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**Colonization, disability and the  
intranet: the ethnic cleansing of  
space?**

**Qualitative Inquiry**

**In Press 19(4)**

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Dr. Alan Hodkinson is an Associate Professor in the  
Centre for Cultural and Disability Studies, Faculty of  
Education, Liverpool Hope University, Hope Park,  
Liverpool, England. L169J Email:  
hodkina@hope.ac.uk (+44) 0151 2913275 .

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## **Colonization, disability and the intranet: the ethnic cleansing of space?**

### **Abstract**

The article analyses teacher's emplacement of the image of disability within school's intranet sites in England. The image unearthed within such sites was problematic as it did not display a positive or realistic image of disability or disabled people. Within the article historical archaeology and colonialism are employed as theoretic framework to interpret this artefact of disability. The article also provides an ethnographic sub script to the creation of a space of possibilities and how this became striated by missionary teachers who colonised this brave new intranet world. Deciphering of the organisation and representation of the disabled indigene, through this theoretical framework, unearthed a cartography inscribed by the scalpel of old world geometry.

**Keywords:** disability; historical archaeology; digital media; colonialism; intranet

### **Introduction**

Recently I was engaged in research that unearthed the image of disability located within English schools' intranet sites (Hodkinson, in press). All electronic media contained within primary schools' intranet sites, such as electronic textbooks, smartboard resources, computer games, teacher constructed and commercial worksheets, websites, teacher initiated photographs and video clips were subject to analysis. This research had originated after a teacher informed me

that the school's intranet site provided a "safe space"<sup>1</sup> for children to learn. A subsequent analysis located within such safe spaces revealed artefacts of disability limited and contextualised by medical deficit. These artefacts formed a social construction of disability based upon inexact scholarship, omission and imbalanced information where negative conceptualisations, enabled perhaps by stereotypical beliefs, colonised the electronic landscape.

### **The research study – 'the space of colonisation'**

The initial research examined the representation and treatment of disability, impairment and disabled people within the electronic media employed within primary schools in England. The data collection was located within four randomly chosen state primary schools in the North-West of England. The research analysed all the materials these schools had chosen to save upon their internal computer servers. In total 494 separate electronic resources were analysed which included 4,485 illustrations, 930 photographs, hundreds of pages of text and 59 video clips.

The original methodology employed proto-text analysis (Bourdillion, 1992) within which content, textual and discourse analysis were simultaneously employed to uncover the explicit and implicit message conveyed within the sample media (Johnsen, 1993). In uncovering the electronic media's subcutaneous (Johnsen, 1993) layer the overall aim of this initial research had been to examine whether consciously or unconsciously these digital media promoted prejudices or stereotypical ideas about disability or "people with impairments" (Fritzsche, 1992).

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper I put to one side the ubiquitous moral panic which renders the information super highway as a topos inhabited by predatory paedophiles, one awash with pornography, every fetish known to society and beast, and that safe space is an overused but under theorised metaphor.

Phase one of the research, the macro analysis, involved each electronic media being examined section by section, with sections which referenced disability, people with impairments or disability issues being demarcated (Commeyas and Alverman, 1996; Ninnes, 2002). Within phase two, the microanalysis, the demarcated sections were examined using linguistic analysis (Crawford, 2004). Here linguistic forms within the text such as the lexicon, agency and action, voice, verbs and adjectives (Ninnes, 2002) were analysed to reveal any, ‘hidden assumptions’ about disability and ‘people with impairments (Crawford, 2004, p. 21). Particular attention was given during this analysis to the positionality of intellectual impairments within the text. During this phase, a frequency and space analysis were also conducted; simple counting and calculating of the discrete sections examined how frequently disability and people with impairments were mentioned. Finally, an examination of the images within the electronic media was undertaken. This involved an examination of the people, categorised by “race, disability, impairment and gender” who were shown in the photographs, illustrations and video clips (Johnsen, 1993).

### **Historical Archaeology**

In exploration of this territorilisation my intellectual endeavour therefore became one of the analysis of the cultural image of individuals and communities in transition into this new electronic space. Whilst the original proto-text analysis had unearthed an “artefact of disability” it became clear that it had no meaningful analytical power to decipher what these artefacts said of their constructing culture. Nor, did this methodological technique have explanatory power to reveal how the images and texts might have been employed to celebrate or marginalise communities dependent upon a continuity of traditions (Meskell, 2007). Moving away from the

more quantitative aspects of proto-text analysis I searched for a theoretical framework to enable analysis of these static artefacts. Of course I might have (and indeed will in the future) interviewed the interlocutors of these artefacts. At this stage though this would have introduced meditative interpretations in the comparing of tropes and tropoi from decontextualised disparate times, places and people. In line with anthropological traditions of Pels (1997, p. 168) I wanted to, 'better understand the relevant context of specific utterances and symbols'. What drew my attention, the question I kept asking was- what if this were all we had to examine the Zeitgeist of this period and to create knowledge of this civilisation? This question upended my thought process as the intranet became reconceptualised as an archaeological dig and pro-text analysis the mere trowel of discovery.

Such thoughts brought me to historical archaeology whose analytic techniques operating in a, 'fast changing and dynamic field' (Majewski and Gaimster, 2009, p. xvi), offered the type of logic I had been searching for (Hudson, 2010). Application of these techniques provided a theoretical framework built upon an analysis of the active formulation of identity which focuses surveillance onto the, 'dominant groups sense of "self"' (see Chapman, 1989, p. 19). As such, historical archaeology develops alternate means of looking for the archaeology of marginalised groups. (Funari et. al., 1999). To impose a, 'single coherent definition [though] belies the diversity of theory and methods evident in its application.' (Funari et. al., 1999, p. 17). Historical archaeology is then a hybrid, innovative, improvisational and context dependant method. Its interdisciplinary approaches tailored to specific situations link human cultural behaviours of present peoples with their past material residues. What held my attention was historical archaeology's stated aim which is to, 'ironicize master narratives' (Funari et. al., 1999, p. 17).

This exploitation of the mosaic of traditional disciplines of archaeology and ethnography (Meskell, 2007) provided explanatory mechanisms of property and processes which enabled simple correlates between materials and so called static phenomenon to be provided (Roux, 2007). Historical archaeology though does not assume that living people are frozen relics of the past but that strands of connection exist between the past and living communities (Meskell, 2007). From this perspective the electronic media placed upon schools' intranet sites became my static artefacts. They formed the link between the intranet present and a pre-intranet past. They had a story to tell, a story with temporal, spatial and historical dimensions of the societal conceptualisation of disability. As such, historical archaeology offered references to analytic data that would underpin the pyramid of inferences of the interpretive construct of these intranet sites (Roux, 2007). By the employment of this theoretical framework the article seeks to better illuminate the images and conceptualisations of disability culture left by the colonisers.

### **The relic of organisation - landscapes as spatial relationships**

Ethnologists agree that landscapes as spatial relationships have utility and relevance which should direct attention to the ways in which the past and present are embedded in culturally informed practices (Simon, et. al., 2010). Auge (1995, p. 42) like Shields (1997) believes the prima facie concern of the ethnologist is to decipher, 'the manner in which a place is organised' and to pay close attention to the layout of villages and their arrangements of house and to observe these as a transcription of space. Pels (1997) further supports this contention adding that any analysis of colonial cartographies (Simon, et. al., 2010, p. 125), such as the one forwarded here, must interpret the, 'non-tactile dimensions of social practices such as the arrangement of

buildings'. In the next section of the article, therefore, I sketch out an argument that within this system of organisational control of the intranet re-materialised the administrative control of the plantation settlement. This then was the strong point of occupation that as in European colonisation provided the model for the enslavement of this society's conceptualisation of disability (Pels, 1997). The organisational construct of space formulated here therefore recast me as the ethnologist who, following after the missionaries and first waves of settlers, aimed to decipher the geography and people of this new space and digital age (Auge, 1995).

**(Figure i – placed here)**

### *The 'field notes'*

My initial exploration of schools' intranet sites highlighted a space of ordered regularity and conventional geometry (see figure 1). As I gazed at the computer screen, small yellow folders shone forth, which were organised in serried ranks bounded by neat rows and columns of ordered space. With unerring regularity each intranet site was formulated within a hierarchical structure. Invariably, the first folder emplaced was labelled to represent a core subject<sup>2</sup> – normally either literacy or numeracy – this was closely followed by science. Subsequent organisation was less ordered but normally involved the foundation subjects of history, geography, religious education etc. After this folders became more random including such things as Christmas, school forms, school pictures or registers. The more I observed these little yellow folders, these portmanteaus of organisation, the more it resembled the order of my original school filing cabinet. This

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<sup>2</sup> In England the original primary school curriculum contained three legally defined and nationally assessed core subjects; these were English, Mathematics and Science. Other cogent teaching areas which are not nationally assessed are detailed as foundation subjects and receive less allocated teaching time than the core subjects.

battered grey cubicle of space occupied the corner of my classroom silently maintaining control of paper copies of curriculum material and the general detritus of school life. The system of ordering I encountered on the intranet sites was the same. It employed this grey cabinet of order that I and generations of other teachers were familiar with. This then was a map of a landscape of a territory engraved on teacher's souls (Bachelard, 1994). The more time I spent observing these folders, the more they appeared as the roofs of houses, surrounded by neat and ordered streets. To employ the words of Bachelard (1994, p. 10) there seemed to be tight anthroposomic<sup>3</sup> ties here and that a, 'past history had come to dwell in these new houses'.

My field notes, my observations, of this landscape demarcated a managed garden rather than a pasture wilderness (Simon, et. al., 2010) where the synergy of habitat and people had produced not only a physical but an intellectual context for analysis (Simon, et. al., 2010). These plantation settlements dominated the space, a space which had witnessed a, 'concrete ritual of emplacement' that appeared to reaffirm and reinstate old world orders (Auge 1995, p. 5). To me, this transition from one space to another mimicked that of the Achilpa tribe of Australia. The Achilpa when creating a new settlement implant a *kauwa auwa* – a sacred pole – in the ground around which they proportion and reproduce new space as a mould into which they recreate the order of past settlements (Auge, 1995). Here in this plantation settlement, as in many cultures, the individual house became the corner of the world (Bachelard, 1994). This village, ordered in a hierarchical fashion, was not in Bourdieu's terms a paradigmatically silent *habitas* rather it had implicitly embedded a hierarchical structure into the social space (Shields, 1997). In this

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<sup>3</sup> Professor Tu Weiming suggests culture is a manifestation of a person's holistic view of his/her relationship to the cosmic order - hence the term 'anthropo-cosmic.' Culture is therefore unique to each person, to each region, to each country, and it is constantly evolving, or rather co-evolving, among its constituents understood as a single, organismic whole. (<http://icontinuum.com/inn01.htm>)

manifestation of society (Simon, et. al., 2010), highly stratified settlement patterns were observable. Here, in this electronic space literacy and numeracy, acting ideologically as the planter's mansion, dominated the metaphorical high ground impacting on social and educational processes as in colonial plantation settlements.

### **The ideology of plantation settlements**

In its most basic form Radune (2005) details that the colonial definition of plantation was the literal planting of people into new ground in the establishment of a settlement. Orser (1990) elaborates plantations as discrete spatially bounded sites whose patterns of settlements reflected a system of centralised control. Whilst the prime function of these sites was agrarian, my attention focussed on plantations as, 'symbolic representations' which expressed power and control through, 'settlement patterning' (Joseph, 1991, p. 59). Joseph (1993) in a fascinating study of the origins of Carolina, in America, argues that the migration of Georgian architectural symmetry and geometry established a "plantation ideology" which stressed hierarchy, order and control. Here, then, through, 'carefully constructed landscapes' the planter, 'geographically located' (Joseph, 1993, p. 59) and, 'actively constructed plantation spaces' (Delle, 1999, p. 136) as an altar of control enabling the development of Omnipotent relations both on the plantation and beyond (Orser, 1990).

In this dynamic plantation ideology enables a reference point as to how teachers ordered and controlled the intranet space. Here, the core subjects acted as the plantation mansion thus reflecting their, 'physical and ideological visibility in contemporary society' (Orser, 1990, p.

121). The foundation subjects and other school materials were relegated and set aside as plantation shacks to be controlled from above and subservient to the core subjects. Within this bounded space and processes of colonisation those residing in the plantation huts, the image of the inhabitant, was likewise heavily controlled.

### **The processes of colonialism: control of the populous**

Historical archaeology's central focus is the analysis of complex power relationships expressed in terms of concepts such as – domination/resistance, inequality and colonisers/ colonised (Funari et. al., 1999). Of course we should not forget that the main battleground of colonialism was that of the control of land and of the implanting of settlements into distant territories (Said, 1993). Said (1993, p. xxi) relates though that colonisation was not just about, 'soldiers and cannons' but that its importance also resided in its, 'forms. . . images and imaginings'. Within such terrains of dialectic and praxis the *raison d'être* of colonialism resides in its, 'power to narrate, or to block narratives' (Said 1993, p. xii). Therefore, as Larson (2000, p. 40) succinctly accounts, 'the power to represent the nation is already the power to dominate it'. Colonialism, then, as Comaroff details is always centred on managing heterogeneity and of dealing with difference by, 'imposition, restriction, regulation and repression' (see Quayson 2000, p. 112). Paradigmatically, therefore, Golberg (2000) believes that colonisation is based upon complex anti-hegemonic theoretical orientations.

In Strathern's (1991) view complexity is inevitable in the cultural and social entailments of ethnographic phenomena such as colonialism but that is only through simplification that such

complexity is truly revealed (see Quayson, 2000). The next section, therefore, details what is at one level just a very simple analysis of the artefact of disability unearthed within these intranet spaces. However, this analysis is also riddled with complexity as within it is captured the very processes of colonisation in action. Such processes provide the critical foregrounding to a phenomenological shrinkage (Larson, 2000) of the, ‘ontological inscription of otherness’ into this electronic geography (Quayson 2000, p. 100). My following analysis, then, seeks in Quayson’s (2000, p. 100) terms to move away from analysis of the electronic environ as a, ‘domain of things’ and moves the discussion forward to embrace the images of colonisation as well. In forwarding this, my argument becomes relatively simple. This being that the artefact of disability uncovered may be read as a social text and that semioses of this text stands in place of an institutional consciousness thus substituting extant discourses of practices (Larson, 2000) for an Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia<sup>4</sup> sanitised telos. The complexity of cultural and social entailments formed here then relies on a telos which obviates the Disability Rights Agenda through the imposition of ideological misrepresentations (Larson 2000). These artefacts, bounded within the power discourse of the plantation settlements, revealed in my mind the enslavement of the history of disability rendering it as subaltern of the white, able-bodied male. Disability, as positive, within the epistemology of these internet spaces became the banished ghost, one destined to roam at the margins of society (Larson 2000).

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<sup>4</sup> Here a nation’s history was effectively coordinated to produce images that produce a sanitised cultural history that was closely identified with distinct political regimes, See Shelton,A. (1995). Dispossessed Histories, *Cultural Dynamics*, 7(1) 69 -100.

### **“Enslavement” of image of disability**

The images encountered within the colonised space are noteworthy in several respects. A major finding of the research was the virtual absence of an image of disabled people within the architecture of colonisation. Indeed, out of the 4,485 illustrations, 930 photographs and 59 video clips analysed only 34 of the images found represented disability of which the commonly portrayed picture was physical disability. Indeed, no textual reference to or pictures of intellectual disabilities were observed. 26.5 % of these images portrayed wheelchair users of which only 8.8% were independent users, 7.7% showed people with a lower limb amputation and 11.7% located disability within the image of a pirate. Of further interest was that only 8.8% of the images located disability within the image of a child. This represents less than 0.05% of the total images analysed. Of concern was that only two images could be perceived to represent positive images of disability. A major finding from the study was that in the wealth of school orientated images analysed such as playgrounds, classrooms, swimming lessons and school sports days no picture of disability was observable. The findings of the study highlighted that the most prevalent image the school children were introduced to was that of the white, non-disabled adult male.

### ***Linguistic analysis***

Within the linguistic analysis only two pieces of texts referring to disability were uncovered. First, in an electronic storybook, disability as metaphor was constructed through the image of a

pirate (a not uncommon image in the dataset). The character concerned was employed to represent the ‘baddy’ in the narrative. The pirate in this pictorial form was a diminutive figure, rather overweight and with ruddy cheeks he did not look in the best of health. Indeed, he looked as though a heart attack was imminent. He had a lower limb amputation, a prosthetic limb made out of wood, a visual impairment necessitating an eye patch and a ‘scruffy black beard’. The character was described as,

‘Of course like most pirates [he] had a wooden peg for a leg so every now and then he would wobble and hobble as he walked...

All in all [he] didn’t seem like a very fearsome pirate at all’.

Here, the image of disability was constructed through a person supposed to be “sinister and evil”, however, this pirate could not even get this characterisation right. Instead, he was located within the text more as a pitiable and pathetic person, an object of ridicule.

It is important to realise here that throughout the history of western culture physical disabilities such as a hunched back, a hook, wooden leg and an eye-patch have been employed as a metaphor for evil and depravity (Connor and Bejoian, 2007). In contrast “goodness” is articulated by angel like figures of long flowing locks and smiling faces. Connor and Bejoian (2007) believe that such dichotomous images tell us a great deal about a society and its values. As such they are nothing more than a form of disabilism leading to the abnormalisation of the cultural image of disabled people.

The second section of text found within an electronic science textbook employed an image of a female occupational health therapist showing a wheelchair to a child, a caption under the image

read, 'Occupational Therapists help children with disabilities to be as independent as possible. They also help if you go back to school after a long illness or severe injury'. Disability here was located as medical deficit employing words such as "injury and illness". One should also pause to analyse this narrative further. For example, 'Occupational Therapists *help* children with disabilities,' also the employment of '*if* you go back to school'. This elevated medical and quasi-medical professionals into positions of power and control over people with impairments and did not promote a positive image but rather served to highlight the power dynamics involved in "therapeutic care". It seemingly made plain who controlled the decision of whether a child is allowed back into school.

The unearthing of this artefact of disability does not in Mathew Arnold's terms provide a "reservoir of the best that been know of it". Rather it produces, 'registers of assumptions' and, 'efficacious signs of identification' where the, 'ontological inscription of otherness' is (mal)formed within a hierarchical and variegated demography (Quayson, 2000, p. 100). Through analysis of this aestheticised and commodified artefact of disability, one bounded within plantation ideology, we may observe the process of colonialism at work. Here the missionary teachers controlled the, 'system of representing, as well as speaking for everything in the domain' (Said, 1993, p. 13). Ontologically speaking, the process of colonisation emplaced here provides a social text of, 'unchanging intellectual monuments' (Said 1993, p. 12) of disability that legitimised a grand narrative of abilism. This discourse of modernity in Fieldhouse's (see Said, 1993, p. 13) mind bears witness to, 'a mental attitude of the colonist inability to conceive of any alternative' thus revealing the formulation and control of demographic. Within this terrain, the teachers may be observed as a "repressive force" which occluded the heterogeneity of

past ages recasting the ancestors, the strong and positive image of disability, within an institutional homogeneity of normalisation and abilism (Quayson, 2000).

## Discussion

The data evidenced above provide a narrative to the creation of a space of possibilities and how this *chora*<sup>5</sup> became striated into Euclidean space<sup>6</sup> by missionary teachers who came to colonise this undiscovered brave new world. A world which offered the prospect that disability might have become located within a new cultural framework. As Žižek (2009, p. 116) comments, ‘what can be more sublime than the creation of a new liberated territory of positive order of being which escapes the grasp of the existing order’. Problematically, whilst the colonial power ensured this world was safe from pornography and predatory paedophiles, other aspects of colonisation were not subject to similar “control orders”. The contention forwarded is that the intranet here became an anti-democratic space controlled by a colonising power who employed an axis mundi of “selective tradition”<sup>7</sup> (Williams, 1961) to striate, subjugate and delineate electronic space with old world orders. Teachers, recast as missionaries, delivered a, ‘civilising and repressive force’ reminiscent of Victorian cultural imperialism as they took up special

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<sup>5</sup> I employ *chora* here to mean unregulated infinite space. See K. Algra (1994, p.32) *Concepts of Space in Greek Thought (Philosophia Antiqua)*. London: Brill for an expansive discussion of space and place terminology.

<sup>6</sup> Euclidean space is defined here as regulated space- controlled and over coded by geometries. ( *ibid*, p. 19)

<sup>7</sup> ‘What is constructed through the selective tradition is what is claimed to be legitimate knowledge which, by its elevation, is provided with status, territory and resources; through a process of textual inclusion and exclusion one group’s cultural knowledge is given an official stamp of approval. The outcome of constructing social representation, historical memory and identity in this fashion is that it produces cultural silences’. See K. Crawford (n.d, p.1.). *Researching the Ideological and Political Role of the History Textbook - Issues and Methods*. Electronic document, <http://www.heirnet.org/IJHLTR/journal1/Crawforded-kw.PDF>

positions, ‘ at the juncture of colonial technologies of domination and self control’ (Pels, 1997, p. 168). They became the masterful and pioneering power which codified, channelled and regulated intranet space (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972). In creating *their* modernity of space they built plantations of knowledge and identities whose architecture was domination and building materials were technologies of self (Van der Veer, 1995). As in the late 1800’s, missionary zeal here produced a “civilised” (in their eyes at least) image of a disabled indigene fit to be observed by the wave of subsequent settlers; the children who entered and explored this world in the name of education. This colonisation, through “intranet plantations,” this expropriation of space left permanent legacies of an internal colonialism, of hegemony based on the sanitisation of the image of the Other (Pels, 1997).

The uncovering of this artefact of disability felt uncomfortable. It raised the spectre that a process of ethnic (or perhaps cultural) cleansing had been quietly and privately accomplished. It appeared that a genome, a media project had swept through this space clearing a, terra nullius<sup>8</sup> (See Meekosha, 2011). Here, expulsion of some settlers, the new indigenes, as illegal immigrants produced a private environ (Auge, 1995) whose residual artefact was a social hieroglyph of disability formed within a cultural cloak of bigotry and psycho-medical pejorative traditions. Within this terra nullius only some spirits of the ancestors were brought to populate and animate

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<sup>8</sup> Terra nullius the colonial doctrine of “empty land,” that colonised land was empty (or indeed emptied) of human inhabitants and therefore could be legally claimed and settled by colonists. Electronic document., <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415485395/glossary.asp>.

this private geography (Kwon, n.d). Acting as *hikpapa na'iyatakiunas*<sup>9</sup> teachers rather than sacrificing to the ancestors actually sacrificed some of the ancestors as the, 'quintessence of humanity' became no humanity at all (Auge, 1995, p. 42). As in Vietnam after the expulsion of the American army the ancestor spirits were re-categorised by the conquering force and so a strong ancestry of disability rights was relegated to the status of the *ang bac* (ghost) and thrown out from the new plantation settlements (Kwon, n.d). Societal control exercised in line with that of the Mexican Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia sanitised the artefact of the indigene moulding it to inculcate settlers into a hegemony of an ableist society. This artefact of disability (its residual hieroglyph) became the hidden away refugee of equality. In this form, this Foucauldian leper was non-threatening, subjugated and controlled, whose placement at the borders of this new striated space was observed acceptable. This intranet space then had been subject to a territorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) and I realised that disability here had become Pavlov-West's (2009) "Irish theme pub". Within this territory, then, a chain of clones a recreated reconceptualised essence of disability, of being and belonging, was mapped out within the fallacious architecture of the rustic model village. In this formalised culture a motif of reduction operated which made present, 'an easily assimilable version of a complex reality' (David, 2001, p. 141) whilst absencing the concrete reality of impairment based upon an assumption of an ontology of being (See Chiesa, 1995).

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<sup>9</sup> In Papua New Guinea people deforesting areas to enable settlement hired a seer or exorcist (*hikoapa na'iyatakiuna*) to banish any dangerous spirits. The area was then planted with cordylines and vines capable of barring the movement of spirits. See Moretti, A. (2007) *Ethnology*, 46 (4), 305-328.

## **Ways forward – an utopia of hope**

The narrative of this new world which has been sketched out above is both dark and oppressive. I want now though to suggest how control of this “disabling” narrative might be reclaimed by all and for all who wander this digital topography. Here, then, I sketch out a new cartography where the colonial mansions and plantation settlements are dismantled. In line with Bloc’s (1995) *utopia of hope*, in this topography closed systems of oppression would be opened up and re-framed. This future landscape— this “not-yet-consciousness” (Bloc, 1995) would observe the creation of a homeland of social justice where equality would stand as an achievable “state” and as alternate possibility to the created “rational” electronic society that now exists. The reforms I detail below articulate my own “wishful images” (Bloc, 1995).

Education in this landscape would be reframed within the principles of human rights, democracy, equity and social justice within in which digital media and internetting technologies ultimate aim would be to develop schools’ intranet sites where all children could participate and be treated equally (Sandhill, 2005). In converting this aim into reality all material located into this electronic space must address ‘discrimination, equality... and the status of vulnerable groups in society’ (Sandhill, 2005, p.1). Paradoxically, I contend therefore that more control/ censorship of this “great space of internet democracy<sup>10</sup>” might actually bring forth education that is more

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<sup>10</sup> Cyber optimists such as Al Gore suggest that the internet’... will derive robust and sustainable economic progress, strong democracy, better solutions to global and local environmental challenges, improved health care and ultimately a greater sense of shared stewardship of our small planet ...

...In a sense, the Global Information Infrastructure will be a metaphor for democracy itself. (See Hodkinson, In Review)

culturally sensitive and democratic. In this form, education in this space would become a moral concept necessitating the expression of the values of self-fulfilment, self-determination and equality. However, for Bernstein (1996) an essential pre-requisite to the promotion of cultural democracy, is that the individual has the right to participate and to be included within society at a social, intellectual and cultural level. For this new space to become effective the control of intranet and its digital media by teachers has then to be challenged. Schools have to recognise that relations of dominance exist in society and that obstacles to effective education have become embedded in simple everyday habits of this new electronic world (Slee, 2001). My belief is that if this world is to move beyond the 'phenomena of structure' (Clough, 2005, p.74) and be built upon human rights and the democratic imperative it must give preference to strategies of empowerment. It is in the pursuance of this democratic imperative where the mediating role of the electronic media within this pedagogical space becomes most important. This space is within our grasp but if we want this world to become more humane and fair we need to reach out and take it one keystroke at a time.

## **Conclusion**

Within the virtual space, the missionary teachers and colonial government had a unique opportunity to move beyond, 'post-modern local narratives' and disturb their functions by producing a truth which intervened into the Real perhaps causing, 'it to change from within' (Žižek 2009, p. 33). Here then was a new space of politic and possibilities, a chance to create a democratic, emancipatory and perhaps even subversive world. However, the missionaries' colonisation has subjugated and striated this intranet space and so collapsed the, 'space for a

multitude of oscillations into a reality based on the reduction of open space' (Chiesa, 2009, p. 210). Deciphering of the organisation and representation of the "disabled indigene", through the theoretical framework of historical archaeology and colonialism, unearthed a cartography inscribed by a scalpel of old world geometry (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Colonisation, here, acting as the "overcoding machine" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) has produced a "geometrico" of homogeneous space that determined the substance, form and relations of the electronic environ. Disability, synthesised into this experience of reality became the Deleuzian virtual shadow, the *ang bac*, of its former ideological self. This locality then did not separate figures from affectations. Rather it (rein) forced morphological formulations as the primacy of the theorem element where people with impairments became segments of their segmentations (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). This new world then predicated on extant Lacanian Master–Signifier relationships was founded upon, '... ground rules [which were] grounded only in themselves' (Žižek, 2009, p. 22). Thus, images captured within plantation ideology and over coded by old world geometry empowered phenomenological reduction and the, 'homogenising logic of the institution' to, ' (re) produce a homogeneity of demographic' (Golberg, 2000, p. 73) which hollowed out this space as a site of emancipatory possibilities (Larson, 2000; Žižek, 2009). This framing of disability, its residual artefact, therefore hid from view, 'differences and distinctions' which, 'flowed through the heart of the colonizing darkness' (Golberg, 2000, p. 73). 'Homogenising the heterogeneous' it fixed the, 'flow and flux' with a praxis which rendered passive the strong and positive image of the ancestors (Golberg, 2000, p. 84). This colonised world rejected subjective experience and object materialism (Žižek, 2008) and constructed disability as a, 'staged cultural reality of mental states or perhaps behavioural dispositions to all' (Interrationale, 2008, p.1).

The silence of the ancestors is deeply troubling, as initial ignoring (or perhaps lack of veneration) ultimately renders these indigenes as invisible (Golberg, 2000). For Said (1993, p. 14), the wonder of such, ‘representational exceptionalism’ is that schooling becomes provisional in its outlook and action, ‘... unchecked, uncritically accepted, recurring, replicated in the education of generation after generation’. One must question that if the settlers of this new world, the children exploring these environs, are repeatedly presented with such ideological formations what effect will this have on their conceptions of people with impairments? The answer to this perhaps, with the substitution of one word, comes from Said’s (1993, p. 24) influential text *Culture and Imperialism*,

‘The thing to be noticed about this kind of contemporary discourse, which assumes the primacy and even the complete centrality of the West [abilist] is how totalizing is its form, how all enveloping its attitudes and gestures, how much it shuts out even as it includes, compresses and consolidates. We suddenly find ourselves transported backward in time to the late nineteenth century.’

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**Figure i – Layout of the plantation settlements**

