on issues affecting Aboriginal Education Workers and liaise with other appropriate groups to ensure a coordinated approach to the education of Aboriginal students.
- be responsible for implementing significant initiatives and demonstrating skills of discretion, judgement and autonomy in the day to day coordination of DECS/Aboriginal services.
- exercise a high degree of initiative, judgement and autonomy by having significant role in the State-wide policy development and implementation of policy and programs related to the goals and milestones of the Plan for Aboriginal Education in particular those related to student achievement, employment and access.
- provide appropriate advice, undertake duties of a sensible, critical and complex nature and provide a consultancy service to a wide range of service providers and clients in the region.
- demonstrate a knowledge of the principles of adult learning as they relate to the shared facilitating of training and development related to Aboriginal Education.