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Analytic philosophy of education and the postcolonial moment

Stephen Daniels and Penny Enslin
University of Glasgow, UK

Abstract

Of all possible future directions for analytic philosophy of education, few are as overdue as thoroughly confronting the legacy of colonialism and the postcolonial moment. Rightly credited with establishing the credibility and standing of philosophy of education, by 1980, analytic philosophy of education was the dominant though not unchallenged approach to philosophy of education in the Anglo-American world. While its dominance has declined and philosophy of education has become more diverse, analytic philosophy of education retains a strong international presence in educational theory. By contrast, postcolonial theory – the critical study of colonialism and its aftermath – has attracted growing interest across many academic disciplines, developing from the 1970s onwards from its early location in literary and cultural studies. After outlining the emergence of analytic philosophy of education, and the subsequent reshaping of philosophy of education, we describe postcolonial theory and the place of education in both colonialism and postcolonial thought. Having thus located analytic philosophy of education and the postcolonial turn in their own times and contexts, we consider the postcolonial challenge to Western philosophy and how analytic philosophy of education could respond, developing our stance on a postcolonial future direction for analytic philosophy of education. We argue that the future of philosophy of education is now inescapably postcolonial and that it should retain its analytical strengths.

Keywords

Analytic philosophy of education, colonial education, decolonisation, postcolonialism, RS Peters, Western philosophy

Introduction

What might analytic philosophy of education and postcolonial theory – two theoretical tendencies with contrasting agendas, methodologies and substantive arguments–have to say to each other? Until recently, having developed in evidently different contexts and with different preoccupations and constituencies, there has been limited systematic

Corresponding author:
Penny Enslin, School of Education, University of Glasgow, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow G3 6NH, UK.
Email: penny.enslin@glasgow.ac.uk

engagement between analytic philosophy of education and postcolonial thought. Yet of all possible future directions for analytic philosophy of education, few are as overdue as thoroughly confronting the postcolonial moment. What this requires is not straightforward, but while it might initially appear that the two are at odds with one another, we will argue that each has something to offer the other. We propose a relationship of creative tension rather than antagonism between the two.

Rightly credited with establishing the credibility and standing of philosophy of education (Hirst and White, 1998), analytic philosophy of education came to the fore in the 1960s; by 1980, it was the dominant though not unchallenged approach to philosophy of education in the Anglo-American world. While its dominance has declined since it was at its height and philosophy of education has become more diverse in its methodologies and influences, analytic philosophy of education retains a strong international presence in educational theory. By contrast, postcolonial theory – the critical study of colonialism and its aftermath – has attracted growing interest across many academic disciplines, developing from the 1970s onwards from its early location in literary and cultural studies. Postcolonial thought, whose features we discuss further later on, now enjoys increasing prominence, prompted by recent activism against racism and colonial monuments, calls for institutions including universities to come to terms with their past associations with slavery and Empire, and demands for curricula to be decolonised. Its time has come.

In the discussion that follows, we start in the second section by outlining the emergence of analytic philosophy of education, its major preoccupations, features and influence. Taking R.S. Peters, its most prominent figure as our primary example, we discuss his approach to philosophy of education. In the third section, we consider the critical responses to the analytic turn within philosophy of education that drew on other theoretical tendencies and so reshaped it in later years. In the fourth section, we describe postcolonial theory and its complexities, including the place of education in both colonialism and postcolonial thought, contrasting it with Peters' work. Having thus located analytic philosophy of education and the postcolonial turn in their own times and contexts, we turn in the fifth section to considering the postcolonial challenge to Western philosophy of education in general and how analytic philosophy of education in particular could take up this challenge, developing our own stance on a postcolonial future direction for analytic philosophy of education. We argue that the future of philosophy of education is now inescapably postcolonial. But, using a metaphor sometimes invoked by analytic philosophers of education, while the 'conversation' needs further broadening by building on its growing openness to other traditions, it ought to retain its analytical strengths that prize rigour, clarity and an emphasis on providing as well as critically assessing reasons and evidence. In advancing these claims, we describe both analytic philosophy of education and postcolonialism as contested from within and without, and also as neither necessarily nor thoroughly at odds with each other. They share some features in common, and they should engage more thoroughly with one another.

Analytic philosophy and the emergence of analytic philosophy of education

When considering the history and future of analytic philosophy of education, our initial focus is on what, methodologically or otherwise, unites 'analytic' philosophers

of education; it is restricted largely to its development in Great Britain, reflecting our familiarity with that context. Analytic philosophy is typically seen as the 'dominant philosophical tradition', at least in the English-speaking world, and has been so for the last several decades (Beaney, 2013: 3). Beaney (2017: 92) argues that it is a mistake to attempt to define analytic philosophy by reference to any specific set of doctrines that 'all and only analytic philosophers' hold. As a result, we might more plausibly argue that what unites analytic philosophers is not a set of common doctrines but rather a shared methodology or style, which centres around some form of analysis. One might contend that characteristic of this style would be focus on clarity, avoidance of vagueness and obscurantism, precision and rigour – and attention to arguments, concepts and normative relationships. It is also concerned with the use of language and engaging in sustained critique. In general, as with analytic philosophy of education, analytic philosophers have regarded these methods and concerns as central to but not the entirety of their work.

Defining what it is that analytic philosophy *is* and what analytic philosophers *do* is not necessarily straightforward. Indeed, a problem of this sort was faced by Peters, Paul Hirst and others in the establishment of analytic philosophy of education as a credible and valuable part of the discussion of education in Britain. What, if anything, does analytic philosophy have to say about education and educational issues? The case was made initially reflecting a particular model of *doing* philosophy common to that era, with its close association with conceptual analysis. In our discussion of analytic philosophy of education, we will aim to flesh out an account of what might be shared methodologically or stylistically among those who self-identify as working in the analytic tradition and also set the groundwork for consideration of whether this way of doing philosophy is suitable and pluralistic enough to address contemporary postcolonial questions in education.

A central feature of the early period of analytic philosophy of education was the productive relationship between Israel Scheffler in the United States and R.S. Peters in Britain. While not alone in their efforts, there is little doubt that these two figures strongly shaped the establishment of a particularly *analytic* approach in the philosophy of education on both sides of the Atlantic. While not wishing to call into question the existing practices in philosophy of education at the time, a *Harvard Educational Review* article entitled 'Toward an analytic philosophy of education' by Scheffler (1954) articulated the case for a 'different conception of the field' (Curren et al., 2003: 183), focussed on 'the rigorous logical analysis of key concepts related to the practice of education' (Scheffler, 1954: 333). Of particular interest for current purposes was Scheffler's contention that part of what was distinctive about this approach beyond its 'greater sophistication', 'attention to detail' and 'rigour' would be the establishment and sharing of 'common methods' rather than doctrines (Scheffler, 1954: 333). With this, as Hirst (1986: 8) observed, 'the scene was set' for someone with the necessary philosophical experience and insight into education to breathe life into this new conception of the philosophy of education in Britain. What Scheffler and Peters had in mind was to bring philosophy of education closer to analytic philosophy more generally than it had been in the focus on 'schools of thought', and 'isms' that had characterised philosophy of education.

Peters was keen to demonstrate the practical value of philosophy to education and educational issues. Peters (1963: 89) was concerned that the kind of economic and sociological descriptions of education that held sway at the time could be 'misleading', if taken

out of context with focus placed on the 'function' of education in the context of economic development, for example. As Cuypers and Martin (2013: 35) detail, part of what Peters was doing in this early period is pushing back against the economic and political forces of his time that he considers 'obfuscate education'. The task in responding to this was the development of a rigorous and systematic approach to philosophical inquiry in education that could overcome these shortcomings. However, Peters realised that the necessary work required in clarifying the concept of education in order to address these shortcomings could not take advantage of existing work in philosophy more broadly and would require philosophers of education to both 'till new conceptual ground and map out new logical terrain' themselves (Katz, 2009: 98). Importantly, this was the task Peters identified for himself but equally important to the project was to 'map the contours of the field' for others to explore (Peters, 1966: 8; White and White, 2020: 3). Peters' efforts here should be located in the midst of the post-war rapid economic expansion in Britain. Against this backdrop, in his inaugural lecture as Professor of Education at the London Institute of Education on 'Education as Initiation', Peters offered a clear statement of his alternative analysis of education against fears of economic instrumentalism. Peters' contention was that conceptualising education along narrow and instrumentalist lines focussing on preparation for the workforce, for example, had several problematic consequences and rendered it 'unresponsive or insensitive to the reasons and perspectives of agents working within the educational domain' (Cuypers and Martin, 2013: 35).

As a result of these various efforts, Peters' new philosophy of education 'not only had practical relevance to schools and educational policy but also became rigorous and academically reputable' (Cuypers and Martin, 2013: 210). Equally influential was the degree to which Peters succeeded in bringing others on board with this project. Indeed, to borrow one of Peters' best known ideas, it is reasonable to think part of this success was the extent to which many students and colleagues were 'initiated'[1] both into a certain way of thinking about education, and also a way of thinking about and doing philosophy of education. Part of the success of the project was then both in establishing analytic philosophy of education as a reputable part of the academy, and by extension, educational theory and education itself, and also in 'exporting' the model from London across Great Britain and Ireland and then to former colonies, particularly to Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Critique and diversity in (analytic) philosophy of education

While Peters and others were remarkably successful in establishing analytic philosophy of education in Britain, criticism of this approach arose almost immediately and intensified over the following decades. Enduring criticism was to come from both those broadly sympathetic to the analytic project, those of a more non-analytic orientation and often most forcefully from outside philosophy of education itself. Soltis (1983) argued that conceptual analysis had not been particularly helpful in solving important questions about values or social issues in education. Critics also disputed Peters' account of 'education'. Mary Warnock (1979) objected to Peters' account of education as initiation, insisting that all learners had a right to an education that enabled them to acquire basic

facts and skills. This fact was for Warnock a moral necessity that should trump any other consideration of educational aims.

Critics also saw 'education as initiation' as inherently conservative. In a paper titled 'The evolution of the APE: analytic philosophy of education in retrospect', James Walker's (1984) biting criticism challenged its 'pretension to rigorous scrutiny' of educational discourse (p. 6), questioning its focus on conceptual clarity and scrutiny of the ordinary language used in educational discourse. Walker attributed to Peters in particular the role of empire building in establishing analytic philosophy of education as an influential presence. Questioning conceptual analysis as a methodology, Walker (1984) was quick to dismiss analytic philosophy of education as having been overtaken 'in the 1970s [by] such strongly anti-analytic trends as Marxism, existentialism, phenomenology and other branches of continental philosophy' (p. 10). Reading Walker from a postcolonial perspective, his invocation of the term 'empire' might look significant. Many would find his accusation of empire building unfair, especially when he observes, unkindly but anticipating the postcolonial turn, of Peters' efforts to establish the discipline of philosophy of education: 'With hindsight, this is ripping good stuff, and takes on the quality of Biggles to the Rescue or, earlier still, Kipling's white man's burden' (Walker, 1984: 8).

Dray (1973: 36), another notable early critic, had by 1965, cast a similar concern about conceptual analysis in more temperate terms by posing the question of: '*whose* concepts the philosopher conceives himself as analysing in order to make his distinctive contribution to educational theory'. Moreover, Dray (1973) emphasised 'the difficulty for philosophical analysis that may arise out of genuine differences of concept among individuals and groups' (p. 38). Dray's central point was that different groups in society could have quite different but perfectly reasonable conceptions of education; that is, that there was a conceptual arbitrariness at work in what Peters was doing. These conceptions of education would reflect different social positions and Peters had been insufficiently attentive to this.

Others shared the concern about whose concepts were being analysed. This question was important because, as Evers (1993: 38) contends, 'various answers strike at the assumption of epistemic privilege analysis allots to ordinary usage'. Harris (1980: 31) argues that Peters (and Hirst) '. . . . managed to "justify" in their collected works every aspect of the social and educational *status quo* that might serve the interests of those wishing to preserve the *status quo*, and to present those as rational, logical and disinterested'. Harris' critique is over-stated, but his central point remains relevant here. Peters' work, like Hirst's, is in some respects strangely apolitical (Daniels and Enslin, 2023), even given the significant political changes and educational problems that both motivated their efforts in the 1960s and would put pressure on this initial 'revolution' in philosophy of education in the late 1970s. On this point, Curren et al. (2003: 187) remind us that several critiques rejected the practice of analysis and the implicit privileging of ordinary language and a common-sense view of the world as systematic misrepresentations of reality. Jane Roland Martin (1981) powerfully argued that Peters' conception of the 'educated man' in important ways ignored women and the question of the educated woman.[2] The key criticism here is that rather than uncovering distinctive features of the concepts of 'education' or 'teaching', what analytic philosophers like Peters had given

expression to was 'unreflective expressions of the analysts' frequently shared contexts of gender, class, and culture' (Curren et al., 2003: 187).

In the periods immediately preceding, during and after Peters' enormous efforts to establish analytic philosophy of education, the British Empire was in terminal decline.[3] Immigration of citizens of the former colonies fundamentally changed the conversation on questions of 'Britishness', London as the centre of the Empire, and the United Kingdom's relationship with the Commonwealth nations. All of this had direct implications for education that might have been considered by an analytic philosophy of education that valued the practical contribution of philosophy to education and educational issues. What, if anything, might have been said about the decline of the British Empire or colonialism more generally at this point? Clearly, this was not Peters' primary interest, nor was it how he conceived of the primary job of the philosopher of education. Yet, with hindsight it is a notable omission from his work that seems to confirm the general critique sketched above that Peters' understanding of education was too narrow.

The enduring bite of these criticisms, and wider shifts in philosophy of education, would lead to analytic philosophy of education undergoing a significant shift towards a more critical and socially engaged perspective that highlighted the role of education in reproducing social inequality and oppression. Indeed, more generally Peters had become 'somewhat dissatisfied' with the analytic approach as it had come to be practised by 1975, worrying that it had turned into something 'scholastic and pedestrian' and demonstrating 'too piecemeal an approach' (White and White, 2020: 8). Peters, as White and White (2020) write, took these critiques seriously and would concede that different groups might have differing legitimate conceptions of education, as well as revising important elements of what he had outlined in his early works. As Hirst and Peters (1970) held, even at the core of the analytic project they promoted, that uncovering presuppositions can then be *criticised and revised*, thus potentially liberating humans from the presuppositions of their age. In this comment they explicitly acknowledged the contingent nature of the presuppositions in question. This leaves important space for change and the widening of the conversation as we consider how philosophy of education has changed over subsequent years. In a more general sense, changes in Peters' thought would become increasingly amenable to what analytic philosophy of education (and philosophy of education in Britain more widely) would become over the next several decades. In a more general sense, this dissatisfaction and recognition of the need for changes in the analytic project was understood against the backdrop of the need for more substantive engagement in education with issues in moral, social and political philosophy than had to that point been the case (Peters, 1983). Nonetheless, as Hirst (1986: 38) put it, the revolution that Peters led was something 'there can be no going back on' and it still has a considerable influence on philosophy of education as it is today in Britain.

As Curren et al. (2003: 188) observe, while the initial hard line taken by analytic philosophers of education would eventually yield, as it had in philosophy more generally, analytic philosophy of education now integrates 'analysis with many other forms of enquiry' as well as accepting the importance of locating meaning in context (and especially the *social* aspect of meaning, and that 'meaning is embedded in social practices'). This 'internal' reform within philosophy of education, as it were, must also be considered

in the context of the early 1970s more broadly. The political and economic climate in Britain began to change considerably, moving from the 'post-war consensus' towards an ever-increasing focus on the 'free-market', managerialism, 'accountability' and competition. In a series of policy changes in education led by the Conservative government, the educational landscape changed significantly in a relatively brief period of time. This had implications for schooling itself as well as teacher education and the academic study of education. The remarkable success in establishing philosophy alongside history and sociology as key elements of teacher education programmes during Peters' time has been considerably erased (particularly in England). Certainly, philosophy of education has moved on from the period of the 'analytic turn' of the 1960s. Yet what is often termed the 'post analytic'[4] period retains important features of the analytic project. We agree with Curren et al. (2003) who argue that what has survived is an emphasis on the methodological commitments of analytic philosophers while also acknowledging and valuing substantive diversity.

In response to the political changes within Britain (and further afield) many educational philosophers resisted the 'neoliberal' understanding of education along market and consumer lines (Cuypers and Martin, 2013). In particular, building on the traditions of critique of the analytic project from both the Continental tradition and from within sociology, philosophers of education began to articulate alternatives to the then dominant Thatcherite reforms in education. This shift fundamentally changed the character of questions asked, as well as the work undertaken in philosophy of education from the late 1970s and the 1980s onwards. Snook (2013: 96) reminds us that even given the warnings from Marxists and others, to an important degree philosophers of education were ill prepared for this fight and needed to 'retool ourselves' in short order. As Cuypers and Martin (2013: 225) observe, this retooling was to draw on both post empiricist Anglo-American philosophy and also wider intellectual traditions. It extends into the present day, which is characterised by Cuypers and Martin (2013) as a kind of meritoriously eclectic and cross-cultural period for philosophy of education. The centrality of concepts like 'power', 'performativity' and 'cultural capital' as described by Foucault, Lyotard and Bourdieu feature regularly in work both within the analytic tradition and in the wider conversations in philosophy of education today. Social changes more broadly have raised new challenges to be dealt with in educational philosophy. As Cuypers and Martin (2011) suggest, among these are questions around globalisation, multiculturalism, the rise of information and communication technology and ongoing debates over the future of Higher and Further Education.

The increasingly diverse and pluralistic state of philosophy of education has reflected a move away from the assumed canon of 'Western philosophy' to engage meaningfully with the rich traditions of thought and scholarship from outside the Anglosphere. Authors, journals and publishers in the field of education have recently been active in bringing perspectives beyond the West to the attention of philosophers of education, diversifying the field.[5] This includes: work by Paul Standish and Naoko Saito (2012) on Japanese philosophy; Charlene Tan (2017) on Confucian thought; Sharon Todd and Oren Ergas (2015) exploring the intersections between the 'East' and 'West'; David Lewin and Ergas (2018) on Buddhist, Hindu and Daoist thought; Nuraan Davids and Yusef Waghid (2019) on democratic education and Muslim thought; Thaddeus Metz (2009) on African moral

theory and Waghid (2020) among others on African philosophy of education (and especially *Ubuntu*). Indeed, this is a limited snapshot of the wide range and wealth of work now produced in philosophy of education. But more remains to be done as this is not enough to secure a meaningfully pluralistic and postcolonial future for philosophy of education, especially while institutional power and who wields it remain an important background consideration. Peters, as we have observed, was wise to the contextual challenges of promoting philosophy of education. A crucial requirement of future work is to understand what a more thorough postcolonial turn might look like, starting with recognition of the significance of colonialism and its consequent implications for philosophy of education.

Colonialism, colonial education and the postcolonial turn

The methodologically diverse field of postcolonial thought developed during the post-Second World War period of decolonisation, as nationalist liberation struggles succeeded in achieving political independence from the European imperial powers. These processes unfolded independently of but contemporaneously with the establishment of analytic philosophy of education in Britain, its former dominion colonies and the United States. Colonisation took the forms of military conquest, administrative control, seizure of land and resources, exploitation of labour, including through slavery and forced incorporation of colonial peoples into a capitalist economy whose markets undermined indigenous economies and favoured the colonial power. Postcolonial theory's analyses of the features and consequences of colonisation have emphasised the violence and trauma of conquest and dispossession, as well as the accompanying colonial discourses about culture, language and race that dismissed the indigenous as inferior and assumed the superiority of the colonisers. Postcolonial analyses draw attention to the problematic of enduring coloniality following independence from colonial rule. For our purposes, although the consequences of colonialism are experienced differently and unequally in former colonies and colonising countries, the postcolonial condition is present in all contexts. Understanding the colonial past and postcolonial present requires particular attention to education and also to how philosophy of education itself can proceed with postcolonial self-understanding.

Postcolonial theorists have differed in their approaches to analysing colonialism and its effects. Edward Said's influential contribution to the study of colonialism did much to establish postcolonial theory as a study of the relationship between knowledge and power (Said, 1978), and hence an enduring poststructuralist influence on postcolonial thought. Said's analysis became foundational to much postcolonial thought, establishing an emphasis on the cultural and hence on themes of subjectivity and domination as major themes in postcolonial studies – particularly in studies of education. Marxist postcolonial theory, on the other hand (e.g. Chibber, 2014; Lazarus, 2011) has countered this emphasis with arguments for framing colonialism in material terms, as defined by the imposition of capitalist class relations, commodity production, waged labour and marketisation – to the advantage of metropolitan powers and their ruling classes. The tensions between these two streams of postcolonialism are clearly present in postcolonial studies of education.

Alongside and interwoven with the destructive and dehumanising effects of colonial conquest, dispossession and political domination, education played a prominent role as a colonial strategy (Carnoy, 1974). What education was available was dismissive of indigenous traditions of upbringing and education, with missionaries aiming to 'improve' indigenous people by providing religious and moral education as well as basic vocational training to create a useful workforce. Education's role was to serve the interests of the colonial powers. Colonial and indeed much postcolonial educational provision for indigenous subjects was modelled on metropolitan schooling, in its curricula, pedagogies, modes of organisation and ethos. Carnoy's (1974) influential analysis made cultural imperialism the key to understanding colonial education, while also emphasising the role of missionary education in serving the labour requirements of the colonisers. Yet colonial education did not develop along a course that was isolated from mass education in the metropole. Mass education in metropolitan Britain and in its empire was deeply intertwined and mutually influenced each other (Jackson, 2022: 1).

Addressing the postcolonial condition challenges contemporary philosophy of education in the broadly analytic tradition to address an obvious question: if contemporary educational practices reflect a colonial past, what measures ought to be taken to correct this? From an analytic perspective, we could start to address this question by asking what concept of education might be appropriate to postcolonial education. Two possible approaches present themselves here. Paulo Freire's (1970) influential *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, has inspired postcolonial educational practices that aim at fostering critical consciousness. Other approaches to postcolonial education have urged, to varying degrees, the retrieval of indigenous traditions of upbringing and education (e.g. Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2003), including what knowledge and skills would have been emphasised as well as local values and conceptions of authority. Both of these construals of postcolonial education emphasise the fundamentally political character of education – colonial and postcolonial – as either a form of domination or as liberation from oppression.

At first glance a postcolonial conception of education might appear to be far from what Peters had in mind in his brand of analytic philosophy of education. However, there is at least some formal compatibility, to the extent that the indigenous educational practices largely side-lined by colonial education and highlighted in postcolonial critiques also comprised initiation into worthwhile activities and modes of conduct, even if those activities were not what Peters himself had in mind. Addressing topics in education that go beyond Peters' account, in his own particular context, has instead been largely a task that has been taken up by philosophers of education in subsequent years, writing from and about other parts of the globe than Britain as well as about topics that go to the postcolonial, like global justice and racism in education. In fairness, this was not Peters' line of enquiry; his project was to establish the credibility of his discipline as deserving a respected position in the academic space of his time. Yet his acute awareness of threats to education from economic instrumentalism has something in common, even if to a limited extent, with commentaries on colonialism that emphasise its economic dimension – that it was highly instrumental and definitively involved exploitation of indigenous labour, the plundering of resources and the destruction of native economies. Peters was right to warn of the threat of economic instrumentalism to education, and analytic and postcolonial philosophers of education now have shared concerns when confronting

global performative influences in teacher education, school and university curricula and assessment, and in educational policy.

Postcolonial analytic philosophy of education

Analytic philosophy of education is vulnerable to the criticism that as it developed during the post-war era of decolonisation, it could have done more to recognise its own specificity. It developed its own considerable strengths in the dying days of the colonial era, which had brought wealth and global dominance in all spheres to the colonial powers. Even if analytic philosophy of education had its own battles to fight, from a postcolonial perspective a critic might ask if there could not have been earlier and more thorough attention to the ethical and political consequences of colonialism. This may seem an unfair line of criticism, but it does point to a significant difference between analytic philosophy of education and postcolonial thought. The former was formulated by Peters as emphatically methodological, while postcolonial thought is not only methodologically more diverse, drawing on both a poststructuralist analysis of culture and identity and a Marxist analysis of the material elements of colonialism. Postcolonialism is also, in Peters' terms, avowedly 'doctrinal', in the sense that it expresses a substantial critical stance about colonialism. Poststructuralist influences on postcolonialism encourage critical attention to both text and discourse as expressions of power, inviting an extension of the early criticisms we have discussed about whose interests were really being expressed by conceptual analysis of education in the analytic style. What about concepts of education expressed in the ordinary language beyond Britain or the United States, of educational traditions of colonised peoples? Postcolonialism is, with good reason, clearly a more overtly political project aimed at countering the ongoing forms of domination that colonialism created. From this perspective, philosophy of education itself – analytic or otherwise – is characterised by inequalities and forms of dominance that are a consequence of the colonial era.

Hence, despite the broadening of analytic of philosophy of education beyond its initial attention to conceptual analysis, embracing more diverse philosophical traditions, themes and topics, its accompanying internationalisation can be seen from a postcolonial point of view to confirm the dominance of philosophy of education as practised largely in the West. In language alone, as emphasised by Standish (2007) imbalances are created by the hegemony of English. A global presence for Anglo-American as well as Continental philosophy of education has been fostered not only by students studying at British and American universities, and taking these approaches back to their home countries. The globalisation of philosophy of education is also evident in the power of leading journals in philosophy of education, including this one. Although these journals do increasingly publish works of authors from across the globe, their power to determine what philosophy of education is, its methodologies and judgements in selecting topics of interest is considerable. Academic careers in former colonies as well as in the metropole are determined by success in having articles published in English-language journals. Furthermore, those trying to enter the field can find the terrain unwelcoming. There is a credible perception that the rules of the game are opaque, making it easier for those advantaged by their metropolitan location and experience to succeed and prosper. Conferences and editorial reviews

where traditions of analytical criticality are taken for granted can seem hostile, dismissive and un-inclusive. In what was once the heartland of analytic philosophy of education, and where it is still influential if not hegemonic, practitioners of philosophy of education enjoy advantages derived largely from the material strengths of their universities and the national higher education systems that fund them, in economies that were enriched by colonialism. These privileges ensure access to materials like books and up to date journals, funding for research, conference attendance and the conferences themselves (sometimes with sponsorship from learned societies and publishers), as well as time, mentoring and networking opportunities. Analytic philosophy of education's success, despite its reduced dominance, is in part evidence of the success of Peters' project. Ironically, Peters' own astute understanding of the politics of positioning his discipline in the academy and in the public sphere applies to a postcolonial assessment of its global success.

From a postcolonial perspective, the continuing influence of the analytic tradition in determining what is taught, written and published in philosophy of education can be viewed further as evidence of privileging some Western styles of philosophy over other global alternatives. Not only was education heavily implicated in colonialism; Western philosophy has been criticised by some as also complicit (e.g. Gordon, 2019). Despite this, in our view analytic philosophy of education, like Western philosophy in general, has much to contribute to the postcolonial project. Yet, it could do more to take both postcolonial theory and philosophy beyond the West seriously. Baggini (2018) suggests that despite the West's geopolitical influence leading to its philosophy enjoying a global impact, it does not reciprocate the openness of non-Western traditions. In philosophy as in other spheres, it is mainly the West that continues to set the agenda. This may be changing, and earlier, we have noted examples of this trend in philosophy of education. We would add to these examples attention in philosophy of education journals to postcolonial themes that include racism, diversity, multiculturalism, dress in schools, global citizenship and global justice in education. There are now more diverse themes and voices in the conversation.

These observations prompt further questions about what a future postcolonial but still analytic philosophy of might be like, if it accorded traditions that have been marginalised as a result of colonialism their deserved place. One clear-cut response to this kind of question urges a decisive break, not only with Western thought but also with postcolonial theories. Walter Mignolo's (2009) categorical decolonial challenge to Western thought calls for 'epistemic disobedience' to counter the 'epistemic privileges' of Western knowledge and to affirm 'the epistemic rights of the racially devalued' (p. 4). This proposed political and epistemological break with the West includes delinking with the vocabulary of the Enlightenment. As he sees postcolonial thinking as having originated mainly in Britain and the United States, Mignolo (2011) maintains that 'it is easier for European intellectuals to endorse postcolonialism . . .than decolonial thinking' (p. 280). This particular decolonial stance would seem to end the present conversation. By contrast, a postcolonial analysis is, crucially, more inclined to accommodate hybridity.[6] For our purposes, a more fruitful and indeed necessary way ahead lies with hybridity, in a postcolonial future to which analytic philosophy of education contributes its methodological hallmarks of careful analysis of concepts, rigour, clarity and critical scrutiny of arguments. We do not support epistemic disobedience if it means abandoning the

methodological hallmarks of analytic philosophy, though we do not of course doubt the need for a range of decolonial practices, such as scrutiny and revision of school and university curricula.

By contrast with decolonisation as delinking, we favour arguments in postcolonial thought for some decentring of Western philosophy, such as Dipesh Chakrabarty's argument for *provincialising* rather than discarding Europe (2008). Proposing a renewal 'from and for the margins' (Chakrabarty, 2008: 16), Chakrabarty argues convincingly that concepts drawn from European thought are 'both indispensable and inadequate' (p. 6). For us, Western thought in the traditions of Marx and, more recently poststructuralism, is 'both indispensable and inadequate' to the task of thinking through the history of colonialism and of addressing its legacy in education and in philosophy of education. We understand Chakrabarty to be arguing that European thought both offers powerful critical tools, for example, in analysing injustice, and it is also limited as a means to explain political modernity in former colonies like India. Elements of Western philosophy have been indispensable to postcolonial critiques of colonialism, for example, Said (drawing on Foucault), Fanon (1963) (Sartre) and Freire (Marx). Yet, it is also fair to say that an inadequacy in philosophy of education in the broadly analytic tradition is its limited engagement so far with philosophy beyond the West.

Although fundamental disagreements lie at the core of the increasingly antagonistic relationship between the postcolonial and the decolonial, both do propose a degree of restoration of the traditional indigenous practices displaced by colonialism. Yet for Colpani et al. (2022: 10), a postcolonial stance is more sceptical about the decolonial project 'of fully retrieving pre-colonial and non-modern cultural and social formations'. It 'relies on the illusion that something could have escaped the totalizing colonial remaking of the modern world and its epistemic violence' (p. 10). The postcolonial tradition's critical preference for hybridity is also sceptical about essentialising cultural identities. In education, this would rule out retrieval as unconditional affirmation of past concepts and practices. Such essentialism poses the danger of a retreat into nativist relativism, in which philosophy of education could revert to a contest between rival 'isms' reminiscent of what preceded the analytic turn.

A retreat into rival philosophical isms could ignore the considerable threats to education common to all contexts in which the narrow instrumentalism of neoliberalism prevails. This commonality is made clear in Achille Mbembe's (2016) compelling proposal for countering the dominance of the Western canon in university education in Africa, particularly in South Africa. Mbembe's (2016) argument for epistemic diversity opposes any assumption that the cultural heritage and consciousness of Africa could be 'an extension of the West' (p. 35), while allowing for a significant degree of hybridity aimed at dialogue between different epistemic traditions that is open and horizontal, 'with the aim of creating a less provincial and more open critical cosmopolitan pluriversalism' (p. 37). Exemplifying a critical stance on 'decolonisation' that accommodates both the cultural and the material, Mbembe also emphasises the unequal power relations between core and periphery at play globally in higher education, shaped by globalisation and the market. His observation that commodification and systems of neoliberal control require disruption of the cycle that makes students customers, consumers of education, points for us to the shared threat to education perceived similarly by many Western philosophers of

education. His critique of marketisation is prominent in his analysis, as is his call for equal distribution of capacities for disciplined enquiry (Mbembe, 2015). It is perhaps here in these dimensions of ongoing coloniality that the most unsettling challenge to philosophers of education working in the privileged contexts of the former colonial powers lies. To be genuinely postcolonial, a future contribution of analytic philosophy of education that embraces the postcolonial moment should go beyond widening the philosophical conversation. In addressing the persisting material consequences that are baked into the global political economy of education, an obvious start would be for British universities to end neo-colonial higher education practices like charging premium 'international' fees to students from former colonies. More challenging still would be to refuse to collaborate with instruments like university rankings that favour wealthy countries who have the resources to outcompete their counterparts in former colonies.

A postcolonial philosophy of education should retain its analytic strengths and contribute to negotiating hybridity while widening the conversation – yet avoiding, among many possible pitfalls, the risk of mere vague and patronising celebrations of diversity. It should continue to offer the virtues summarised by Curren et al. (2003: 89): 'clear, defensible arguments, rational modes of persuasion that are appropriate to the kind of conclusion to be established, and infusions of analytical resources from related domains of philosophy'. As White and White (2020: 8) argue, philosophers of education of any stripe: 'need a clear view of what central educational concepts such as education, learning and knowledge involve; and they need to back up their claims, about the aims of education, for instance, with solid reasoning'. These features are worthy of retention in approaching philosophy of education in the postcolonial moment. They are indispensable to critique as a necessary dimension of postcolonialism, if only because even the retrieval of traditional indigenous educational concepts under conditions of inevitable hybridity is unavoidably open to interpretation and further development as well as contestation – especially when developed into policy, practice and curricula. Concepts in all contexts are diffuse, indeterminate, contestable and their meaning can shift over time. Nowhere do they simply exist in some unambiguous form, awaiting easy definition and application. Moreover, political appropriation of concepts and their underlying presuppositions is a danger everywhere, whether by authoritarian Western regimes, or by postcolonial elites intent on defending their own power and interests. This applies as much to notions of 'harmony' in China or 'ubuntu' in Africa as it does to those favoured by the managerialist performativity whose global presence poses a shared threat to education systems colonised by the neoliberal imperatives of contemporary capitalism. It is a common challenge for all philosophers of education.

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ORCID iDs

Stephen Daniels https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4605-9732
Penny Enslin https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6395-8588

Notes

1. See Peters (1963, 1966) and Cuypers and Martin (2013) for detailed discussions of this idea.
2. See Martin (2020) for further discussion of this and how Peters later revised his position.
3. It is worth noting in the context of our discussion that Peters was born in India in 1919 during the period of British Imperial direct rule ('The British Raj').
4. We share some of the concerns expressed around how meaningful such a description is but agree that the dominance of the analytic paradigm within the philosophy of education has now passed.
5. It is important to note that we are not suggesting that these are analytic philosophers of education or that this work is an example of analytic philosophy. Indeed, several of the authors would reject the label and are critical of analytic philosophy of education.
6. We rely here on Kohn's (2010: 209) formulation of this distinction, which we have amended slightly for the purposes of our argument.

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Author biographies

Stephen Daniels is a Lecturer in the Philosophy and Theory of Education at the University of Glasgow. His research centres on the application of analytic philosophy of education to questions surrounding the right to education and the development of human rights education. He is more broadly interested in political theory, conceptions of human rights, civic and moral education and children's rights.

Penny Enslin is Professor Emerita in the School of Education at the University of Glasgow. Her areas of research interest lie mainly in political philosophy and education, with particular reference to democracy education, liberal theory, higher education, global justice, postcolonial theory, comparative philosophy of education and liberal feminism.