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Enterprising New Worlds: Social Enterprise and the Value of Repair

Introduction

Social enterprises are revenue generating for-purpose (as opposed to for-profit) businesses whose objective is to generate social value. They are businesses in which any net returns are put back into expanding the social value they create, such as employment of long term unemployed or people with disabilities, or environmental clean-up. Social value includes any benefits to society that might not otherwise be created (Ryan & Lyne 2008). In this chapter we seek to extend the bounds of thinking about the benefit that social enterprises create to show how they might contribute to societal change at the deep level of healing and learning to live well together on this planet (Gibson, Rose & Fincher 2015). We discuss how what we call 'social enterprising' plays a role in the work of social and ecological repair in two decolonizing contexts.

The conventional literature on social enterprise provides a grounding from which we develop a critical and, we hope, creative new perspective on the possibilities for social enterprise in a damaged world. A key preoccupation of this literature is on defining the distinctive difference between social enterprise and its two 'others'—mainstream for-profit business and mainstream not-for-profit enterprise. The explicit social mission distinguishes social enterprise from privately owned for-profit companies. The involvement with commercial activities as a source of revenue generation, distinguishes social enterprise from not-for-profit for-purpose enterprises that rely purely on grants and donations. With respect to the latter social enterprises are seen to be more autonomous and financially resilient (Dees 1998). Given the concern for social value generation, another focus is on the way social enterprise enacts its change-making agenda. Some social enterprises seek social change by influencing the way that markets work (Dees 1998, pp. 57-63). Some are led by charismatic heroic single-minded entrepreneurs. Some are cooperative organisations that purposefully promote economic democracy and citizen participation (Defourny & Nyssens 2010). Despite the variety of organizational structures and emphases there is a shared dominant narrative that sees 'innovation and progress' as the way to tackle "intractable social problems" (Leadbeater 2007, p. 2). This privileging of innovation, albeit social innovation that elicits financial returns, as the pathway to change is accompanied by pressure to pursue organisational prosperity in tandem with replicable, lean approaches to solving social problems (see for instance Mair, Battilana & Cardenas 2012).

From a diverse economies perspective social enterprise is itself a site of difference. When we take an anti-essentialist approach we open up the possibility that there might be many different drivers of social enterprise, not only the quests for social innovation and financial viability. Our interest is in how "social enterprising" enacts the social and has the potential to enact the social in a change making way (Beyes & Steyaert 2011, p. 110; Cameron & Gibson 2005). Specifically, we are concerned to explore how social enterprising can be engaged in repairing a damaged world. In what follows we discuss social enterprises in Eastern Cambodia and in the traditional territory of a group of Mississauga Anishinaabe First Nations peoples in Central Canada that are engaged in care, repair and embodied pedagogy.

<b> Enterprising in a Damaged World

Over the past two decades, and in the name of national economic development, people in Cambodia have endured intensified violent land grabbing conducted by politically connected speculators and tycoons (Springer 2010). This experience of dispossession via neoliberal accumulation has served to compound earlier traumas visited on the population. Those traumas include: French colonial dispossession in the 19th and early 20th century; a series of civil wars in the late 20th Century; a US bombing campaign during the escalation of the Vietnam War; and, during the late 1970s, the communist Khmer Rouge regime during which 20 percent of the national population perished in four years (Heuveline 1998). In recent decades, and again in the name of national development, Cambodia has seen the rapid growth of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) involved in aid and development. Today, Cambodia has the second highest density of NGOs on earth (Domashneva 2013). In the last ten years vast numbers of these NGOs have turned to commercial business in order to diversify or consolidate revenues as international aid flows have declined (Khieng & Dahles 2015).[1] Social enterprise advocacy is positioned within a power neutral, progressive discourse. And NGOs establishing social enterprises are urged to enrol the most up to date technical concepts and tools from management disciplines (Dey & Steyaert 2010). But what, we ask, what is missed when this uncritical, forward-facing posture is deployed in a society whose fabric is still torn and damaged?

At the other end of the economic spectrum in Canada, colonial violence through ongoing development persists today. The historic white settler discourse of the 'frontier' that gave rise to the patriarchal family farm and dispossessed Indigenous people of their land and freedom, has since been modified and consolidated by neoliberal agriculture and forms of corporate concentration that raise the political questions around who can access land and grow or harvest food on it (Rotz 2017). Indigenous lifeways nevertheless endure and are continually affirmed. Alongside ongoing struggles over colonial dispossession, Canada's 'social economy', with roots in civic solidarity, has forged more

equitable economic relations in some sectors. Social enterprises are part of this social economy. But for some time now practitioners have worried that social enterprise is being imposed by politicians and business in order to give market forces a prominent role within welfare services and welfare-to-work programs (Browne 2000). Rather than the growth of social enterprise signalling social change and a shift to more sustainable development, our concerns in both Cambodia and Canada are that much social enterprise development is papering over fundamental, deep violences and leaving inequalities and trauma unaddressed. We are interested in exploring whether social enterprise can play a more healing role in a damaged world.

To pursue this line of inquiry we propose to conceptualise "social enterprising" as ways of shifting economic registers and subjectivities that enact the social (Beyes & Steyaert 2011, p. 110; Cameron & Gibson 2005). We suggest that social enterprising can embody resourceful ways of caring for the self and others, taking a "reparative" stance that embodies openness and curiosity, allowing one to imagine and see hopeful possibilities (Sedgwick & Frank 2003). This stance allows 'small narratives' to be valued rather than approached with excessive scepticism (Dey & Steyaert 2010). Small narratives include especially those that show how routine acts of kindness, as well as novel ones, can undo harm and maintain, repair, and revitalise the world. In order to develop this approach to social enterprising we mobilise a family of conceptual tools related to acts of love and kindness that might be motivators for social enterprise, namely decolonial love, Buddhist loving kindness and the routine work of care and repair.

The concept of 'decolonial love' comes from the Dominican-American author Junot Diaz, who has described it as "the only kind of love that could liberate…from that horrible legacy of colonial violence" (cited in Benaway n.d). Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg activist and scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2013, 2017) has developed the idea of decolonial love to explore the complexities of contemporary Indigenous struggles in Canada. Her music, poetry, and writing invite meaningful reflection on the deep scars of colonialism alongside the beauty, pain, loss, and determination of everyday efforts to restore nourishing relationships with land and earth others. Social enterprising can be involved in initiating situated enactments of decolonial love in a way that invites true reconciliation and healing.

Buddhist Mettā or authentic 'loving kindness' is achieved through the cultivation of boundless love and sincere compassion that stands in contrast to self-interested friendliness. It entails an empathetic disposition and mindfulness that can have a restorative impact on wellbeing (Kristeller & Johnson 2005). While Mettā teachings are traditionally part of secular meditation, in more recent times they have become part of "socially engaged Buddhism" which is built on the notion that one's

journey into the next life is not determined just by mediation but also by meritorious acts (Sreang 2008). As a motivator for social enterprising, the commitment to living kindness is very different from the narrowly economistic drivers proposed by resource dependency theories that see non-profits enacting social enterprise as a substitute for grant funding.

A third tool of social enterprising is the routine work of care and repair. As Sharon Mattern (2018) points out care and repair is practiced by a broad demographic of care givers and other outreach agents, not as a matter of altruism, but as a form of what Hall and Smith (2015) term "urban kindness". The everydayness in the work performed by people attending to the physical and social maintenance of societies is also identified in the "extraordinarily ordinary" work of individuals who work in the social economy (Amin 2009).

With these tools in hand, we invite you to travel with us to places in which we have both lived and learned about social enterprise in different ways. First, to Kampong Cham Province, in Eastern Cambodia, and then to a small university town in Central Canada, located in the traditional territory of a group of Mississauga Anishinaabe First Nations peoples.

<c> Buddhism for Social Development Action: Social Enterprises Teaching *Mettā* and Practising Repair in Cambodia

Kampong Cham Province in eastern Cambodia lies along the Mekong River and was once an administrative centre for the French colonial rubber trade. People in Kampong Cham suffered terribly during the civil wars and US bombing. Purges during the Khmer Rouge regime left tens of thousands of bodies in mass graves there (Kiernan 1996).[2] Studies in Kampong Cham more than twenty years later found that nearly half the people who survived the purges exhibited certain behaviours associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and that more than 40 percent were diagnostically depressed (Dubois et al. 2004). Some might argue that the Cambodian nation has surpassed trauma as it has graduated to a lower middle-income country with 'development prospects', but researchers have found that PTSD leaves intergenerational imprints on DNA with links to memory problems and immune deficiencies (Uddin et al. 2010).

Buddhism for Social Development Action (BSDA) is a grassroots NGO that was established in Kampong Cham Province in 2005 by seven monks using their own resources. BSDA integrates *Mettā* teachings into its core values—service to the poor, unity, collaboration, integrity and accountability. Through the 1990s and 2000s, socially engaged Buddhism became attractive to international development agencies and NGOs, largely in accordance with the objective of strengthening civil society (Harris 2008). Consequentially, BSDA grew with donor support and is nowadays engaged in

various projects targeted at youth training and education, health, reducing harm from drug use and sustainable livelihoods. Some of these initiatives are integrated with social enterprise and we focus on two of them here.

The Angkor Language School (ALS) has been operated by BSDA since 2009. It provides affordable English and Chinese classes (fees vary between 1.5 and 3 dollars per month) to more than 600 children and young adults from local villages each weekday evening, using school facilities. ALS stands in contrast to the prosperous social enterprises that tend to gain the most attention in scholarship focusing on social innovations. In 2016, the profit for the year was under one hundred dollars. But while th monetary profit is negligible, the aim of ALS is not to generate high surpluses. Rather, it is simply to provide affordable language classes to as many children and young adults residing in the surrounding villages as possible. Each evening, every classroom that the school has to offer is in use. In the first three years of ALS the local school was made freely available. After three years spent volunteering while the school became established, 18 cooperating teachers were able to finally start drawing part-time salaries as part of the operating cost. These practices of gifting and volunteering build on Buddhist practices of merit making. [3]

A new BSDA initiative is the Hanchey Bamboo Resort—a meditation and yoga retreat targeting Cambodians and international guests. Hanchey provides employment for graduates of its hospitality vocational training programs, but the main aim of the enterprise is to diversify BSDA's revenue in order to help pay for administrative costs and organisational capacity building that donor-funded projects do not fully support. Considering the realities of the aid environment and commercial turn among Cambodian non-profits set out earlier, at first glance Hanchey looks like an enterprising non-profit—it secures its own revenues and avoids excessive dependency on donors, in order to gain monetary sustainability and greater autonomy and entrepreneurial freedom. However, this would be a reductive way to view the social world that has been enacted by this enterprising intervention.

Hanchey has mobilised local assets in a way that strengthens collective wellbeing and community resilience. The construction process became a training programme benefitting more than twenty young adults from local villages who became skilled in landscape design, construction and manufacturing bamboo furniture. These young workers have since become a team that can work on eco-tourism projects elsewhere. Hanchey provides 'alternatively paid' work, in the form of ongoing training in hospitality, catering and facilities maintenance to children from some of the poorest families in the area. In addition to promoting yoga and meditation in the locality as a part of people's wellbeing, Hanchey also helps to instil greater resilience into the livelihood of local market traders

who are often selling to survive in the informal economy (Lyne 2017, pp. 120-2), by providing new retail opportunities.

In BSDA's social enterprising initiatives we discern practices that exemplify both authentic loving kindness (Mettā) and routine repair and care. ALS has mobilised resources including labour and access to facilities through means that are inspired by selfless giving, along with a strong orientation towards economic ethics in the everydayness of work. The School has mobilised combinations of community resources in enterprising ways that has, in the manner of bricolage, created something from nothing. It has massively strengthened the local community in the process. The Hanchey resort has helped the local community to recover practices of reciprocity, promoted pride in local capacities and traditional skills and delivered services that are conducive to wellbeing. It also exemplifies design practices that uphold the use of vernacular materials such as bamboo, keeping alive diverse ecologies of productivity (de Sousa Santos 2016, pp. 180-1) that are otherwise rendered absent by western-centric monocultural modes of economic progress.

<b> Cultivating Decolonial Love in Nogojiwanong, Central Canada

Nogojiwanong (also known as Peterborough, Ontario) is an Ojibwe word that means "place at the end of the rapids". This is where Trent University overlooks the waters of the Odonabe (or Otonabee) river, an important historical gathering place for First Peoples who have lived in this region for thousands of years. Nogojiwanong bears the old scars and fresh wounds of coloniality. It is also a place of brave healing and affirmative politics. At Pigeon Lake, just north of Nogojiwanong, James Whetung of Curve Lake First Nation runs a small enterprise selling cleaned and packaged wild rice. His focus in not on profit-making but instead upon "Manoominikewin" – the practice of wild rice cultivation, harvesting, and stewardship that he argues maintains ancient skills and knowledge.[4] As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson explains:"Manoominikewin is not just about gathering a food staple, it also includes songs, acts of governance, ceremony, families, and philosophies – it is in itself an act of "being Anishinaabeg" (Anishinabek News, 2015). James' wild ricing enterprise is a bold affirmation of Indigenous life and food ways which includes the right to practice self-governance and self-determination, and it invokes responsibilities in doing so. Key to realising these rights and responsibilities is a loving pedagogical relationship to land.

Learning how to relate with land in this way is not something available only to Indigenous communities. It is an invitation to all of us who desire to survive well together on this planet to find ways to connect with the land we are situated in through our own pedagogical process. Student-led food based social enterprises at based at Trent University also enact ethical commitments oriented

to social, economic, and environmental justice and equity. An early campus project transformed a green roof on Trent's Environmental Science building into an organic vegetable garden.[5] The rooftop garden supported the evolution of a student-run cooperative – the Seasoned Spoon Café, established in 2002. The Spoon, as it is affectionately known, fought for and eventually won the right to contest an exclusivity clause in Trent's contract with corporate food service provider Aramark. A few years later, in 2006, a one-acre field garden, The Trent Vegetable Garden, was established on campus to increase production capacity to supply the café.

The Spoon and the two vegetable gardens are non-profit organisations, supported by a student levy and small membership fees. Most of the work done to maintain their existence is unpaid labour, performed by the collective multiple species' efforts, as a gift to the community. It is bolstered in the growing season by small government subsidies that support student summer jobs. These financial supports allow food from the garden to flow directly to the café without payment, and surpluses are donated to garden staff and volunteers, the local Food not Bombs chapter and other community non-profits. In 2006, the Trent Vegetable Garden was also established by students who wanted to see more campus-grown food in the corporate-managed cafeterias. In an uneasy collaboration with Trent's corporate food service provider, they created a new social enterprise that grows organic produce which goes into resident student meals.

More recently,in 2014, a new garden and social enterprise was initiated on Trent's campus – the Trent Market Garden. The Trent Market Garden was created specifically as a for-purpose student enterprise to supply Trent's four college cafeterias with organically grown food, in an uneasy collaboration with Trent's corporate food service provider. The Market Garden formed an alliance with The Flint Corn Community Project, an Indigenous seed saving and educational initiative that involves Haudenosaunee grower Ieiérhes Karolyn Givogue Grant,[6] the Trent Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Science youth program that is run through Trent's Indigenous Environmental Studies department, and Farms at Work – a project promoting healthy and active farmland in east central Ontario. The Flint Corn Project engages local Indigenous youth in caring for a variety of Kanienkeha:ka (Mohawk) corn seeds, who throughout the growing season learn about the "Three Sisters" (interplanting of corn, beans, and squash) and their pollination systems and also participate in traditional celebrations related to the growing and harvesting of corn (Farms at Work 2015).

In all these endeavors there is a discernible contribution to collective well-being now and in the future. There is an aspiration to decolonise relationships, that is, to relate in respectful, sustainable, and loving ways with other beings in the community. The activities of students on Trent's campus reflect the desire and effort to learn from the land, from Indigenous knowledge-keepers and one

another, even as they navigate institutional disinterest and imperatives toward further commoditisation of the campus food system. In this pedagogical process embodying decolonial love, there have been struggles over meanings, ethical issues, space, and accountability. But through the co-production, sharing and distributions of food by enterprising means, these initiatives have also denied corporations and neoliberal governance regimes the right to fully settle questions about who can access the resources to grow and distribute food.

<b> Conclusion

In this chapter, we have shied away from essentialist notions of social enterprise and maintained a commitment to diverse motivations. We have proposed decolonial love, *Mettā* teachings of loving kindness and routine care and maintenance as three interrelated socially enterprising activities that shift affective economic registers and enact the social in transformative ways. We have amplified small narratives of kindness and repair in the broken worlds of Cambodia where a population tries to recover from trauma while past perpetrators continue to assume power, and of Canada where neoliberal concentration of land and resources continues to deny basic social justice. We have suggested that through social enterprising involving the routine maintenance of our collective world and reciprocal acts of decolonial loving kindness, the pain of a suffering and damaged world can be softened a little. Perhaps this pain can be mingled with hopeful dispositions premised on the appreciation of daily collective work, however mundane it may seem. Through allowing ourselves to be affected by others through this work, and by refusing to know too much, we are called to be open to possible enterprising activities that undo harm and maintain, repair, and revitalise loving pedagogical relations with our human and non-human kin.

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[1] Cambodia's active social enterprise sector is now seen by the World Bank as a model that should be replicated wherever possible in other lower income countries (Hutchinson 2007, p. 153).

[2] A list of the "Killing Fields" of Cambodia left by the Khmer Rouge period in the second half of the 1970s can be viewed at http://d.dccam.org/Projects/Maps/TableList/List_of_Mass_Graves.pdf

[3] It is worth noting that communities in Cambodia commonly raise more money for local facilities, including schools and Pagoda buildings, than the Cambodian Government provides (Pellini 2005).

[4] James Whetung faces ongoing animosity from cottagers who say that his seeding of traditional wild rice in the lake impedes their ability to use watercraft and public enjoyment of the lake.

[5] More information about the Trent's student-run vegetable garden can be viewed at https://www.greenroofs.com/projects/trent-university-environmental-and-resource-sciences-vegetable-garden/

[6] The Haudenosaunee Confederacy meaning People of the long house is made up of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas, and was intended as a way to create a peaceful means of decision making. It has been referred to as the oldest, participatory democracy on Earth, where law, society and nature are equal partners, and each plays an important role.