Title of Article: Decolonizing Education: Enunciating the Emancipatory Promise of Non-Western Alternatives to Higher Education.

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Abstract

Today’s globalizing world inadvertently creates an imbalance in power relations between the so-called ‘western’ and ‘non-western’ contexts, and discourse about educational excellence often circumvents indigenous paradigms, needs, and ideas about the purpose of education. Further still, the hegemony of western-inspired, industrial-styled education often constrains discussion about the challenges of reforming higher education in ways that suggest a thought-linearity and blindness about the promise of alternatives. In light of the intractable difficulties associated with higher education in the so-called developing world, this paper draws from a post-structuralist, social constructivist, ethos and advocates for a decolonization of the educational milieu. By focusing on examples of unorthodox approaches to education drawn from principally non-western contexts, we support a move towards radical differentiation and pluralisation as a solution to today’s higher education problems. We claim that higher education might be better served if it exists in tension with indigenous alternatives – instead of bearing the sole burden of service. Ultimately, we imagine what alternatives to ‘school’ might look like, and reflexively present the emerging contours of a participatory action research and community-driven, culture-sensitive process that breaks through the linearity and modernistic assumptions of mainstream schooling – a process these authors are embarking on tentatively called ‘Koru’