

9

USING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND STORIES TO DECOLONISE HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

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Introduction

Human activities are causing irreparable damage to our planet. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2022), our current climate crisis is unequivocally caused by human actions and emissions. The situation, however, is not hopeless. This chapter makes the case that a decolonising human rights education (HRE) has the capacity to play an important role in contributing to the matrix of solutions necessary to address climate breakdown. It argues that re-imagining HRE, through the use of a decolonising lens, offers potentially powerful pedagogical spaces for framing critical understandings of and action-oriented responses to our current climate crisis. This chapter acknowledges and unpacks the inherent inconsistencies and tensions in promoting an anthropocentric approach, like human rights, to a crisis fuelled by human exceptionalism. As has been argued by many, our current planetary predicament is largely caused by anthropocentrism and our insatiable desire to control and exploit the natural world (Blitzer, 2021; Bonnett, 2013; Düwell & Bos, 2016; Khoo & Kleibl, 2020; Kopnina et al., 2018; Sultana, 2021; Williams & Bermeo, 2020). In this context, the human-centric nature of the human rights project brings it into conflict with the more eco-centric approaches needed for planetary survival (Kotzé, 2014).

While human rights and HRE may be imperfect projects more generally, they are dynamic and evolving processes which have the capacity to be transformative and to play an important role in tackling the climate crisis. Human rights offer a long-established ethical framework through which we can confront the climate crisis and an ethical justification for re-imagining humanity's relationship with the natural world (Kotzé, 2014). They have

“universal applicability” (Adami, 2021, p. 7) and provide a familiar and widely-used “moral vernacular” (Ignatieff, 2001, p. 109) for naming practices which infringe on and violate people’s lived experiences of human rights. In reflecting on the transformative capacity of human rights Kotzé argues that “The allure of human rights lies, among other things, in their ability to transform society, the many socio-political, legal and economic institutions and the manner in which society interacts inter se and with the environment” (2014, p. 271). Undoubtedly, HRE’s capacity to humanise the climate crisis by relating it directly to human suffering and the violation of rights, can make the abstraction and complexity of climate change perceptible and intelligible and can motivate action at individual and systemic levels (Limon, 2009). While this ontological positioning remains problematic as it continues to prioritise the intrinsic value of humans over other-than-humans, it at the very least offers an action-oriented pedagogical space for children and young people, a space where they can think differently and imagine and explore a “more balanced ecocentric-anthropocentric vision” (Kotzé, 2014, p. 264). This chapter suggests that re-imagining the relationship between humans, the environment and other species through a human rights lens, however, requires a radical shift in perspective, from one which prioritises the liberal values of the European Enlightenment towards one which questions dominant Western narratives of human exceptionalism. It argues that such a shift can occur through a pluriversal and decolonising HRE which includes the knowledge, perspectives, experiences and stories of previously silenced minoritised groups, particularly those whose human rights continue to be restricted by colonial practices, white supremacy and anti-nomadism.

In illuminating these tensions, the chapter examines the role of colonialism and capitalism in shaping rights discourses, our understanding of the world and our relationships to self, others and the natural environment. The analysis explores the role of these structures in exacerbating climate breakdown and climate injustices, both through extractive ecological practices and epistemic violences rooted in the silencing and erasure of ethnic minority and Indigenous¹ knowledge systems, onto-epistemologies and subjectivities. At a pedagogical level, like other scholarship in the field of HRE (Adami, 2021; Osler, 2015; Pyy, 2021), it puts forward counter-narratives as powerful counter-hegemonic tools. Drawing on the rich oral tradition of Indigenous and ethnic minority groups, the chapter provides examples of stories which offer alternative ontological, epistemological and pedagogical perspectives. The selected stories offer important insights into different ways of being with and relating to nature. The inclusion of such narratives ascribes value, legitimacy and status to ethnic minority and Indigenous knowledge systems and pedagogies. Additionally, the use of such pedagogical approaches helps to realise minority rights in and through education, both in the context of cultural

preservation and the academic and social benefits which accrue from cultural recognition and in realising children's and young people's right to a voice.

Structurally, the chapter begins with an exploration of the relationship between human rights and the environment. The potential role of HRE as a pedagogical space for making the climate crisis intelligible and supporting agency and local knowledge production is then explored. With a focus on the expropriation of knowledge systems and culture, the impact of modernism, colonialism and capitalism in creating othering of nature is referenced. Counter-narratives as a way of de-centring colonial, Eurowestern epistemological and ontological hegemony are suggested. The final sections of the chapter examine how Indigenous ways of being, knowing and relating to the world through storytelling can offer valuable insights into how we can relate to the natural world and develop a relationship based on respect and mutuality. Storytelling is also explored as a tool for social justice and as a culturally sustaining pedagogy that can help to realise minoritised groups' rights both in and through education.

The relationships between human rights and the environment

Global recognition of the relationship between human rights and the environment has increased significantly in recent years (United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 2016). It is evident in the domestic legislation of nation-states but also transnationally with, for example, the appointment of UN special rapporteurs on the promotion and protection of human rights in the areas of the environment (2015) and climate change (2021). The dominant discourses emanating from transnational organisations, like the UN, are clear and unequivocal – human wellbeing and the realisation of human rights are inextricably linked to planetary equilibrium and wellbeing (UNGA, 2019, 2016). A healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of a range of human rights, including rights to life, health, food, water, sanitation, an adequate standard of living, development and culture (UNGA, 2019, 2016; Wickramasinghe, 2020). Therein lies a robust if problematic rationale for climate action. Hayward's (1997, p. 60) contention that "the best, if not only, reason for preserving eco-systemic relations is precisely that they constitute 'the life-support system' for humans" (p. 60) will be interrogated in the next section. Before that, the wider existential threat posed by our current planetary crisis will be explored.

The planet's most recent environmental emergencies – the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and unprecedented wildfires in Europe, Australia and North America – underscore both our planetary interdependence and the precarity of the right to life. Approximately 24% of annual global deaths are directly linked to environmental factors (WHO, 2016), ambient air pollution being the number one causal factor (Landrigan, 2017). Vulnerable

populations, already at risk of human rights violations, including women, children, Indigenous, Afro-descendent and coastal communities and people living in poverty are disproportionately affected with higher morbidity and mortality rates (UNGA, 2021). Intersecting forms of inequity, related to race/ethnicity, indigeneity, socio-economic status, gender, age, migrant status and spatial location, result in higher incidents of environmental racism and lower incidents of procedural justice and effective remedy (Donahue et al., 2016; Kuemmerle, 2021; Malin & Ryder, 2018; Newkirk, 2018; Orellana, 2021, Villarosa, 2020). In an Irish context, environmental anti-Traveller (an ethnic minority group indigenous to Ireland) racism is endemic with roadway encampments (known as halting sites) frequently located in unsafe, undesirable and poorly serviced, peripheral industrial locations (Holland, 2021; Joyce, 2018; Ombudsman for Children Office, 2021). Access to recourse is inhibited by inadequate protections for Traveller nomadism within legislation, human rights instruments and mechanisms (Donahue et al., 2016).

These arguments indicate that the realisation of human rights is therefore inextricably linked to the preservation of the environment. Moreover, environmental injustices significantly undermine minoritised groups' human rights and well-being. In this context, the next section examines the potential of HRE to support critical understandings of and action-oriented responses to the current climate crisis.

Why a human rights approach to climate change?

As has been argued, our planetary crisis poses a significant threat to the protection and progression of human rights. This section will first problematise the somewhat utilitarian nature of human rights-based rationales for climate action. It will then explore the possibilities offered by HRE as a pedagogical space for climate understanding and action.

Anthropocentrism, which is arguably at the heart of human rights, is an ontological and ideological position that locates and entrenches all value in humanity (Kopnina et al., 2018). The roots of this perspective are in the Modernist projects of colonialism and capitalism (and related values of rationality, autonomy and individualism), both of which are premised on a destructive socio-natural dualism that separates the human from the other-than-human world (Moore, 2017; Williams & Bermeo, 2020). Williams and Bermeo (2020) argue that such ontologies "have led human beings to be estranged from each other and from the planet" (p. 7). This alienation is evident within the liberal human rights project, where unlike humans who are the "subject of rights", nature is viewed as an "object" to be "acted upon" (Humphries, 2015, n.p.). Any action taken to mitigate climate change in this context is in our own *human* self-interest. In this view, we continue to see the natural world as ours to exploit and any consideration of nature's welfare or intrinsic aesthetic or

moral value is a secondary consideration (Bonnett, 2013). Human rights require that we respect the dignity and rights of other human beings, but make no such demands in relation to other-than-humans, save for the exploitation of natural resources which infringe upon the rights of other humans (Düwell & Bos, 2016). As articulated by Düwell and Bos (2016), “When there is conflict between human rights and nonhuman nature, a human rights approach would demand this conflict be resolved with due respect for human rights” (n.p.). The problem is, therefore, an ideological one, compounded by the liberal human rights ideals of human dignity and individual freedom (Kotzé, 2014).

It is important that these tensions and inconsistencies are illuminated and critiqued. As there are no easy solutions to addressing our climate emergency, it is necessary for us to acknowledge the discomfort and dissonance caused by seemingly incompatible ideological and ontological understandings of the world. This is required as while locating climate action in an HRE context might not be ideal ideologically, a human rights framing offers a range of advantages. In the first instance, the UN has adopted a rights-based approach to addressing the climate crisis, making the language of rights prevalent in environmental discourses. Reflecting this positioning, Kotzé (2014) argues that rights “are uniquely situated and able to perform a singular mediating role in the human-environment interface” (p. 252). More broadly, rights discourses create the conditions for agentic action as individuals are rights-holders with entitlements. In relation to these entitlements, it ensures individuals’ rights to essential information, effective participation and access to remedy. This is particularly important in the context of minoritised and marginalised groups, who may be suffering most from the consequences of climate change. The OHCHR (n.d.) emphasises the importance of participation without discrimination for individuals and local communities. Indeed, more broadly, a human rights framing offers protection to environmental human rights defenders (Mijatović, 2021). Moreover, it holds governments, businesses and other duty-bearers to account as (in)actions are monitored (Wickramasinghe, 2020; Young, 2021). The OHCHR describes a human rights-based approach to climate change as,

a conceptual framework that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyse obligations, inequalities and vulnerabilities and to redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede progress and undercut human rights.

(n.p.)

Most significantly, locating climate change within such a framework gives it universal norm status (Young, 2021), a powerful footing in a global crisis.

What role can HRE play in mitigating the climate crisis?

As previously stated, HRE has the capacity to humanise the climate crisis. Bryan (2021) argues cogently that it is our inability to recognise the humanity of others, particularly those who are marginalised and othered, that has partially contributed to our current inertia. The marginalised become “ultimately expendable” (Bryan, 2021, p. 6). Being able to explore the crisis through a humanising HRE lens, has the capacity to reduce the level of abstraction and makes it more intelligible and meaningful. It also as Kotzé (2014) argues provides an ethical imperative to take mitigating action. Taking action to promote and protect rights respecting norms, values and practices and bringing about social change and structural reform are important aims of HRE (CoE, 2010; Waldron, 2010). However, a spectrum of HRE practice is evident within educational and national contexts (Waldron, 2010). These practices vary from those which are largely knowledge-based (e.g. focus on knowledge and understanding of human rights instruments, legislation and the narrative/stories of those whose human rights are or have been violated), to those that emphasise skill development and focus on rights respecting pedagogical approaches (e.g. those that enable the realisation of children’s participatory rights), to those that focus on transformative action (Tibbitts, 2017; Waldron, 2010).

In the context of climate change and climate justice, HRE can support children’s and young people’s knowledge, skill development and agency in a range of ways. It provides opportunities for children and young people to learn about their right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (as set out recently by UNGA resolution A/76/L.75) (UNGA, 2022) and to explore how the climate crisis undermines the realisation of this right and other rights (e.g. the right to safely engage in play and recreational activities which is undermined by air and water pollution, exposure to hazardous substances, lack of safe greenspaces etc.). More transformative approaches to HRE take this knowledge to the next level – that is empowering children and young people to exercise their rights and to respect and defend the rights of others. These approaches equip children and young people with the skills and attitudes necessary to exercise their civil and political rights, particularly the rights to seek, receive and impart information, peaceful assembly and association and the right to access justice mechanisms (Daly & Lundy, 2022). Article 12(1) of the CRC in particular requires that children’s views be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. Within the context of the climate crisis, this means having their views given due weight on matters of climate justice.

These more transformative and empowering approaches also provide opportunities for children and young people to consider difficult questions (e.g., must the realisation of human rights always be at the natural world’s expense? Do other species have rights? Does the planet have rights?), to discuss the

many ethical dilemmas that climate change generates, their own complicity in the climate crisis (for example how their actions, or those of their communities, damage the environment and damage the lives of other people, particularly those who live in the global south or are marginalised in the global north), and to consider how humans can re-imagine a more respectful and equal relationship with the natural world. It is also an ideal space to problematise human rights and look at how colonialism, capitalism and racism, among other constraining forces, have contributed to a need for human rights in the first place. The following section will explore the role of colonialism and capitalism in engendering an instrumentalist view of nature, which in turn has led to our separation from it.

The role of colonialism and capitalism in the expropriation of minority and indigenous knowledge systems & cultures

This section argues that critical engagement with the legacies and realities of colonialism and capitalism are essential in a decolonising HRE. It argues that a broadening of the knowledge systems and onto-epistemologies of current conceptualisations and practices of HRE can mitigate against epistemic injustices (i.e., the silencing and invalidation of other ways of knowing) and create a more inclusive and pluriversal HRE. In this context, recognition of the pluriversal knowledge of human rights involves “defining, understanding and honouring multiple knowledges, epistemologies, ways of being and differing ways of viewing relationships to others, the earth and the cosmos” (Becker, 2021, p. 55). It goes on to argue that we can learn a great deal about climate mitigation and respectful socio-natural relationships from those who have been marginalised by colonial social relations.

From a de-colonial perspective, HRE’s dominant positioning within liberal, multicultural and cosmopolitan ethical frameworks (as evidenced by theoretical and empirical literature), renders the reproduction of colonial cultures, systems, structures and relationships almost unavoidable (Williams & Bermeo, 2020; Zembylas, 2020). As argued by Zembylas (2020), “coloniality is inextricably linked to liberal-democratic values and institutions in Europe, hence the ethico-political foundations of European values—e.g. private property, tolerance, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, individual rights, human rights and so on—were borne out of the colonial experience” (p. 8). Known as coloniality, it is argued that such positioning leads to “the continuity of colonial forms of domination” (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 219). Such power relations are made possible by what Mignolo (2007) terms “a colonial matrix of power” (p. 156) which involves racialised hierarchisation, endemic exploitation and the expropriation of non-western ontologies, epistemologies, knowledge systems and cultures (Zembylas, 2020). Given the chapter’s focus, it is to

these epistemologies and ontologies and their implications for HRE that I now turn (Becker, 2021; Williams & Bermeo, 2020; Zembylas, 2020).

De-colonial scholars argue that through the centring and imposition of colonial and capitalist relations, Eurocentric ontologies, epistemologies and knowledge systems became uncontested and globally hegemonic (Gwaravanda, 2019; Zembylas, 2020). This “coloniality of knowledge” results in the knowledges of Indigenous and other colonised subjects being systematically inferiorised, marginalised, silenced and erased (Gwaravanda, 2019; Williams & Bermeo, 2020; Zembylas, 2020). The colonisers in essence deny “the validity of widely experienced and valued phenomena by simply presuming the superiority of their perspective” (Bonnett, 2013, p. 265). Gwaravanda (2019) argues that “Eurocentric epistemology has used the ideals of universality, objectivity, and neutrality to hide the locality and situatedness of knowledge” (n.p.). As argued by Zembylas (2020), this is replicated in HRE programmes. Hermeneutical injustices continue to play out in contemporary HRE programmes which continue to privilege Western ontologies, epistemologies and cosmologies and in pedagogical approaches that fail to draw on the material, historical and social realities of minoritised students, viewing students’ knowledge as lacking in credibility and status (Gwaravanda, 2019). The following section provides some examples of how through a pluriversal HRE (in this case a relational ontology), we can reconceptualise our relationship with each other and the planet and imagine a more eco-centric relationship with the natural world.

While there is diversity and plurality within and between Indigenous onto-epistemologies, it is widely accepted that anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism are not characteristic features. On the contrary, most are place-based and underpinned by a strong ethic of kinship and relationality (Hernandez, 2022; Kimmerer, 2013; Standing Bear, 2018; Watts, 2013).

This relational ontology understands human existence to be inextricably and mutually entangled with the natural world (Hernandez, 2022; Kimmerer, 2013; Watts, 2013). In this interconnected understanding, society comprises respectful interaction between human and other-than-human entities in a relationship bound by what Kimmerer (2013) terms a “covenant of reciprocity” (n.p.). Humans are generally understood to be extensions of the land and as such are required to treat it with respect (Watts, 2013). “Mother Earth” is not viewed as owing anything or being in servitude to humanity. Rather she is ascribed intrinsic value and neither the rights nor moral worth of human beings take precedence over her and other beings (Hernandez, 2022; Watts, 2013). Other-than-human entities, including birds, animals, plants, stones, grasses, are understood to have inherent knowledge and all living things are understood to have equal rights (Standing Bear, 2018). In describing the

relationships between humans and animals in Native American Lakota culture, Luther Standing Bear (1868–1939) (2018, p. 149), an Oglala Lakota chief states,

The animal had rights – the right of man’s protection, the right to live, the right to multiply, the right to freedom, and the right to man’s indebtedness – and in recognition of these rights the Lakota never enslaved the animal, and spared all life that was not needed for food and clothing.

In contrast to humanist Enlightenment ways of being, these alternative understanding of knowledge, what it means to be human and what it means to relate to nature in a non-binary way offers HRE important counterpoints to the individualism and anthropocentrism of the liberal ethical frameworks in which rights are located. They also ascribe value and validity to other ways of knowing and being in the world. In this way, they de-centre colonial, Euro-western epistemological and ontological hegemonies. In this context, the following section explores the ways in which Irish Travellers’ (an ethnic minority group indigenous to Ireland), the Anishinaabekwe/Ojibway’s (First Nation & Native American) and the Lakota’s (Native American) ways of being and knowing, can contribute to a more culturally sustaining and pluriversal HRE.

Storytelling as counter & alternative narrative

Storytelling, particularly by Indigenous and other minoritised communities, has the capacity to deepen practices of HRE. It does so as it facilitates participation rights and the sharing of non-dominant perspectives, narratives and knowledge systems. Storytelling and story sharing facilitate the sharing of relational Indigenous onto-epistemologies which can support children and young people to think differently about how human beings relate to the natural world (Kavanagh & Ní Cassaithe, 2022; Kavanagh & Ní Cassaithe, in press). This is particularly important in the context of climate change and climate justice. In describing storytelling as a pedagogical and onto-epistemological approach, Iseke (2013) states,

Storytelling is a practice in Indigenous cultures that sustains communities and validates the experiences and epistemologies of Indigenous peoples. Storytelling provides opportunities to express the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Indigenous languages and nurtures relationships and the sharing of Indigenous knowledges and cultures.

(p. 559)

Iseke (2013) draws attention to the power and importance of Indigenous storytelling and its role in the sharing of Indigenous knowledges and culture.

Despite this, Indigenous and ethnic minority knowledge, experiences, perspectives, stories and agency are largely absent from global mainstream curricula (Kavanagh & Dupont, 2021; Kavanagh & Ní Cassaithe, 2022). This erasure denies the possibility of Indigenous groups being sources of knowledge, valuable in the educational sphere. In addition to sharing rich oral and narrative pedagogies and traditions, Indigenous and ethnic minority groups around the world also shared experiences of intergenerational oppression, deprivation and systemic injustice. Indigenous scholars, Judy Iseke-Barnes and Deborah Danard (2007) of the Metis Nation of Alberta and the Anishinaabekwe/Ojibway nation respectively, describe Indigenous peoples as “hav[e]ing been denied inherent rights and dignity by a mainstream society that does not hear our voices, denies our history and identity, and has worked to destroy our languages and cultures” (p. 7). HRE, when conceived critically as a form of action for climate justice, can provide space for Indigenous and minoritised students to articulate counter-narratives which challenge assumed truths about minoritised groups’ knowledge systems, histories, lived realities and contemporary experiences of injustice. In doing so, counter-narratives through acts of storytelling and story sharing, can promote political compassion (Pyy, 2021) and foreground and validate a pedagogical approach central to Indigenous cultures (Hampton & DeMartini, 2017). In this way, it can act as a form of resistance to hegemonic narratives but also a form of reclamation of a cultural identity almost dismantled by colonialism and in some instances sedentarism. These stories also provide rich insights into relating to the natural world as they are often based on a profound and sacred respect for nature.

Oein DeBhairduin, an Irish Traveller author, educator and activist, published an award-winning collection of stories (*Why the moon travels*) in 2020. These stories, passed down orally, through generations of Traveller families, provide rich insights into both the human and natural world (Kavanagh & Ní Cassaithe, 2022). Stories like ‘The birth of the rivers’ (Risp a skai luals), ‘Airmid’s voice’ (Airmid’s gresko), ‘The hedgehog and its coat’ (A griffin an a gráinneog) and ‘Bees and giants’ (Beach an tom gloke) offer valuable springboards for encouraging children and young people to think about humanity’s relationship with nature and to imagine how it could be otherwise (Kavanagh & Ní Cassaithe, 2022). In the same way, Lakota onto-epistemologies construct animals, birds and insects as powerful knowledge sources. Whether it is the bison in versions of the Lakota emergence story (National Parks Service, 2023) or a range of animals in Luther Standing Bear’s *Land of the spotted eagle*, animals are important and valid knowledge sources. Standing Bear (2018) states, “From them [animals] were learned lessons in industry, fidelity, and many virtues and much knowledge... (p. 53). In describing some of this knowledge, he states “The Lakota trained himself to hide by trying to become as artful as his wise mentors and guides—the animals, birds, and insects” (p. 66). These stories can be used to challenge understandings of both human superiority and

non-Euro-western inferiority. The story of “Sky Woman”, a First Nation Anishinaabekwe/Ojibway’s origin story or creation history, is another example of a story which grounds an understanding of society as comprising humans and other-than-humans (e.g., animals, the spirit world, the mineral and plant world) (Iseke, 2013). In this way, it provides a powerful stimulus for children and young people to reimagine eco-social relations. These stories, as research has shown, can foster minoritised children and young people’s cultural pride (Iseke, 2013). Moreover, it communicates to all children and young people that Indigenous knowledge is both valid and valuable.

There is therefore much to learn from existing stories that may be widely known within a specific community over a period of generations, but also in the individual narratives of children and young people sharing their experiences of human rights. It is my contention that HRE can benefit from both. Osler (2015) argues convincingly for the need for HRE to move beyond human rights instruments and to build on children’s and young people’s experiences. Storytelling as both an epistemology and pedagogical approach should play a greater role in school curricula, both in the sense that it provides rich knowledge but also it affirms a pedagogical approach, central to Indigenous and ethnic minority communities. However, as is argued by Barton (2020), while personalising human rights is a powerful pedagogical tool, in order to motivate action beyond a personal level, children and young people need to engage with the political and economic mechanisms that constitute the global framework for protecting human rights.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to argue that a decolonising (HRE) offers potentially powerful pedagogical spaces for framing critical understandings of and action-oriented responses to the current climate crisis. It has not sought to argue that human rights or HRE can provide all the answers to the climate crisis. Rather, it has argued that by seeking to decolonise and pluriversalise HRE by including previously silenced ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies particularly those that expose children and young people to different ways of looking at and understanding the world, new possibilities open up for reimagining the relationship between the human and other-than-human world. HRE was considered a particularly effective context given the centrality of human rights to environmental discourse more broadly (largely through the UN) but also by the types of transformative pedagogies that more critical action-oriented versions of HRE have to offer. HRE is also considered an effective approach as it shines a light on the reality that we are embedded within our environments and that our actions damage these environments and, in so doing, undermine the rights and dignity of other people, particularly those in the global south and those that are marginalised in the global north. The chapter

argues that storytelling can serve both pedagogical and epistemic functions. It validates a pedagogical approach central to Indigenous and ethnic minority communities and also validates the rich knowledge systems contained within these stories and narratives. The use of storytelling also provides a powerful pedagogical space for Indigenous children and young people to articulate counter-narratives which challenge assumed truths about their experiences of the world and shed light on and motivate action to address the grave violations of human rights by societal institutions. Ultimately, it is argued that the remit of HRE needs to be extended both in terms of the knowledge systems, ontologies, epistemologies and pedagogies made available in the education space but also more broadly, to offer a pedagogical space with a more socio-natural lens where children and young people can engage in critical informed discussions of how anthropocentric and eco-centric perspectives can be brought into greater harmony.

Note

- 1 The term “Indigenous” is contested and imbued with historical asymmetric power relations which serve to homogenise, restrict and silence native populations. In using the term “Indigenous”, I am in no way seeking to flatten differences or suggest that Indigenous communities, tribes, clans, nations, pueblos and so on are monolithic. I want to emphasise recognition of the epistemic, cultural, linguistic and historical heterogeneity of Indigenous populations. I also wish to acknowledge that not all native groups self-identify as “Indigenous” with some viewing it as a derogatory label imposed by white colonisers. I use the term as a collective noun as it is the term used in academic literature and by transnational organisations such as the UN.

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