Decolonizing Australia's Body Politics: Contesting the Coloniality of Violence of Child Removal

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Abstract

In this article I develop a critique of the continual historic and contemporary use of child removal to systematically pathologize and criminalize Black, Indigenous, and poor-white motherhood. I demonstrate how the technologies and rationalities put to work as part of the reproduction of the modern state, wound the body politic in ways that disarticulate the conditions of possibility of the political subjectivity of the subaltern. I develop my critique as a re-reading of contemporary child removal in Australia through a decolonizing feminist perspective. Accordingly, I begin by demonstrating how the biopolitical attempt to produce the raced and gendered subject as a non-subject denied rights and rationality is co-constitutive of the foundations and continuing reproduction of settler-colonial societies, including that of the Australian state and polity, in the neoliberal period. However, I do not stop at this point, for this is to re-inscribe the subaltern in the logics of denial of subjectivity of coloniality. Thus in the second part of the article, emerging from activist scholarship with the Family Inclusion Strategy Hunter, Hunter Valley, NSW Australia – an organization comprised of families who have or are experiencing child removal, practitioners working in the out-of-home care and child protection sectors, and critical scholars that are united in their commitment to foreground the voices, knowledges, and perspectives of birth families in the practices, policies, and politics of child removal – I offer a critique through praxis of these dehumanizing state practices. I focus on three areas: Decolonizing Monologues of Intervention through Dialogues of Connection; Co-construction of Knowledges for Transformation; and Encounters across Borders: Embodying and Embedding Critical Reflexivity. My engagement foregrounds how these active processes of subjectivity of racialized subaltern mothers and families, and their allies offer emergent possibilities for a decolonizing politics which seeks not recognition within the "state" of things as they are but a radical disruption of the terms of the con-

versation as they have and continue to structure Australia's state and polity. This praxical analysis and reflection contributes and extends our conceptualization of the feminization of resistance by bringing to the centre of our analytic and political attention the decolonizing epistemological and methodological aspects of this reinvention of emancipatory politics.

Legacies and Logics of Coloniality

Settler-Colonial societies are characterized by a history in which their Indigenous First Peoples were treated as non-subjects through rationalities and logics of elimination either through direct physical annihilation or processes of cultural, psychological, and subjective assimilation (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). It is the latter logic and rationality and how this is reproduced in the contemporary neoliberal period that is the subject of critique here. Of particular ethical and political importance is maintaining in productive tension and analytic visibility both how such strategies work to reproduce the non-subjectivity of the racialized subaltern women and undercut the possibility of emergence of her political subjectivity, *and*, how they are resisted through processes of active subjectivity and onto-epistemological practices of (re)humanization.

Strategies of child removal to "remove the Indian from the man" characterize the interventions of assimilationist politics in Australia, Canada, United States, and New Zealand. Historical archives and critical analysis demonstrate how such strategies were premised upon the denial of the humanness and subjectivity of Indigenous peoples, and in the case of the US its Afro-American population, and a lack of recognition that there was anything to be learned from Indigenous and Black culture and ways of life. As an Inquiry into assimilationist policies in Australia between the 1920s and 1970s concluded "the predominant aim of Indigenous child removals was the absorption or assimilation of the children in to the wider, non-Indigenous community so that their unique cultural values and ethnic identities would disappear" (Krieken, 2004: 141). Aboriginality was constructed as a primitive uncivilized social order lacking historical agency and knowledge as against the white settler society which was represented as synonymous with civilization, progress, and reason (Morgensen, 2011).

When we bring the gendered subject into our considerations, then the interrelationships of paternalism and patriarchy become evident in the formation of settler-colonial states and polity. Aboriginal, and Black mothers in the States, were represented as "children of the state" lacking rationality, reason, and knowledge and also as Salmon (2011: 169) describes in the Canadian case but representative of more generic discursive positioning "as abusive, neglectful and otherwise dangerous to their children". Racialized subaltern mothers were therefore interpolated as non-citizens through infantilization and pathologization which left them subject to the interventions of the state onto their bodies, and into their families and communities (Jacobs, 2009). In the Australian context this resulted in the genocidal policies now referred to as the Stolen Generation (Krieken, 2004; Robinson and Paten, 2008). At once therefore was a paradoxical process of both denial and invisibilization as knowing subjects with history, culture, and agency, at the same time as a process of being made hyper-visible through representations that sought to caste these women and their families as legitimately subject to "civilizing" state interventions. As Sara Ahmed so eloquently describes in the Phenomenology of Whiteness,

> When we talk about a "sea of whiteness" or "white space" we are talking about *the* repetition of the passing by of some bodies and not others, for sure. But non-white bodies do inhabit white spaces; we know this. *Such bodies are made invisible when we see spaces as being white, at the same time as they become hyper-visible when they do not pass, which means they "stand out" and "stand apart".* (2007: 156, author emphasis)

Whilst it is essential to re-tell this story of the violences of the settler-colonial past it is important that we do not stop here as this can fall prey to a re-presentation of Indigenous and Black communities and mothers as passive spectators on their lives and merely victimized recipients of state policies. This can reinforce a narrative which as Maria Lugones (2010: 748) describes "[assumes that] the global capitalist colonial system is in every way successful in its destruction of people's, knowledges, relations and economies".

As archival evidence suggests strategies of child removal were developed as a way of quelling potential threats to order (both social and

political), as a biopolitical process of disciplining and controlling the autonomous female subject and collective forms of social reproduction, and as a means of breaking Aboriginal and Afro-American resistance (Roberts, 2007, 2012; Salmon, 2011; Robinson and Paten, 2008). This foregrounds how oppressed and colonized communities resisted such practices of assimilation, denial, and annihilation. Affirming Lugones reminder that the racialized subaltern woman

> [is] a being who begins to inhabit a fractured locus constructed doubly, who perceives doubly, where the sides of the locus are in tension, and the conflict itself actively informs the subjectivity of the colonized self in multiple relation (2010: 748).

Neoliberal Smoke and Mirrors

Such processes of dehumanization and de-subjectification of Black and Indigenous subaltern mothers have continued into the neoliberal era despite both the formal recognition of citizenship status of Indigenous peoples and "official" apologies for systematic strategies of child removal in Settler Colonial States such as Australia and Canada.

Neoliberal social interventions are justified through a discourse that individualizes social ills. Thus social ills such as poverty, domestic violence, addiction, unemployment, and mental health become the responsibility of poor individuals' defects, pathologies, and deficits (Motta, 2008; Mansell and Motta, 2013). This discourse responsibilizes poor communities for the destructive impacts of neoliberal reform and makes them accountable to the state for their actions and behaviors at the same time as state run social services and support systems are privatized, outsourced, and downsized in the name of growth and efficiency. Institutionally this is manifested in the increasing turn to audit and risk cultures and practices, which create "rituals of verification" (Power, 1997 cited in Scherz, 2011: 35) that transform a political question into a technical issue by "recasting it in the neutral language of science" (Dreyfus and Rainbow, 1983: 196, cited in Scherz 2011: 35).

The intersecting paradox that faces poor mothers, often amongst the most adversely hit by these reforms and (mis)representations is to be

caught between the state strategies of privacy and punishment represented as expert and objective strategies of attentiveness and care. Yet the privatization and individualization of social reproduction hurts mothers. Firstly, it results in women from the poorest communities with the fewest resources coming to shoulder the greatest burdens of ensuring the well-being of their children. Secondly, as they are re-presented as responsible for their and their children's social and economic conditions they are easily pathologized as unfit mothers subject to state intervention, surveillance, and punishment (Roberts, 2009; Salmon, 2011). In this context welfare systems reproduce strategies of subjectification which seek to regulate the behaviors of poor mothers so as to reproduce their political and social disarticulation (Roberts, 2007; Mansell and Motta, 2013).

The disciplinary neoliberal state's intersecting strategies of privatizing of social reproduction and pathologizing of poor mothers imbricates smoothly with the historic racist discourses which represent Black and Indigenous mothers as unfit for rule and citizenship and thus legitimately subject to state paternalistic and patriarchal interventions. They build on and reinforce misrepresentations that pathologize Black and Indigenous motherhood which portray black women as "sexually licentious… the family-demolishing Matriarch, the devious welfare queen, the depraved crack addict accompanied by her equally monstrous crack baby- paint [ing] a picture of a dangerous motherhood that must be regulated and punished" (Roberts, 2012: 1292).

Research into contemporary forms of biopolitical punishment and regulation of racialized and feminized subjects in settler colonial states demonstrates that numerous iterations of social policy related to child protection and community cohesion and framed as practices of care and commitment reproduce discourses of dehumanization and epistemological negation. These discourses represent, in the Canadian case, Aboriginal mothers and their children as objects for state intervention that are "unable and unwilling to care for their children" (Salmon, 2011: 170), and in the US, they represent Black mothers "as incapable of governing themselves and need(ing) state supervision" which helps to justify intense state surveillance and intervention into black communities and families (Roberts, 2007: 3–4). In this way Aboriginal and Black mothers become positioned as outside of the circuits of productive citizenship

and as against the needs and interests of the public. Arguably, this justifies the state's intervention into their lives in ways which re-traumatize and seek to ensure order and acquiescence that "help[s] contain resistance against the state's support of systematic inequalities and collusion with corporate interests" (Roberts, 2009: 194).

The net of disciplinary biopolitical regulation and fragmentation of the body politic is widening as the possibilities of "inclusion" into neoliberal regimes of accumulation decreases (Chant, 2007; Morgensen, 2009). Thus the poor white mother becomes increasingly represented as a racialized non-subject, legitimately subject to similar practices of blaming, shaming and disciplinary interventions. As Sara Ahmed (2007: 159–160) explains:

> Some bodies, even those that pass as white, might still be "out of line" with the institutions they inhabit. After all, institutions are meeting points, but they are also where different lines intersect, where lines cross with other lines, to create and divide spaces… Becoming white as an institutional line is closely related to the vertical promise of class mobility: you can move up only by approximating the habitus of the white bourgeois body.

As these examples foreground the consequences of disproportionate practices of child removal from subaltern Black and Indigenous communities in settler-colonial societies work to inflict further individual and collective soul wounds (for a detailed discussion of this concept see the work of Duran et al., 2008) on communities who have already suffered centuries of wounding *and* enact fresh wounds on communities suffering the traumatic impacts of changes in patterns of accumulation which result in mass and chronic unemployment and social exclusion. This is a politics of state shaming, blaming, and abuse which "does not honor… women [as it] decrees simultaneously that these women must be and yet cannot be normative mothers" (Fraser, 1989: 153 in Salmon, 2011: 173; for a detailed analysis of how feminist discourses have been co-opted into these biopolitical logics see Bumiller, 2008). A poor racialized and feminized underclass becomes re-presented as less-than-citizen and their needs "[positioned] as against those of the public" (Salmon, 2011: 173). This justifies policies and practices of intervention that build upon and

extend historic strategies of dehumanization that aim to produce the raced and gendered subject as a non-subject and disarticulate the conditions of possibility for their political subjectivity. This demonstrates the historic and contemporary co-constitutive role of such practices of dehumanization to settler-colonial states and "democratic" polities.

Representational Absence of the Racialized Subaltern Mother

Critical political economy analysis of contemporary processes of neoliberal dispossession have paid scant attention to how these state disciplinary technologies and strategies impact on the gendered and racialized body of the proletariat (sf. Hardt and Negri, 2005; Harvey, 2007; Žižek, 1998). This reproduces the invisibilization of Black and Indigenous motherhood as a site of oppression *and* resistance despite these women often being at the forefront of the attacks of neoliberalism of social, economic, and political rights and making up a large proportion of many of the movements resisting such politics in the Global South (Motta, 2013, 2014; Gutierrez, 2012). If the Black woman and mother is re-presented, she is as Lugones (2006: 78) describes "not within the bounds of normalcy (that is without structural description)… as inferior". Such a representational absence reinforces a patriarchal logic of coloniality in the production of "critical" theory which re-enacts the very processes of denial and elision it seemingly seeks to contest (Motta, 2016).

On the other hand, feminist materialist analysis has contributed to visibilizing the gendered impacts of contemporary neoliberalism on the body of the global proletariat. Thinkers such as Sylvia Chant (2008) have demonstrated how processes of dispossession have eroded the survival mechanisms of poor communities and augmented the burden that women carry for ensuring the welfare and social reproduction of their children and families. This increased burden of social reproduction is combined with the entrance of poor women into the workforce often in unregulated and casualized conditions. Such a combination of structural shifts has resulted in the feminization of poverty with increasingly precarious and violent conditions of everyday life contextualizing the

experiences of millions of women and their families across the Globe. Nuanced analyses (sf. Olivera, 2006) have demonstrated the intimate link between these processes of structural reform and the increase in intimate partner violence and femicide as communities are ripped apart, social identities devalued, and cultural practices and autonomous moral economies eroded. However, there is again little work in relation to gendered state strategies of dehumanization, denial, and disarticulation in relation to welfare, child protection, and prison systems. Additionally, whilst these analyses visibilize conditions of gendered, classed, and racialized oppression, they reproduce the racialized subaltern women as victim, re-presenting her silence and reinforcing a discursive representation which elides her subjectivity (sf. for a similar critique Mohanty, 1988, 2003).

More specific critical analysis of state welfare and prison systems have demonstrated how the prison industrial complex in the US is an instrument for the management of social and racialized marginality (see for example Chartand, 2016; Waquant, 2002). However, these accounts neglect the gendered intersections of power and oppression and so neglect incarcerated women. Yet as Roberts (2012: 1483) demonstrates "Incarcerations impact on black mothers is an important element of how mass incarceration acts as a means of political subordination. One of the most pernicious features of prison expansion is that it devastates community-based resources for contesting prison policy and other systemic forms of disenfranchisement". Thus the representational absence of Black women and mothers from these analyses miss the vital gendered linkage between the prison system, the foster care system, and the attack on the social and political power of poor Black communities, and conversely devalues the central role of Black mothers in resisting such a nexus of power (Roberts, 2012; Mohanty, 1988).

Those scant critical studies across the disciplines that engage directly with child removal are historically focused (Krieken, 2004; Robinson and Paten, 2008) or develop a critical engagement with social work policy delinked from broader analysis of neoliberal political economy (Scholfield et al., 2010; Kapp and Propp, 2002; Burgheim, 2005), and/or place emphasis on the psychological, emotional, and cultural impact of such policy for community cohesion and resilience (Mason and Gib-

son, 2004; O'Neill, 2005). It is rare to find work which situates such strategies within historic and contemporary political economy critique of (neoliberal) capitalist coloniality and which interrogates and exposes the political functions of this massive removal of children from racialized subaltern mothers. A key exception is the work of Roberts (2007, 2009, and 2012) which explicitly seeks to expose and dissect the political function of such systems in the case of the United States and their role in reproducing a deeply unequal and dehumanizing social system which systematically oppresses Black communities and Black mothers. However, despite the importance of visibilizing historic and contemporary forms of oppression such work speaks over the voices of racialized mothers in that again they become re-presented as if global capitalism were completely successful in subjugating Black mothers and motherhood. This re-produces, as Lugones (2010) and I (2014) argue, despite social justice intentions, the invisibilization of the political subjectivity of racialized subaltern mothers.

On the Need for Feminist Decolonizing Methodologies

If we start from the decolonial feminist perspective of embracing the place-based experiences and knowledges of subaltern racialized women (Motta, 2014), then as Lugones (2010: 746) reminds us, it is "belonging to impure communities that gives life to her agency". This implies beginning from the onto-epistemological politics of subaltern racialized women through embracing the conflicting, tension-ridden experiences of being at once subjugated as a racialized subaltern non-subject *and* resisting this through active processes of subjectivity. It is here that we move beyond both the representational invisibility of the racialized women *and also* the racialized subaltern woman as victim detailed above, to a perspective of feminism in decolonizing praxis (see also for a similar critique Motta, 2013). This is by necessity a praxical task which implies a stepping inwards to the contours of everyday life and the embodied experience of the lived contradictions between the "fiction" and realities of capitalist (self) representation, which as Lugones (2010: 746) describes

> … is to enact a critique of the racialised, colonial and capitalist heterosexualist gender oppression as a lived transformation of the social. As such it places the theorist in the midst of the people in a historical, peopled, subjective/intersubjective understanding of the oppressing-resisting relation at the intersection of the complex systems of oppression.

The methodologies of the feminist in decolonial praxis become methodologies of everyday life that enable her to co-facilitate processes of critical intimacy as opposed to the groundless distance of research embodied in the logics of coloniality (Motta, 2016). An epistemological stepping inwards involves nurturing and experimenting with knowledge processes in which we collectively bring to awareness how systems of oppression wound us as communities and as individuals. However, it is of no surprise that decolonizing epistemological practices comes from those who inhabit the epistemological margins of colonial difference. They emerge out of the struggle and practice against ontological and epistemological denial as outsiders-within formal education and in the multiple informal spaces of everyday life and community organizing against processes of subjectification of coloniality. These processes of subjectification are, as Lugones (2010: 748) describes

> ... met in the flesh over and over by oppositional responses grounded in a long history of oppositional responses and lived as sensical in alternative, resistant socialities at the colonial difference.

It is also of no surprise that there is so little written about decolonizing work for activist-researchers, for as Gill et al. (2012: 11) argue, "[there] is limited representation of these peoples in the academy".

Identifying as an outsider-within formal educational spaces, I have embodied and embedded such commitments and practices of co-construction in my scholarly practice through exploring with others ways to bring to (our) life(ves) prefigurative epistemologies (Motta, 2011) and methodologies of the storyteller (Motta, 2014, 2016). Prefigurative epistemologies are embedded in the collective construction of multiple readings of the world, in which we tell our stories to re-enchant the world and our communities, speak in multiple tongues, rethinking and creating

what it means to speak, to write, to theorize. Here we co-create the conditions of possibility, and the terms of our own healing visibility to disrupt both the death-producing logics of invisibility and the pathologizing gaze of hyper-visibility. As Anzaldúa (2007: 81) describes in relation to her experience – and eminently applicable here – "I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing; I will have my voice… I will have my serpent's tongue – my woman's voice".

Prefigurative epistemologies are inherently pedagogical in that they involve the development of practices of (un)learning that enable transformation of conditions of oppression. Critical to emancipatory pedagogies such as these is an overcoming of the dualism between mind and body, theory and practice, and knower and known. This involves, as I have argued elsewhere, moving away from the Monological silencing epistemologies of re-presentation and moving towards methodologies of the storyteller. These methodologies foster processes of critical intimacy to co-create a politics of dialogical healing and transformation in which all become co-constructors of knowledge, our social worlds, and ourselves.

In my collaboration with Family Inclusion Strategy Hunter (FISH) to date, such epistemological prefiguration has been methodologically actualized in a decolonizing Participatory Action Research (PAR) process which builds upon traditional PAR studies in its: i) conceptualization of the boundaries of the research, ii) conceptualization of theory/knowledge; iii) and the relationship posited between subject (researcher) and object (researched). In terms of the boundaries of PAR, many PAR studies tend to develop place-based ethnographies which bound the nature of community participation and knowledge production to understanding local conditions, behaviors, and practices. Additionally, in many PAR studies the researcher takes on the role of analyzing "everyday life from the standpoint of an outsider looking in" (Akon, 2011: 115). Both these limitations result from the epistemological assumptions that communities' knowledge is experiential and concrete, and it is the researcher who is able to systematize and theorize more deeply these concrete experiences in a way that will be of use to communities in their concrete objectives of change (see Motta, 2011 for an extensive critique of this position). However, such an epistemological underpinning reproduces

the hierarchies of a colonizing politics of knowledge, in which as decolonial feminist scholars describe (Lugones, 2010; Motta, 2014), communities are considered unable to produce theoretical knowledge and the thinker is posited as an abstract, individualized, and masculinized subject able to separate from the messiness of embodied experience to produce knowledge to guide everyday life. This invisibilizes the ways in which theoretical knowledge can be produced collectively through processes of critical reflection on the lived experiences of oppression and struggle, and how theoretical knowledge and systematization can take multiple forms including, but not limited to, the textual.

Thus the methodology developed in this research differs in its epistemological assumptions, as it specifically seeks to decentre the knowing-subject of coloniality and instead embrace collective processes of knowledge construction and multiple forms of knowledge (written, oral, visual) with participants in the research project. Such an epistemological foundation also implies that the researcher moves away from representing the "other" and towards collective problem-solving, healing, and transformation. The researcher's experience and knowledge becomes one element in the dialogue out of which a research project emerges. It also implies that the researcher takes on a facilitative role in the co-creation of knowledge for change (co-defined), becoming part of the change-process itself. This re-orientates and dislodges the traditional dualism between research (subject of research) and researched (object of research) as all become knowers and researchers.

These ethical, political, and epistemological commitments have shaped my engagement and participation in FISH. They meant that I joined as one participant amongst many, offering particular pedagogical and methodological knowledge and experiences and open to co-create the directions, practices, and objectives of FISH. Elements of this journey are outlined below as a way to foreground the onto-epistemological practices of humanization, resilience, and hope of racialized subaltern women and their allies.

Contesting the Violence of Coloniality of Child Removal in Australia

Racist state technologies and rationalities of dehumanization which attempt to (re)produce the non-subjectivity of subaltern racialized mothers intertwine with the logics of the disciplinary neoliberal state in pernicious ways in contemporary Australia.

As Walter, Taylor and Habibis (2011: 11) argue in relation to social work as a discipline and practice "Whiteness as a concept, theory and reflexive practice has a low visibility within the pedagogy and curriculum of Australian social work… [there] remains a 'Whiteness gap'". The epistemological underpinnings of social work thus continue to be embedded within logics of coloniality and the negation of the subjectivity and epistemology of Aboriginal peoples. Social work education and expertise remains located and embedded within a Eurocentric perspective, which legitimizes a universalizing expert perspective that negates difference and diversity, and instead reproduces the representational absence of the racialized subaltern mother as knower and carer (Young, 2011: 114–115).

Such monological logics and rationalities imbricate smoothly with the individualizing and pathologizing shifts in social work policy during the neoliberal era. The principles underpinning current social policy for child protection emphasize the centrality of the family and the primacy of professional and scientific expertise, resulting in policy and practice which focuses attention on the individual. The problem to be addressed is isolated, and professional service or treatment is provided to change and modify behavior in one or more of the protagonists within the confines of the family unit. As Young (2008: 106) reflects "it is clear that the intricacies or complexities and varied forms of family life and human behaviour that exist within a range of socio-economic and cultural circumstances are relegated in importance".

These intertwining logics of historic processes of dehumanization and contemporary neoliberal forms of pathologization and re-traumatizing interventions are perhaps most clearly manifested in the Northern Territory Intervention of 2007. In this situation alleged cases of systematic child sexual abuse became a context in which the state intervened to "protect the children" through a representation of Aboriginal communi-

ties as pathologically abusive and neglectful. Such social pathology was used to legitimize militarized interventions and intensified surveillance onto Aboriginal communities that continue to this day. The coloniality of social work and the neoliberal disciplinary state here came together to reproduce epistemological and ontological violence through "policies of surveillance and subjugation, …claimed by their authors as policies of deliverance and civilization" (Young, 2008: 119).

In the context of the Hunter Valley, where FISH emerged, this confluence of coloniality and contemporary disciplinary neoliberalism manifests in the Hunter Central Coast region of NSW having the highest rate of children and young people in out-of-home care in NSW in 2012/13 (NSW Family and Community Services, 2014), including continuing very high rates of new entries to care. The rate is significantly higher than most other regions. NSW has the highest proportion of children and young people in out-of-home care in Australia with the exception of the Northern Territory (AIHW, 2014). These two figures combined suggest that this region has one of the highest proportions of children and young people in out-of-home care in Australia. This is combined with the privatization, closure and/or outsourcing of mental health, domestic violence, and out-of-home care services (Cox, 2014). Juridically in the state of New South Wales there is a shift towards support and recommendation for adoption of children removed from their birth families if the situation of risk and/or harm has not be resolved within set timeframes and making adoption easier from out-of-home care without parental consent (see FACS, 2013 for an overview of these changes which mirror similar shifts in the US, Roberts, 2007, 2009). This is embedded and reflected in social work training and practice with a shift away from traditions of community welfare and social justice-orientated praxis towards neoliberal individualized and risk-focused interventions and discursive framings of child protection issues. This tends to individualize social problems facing subaltern communities and families and pit child interests against those of parents and families framing the role of the social worker/child protection agent as protecting children against unfit parents (Rogowski, 2015; Thorpe, 2007; FIN, 2007).

In this context critical practitioners from the out-of-home care NGO sectors, critical scholars, and a small group of parents who had

experienced or were experiencing the out-of-home care and child protection systems came together in early 2014 to form a steering-group called Family Inclusion Strategy Hunter. FISH emerged out of growing concern of the lack of voice and representation of marginalized families in out-of-home care processes and shared the broad intention of facilitating processes and practices of parent voice and participation. The group converged on a commitment to addressing these issues with a parent-centered approach to facilitate the voice, visibility, and agency of families so as to foster reflexive and inclusive practice and transform/reform of the discourses that shape and frame policy and practice.

My resonances with the orientation of FISH were its commitment to collaborative and dialogical knowledge processes with parents and families facing the disciplinary neoliberal state, questioning of the individualization of social ills discourse framing policy interventions and commitment to fostering critical reflexivity amongst practitioners. My engagement has focused on supporting the development of methodologies that facilitate the construction of knowledges for transformation, active engagement with developing and consolidating processes and practices of critical reflection with critical practitioners in the out-of-home care sector, and supporting the process of consolidating and nurturing the sustainability of FISH over the medium and long term. Through this process my own framing of practitioners in this sector has changed from one of mistrusting homogenization to empathy and connection across our shared commitments to maintaining radical traditions of public service amidst increasing colonization by marketized logics. This has involved the beginnings of a transformative dialogue between traditions of narrative therapy and feminist popular education.

Below I detail three stories which I believe contribute to putting in action a feminism in decolonization praxis of transformation in text and body, and which I hope support FISH's critical reflectivity and praxis, as well as offering a contribution to the broader dialogue of how to transform, resist, and transgress historic and contemporary practices of state dehumanization of racialized subaltern mothers and communities.

Decolonizing Monologues of Intervention through Dialogues of Connection

Our first public event was targeted to practitioners and organizations in the field of out-of-home care. We spent a number of months as a group coming up with a "wicked question" around which we would organize the first ever family inclusion practice forum to be held in the Hunter Valley. The question that emerged was: "How can we support parents and family to have better relationship with their children in out-of-home care?". This question was chosen as it enabled a discussion and critical reflection of the plight of children and young people in child protection and out-of-home care systems at a range of levels, including the voices of children and young people, the voices of parents and families of children in out-of-home care, those of authorized caregivers, and of practitioners in family support and other welfare services as well as policy makers and program developers.

The group spent a number of months thinking deeply and dialogically about the methods that would most suit the objectives of building practice partnerships between families and children, and practitioners that could enact change and transformation to improve the outcomes and experiences of marginalized children and families. We wished to enable the sharing of stories from both parents and practitioners of the out-of-home care sector as a way to identify "a shared understanding of the problems and developing next steps" (Cox, 2014: 6). However, we felt strongly that the emphasis should be on parent voices being heard and the perspective of parents and family being foregrounded as key to any meaningful dialogue in the out-of-home sector. We thus began the day with a parent panel in which four parents who had interacted with the child protection and out-of-home care systems acted as experts and consultants. They attended the forum to share their stories, experiences, and knowledges of the service system and to provide advice to practitioner participants about what had worked well and what needed change. They participated in the entire forum as experts contributing to the ongoing discussion with practitioners. We then organized the rest of the day around participatory methods of knowledge construction which included world cafe (see Appendix 1) and open space technology methods (see Appendix 2).

Out of our dialogue emerged five key areas for practice and policy change, as well as a number of ways forward (to be detailed in the following experience). We agreed to write up the process of emergence of FISH, the methodology of organizing the practice forum, and the key themes and outcomes of the forum as a report aimed at families and practitioners experiencing and working in the sector. The methodology of writing up the report mirrored that of the forum, in that we aimed to be as dialogical and inclusive as possible within time and material constraints. Jessica Cocks wrote up the initial notes and reflections from the forum and then with other practitioners deepened the dialogue with the parent experts in relation to comments and ideas that had emerged from their contribution. This was then sent on numerous iterations to critical educators and other members of FISH for their comments and reflections. The report "Building Better Relationships: Family Inclusion Strategies Hunter: Outcomes of the Family Inclusion Forum" was launched in early 2015.

The ethical and epistemological praxis of FISH enact a decolonization of the Monologues of interventions that have and continue to characterize dominant state interventions on the body and into the family and community of racialized subaltern mothers, their children and families. FISH's practice enacts a radical disruption of the implicit hierarchies of knowledge and rationality on which they are premised and de-centers the terms of the epistemologically and politically violent conversation of coloniality in Australia.

This affirmative dialogical praxis does not seek to enclose the conversation about out-of-home care and the families and children impacted by this system into a homogenous uni-dimensional solution. Rather there is an embrace of complexities, multiplicity, and openness to the voices of racialized subaltern mothers, their children and families. Implicit within this practice is the foregrounding of a radical democratizing practice of community welfare that offers horizons to re-think the state and its social policy interventions in relation to subaltern communities. Such a radical re-thinking and reclaiming mirrors the work of sister organization Family Inclusion Network, Queensland (FIN) which describes their practice as embedded in radical community and social justice traditions "that seek to tap into, support and enable and underpin informal

community relationship, with a view to developing community groups characterised by mutuality and democracy, and committed to personal support and collective action" (Thorpe and Ramsden, 2014: 66; see also Cary et al., 2007).

Importantly the embodied lived experiences of the families and mothers are reframed and re-narrativized as sources of expertise and knowledge as opposed to spaces of lack, criminality, and deviance. The body of the racialized and feminized subaltern becomes recognized and embraced as a site of wisdom and rationality. This involves disruption of dominant embodied performances of expertise and professionalism in which the knower is the deplaced academic and policy maker who empowers the practitioner to intervene into the infantilized and pathologized lives of subaltern racialized mothers and families. As FIN (Thorpe and Ramsden, 2014: 66) reflect on their practice this involves "reframe[ing] conventional professional boundaries... work[ing] with families and develop[ing] relationship with equal power". Similarly, for FISH, deplaced and disembodied hierarchical distance becomes transfigured and prefigured with placed and embodied dialogical intimacy and connection.

Such encounters between critical practitioners and families and mothers affected by the "system" disrupt the affective hierarchies of dominant professionalized interactions in that as opposed to hierarchical separation and differentiation, emotional relationships of empathy, care, and friendship are fostered (see also Thorpe and Ramsden, 2014: 67 in relation to the concept of resourceful friends). This involved the practitioner being silent as opposed to talking and taking the authorial voice, and as such supported the creation of the conditions of possibility for decolonizing dialogue (Young, 2008: 117). The stories of parents and mothers impacted by the out-of-home care and child protection sectors deeply impacted the practitioners at the Forum. For most this was the first time that they had heard the stories of their "clients". This caused productive discomfort which led to critical reflection and the emergence of new relationships of understanding and solidarity. We had co-created a space that as Coombes, Johnson and Howitt (2014) describe "[was] a pedagogical safe place that enable[d] inter-subjective contemplation and growth in consciousness about social processes and options for [change]".

Co-Construction of Knowledges for Transformation

Reflecting back to the experience of the first forum, FISH as a group made a leap of faith and had a level of trust (often not explicitly spoken) in a co-constructed process of change embedded in the knowledges of parents and front-line critical practitioners. In our discussions we agreed on the importance of facilitating the forum mindfully around the objectives of enabling deep reflection as a means to come up with concrete ways forward for our work individually, collectively, and organizationally. As a key commitment was to visibilize and amplify parent and family voices that had experienced the removal of their children into out-of-home care for a short or long time, we wanted those voices to be given emphasis.

Our decision to begin with a parent as expert/consultant panel reflected this. The questions for the panel were prepared in advance and parents on the panel gave their suggestions and comments on them beforehand (see Appendix for questions). In our preparations we were mindful not to close off avenues of discussion and so as opposed to pre-framing the themes to be discussed after the parent-expert panel we instead chose two open-ended questions about family-inclusive practice. We organized the reflections around a world café model (Brown, 2005) in which pieces of butcher's paper were placed on separate tables. We then asked participants to move to a table of their choice and then to move around as a group so that all groups engaged collectively with the different answers and reflections that were emerging. We hoped that as a method this would enable a deepening of reflection on each question as each group added and engaged with what previous groups had written and discussed and then returned to their original table.

Our final session was organized as an Open Space session (as described in Michael Herman Associates, 1998). This began with the facilitator asking participants to suggest a question that emerged from their reflections and that would help us to think of ways forward in facilitating family inclusion in out-of-home care. Five questions were suggested by distinct individuals who were then asked to be the facilitator of discussion around their question. Other participants were then free to move to

any discussion during the remaining time of the forum. Throughout the day participants from FISH took notes of reflections and discussions and we noted down everything that was discussed in groups on butcher's paper, which were gradually put up around the room so that all participants could continue their individual and group reflections over lunch and during breaks. The report emerging out of the forum was organized around these notes and the themes and key questions and answers that emerged.

The key outcomes of the forum involved a focus on five themes: individual practice change, partnerships between careers, family and the service system, re-thinking models of out-of-home care and earlier intervention, and opportunities for innovation and systematic change. Under each were detailed areas where things were working, areas where there were problems and barriers and suggestions for both concrete and systematic change. In the latter this also involved commitment to further research, reflection, and collective action (Cox, 2014: 18–28).

The outcomes are too broad and complex to be detailed here, but some of the most significant are visibilizing the detrimental impact of individualizing questions of deprivation and violence, and how this resulted in practices of shaming, blaming, and humiliation of parents; challenging the dominant framing of out-of-home care and child protection which often pits the needs of children against those of family; innovating in experimenting with different forms of kinship care and the idea of fostering and supporting families; the important role of reflexivity in practice; and the importance of collective learning and collaboration between carers, families, and practitioners. Our findings speak to the continued existence of the pathologization of racialized subaltern mothers as an institutional method of subjugation in which these mothers are hyper-visible as objects of intervention but also invisibilized and denied as knowing subjects and legitimate caregivers.

The methodology of the FORUM (both as process, event, and outcome) is but one example of the many layers and forms of collective knowledge production that FISH are pioneering and prefiguring. Common to our practice is that it foregrounds a politics of knowledge that honors the embodied lived experiences of families and children as the starting point for engagement in the complex problems of deprivation,

marginalization, and violences often experienced by subaltern communities. It thus moves away from either a pathologizing and/or merely victimizing framing of racialized subaltern families and communities. Beginning from these experiences is an acknowledgement and commitment to fostering and strengthening active processes of subjectivity. Key to this is a practice of dialogue and commitment to listening, in complete divergence from the dominant historic and contemporary state practices in the sector.

However, there is also another subject who is often invisibilized and devalued in the relationship between state and racialized subaltern family and women. This is the practitioner and worker in the out-of-home care sector. It is easy to (re)produce simplistic binaries which conflate the practitioner with the state's logics and thus re-present her as an agent of dehumanization. It is also easy to fall into the dominant discourse which posits practitioners and workers as mere agents of implementation that lack critical reflexivity and expertise. However, striking from practitioners' reflections were the resonances with the stories and experiences of critical educators trying to keep spaces of hope and possibility alive in an increasingly neoliberalized education sector (see for example Motta and Cole, 2014). These included time and resource scarcity, innovating on the margins (often on top of their normal work load) and thus taking on invisibilized and devalued labor, feelings of isolation, erosion of spaces for critical reflection on practice, discourses of delegitimization, and yet incredible commitment to humanizing praxis with marginalized communities, families and children (for a discussion of some of these tensions in the Australian context see Scherz, 2011).

This mirrors and reinforces the reflections of FIN's praxis. Ros Thorpe and Kim Ramsden (2014) in detailing these experiences demonstrate how they involve reclaiming community and social justice orientations of community work and social work. This, she argues, involves disrupting normalized framings of professionalism embedded in hierarchical separation between professional and client, and judging practices of professional towards communities, families and parents. Instead they argue for the forming of ally friendships premised on recognition, connection, and respect. She conceptualizes this kind of praxis as fostering and developing a friendship model based on the resourceful friend con-

cept. The qualities of such an ally are "respect and empathy…´love of humanity´…reliable and dependable, being open to contact at times of need, including evenings and weekends, reaching out and making contact when parents are immobilised by depression, and doing the extra mile. These qualities and practices of being and relating, as she continues, "reduce the interpersonal distance between supporters and families... [such] co-producing practice with service users is a profoundly professional act and aids in healing from trauma" (Thorpe and Ramsden, 2014: 66–67).

FISH's work arguably mirrors such praxis. The questions this raises in relation to the use and abuse of social work for decolonizing community work are immense, and again are reminiscent of those asked about the critical educator in the university and strategies which are at once in, against, and beyond the subjectivity and institution of education as hegemonically practiced. How might a strategy and praxis of in, against, and beyond social work and the figure of the social worker be put to work usefully, ethically, and meaningfully with practitioners and families? How might a decolonizing of social work be actualized? These are not questions I can answer here as these are praxical questions that emerge and can only be engaged with in the collaborative and reflexive co-creation of organizations such as FISH and FIN. However, it is essential in our exploration of these questions to engage with those marginalized voices within social work studies who bring a critique of whiteness and coloniality to bear on historic and contemporary social work epistemology and practice (see for example Young, 2008; Walter, Taylor and Habibis, 2011). Undoubtedly too, these are questions that will come to have increasing importance as the logics and consequences of the intertwining of coloniality and disciplinary neoliberalism become sites of political contestation.

Encounters across Borders: Embodying and Embedding Critical Reflexivity

The stories that I tell in relation to encounters across borders are more intimate in nature in that they do not involve reflection on the more visible public pedagogy of FISH and how this embodies and prefigures the politics of knowledge of our praxis. Rather I refer to encounters that oc-

cur as part of the day-to-day building of relationships and practices out of which we might nurture FISH as a collective and group of individuals articulating distinct humanizing voices in the out-of-home care sector and as/with racialized subaltern families and mothers.

After the Forum FISH moved forward to create a number of subgroups which mapped onto the key themes and ways forward emerging out of the process and identified in the report. I joined the storytelling group whose aim was to collect stories of practitioners and families as a process of prefigurative change and also as a resource that could be used to facilitate further change and transformation. Our initial discussion revolved around the creation of a project of critical reflection with practitioners in which we would hold monthly meetings to facilitate reflection in relation to the five themes emerging from the Forum process. Whilst this project did not materialize due in most part to the time and resource scarcity and restraints identified in the Forum, the process of thinking through this project, reflecting on its non-materialization, and thinking of further ways forward opened another kind of dialogue between FISH participants. More specifically, we shared our experiences and understanding of storytelling as a means of developing a shared language through which to communicate our understanding and intentions with storytelling as a methodology. This opened a dialogue between traditions of critical narrative therapy which was influential with practitioners and feminist, decolonial popular education traditions which have shaped my practice. Clarity emerged as to the crossovers in our understanding and commitments, as well as deeper reflection about the collective nature of these methodologies and their explicit commitment to disrupt individualized and normalizing/pathologizing accounts and discourses of violence, marginalization, and addiction by situating them within the broader socio-economic, discursive and political conditions and causes as well as disrupting hegemonic conservative framings of family which tend to devalue and problematize "other" families.

This then opened the possibility for me to support the critical reflection on practice of a narrative practitioner from the group who was facilitating a collective narrative project with families who had experienced out-of-home care. This was a learning process in which questions of the art of facilitation, openness, and closure as well as (self)care of

the facilitator emerged. The hope was that this supported both our individual praxis but also deepened a shared critical narrative in relation to our work in FISH and more generally in community practice.

This engagement led to a humanization of our relationship as we came to know each other and our commitments more deeply. The forging of such linkages of solidarity fostered trust, active listening, and deepened the sense of a "we" which did not eradicate our differences and distinctive orientations of praxis but created a basis from which we might develop these. As part of this, I acted as a witness in an interview process (see White, 2007) with a mother from the project using a critical narrative therapy approach. In this instance, a number of us who volunteered from FISH were to act as witnesses to her journey with out-of-home care and processes of restoration.

As witnesses we were asked to reflect on that which resonated from her story and why we thought this resonated, which elements of our life and work it connected to, and how this experience of hearing and reflecting on her story had changed us in some way. The methodology seeks to disrupt the internalization of individualized and pathologizing discourses of deficiency and turn towards recognition of agency, understanding, wisdom, and resilience. It also opens the possibility of re-framing the individual and community's experience within broader social and political conditions and processes. Such methods are based in a methodology of deep dialogue which disrupts the self and other binary upon which the entire matrix of state intervention upon the racialized and feminized subaltern body politic is premised. As Young (2008: 117) describes "A genuine [decolonizing] human relationship, contrarily, is based on mutuality and a deep attention to the other". Such intimate connection also invites reflection on the ways in which the story of the "other" actually has implications and resonances for "our" stories of self.

Creating a safe space for such critical intimacy as shared learning for transformation embodies commitments I have made in previous work about the methodologies of the storyteller in which "[she] enters in her integrity and wholeness in this process of epistemological reinvention. She does not enter as an external liberated knower to educate and speak for the unfree masses. She does not reproduce a victim re-presentation of the oppressed in her practice but rather begins from a commitment

to weaving together subjects, practices and stories of agency, dignity and survival" (Motta, 2014). Methodologies embodied and embedded in critical intimacy work with vulnerability as strength and are mindful of the creation of shared and safe spaces of encounter. As hooks (2003: 216) explains, "We cannot really risk emotionally in relationships where we do not feel safe". As opposed to processes of shaming, naming, and blaming comes practices, relationships, and ethics embedded in care.

This experience helps to centre the enactment and embodiment of witnessing as part of prefigurative epistemologies of transformation. Yet it troubles any simplistic binary framing of such practices, for in this encounter we become both witness to an "other" but also to "our" selves. And of course this relates to an earlier observation about how often those called to embrace decolonizing (feminist) methodologies are those of us, as Anzaldúa describes, who "knew we were different, set apart, exiled from what is considered 'normal'. And as we internalised this exile, we came to see the alien within us and too often, as a result, we split apart from ourselves and each other. Forever after we have been in search of that self, that 'other' and each other"' (cited in Keating, 2009: ix). In my encounter with Christina[1] and her story I was able to give testimony to some of my story, to dislodge "perceived" unbridgeable borders of difference and separation, and to create unexpected empowering recognitions and connections.

Tensions as Sites of Possibility

There are, of course numerous tensions in the praxis detailed above. Firstly, the institutionalized nature of FISH; in that it publically represents itself as a steering-group organization, not a political or community movement. Such self-representation was perhaps inevitable in the broader context of severe socio-political fragmentation and subaltern political disarticulation (as detailed previously). The ability to shape-shift from more openly political practices and interventions to expert contributions to a social and policy debate has enabled FISH to attract a broad range of participants. However, it has also acted as a limit on how far

[1] This mother's name has been changed for reasons of privacy and confidentiality.

the explicitly political practice of the organization can go (not only as self-representation but as material-epistemological practice). Secondly, there is a tension-ridden relationship between an ethics/politics of care and carelessness. Whilst there is a clear focus on an ethics of care and care-full attention towards birth parents and families and their children, there is, as is often the case, less attentiveness to the logics and rationalities of carelessness which structure the everyday contexts of critical practitioners in the third-sector and popular educators and researchers in the HE sector. Institutional logics which push for 24/7 availability, infinite flexibility, and ever-increasing measurable output undercut the conditions of possibility for the tender and slow work of constructing an other politics and practice of child protection and out-of-home care. They create a context in which practitioners and researchers can easily become internally split, enacting care for others, yet reproducing carelessness for themselves.

Such a tension can perhaps be understood if we think to the very foundations of social work and policy, and higher education, which posited the racialized and feminized other as an object of intervention, to be at worst annihilated and at best saved. These logics and rationalities often implicitly shape the narratives and framings of the critical praxis within FISH, so that questions of healing, voice, and participation remain focused on subaltern mothers and their families. This is of course absolutely fundamental. Yet it avoids the explicit project of decolonizing of the subjectivity of the social worker and the researcher, which would involve reflection and recognition of the ways in which patriarchal capitalist-coloniality marks, dehumanizes, and wounds their subjectivity.

Emergent Possibilities for Decolonizing Australia's Body Politics

Emerging from and with engagement with racialized subaltern mothers and families, and allies, FISH is embodying and embedding possibilities for an emergent decolonial politics which seeks not recognition within, but disruption of, the coloniality of the political as it has and continues to structure Australia's state and "democratic" polity.

FISH's politics of knowledge contributes to a politics that disrupts and dislodges the hierarchical and disembodied politics of knowledge

that has structured Australian state interventions onto the body and into the families and communities of racialized subaltern women, specifically Indigenous, poor-white, and refugee mothers and their families. It replaces these with co-constructed knowledge practices which value the wisdom and knowledges of racialized subaltern mothers and prefigure relationships of care, reciprocity, and dialogue that are deeply humanizing and democratizing.

Processes of critical reflection by racialized subaltern mothers about experiences of biopolitical dehumanization begin the unlearning of the oppressor's logics through healing of the traumas inflicted by the Australian state. This fosters active processes of subjectivity which enable the emergence of new forms of individual and collective subjectivity. Critical practitioners become border-thinkers disrupting state logics, becoming supportive friends to mothers and families, and reclaiming traditions and practices of community and social justice work. In many ways their praxis works in, against, and beyond the confines of professional categories of social work and the figure of the social worker, opening possibilities for a radical community practice which prefigures an "other" practice and subject of an emergent politics that is multiple.

These processes of emergent political possibility resonate with a feminism in decolonizing praxis for they nurture, and are enabled by, processes of critical intimacy in which we collectively and collaboratively experiment with prefigurative epistemologies and methodologies of the storyteller. As Lugones (1992: 33) describes, summarizing the practice of Gloria Anzaldúa, "the against-the grain storyteller pushes against the limits of oppression" through fostering dialogue between and within the multiple moments and places of the colonial difference. In this way the storytellers of decolonizing critique (both outsiders-within formal education and organizers within and of the community) become part of a new epistemological terrain "toward a newness of be-ing… incarnating a weave from the fractured locus that constitutes a creative, peopled re-creation" (Lugones, 2010: 754).

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APPENDIX 1

World Café at a glance: (http://www.theworldcafe.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Cafe-To-Go-Revised.pdf)

- Seat four (five max) people at small Café-style tables or in conversation clusters.
- Set up progressive (at least three) rounds of conversation, approximately 20 minutes each.
- Engage questions or issues that genuinely matter to your life, work, or community.
- Encourage participants to write, doodle and draw key ideas on their tablecloths (and/ or note key ideas on large index cards or placemats in the center of the table).
- Upon completing the initial round of conversation, you may ask one person to remain at the table as a "table host" for the next round, while the others serve as travelers or "ambassadors of meaning." The travelers carry key ideas, themes and questions into

their new conversations, while the table host welcomes the new set of travelers.

- By providing opportunities for people to move in several rounds of conversation, ideas, questions, and themes begin to link and connect. At the end of the second or third round, all of the tables or conversation clusters in the room will be cross- pollinated with insights from prior conversations.
- In the last round of conversation, people can return to their rest table to synthesize their discoveries, or they may continue traveling to new tables.
- You may use the same question for one or more rounds of conversation, or you may pose different questions in each round to build on and help deepen the exploration.
- After at least three rounds of conversation, initiate a period of sharing discoveries & insights in a whole group conversation. It is in these town meeting-style conversations that patterns can be identified, collective knowledge grows, and possibilities for action emerge.

APPENDIX 2

(http://www.chriscorrigan.com/openspace/whatisos.html)

Open Space Technology has been defined as:

- a simple, powerful way to catalyze effective working conversations and truly inviting organizations -- to thrive in times of swirling change.
- a methodological tool that enables self-organizing groups of all sizes to deal with hugely complex issues in a very short period of time.
- a powerful group process that supports positive transformation in organizations, increases productivity, inspires creative solutions, improves communication and enhances collaboration.
- the most effective process for organizations and communities to identify critical issues, voice to their passions and concerns, learn from each other, and, when appropriate, take collective responsibility for finding solutions.

The goal of an Open Space Technology meeting is to create time and space for people to engage deeply and creatively around issues of concern to them. The agenda is set by people with the power and desire to see it through, and typically, Open Space meetings result in transformative experiences for the individuals and groups involved.

What does Open Space look like?

A meeting room prepared for Open Space has a circle of chairs in the middle, letters or numbers around the room to indicate meeting locations, a blank wall that will become the agenda and a news wall for recording and posting the results of the dialogue sessions.

Essentially an Open Space meeting proceeds along the following process:

- Group convenes in a circle and is welcomed by the sponsor. The facilitator provides an overview of the process and explains how it works.
- Facilitator invites people with issues of concern to come into the circle, write the issue on a piece of quarter size flip chart paper and announce it to the group. These people are "conveners."
- The convener places their paper on the wall and chooses a time and a place to meet. This process continues until there are no more agenda items.
- The group then breaks up and heads to the agenda wall, by now covered with a variety of sessions. Participants take note of the time and place for sessions they want to be involved in.
- Dialogue sessions convene for the balance of the meeting. Recorders determined by each group capture the important points and post the reports on the news wall. All of these reports will be rolled into one document by the end of the meeting.
- Following a closing or a break, the group might move into convergence, a process that takes the issues that have been discussed and attaches action plans to them to "get them out of the room."

The group then finishes the meeting with a closing circle where people are invited to share comments, insights, and commitments arising from the process.