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ALTERNATIVES TO ABA, COMMUNICATION, CULTURE & IDENTITY, EDUCATION, MENTAL HEALTH, PDA:
PATHOLOGICAL DEMAND AVOIDANCE, RELATIONSHIPS, RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS, RESOURCES
FOR PARENTS, RESOURCES FOR THE NEURODIVERGENT

Decolonising education



By Jorn Bettin
May 24, 2024



Image from <https://indigenousx.com.au>

The April NeurodiVerse Days of Solidarity catalysed a range of conversations, with many threads weaving through the topic of education. Several topics resulted in in-depth discussion and new emerging ongoing collaborations, which is beautiful to see. Changes towards a more egalitarian culture that deeply and fully appreciates cultural, biological, and ecological diversity are changes that improve the lives of all people, re-align humanity with our evolutionary heritage, and help us nurture sacred relationships beyond the human.










The quarterly **NeurodiVerse Days of Solidarity** offer a space for omni-directional learning in Open Space. The quarterly cadence provides room for distilling, sharing, and fermenting results between workshops. This article offers a synopsis of conversations in April 2024, as part of an ongoing **Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination, and Internalisation (SECI)** knowledge creation spiral. Important topics can be picked up again in July, with new energy and proper attention!

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2. Education and how disabled groups can work together
3. Nurturing diversity in humans and non-human nature – bringing the two together
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Many thanks again for all your contributions to this event!

NeurodiVerse Days of Solidarity – April 2024

The Autistic experiences of modern day colonialism

What can the Neurodivergent community in the West do to support healing?

The Autistic experiences of modern day colonialism. What can the Neurodivergent community in the West do to support healing?

Two experiences need to be highlighted:

1. That of the autistic observer
2. That of the autistic lived experience- the more important point.

The Autistic experience cannot be talked about without framing it within anti racism. DisCrit (Dis/ability Critical Race Studies) needs to be more widespread in our academic and professional fields.

Pathologization of neurodivergence and institutional racism in the context of identity and diagnosis (self or otherwise) can be considered as a part of neo-colonialism, in a similar way to the gender spectrum, which became a gender binary.

The persistent big differences in life expectancy between countries and between population segments tell the story of global economic wars – and they also include examples of countries with relatively low “economic performance” with lower levels of inequity and excellent primary healthcare services, where life expectancy is less than 5 years from countries with the highest life expectancy.

I propose an amended version of the [Bronfenbrenner's Social Model of Disability](#).

It is thinking about how we can meet people where they are at (means, spoons, etc.). I think it would be great (one day, somehow) to have a work group where neurodivergent people could regularly meet to come up with realistic mini actions for dismantling white supremacy. I'm doing a reading group right now, where the focus is prison/police abolition. It's useful because there is discussion around how we can all take daily tiny actions towards this incredibly daunting eventual goal of abolition. An idea that has come up frequently is establishing communities of care, which is certainly something that AutCollab possess in spirit.

I can recommend [the writings of Indrajit Samarajiva](#).

Industrialisation introduced an artificial distinction between “paid” work and “the rest of life”. This “great idea” has been exported globally and has led to many problems. It has meant that people have come to accept horrible conditions at work. I try to understand social problems in terms of how much out of sync cultural practices are with our evolutionary human scale heritage. For this I use [a visual language for describing wellbeing](#).

Education and how disabled groups can work together

This is an important question that was proposed and a complex topic that we did not get to discuss in April. This topic weaves through many AutCollab articles, and through the lived experience reports and results that are emerging from our participatory research. The NeurodiVerse Days of Intersectional Solidarity could be one crystallisation point for intersectional collaboration. We are seeing it in the active conversations we are having around replacing / transforming the Western education system.

Nurturing diversity in humans and non-human nature – bringing the two together

See for example [Ren Hurst's writings](#).

How to find and create a network within my community after coming back from being abroad for 6 years

It's not easy, I wouldn't try directly to create a network. IMHO, I'd say you have to try and find an action that could reward you all, like organising a party, an event or simply an interview about an article you want to write. I think this last solution is a “good” one because it's a case-by-case approach and each person will probably feel differently about your absence. Or maybe contact them one by one and check their reaction? Just to say that I'm an amateur when it comes to friendship.

One of the challenges most of us face is local isolation due to our relatively small numbers (we are a small minority) and due to the stigma and lack of active local support for Autistic community formation. Hence the AutCollab initiative to [co-create centres of Autistic culture](#). I have since relocated to a smaller city, but this topic is on my “take action this year” list of things to do. I intend to start a conversation with the local council and the local library about this topic, and perhaps in combination with a local [in-person NeurodiVerse Days of Solidarity event](#) to get started.

Non-violent communication

I fell in love with Rogerian active listening, NVC, How to Talk So Kids Will Listen And Listen So Kids Will Talk, P.E.T. etc. When I started supporting other people in learning to facilitate Self-Directed Education for young people, I recommended that they also go study one or more of these. Some of them also found this enormously helpful. A few, did not. They told of bad experiences with these approaches. When I listened, I discovered that it's not the tool you use, it's what you do with it. All can be weaponised. Especially when a person already experiences challenges with formulating and expressing through the spoken word it's so easy to use these styles to dominate from a place of ‘moral high-ground’. I started excavating for the common DNA behind these approaches. I call it Horizontal Communication. I like to say it's not how you communicate, it's why you're communicating. Intent is key. www.horizontalcommunication.org outlines the basics.

I'd love to hear from other people here what your own experience is/has been.

And have any of you encountered “Clean Language” facilitation?

This is such an important topic! I like to use the term *De-powered Dialogue* to refer to the kind of conversations and ways of communication that are needed for omni-directional learning and genuine compassion – the mutual deep desire to understand a precious living being. Let us compare notes. See these [notes on cultural and psychological safety](#) and this [article on de-powered dialogue](#).

Yes, the intent makes all the difference. As Autistic people we communicate to better understand and help one another. But in powered-up industrialised societies we learn the very hard way that we live in a culture in which communication is often used for deceptive purposes, to the point where a leading “autism researcher” and no shortage of neo-Darwinian social scientists and biologists consider the capacity for “flexible deception” to be a foundational and beneficial human trait, no recognising that this capacity is largely if not entirely a product and symptom of a sick culture. This takes me back to [the very first post](#) that encapsulates the motivation for establishing the AutCollab.org website.

I [looked up Clean Language](#). It seems to have some similarity with the techniques for [creative collaboration](#). It works beautifully if people genuinely trust each other and are curious about the other.

Things get difficult as soon as social power dynamics are present or can't be excluded, which, speaking from painful experience 😊 is what consistently trips up Autistic people. As soon as one party feels entitled to some form of social power, communication ceases to be honest and transparent. Things get especially tedious when the other party(ies) openly reject being subject to coercive demands / techniques. Two AutCollab articles come to mind:

- [Understanding power and de-powering](#)
- [Trust in Human Scale](#)

What would small ecologies of care look like?

See [this new specific page](#) on this topic.

So far my ecology of care has mostly been limited to remote collaborations and 12 years of operating an egalitarian worker co-op where we share the burden of interfacing with the external world. This is an important piece of a much bigger picture.

I now live on a plot of land with two households that are collaborating on establishing a food forest, and I am learning a lot. My experience in this local aspect of ecologies of care is currently still less than 12 months, but I am immensely enjoying the experience. I love Vandana Shiva's work, and I am delighted to now be in a position to put it into practice and adapt it to the local context. The egalitarian worker co-op experience comes in extremely handy. Now the learning can focus on the ecological aspects beyond the human.

Also, over the last 5 years or so, my focus has shifted more and more towards de-powering collaboration between human scale groups. We know how to operate small egalitarian worker co-ops, and we also have plenty of experience in interfacing with the powered-up external world. My learning is now centred around the question of how to help other small groups to transition to egalitarian worker co-op models or to catalyse the formation of such groups. We arrived at our specific worker co-op model 12 years ago as a result of another 10 years of learning from somewhat more traditional ways of operating, for example, in the early days we

made the big mistake of thinking that a financial investor could help us become more established.

Now I am also interested in the ways of collaboration and non-monetary mutual aid that emerge locally, between households. This is so important. I see it as a way of incrementally and increasingly reducing the toxic levels of commodification and financialisation in our societies. These are active steps towards de-growing the "economy" and replacing it with an ecology of care!

The emerging threads of discussions this month prompted me to put together a curated list of public education resources that attempts to weave together all of the threads. Further links and insights shared in these conversations will find their way into future articles and into emerging ongoing collaborations between participants.

Questioning the neuronormativity of friendship. What is friendship for an autistic person?

I'd like you to answer three questions:

(1) What is friendship to you?

Thanks for opening up this conversation. This is a good question. I want to think, to be able to provide a succinct answer that also highlights the limits of what we can put into words. Linear language is such a limited tool 😊

I can't answer succinctly either, I'm using two approaches that (I think) complement each other to arrive at a vague definition: complementation through otherness -> the projection of the non-self, the satisfaction of implementing a collective holotropic understanding of the world, sustained in time.

This is about care and love as well.

But more simply, I use these words: otherness, non-self, collective, holotropism, joy, sustainable, care, love

(2) What is not friendship?

Individualism, reward circuit, comradeship.

I am not sure why 'comradeship' is excluded, as the word is somewhat synonymous with friendship?

(3) How does friendship with, or between, autistic people differ from neuronormative friendship?

I'm thinking about neuronormative expectations from the Western world. If you wish, there will be a second stage during which we will use your answers to guide the process of creation (to be defined collectively).

I've read a few academic studies but, unsurprisingly, they deal with what makes autistic people difficult friends. Further reading:

- **The relational nervous system of open knowledge flows between human societies** by Jorn
- **Resolution for Inclusion: Autistics need deep, quality friendships** by ryansheart
- **Depowered feral Autistic relationships** by Jorn Bettin & Ulku Mazlum

- [A communal definition of Autistic ways of being](#)
- [Coming back to life](#) by Aut Collab
- [Andrew Russell](#)
- [Friendship Importance Around the World: Links to Cultural Factors, Health, and Well-Being](#) Peiqi Lu *et al.*
- [Derrida, Foucault and critical pedagogies of friendship in conflict-troubled societies](#) Michalinos Zembylas

Changing the lived realities within children's education spaces as a necessary foundation for cultural evolution

I'd like to discuss changing the lived realities within children's education spaces as a necessary foundation for cultural evolution. I'm watching kids in Self-Directed Education grow up with substantially less trauma – it's making a big difference. "Pathological Demand Avoidance" provides a litmus test for non-coercive education.

It took me ages to recover from schooling, and the masking it took just to survive. The SDE kids seem more authentic, seem to have a level of self-integrity I'm still acquiring in my mid 50s. My son just turned 18 and he's already wiser than me in many ways...

I presume you are referring to approaches such as described by [The Alliance for Self-Directed Education](#), right? This is very much the approach that I advocate. I went to school and university, but mostly I am self taught and have learned a lot by facilitating peer-to-peer learning, learning from and with others.

Much of my work with organisations within the so-called economy has been the context of collective learning. My role in particular tends to be one of knowledge archaeologist, facilitator of de-powered dialogue, and visual language co-creator. In this context typically I work with adults, with domain experts from various fields, who have come together in a transdisciplinary space to address a wicked problem.

Anecdotally, from my experience, looking back over 30 years, it seems many people within corporations and government departments have become increasingly afraid to share insights, ask uncomfortable questions, and talk openly about the limits of their knowledge and understanding, in line with what W E Deming was already observing in the 1980s.

I was not aware of the SDE Alliance. This can be helpful in our efforts to educate teachers and other educators. Many thanks! I have discovered [the ecoversities network](#) which aims to *reclaim diverse knowledges, relationships and imaginations to design new approaches to higher education*, which operates in the space of collective learning across all age groups, and is primarily focused on adults.

There are also valuable insights to be gained from various approaches to continuous improvement, especially practises that assist indoctrinated adults to relearn how to share knowledge and learn from each other. All such approaches involve getting people to temporarily pretend that social power gradients don't matter. This observation led to the egalitarian neurodiventure co-op model and to the realisation that all forms of "powered-up" relationships are toxic.

Persistent Demand for Autonomy (PDA) is a healthy reaction to a powered-up traumatising social environment.

I am keen to learn from your experiences!

This is so fascinating as I had not known about this Self-Directed Education initiative, though its theory is at the core of the work that I do as a school psychologist. Thanks so much for sharing!! I find that SDE is highly in line with Dr. Ross Greene's Collaborative and Proactive Solutions model: Lives in the Balance. I usually recommend its approaches when working with students who I suspect are PDA.

How would you say SDE differs from traditional Montessori schools? The impression I get is that Montessori schools generally still operate as regular schools under the illusion of self directed learning, whereas true SDE establishments truly focus on full autonomy without imposing an educator's (or society's) views during the learning process. Are outdoor or nature schools the same things as SDE? I am hearing about many "outdoor preschools" pop up all around my area.

I'm on the Ecoversities WhatsApp group but mostly lurking as my time is very full so I prioritise carefully – So far this space seems more promising, grin.

Montessori is what we call Progressive rather than SDE, and forest schools vary widely – some are SDE, some are not even Progressive. The bottom line is whether an adult is ultimately attached to their own idea of what a child needs to learn, or whether the adult is able to fully respect the child's autonomy and step back into a genuine assistant role.

[Here's a good article](#) on Progressive vs SDE.

My younger child is a PDAer. My experience is that SDE is ethically appropriate and helpful for all kids, deeply liberating for Neurodivergent kids and 100% necessary for PDAers. The defining feature of SDE is not in the way the child learns e.g. curriculum, project based, free exploration or whatever. The defining feature is that the child is the genuine decision maker.

I love Ross Greene, although my experience is that PDA doesn't respond well to any communication that is in any way formulaic. The principles need to be internalised and then the communication can be more natural. Even asking Whatsup can become a demand if used more than once.

Please send teachers my way if they're interested. I make my living training adults in SDE Facilitation. Teachers have a harder time than non teachers though, as they have so much to unlearn, and they often struggle vocationally making the shift because they've often been attracted to teaching because they need to feel useful and central and it's hard to become peripheral. Many teachers really enjoy the creativity that goes into getting a disinterested person to engage with prescribed content. SDE does not attempt, in fact carefully avoids, trying to manipulate attention.

Many thanks for sharing your experiences. Perhaps we can collaborate in educating teachers. One aspect we try to emphasise is that neurodivergence is not limited to children. For schools, providing a safe environment for all staff is just as important as providing a safe environment for the students.

The emerging threads of discussions this month prompted me to put together [a curated list of public education resources](#) that attempts to weave together all of the threads. Further links and insights shared in these conversations will find their way into future articles and into emerging ongoing collaborations between participants.

You make me wish I had more time to explore this rabbit hole. Thank you for this. I will dip in as

I can and am saving links. Right now I'm figuring out effective emancipation strategies in the face of oppressive draft legislation around school education in South Africa. Everything you say in the article above applies...

Thank you so much for your thoughtful response. The article you provided was further clarifying, but I also found your distinction very helpful. I think you opened up a whole other rabbit hole for me to explore when I have the spoons so I truly appreciate that!

To one of your points about teachers having so much to unlearn, I find it is the same in the field of ABA, at least here in America. In addition to the need to feel helpful and need for control, I feel like a lot of ABA therapists also may be autistic themselves and perhaps make a living of how to help others like them. This is exactly how I would also describe my experience entering the field of school psychology. The problem becomes, however, that the systems we have in place aren't complementary to these ideas we are talking about and so we are systematically training teachers and ABA therapists alike, who may have completely the right intentions, how to indoctrinate neurodivergent students into this transactional world that is not built for anyone except the privileged, truly. Public education was designed to indoctrinate, not to educate, so I am afraid as hard as educators might try, the system just doesn't work.

Happy to discover there are several in my state and one SDE school in particular near me. I am currently working in public education to pay school loans but am constantly investigating alternate options given my skill set- I feel my job in general shouldn't exist in the sense that special education should not have to exist (i.e. as in SDE schools), but I think there is value in identifying educational "profiles" with respect to identifying an individual's needs and omnidirectionally problem-solving (student learns from mentor and mentor learns from student) to navigate effective ways around barriers.

I find that the topic of PDA relates directly to The fifty-seventh chapter of the Dao De Ching. PDA can be understood as the result of our bodyminds leading us to the healthy insight of letting go of internalised ableism – to stop playing the [hypernormative social] game. This insight is very old. Yet it seems to be an insight that is missing, or at the very least subordinated to dogmatic, coercive systems of beliefs in capitalism and in many monotheistic religions. This chapter of the Dao De Ching is a beautiful reminder of human scale limitations, an antidote to anthropocentric myths of superiority.

I am host to a small group busy finalising a Declaration of Educational Rights that we started work on in 2020 and that I strategically need to complete this month, and one of the clauses to be written this weekend concerns neurodivergence. The placeholder so far reads:

"Article 7: Should deal with neurodivergence to be de-pathologised and neurotypical norms shall not be imposed."

Your input would be welcomed. Please let me know if you'd like to see the full document for context.

Yes, please share details. The [Design Justice Network](#) is possibly related or a source of ideas for adaptation to your context of education.

As part of engaging with our database of teachers we've just put out [a new ongoing survey, with a focus on experiences in education environments](#). The survey is very similar to the one we use to assess psychological and cultural safety in other aspects of life.

Navigating the political research landscape, when you don't have a map or a guide, only a moral compass

It will be valuable to hear first hand accounts from within the web of political constraints of the neoliberal Overton window academia. Because of the severe constraints, **there is a need for independent research**.

This is one of the reasons why ongoing **AutCollab participatory research** is so important. We are not institutionally constrained in terms of the questions that we are asking. We invite everyone to contribute and also to suggest useful questions and research agendas that are relevant for neurodivergent communities. At the same time we are open to exploring collaboration with aligned academics, on condition that AutCollab is the custodian of the research data, so that we can consult with Autistic communities when putting together a research agenda, before granting academic researchers within the established [neoliberal] system access to any data we are gathering.

Reflections

The NeurodiVerse Days of Solidarity offer a rich opportunity for **omni-directional learning** across cultures and geographies, bringing into focus the chasm between the life affirming **ecologies of care** and **the life destroying busyness** of the global mono-cult.

Omni-directional learning **framed in the language of ecologies of care** is at the core of all **Autistic collaborations**.

The topics of omni-directional learning and conceptual framing are **close to my heart**. George Lakoff **offers a good introduction** to the role of framing in language and thought – please note that some of the linguistic examples of frames and metaphors provided apply to Western cultures and to the English language, they are part of WEIRD psychology and do not translate one to one to other cultures and languages.

The abstract categories of *frames* and *metaphors* are foundational for **understanding symbolic thought**. Autistic culture evolves **at human scale**, by sharing lived experiences in **Neuroqueer Learning Spaces** – like the **NeurodiVerse Days of Solidarity**.

We can only fully understand and undo (neo)colonialism by reframing the social world **without using the masters tools**.

It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.
– Audreya Lorde, Black, lesbian, feminist, socialist, mother, warrior, poet

Great examples of decolonising frames are found in the following episodes of **The Moanan** podcast, which acts as a bridge, connecting indigenous pacific knowledge holders and scholars to descendants of the Moana, living in diasporas today:

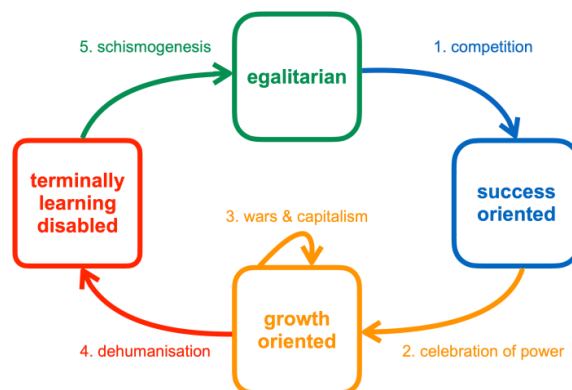
1. Indigenous Pacific voyaging/navigation
2. The migration from South East Asia into the Moana

The sacred oneness of life

The (neo)colonial perspective denies the oneness of life, and relies on framing the evolutionary process of life as a competitive game, which culminates in an anthropocentric notion of progress, rather than in terms of ecologies of care beyond the human, which are part of a regenerative cycle of life bound by planetary biophysical limits.

Cultural framing determines whether competitive or collaborative motives are the primary drivers of social interaction, and by implication, whether competitive or collaborative motives are understood and treated as secondary drivers.

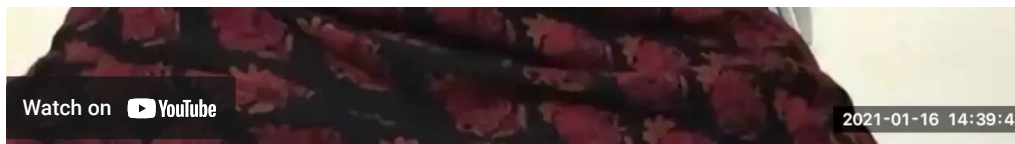
Anyone who has ever worked with agent based models and simulations knows that confusing first order effects and second and higher order effects results in radically different behaviours. Depending on which cultural framing prevails, and depending on the degree to which human collaborative tendencies and ecological frames are not only denied, but also actively discouraged and pathologised, **we can distinguish four basic categories of human societies:**



There is a good reason for ecology having become a discipline in its own right. To this day the dominant frames in the discipline of **biology remain entangled with a paternalistic capitalist ideology**. David Sloan Wilson has done some good work on multi-level group selection and dual inheritance, but he is still trapped within the Western frame of technological “progress”.

When you are doing the right thing for the earth, she gives you great company.
– Vandana Shiva





Cultural framing and individual sensitivity profiles define the relative priorities of competitive or collaborative motives. The evolution of the human capacity for language and culture, as well as results from experiments with small children indicate that collaborative intentions dominate prior to socialisation.

Re-humanising neurodivergence

In times when social paradigms have become toxic, more and more people subconsciously suffer from cognitive dissonance. Autists and the Arts play an essential role in allowing cognitive dissonance to surface and be shared in explicit form, in ways that transcend words, simplistic linear narratives, and established paradigms.

Aesthetic : Autistic, Artistic, and other ways of being that deviate from hypernormativity.

We are the utopian dreamers.
The invisible pioneers.
The vulnerable change-makers.
The compassionate healers.
We are the creative pathfinders.
The quiet adventurers.
The accidental discoverers.



Re-humanising learning

Conventional education ignores the priorities of basic human needs.

Conventional education aims to try and get the child to learn stuff, and then now that we're focusing on getting the child to learn stuff we want to try and add some mental health stuff on top, where we kind of also try

to make them feel a bit competent and have good relationships but that's secondary.

Self-directed Education Works exactly the other way around: we start by focusing on meeting those core needs so that we have a strong thriving person because after that things tend to happen fairly naturally because especially with PDA there is that drive for Mastery that drive for competence um that desire to do things well and when there's enough.

From **Why is Self-Directed Education so ideal for PDA?**

Within the neurodiversity paradigm PDA is understood as a healthy response to a hypernormative, oppressive (neo)colonial cultural context, it is referred to as a *Persistent Demand for Autonomy*.

CARDS = Competence, Autonomy, Relatedness, Dignity, and Safety

When these core needs of Competence, Autonomy, Relatedness, Dignity, and Safety are met for any human being, you're going to have a state that is leaning more towards thriving, and to the extent that these core needs are not being sufficiently met, you're going to have a person struggling no matter what their neurotype.

From **Why is Self-Directed Education so ideal for PDA?**

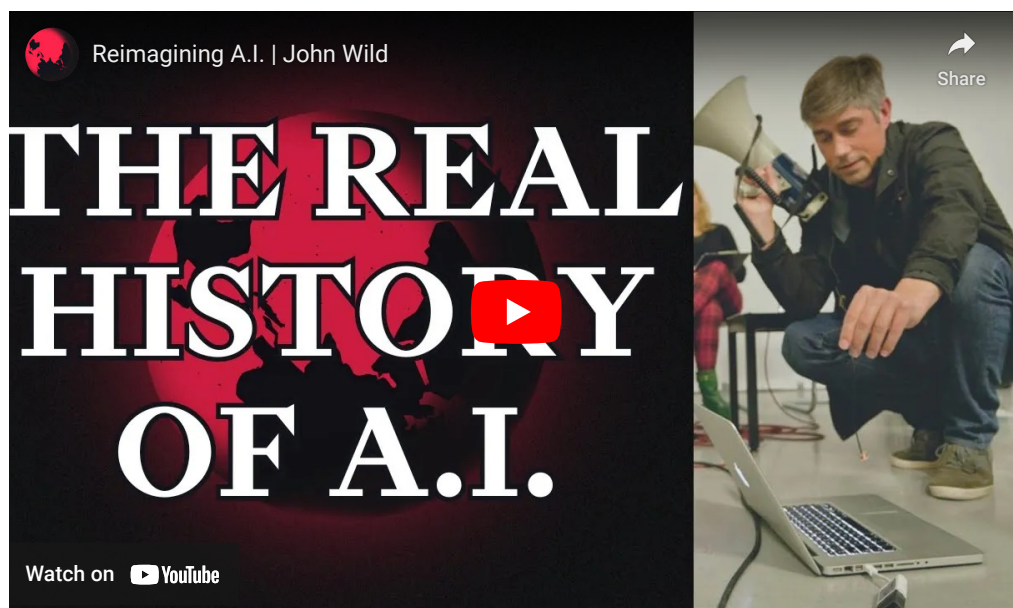
Within modern industrialised cultures, those with uncommon sensitivity profiles and a distinctly reduced capacity for maintaining cognitive dissonance, especially over longer periods of time, increasingly receive pathologising and stigmatising diagnoses such as autism spectrum disorder, pathological demand avoidance, and oppositional defiant behaviour.

The key question: Who is benefitting from stigma and from labels that pathologise individuals? The obvious answer: Established institutions of social power within modern industrialised cultures – in other words, the institutional landscape that perpetuates (neo)colonialism. In this context the corporate *neurodiversity-lite* attempt of co-opting of the language of the neurodiversity paradigm reveals itself as an exercise in perception management, and as a tool for subordinating neurodivergent people to the oppressive system of control of the mono-cult.

Pathologising and dehumanising individuals for not conforming to the factory model of industrialised society has become a core practice of neo-colonialism, alongside the perpetuation of deadly wars, including deadly economic wars across the artificial national boundaries conceived by colonial powers.

Assigning pathologising labels to individuals allows the institutional landscape of (neo)colonialism to marginalise all those who openly resist subordination to the mono-cult, including those who are not already part a marginalised minority group or an “underdeveloped economy”. Modern hypernormative practices of dehumanisation are specifically designed for perpetuating social power gradients in a globalised world, irrespective of national boundaries.

Furthermore hypernormative practices and values in the digital era increasingly devalue all forms of biological life, and are deeply entangled with the goals of eugenics and the suicidal narrative of linear and ultimately unlimited technological progress:



Pathologising labels facilitate the “free” unlimited imposition of demands from self-declared cultural authorities on **those who are considered insignificant** by **the mono-cult**. In this context the institutional landscape of cultural authorities relies on the internalised ableism of parents, educators, and medical professionals to perpetuate the mono-cult. Internalised ableism is the Achilles Heel of the mono-cult.

Educating parents, educators, and medical professionals about the lived experiences of neurodivergent people is an important tool for exposing the harm perpetuated by the mono-cult. **Intersectional solidarity**, Autistic culture, and Persistent Demand for Autonomy are part of a **healthy cultural immune response** towards the life destroying mono-cult.

Changes towards a more egalitarian culture that deeply and fully appreciates cultural, biological, and ecological diversity are changes that improve the lives of all people, realign humanity with our evolutionary heritage, and help us **nurture sacred relationships beyond the human**.

Onwards! Together. In good company.

Small is good, small is all

I borrowed this fitting one-liner from **The small things Manifesto**, a work in progress, a living document, written and compiled by Andrew Roach. A quote from the introduction:

Many of the major technological and cultural innovations of the last several hundred years have served to flatten the world, eliminate or obviate distance, and bring us closer together as people. Printing, transportation, telephone, radio, television, home video, and the internet have each, in their own way, made our impact on the world bigger, and made parts of the world smaller.

But this came at a price.

Technology is not a net good, or even a neutral force. Technology is a Force Multiplier. It

reshapes the world to fit the vision of those who design it, regulate it, and wield it. Oil companies poison our lakes and rivers, slowly boiling our planet. Facebook tracks everything we do online and uses that data to make us miserable. Disney owns an outsized portion of modern folklore. The FCC decides who gets to launch a radio station, and under what circumstances. Television turns reasonable people in to rabid fans of raving monsters, and turns raving monsters in to celebrities, politicians and thought leaders.

It does not have to be this way.

It is this way thanks to a combination of factors, most of which can be summarized as “The Profit Motive.” For some companies, making people angry is a surefire way to drive Engagement, and driving Engagement is a surefire way to make money. For other companies, the money lies in controlling our access to our own culture, gatekeeping who is allowed to tell stories, and when, and how. For these major corporations, there is no incentive to Help, to Improve. There’s no money in making the world a better place.

It will not be easy.

Most new technologies, but especially Digital technologies, experience a period between inception and corporatization during which they flourish as a result of a bunch of disparate people with distinct goals who Explore the space that the technology creates, often without regard for profit of any kind, or at least with some motivation beyond pure profit. Then there is, usually, a period of contraction and consolidation around the things that have made the most money (or, in the case of television, have had the most Regulatory support from the corrupt FCC) and you’re left with HBO/DISCOVERY, Disney, Facebook, and Joe Rogan.

But we can reject the profit motive!

Local theater still happens, in spite of the fact that it stopped being profitable ~100 years ago. Local music still happens, in spite of the fact that only 1 band in 100 is going to make their living making music, and significantly fewer than that are ever going to Make It. Small creators make video games in their spare time because they enjoy it. Hundreds of people work together to run free and open alternatives to major social media networks, funded out of their own pockets.

Ars Enim Mutare; Art for change

These things happen in isolation, from creators who make things because they want to make things. They toil, often in isolation, for little reward. This is a call to action for solidarity, and support and intentional creation. We can reshape the world, and support one another as we do it. We can opt out of activities that enrich corporations that seek to make us suffer or to destroy us. We can (and must) become our own media.

...

The key element that holds together all the threads, which has been systematically eroded in Westernised societies: the notion of trust, including the role of trustworthy, sacred relationships within the context of human scale ecologies of care beyond the human.



Jorn Bettin

Knowledge archaeologist by day and neurodivergent anthropologist by night at [S23M](#)



The more we help each other to question in ways we otherwise wouldn't – and correspondingly discover new insights about the world and ourselves, the more we are able to learn from each other, and the more we start to understand each other. The gift that we all bring to the world is the (re)generative potential of all the trusted relationships that we co-create.

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camillaflynn says:


July 2, 2024 at 05:39

Hello everyone! My name is Camilla. Non Profitable Organization <https://peoplesorganizing.org/> are entities structured to operate without the primary goal of financial profit. These organizations are vital to societal development, providing solutions and support where governmental or business sectors cannot. They cover a wide range of activities and areas, from charitable work to education and religion, each playing a crucial role in their respective fields.

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