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# Knowledge as agreement: inviting Indigenous innuendo

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# Knowledge as Agreement

*Inviting Indigenous Innuendo*

An Honours Paper

This paper was authored by the student Daniel John Peterson and supervised by Dr. Loretta Kelly and Dr. Alessandro Pelizzon in accordance with the *School of Arts and Social Sciences' "2012 Honours Handbook"* as adopted by *Gnibi, College of Indigenous Australian Peoples at Southern Cross University* on 'Bundjalung' land.

## Core Specifications:

- Length: body 16610 words
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- Left-hand margin: 5 centimetres for comments and binding
- "*References*" (pages 61-69) are limited to the paper's citations only

**Declaration of Originality**

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Signed  ..... Date 12 – 12 – 2011 .....

## Acknowledgments

The author wishes to acknowledge all the ‘Goori’ Nations, traditional owners and relations through which the author and the paper have come to Be.

Many teachers have shared teachings in the course of the author’s formal academic pursuits. As such, the author wishes to present this Honours paper as an opportunity to *honour* those academic teachings and teachers. Consequently (and cognisant of the limits of the author’s own learning) this paper is presented as a formal academic attempt to manifest something of the philosophies, customs and values shared through those teachings.

The author would also like to acknowledge the support gifted by many proofreaders and colleagues who each contributed to this paper in various and meaningful ways. Thank you very much for your guidance and sharing in this paper’s co-creation.

Finally, the author acknowledges the reader, without whom the paper would not knowingly exist.

## Preface

In Australian academia one may distinguish between philosophies of a Euro-Western origin and philosophies originating from the ancestors of Indigenous peoples. The prudent academic scholar of 'Indigenous Studies' often finds just cause to distrust and disregard Euro-Western philosophies. Conversely, Euro-Western philosophies often manifest with distrust of and disregard for, Indigenous philosophies. Moreover within the distrust of a colonial-like setting, philosophical curiosity is generally disregarded, replaced perhaps by more *practical* concerns. Thus parts of the present paper (such as "*Positioning the Author*" for example among other aspects of the paper) may seem ill conceived, unnecessary or awkward to some readers, however, for other readers such details do remain very important indeed.

Having had fortunate opportunities to be an academic student in both camps, the author offers this paper in a vain hope of inviting further philosophical curiosity – simultaneously within both of these two groups. For the academic philosophers of 'Indigenous Studies' this paper attempts to inspire a means of seeing beyond necessary distrust and disregard into ideas and feelings which may not have been seen before in quite the same way. For the academic scholar of Euro-Western philosophies this paper attempts to encourage further consideration of what may have otherwise been distrusted or disregarded. Whether or not this paper *actually contributes* to either group is for the reader to judge. The author's hope is simply that the following paper resembles something relevant for both groups.

## Abstract

By contrasting rational knowledge with relational knowledge, this paper discusses the forming of agreements as the pursuit of knowledge. Knowledge as agreement (the paper's topic) is thus discussed in this paper via research methods including 'autoethnography' (the paper's methodology). Pursuing knowledge by virtue of agreements (the paper's epistemology) is subsequently valued after positioning the author as a non-Indigenous 'dagay', positioning the paper itself as a dissertation, and after assuming an initial relationship between the reader and author. The paper occurs within the cultural context (the paper's ontology) of 'academia'. Once rational knowledge has been contrasted with relational knowledge, the paper then highlights how agreements may be effectively pursued via 'dialogue' and affected by one's topology (the paper's axiology). These pursuits, says the paper, are pursuits of knowledge as agreement.

This paper is written from within 'academia' for the academic reader of a philosophical ilk. It is an attempt at the coherent valuing of relational knowledge and discussion of the possibility of knowledge through the pursuit of agreements. Philosophically, this is a paper about epistemology. As a creative discussion, author and reader share via this paper their mutual pursuit of fresh knowledge. Thus the paper is offered as an invitation for the reader to join the author in creating something that has not existed before – new knowledge.

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## **Chapter One: Introductory Discussions**

*If you listen to this story here,  
e'll be with you e'll be with me.  
This story for me, for anybody, for you too ...  
We got spirit our story and spirit with us.  
(Neidjie 1989:109-10)*

By positioning the author and paper, then locating a context within which to discuss the topic, a relationship is thus assumed. The reader is invited to participate in this assumed relationship. At the paper's core is a contrast between rational knowledge and relational knowledge, used to describe the relational foundation of knowledge as agreement. Included is a description of dialogue as the best means for pursuing, creating, and valuing the agreements that constitute knowledge. In addition, the critical view that knowledge as agreement disregards objectivity, is responded to. Principally through a discussion with the reader, the author introduces, contextualises, and demonstrates in this paper how agreements can be knowledge.

Like other styles of research, this paper uses qualified research methods to produce 'new' knowledge aimed at contributing both generally, to an ongoing discussion, and specifically to the academic body of knowledge. This paper is intended as a contribution to an agreement, between the author and "all his or her relations" about the nature of reality (Little Bear 2005:10). Any sense of agreement shared by the reader indicates evidence of what the author sees as a valid research project. As is the case for other research papers, this paper is presented for testing by both existing and *emergent* academic critique.

Unlike other research papers, this paper (in so far as it is a distinct entity) would thus prefer to be called a dissertation, and embodies an intended style, which hopefully, "continues to discuss" the nominated topic (Oxford 2002:258). This dissertation discusses content in a non-argumentative style – in order to contribute to a 'body of knowledge'. As distinct from the idea of 'knowledge by argument' what follows is a discussion of knowledge as

agreement. The author does not wish to argue for or defend any particular position or case. Here, this usual academic practice of argumentation has been explicitly negated in favour of a formal discussion based, principally, on the author's human experience<sup>1</sup>. A discussion based on human experience has been privileged because the author believes this is the best means by which to achieve knowledge. Indeed, as Karl Popper says "all knowledge is human" (1963:39). This paper considers that pursuits of knowledge are not pursuits of argued correctness but instead are pursuits of human relevance. Hence, the author is not vying for acceptance here as a truth-teller, in the way a theory proposes how things are. Rather, the author offers here a discussion of what *may* be true, subject to our agreements.

By beginning this discussion, an assumption is being made that the reader already agrees with, or subscribes to, some agreements – a few agreements about what the reader already considers to be true. In other words, the author is beginning from the assumption that the reader is sufficiently capable of agreeing with something (some version of truth), somewhere, somehow. Hence, the paper assumes a few foundational agreements with the reader, and then pursues subsequent agreements. These pursuits occur via what is assumed to be the reader's pre-existing values. The author is therefore assuming that the reader values existing academic research methods.

By honouring and utilising existing research methods such as "autoethnography" (Adams and Jones 2008:374-6; Jones 2005); "emancipatory action research" (West 2000:38-9); "story-telling" (Kelly 2007:70-6); and "ceremonial" research (Martin 2008; Wilson 2008) this paper offers knowledge which has actually or experientially benefited the author. Therefore, what follows is not strictly a defence of new knowledge; rather it is a discussion *about* potentially new knowledge. Some researchers refer to this form of dissertation explicitly as "story work" (Martin 2008:20-1, 95-7).

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<sup>1</sup> Argument here may be defined as "the application of an inference or rule of reasoning to some assumption or premises thereby intending to "force" a conclusion" Hyde, D. 2009, Introduction to Logic, definition of 'argument'. *Introduction to Philosophy*. University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus, Brisbane, Yuggera, Queensland, Australia.

In its attempt to create new knowledge, this paper invites a personal, or an experiential, relationship between the reader and the author. The author therefore, not only pursues an agreement with the reader, but also invites the reader into an agreement about what is possible. As an experientially based discussion, this paper's worth as a contribution to academia's body of knowledge may be measured not by the "force of its argument" (Hyde 2009:6) but rather by its "heuristic" coherence (West 2000:14). What follows therefore describes, discusses and references how the author experiences the role of knowledge in discerning meaning with human relevance. Hence, this dissertation's topic is nominated as the topic of knowledge generally and knowledge as agreement specifically. Negated by the paper are additional inquiries which include the question of whether *all* agreements may be considered as knowledge. The author's discussion here primarily considers whether what is known to be knowledge may be effectively considered as an agreement between relations.

There is a problem within the idea of knowledge having quantifiable, static, reasoned and definable value (Popper 1963; Saul 1992). This type of knowledge is discussed here generically as rational knowledge. In particular, the author has been frustrated in the past by an inference which positions knowledge as something coming *from* a person. Too often, this implies that knowledge is rational knowledge, simply *because it has come from a person*. Alternatively, the author's experience and research finds that knowledge actually passes *through* a person and people. As a critique of the above inference, this dissertation challenges any origin of knowledge *per se*, and refers to the human experience of knowledge in perpetual motion, or knowledge "coming full circle" (Dillard 2008:290).

Providing new data to inform one's choices should come with the opportunity to question how and if that data should become knowledge. Indeed, questioning the process of constructing knowledge from data is what makes this paper essentially about epistemology. Thus this epistemic dissertation offers a view of knowledge as being a way to explore, not exploit, meaning. The reader is personally invited to share in a general discussion about

philosophy, and a specific discussion about epistemology. As others testify, the question of where knowledge comes from is “one of the ... most important questions a [person] could ask” (Popper 1963:5).

### **Positioning the Author Generally**

The author has chosen to write from the position of a third person. In other words, the author is positioned within this paper by reference to an absent third party described as ‘the author’. This use of third person serves as acknowledgment of the limited capacity for a written English paper to authentically represent a literary creator’s unique perspective as anything other than that of ‘author’. In addition, the use of third person has been chosen in order to more closely subscribe to existing customs of ‘academia’. The author is simultaneously attempting to balance that subscription with the honour and maintenance of non-academic cultural subscriptions as *they exist distinct from the present paper*. While attempting this balance, the author requests that their use of third person not be taken as hypocrisy, in the sense of being contrary to non-academic cultural values. Rather, as a conscientious intercultural exchange of teachings, which Little Bear and Wadsworth describe as “petty folly” (2006).

A foundational experience presented in this paper is that identity, be it of the paper, the author, the reader, or an attribution, remains beyond the limited scope of this written English paper. English (especially the written form of English) is typically limiting in cross-cultural environments (see "*English Makes Me Tired*" in: Trudgen 2000:84-6). Therefore, the author’s position will be limited and dedicated to a *descriptive* position as opposed to an *identified* position. This distinction is important because it helps the reader locate the author’s position while also respecting the present communicative limits of our author/reader relationship. From the author’s perspective, this relationship is contained within the experiences of physically written text. What follows, therefore, fulfils a contextual need to have the author located or positioned within the static text of the paper, while also honouring the dynamic experiences of [potential] human identity outside the paper’s content.

By failing to reference *who* (identity) they are, the author is not failing as a human being, rather the author is choosing to value one particular experience of being a human being – an experience of being the author. As such, this part of the paper positions *what* (description) the author is. That is, a description of how the author sees themselves situated or positioned. As the reader engages more with the paper's meanings, relational expectation will likely grow. Given that the author does not have prior agreed knowledge about those expectations, the author can only therefore be positioned according to *assumptions* about what those expectations might be. Hence, this part of the paper is motivated by how it is that the author sees themselves positioned (and how that position may possibly be seen) within the relationships manifest by the paper.

Much of the paper's content makes reference to descriptions of Indigenous perspectives. Simultaneously, the author operates by virtue of *Gnibi*, the *College of Indigenous Australian Peoples at Southern Cross University* on 'Bundjalung' land. This content and context mean that the author carries an obligation to explicate in detail the author's position as a non-Indigenous author.

In the broadest sense, the author's position can effectively be located by employing the single word, indigenous. This is possible because of the many connotations that this single word has come to embody. These can be viewed as generally either descriptive connotations or identifying connotations. Thus over the page, the following connotations of the word indigenous are used to descriptively locate the author's position. Identifying connotations are only used in this paper to honour the *actual* use of 'indigenous' as an identity marker. Furthermore, no comment about one's 'indigenous' identity is intended or implied. Descriptive locators and identity markers both share connotations derived from the word indigenous. This paper therefore nominates what some of those connotations are (1 through 5). In doing so, the author's position – as a non-Indigenous author – can most accurately be described via the following connotations.

(1) Let us briefly establish a foundation upon which to appreciate the word indigenous. The root English word *indigenous* is derived from the Latin word *indigena* which translates as “a native” (Oxford 2002:461). Furthermore, the word is defined as follows: “originating or occurring naturally in a place” (ibid. 2002:461). This definition only contains the possibility of an item being non-indigenous by virtue of the word “natural” and the implied possibility of an item possibly being [somehow] not “natural”. By virtue of this definition, one may therefore feel secure in the legitimate potential for an item to be positioned using the adjective ‘indigenous’ as a descriptive locator.

(2) Both the *United Nations* and *Australian Government* (Gardiner-Garden 2000:3) utilise the word ‘indigenous’ to derive the word Indigenous as a proper noun. The proper noun is grammatically derived and linguistically identified by the use of an upper-case letter at the beginning of the word. Use of a proper noun is actioned for the specific purpose of differentiating between distinct political and social groups in a colonial and post-colonial context. In the case of the *Australian Government*, an Indigenous entity is thus recognised via the description of a ‘three-part definition’ (Government 1983; Kelly and Barac 2010/11). In turn, the United Nations have similarly employed a prescriptive or “working definition ... for practical purposes” given that “no formal universal definition of the term is necessary” (UN 2009:4-7). From this connotative use of the word indigenous comes a contemporary *description* of being Indigenous.

(3) An entity may also be located by the descriptive connotation of the word non-Indigenous. Once embroiled in, or subscribing to, the political and social groups of a colonial and post-colonial context, an entity is subject to those concurrent prescriptions of what is described above (2) as Indigenous. The author finds that, once aligned with those prescriptions, one is then engaged with the on-going challenges of aligning one’s particular existence with a pragmatic description or “working definition” (ibid. 2009:4) of Indigenous – a prescriptive description. The author’s purpose in highlighting this connotation is specifically to locate the word non-Indigenous (also penned as Non-indigenous or Non-Indigenous). Having located it strictly as a

derivative of the proper noun previously referenced (2) a non-Indigenous entity therefore is defined as: an entity not otherwise located using the above (2) “working definition” of Indigenous. By these means the author *describes* their own location as that of a non-Indigenous author.

The connotations thus far discussed (1 through 3) have been explicitly descriptive connotations. The paragraphs below however (4 and 5) are committed to locating some key identifying connotations – that is, identity markers as distinct from descriptive locators.

Indeed, this distinction between identity and description is also important for linguistic reasons. A group/item can often become misrepresented by the insufficient capacity of the language being used to describe it. Human languages have the potential to foster *implications* that may or may not match what the group/entity *intend* when they use that language for identification. It is precisely because of this ambiguity in the use of English non-nouns (for the purpose of self-identification) that the author has chosen to firstly distinguish descriptive locators (1 through 3) from identity markers (4 and 5) and secondly, preference a descriptively located position. The author thus honours the limited capacity of the paper’s language by positioning themselves via the descriptive locator (3) of a non-Indigenous author.

Furthermore the paper acknowledges that one’s entitlement to discuss another’s identity is morally limited. Fundamentally, the author is *not* automatically entitled to discuss the nature of another’s identity, without explicit permission (at the very least) volunteered from those whose identity is being discussed. In this sense, the paper thus includes a pre-emptive apology from the author, for instances where the discussion has inadvertently disrespected one’s identity.

(4) In political terms, one’s identity can have a direct and significant impact on one’s practical day-to-day access to human services such as health, education, housing, and financial services. In Australia “Indigenous special admission schemes at universities apply on the philosophical basis that

Indigenous people have suffered disadvantage and discrimination, and do not enjoy human rights at the same level as non-Indigenous people” (Kelly and Barac 2010/11). Moreover, in Australia’s case, there exists a strict legal definition for identification as an “Indigenous” person. This definition derives from Section 4 of the New South Wales’ *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* (1983). Subsequently this definition has been interpreted as a person who firstly can demonstrate ancestral connection to other Indigenous peoples, secondly declares themselves as an Indigenous person, and thirdly demonstrates acceptance as an Indigenous person by a current Indigenous community (Mabo v Qld (No.2) 1992 in: Gardiner-Garden 2000:3; Jose' R. Martinez Cobo's Study in: UN 2009:4-5; see also: Government 1983:sec 4). Based on this three-part definition, Australia’s “special measures” (Behrendt 2003:91) can make the possibility of Indigenous or non-Indigenous identity a very meaningful though complicated and challenging issue, not least because it often cuts to the core of a person’s collective identity.

(5) For the Indigenous people of Australia, collective identity is generally (though not always) synonymous with one’s identity *per se* (Harrison and McConchie 2009:92; Martin 2008:21,66; Mudrooroo 1995:19-20; Murphy 2003:45-55; West 2000:106; see also: Randall 2006). The *Australian Government’s* recent abolition of the “*Community Development Employment Program (CDEP)*” exemplifies why non-Indigenous governments are viewed as inherently ‘anti-collective’ (Maddison 2009:87) as compared to what “Indigenous world-views recognise as a *collective identity*” (Atkinson et al. 2010:25: emphasis added). Experientially however, an Indigenous person’s collective identity is often surpassed by that person’s “state of relatedness” (Martin 2008:128) or more specifically “the tension between individualism and collectivity” (Maddison 2009:84). The “Aboriginal social relations [that] are in many ways constituted within this tension” (ibid. 2009:83) are echoed in this paper’s “*Concluding Discussions*” regarding objectivity and subjectivity. Here however, the paper need only attribute “kinship” systems for referencing the collective identities of Indigenous Australia (Behrendt and Kelly 2008:86-9; Mudrooroo 1995:23-7, 79). These systems have been articulated by Elkin as being:

... essential to physical, psychological and emotional survival in traditional Aboriginal society. ... *the kinship system* ... provides a powerful regulatory framework *for individual identity*, stable relationships and group cohesion. (Bourke 1994:2.13: emphasis added)

The above quote describes the importance of “the kinship system” as a collective identity through which one’s individual Indigenous identity is known (5). The previous paragraph (4) similarly discussed the use of an Indigenous identity marker for political reasons. The paper’s discussion of political and collective purposes for identifying with the word indigenous (4 and 5) conveys the meaningful difference between using the word indigenous as a *descriptor* (as in 1, 2 and 3) and as an *identifier* (as in 4 and 5). The word indigenous can both *describe* entities as well as *identify* people.

The present paper focuses on the use of ‘indigenous’ as a descriptor (1, 2, or 3) and *not* as an identity marker (4 or 5). Descriptions locate an ‘entity’ effectively due to *the absence of* that same ‘entity’. Identities however, locate ‘us’ as distinct from ‘them’ (the distinction *depends* on ‘them’). In other words, descriptive locators do not [necessarily] infer ‘the other’ (something or someone *else*). The implication being made here is that the author’s authorship actually exists by virtue of (not distinct from) the reader’s act of reading the paper. In addition, this decision (to favour descriptive locators) has also resulted from research into how a word’s intended meaning (as in identity) is rarely the same as the word’s interpreted meaning (for example see: Barthes 1977; Bessarab and Ng’andu 2010). Consequently, the connotations of ‘indigenous’ as an identity marker (as in 4 and 5) have been included purely to honour the overt human significance that the word ‘indigenous’ carries. The choice of a descriptive locator is inclusive of respect for the potential for identification with *anything* (by virtue of that thing’s potential description). While descriptions can be identified with, not all identities can be described. This decision to favour descriptive locators was made to honour the experience of the author’s identity *per se* being in essence beyond description.

As a non-Indigenous author, the author's writing is thus only capable (at best) of being written *about* (or referring to) descriptions of Indigenous perspectives. If this paper is to effectively involve Indigenous perspectives at all, such perspectives will by necessity be *descriptions* of Indigenous perspectives, over and above the Indigenous perspective/s *per se*. The non-Indigenous author's writing therefore can not be written *from* (or be representative of) any Indigenous perspective as such. The paper is written to describe what its message is – to describe the paper's topic. The author is not entitled to identify the paper's message, nor does the author intend to identify the paper's topic. Thus, the author writes from a perspective described as (though not identified as) a non-Indigenous perspective.

In addition, the reader is asked to recognise a *potential* for the author's position (as any *natural* position) to be described as an 'indigenous' (1) perspective. This potential is possible given that any position by definition occurs "naturally in a place" (Oxford 2002:461). The disclaimer being made here is that while this potential description is possible, the author is not intending it. Where the reader is not able to recognise this innate potential for an 'indigenous' perspective (1) the author can only therefore apologise in advance for any instances where the author has (or appears to have) failed to remain within the nominated location of a non-Indigenous (3) position. The author's non-Indigenous position has now been located via an exposition of the word 'indigenous'. Furthermore, the use of other English words such as "aboriginal" (Attwood 1992:i-xvi; Gardiner-Garden 2000; Oxford 2002:3) and "native" (Alfred 2005:224-5; Oxford 2002:598) carry with them parallel connotations for the purposes of this dissertation.

### **Positioning the Author Specifically**

Unlike the word 'indigenous' however, when Taiaiake Alfred uses the non-English word "Onkwehonwe" to refer to "original people" (2005:19) this word is not merely describing a unique perspective but also connecting that unique perspective to a physical area, a place, or what some call a "topography"

(Johnston 2007:ix; Sharpe 1994:9). Alfred's Onkwehonwe perspective goes beyond the ambiguity of describing a unique perspective with a prescriptive (English or other foreign) word. "Onkwehonwe" actually locates Alfred's perspective *somewhere* in the physical world. Other poignant examples include the non-English words "Koori" generally (Behrendt et al. 2009:165; Miller 1985; Mudrooroo 1995:235; West 2000:9) and "k" more specifically (Cook 2009 circa; Donaldson 1996:157; Gordon 2006:vii; Hoff 2006:xiii; see also: Oliver 2007; and also: "guri" in: Sharpe 1998:78). As in the use of "Onkwehonwe", the use of "Koori" and "Goori" actually connect a unique *perspective of the world* with a unique *place in the world*.

The non-English word with which the author of this paper positions themselves specifically is therefore the word "dagay" meaning "whiteman" (Ginibi 2007:295; 1994:213; see also: Sharpe 1994:7). Thus, "dagay" describes and combines the author's birth place (innately unique perspective of the world) with a specific place in the world referred to generally as "Bundjalung" land (Ginibi 2007:1). Therefore, the author's position can also be located as that of a "dagay" author (Ginibi 2007:295; 1994:213; Sharpe 1994:7). A discussion about the use of an upper-case letter as the first letter in the written word "dagay" (ibid. 2007:295; 1994:213; ibid. 1994:7) is beyond the scope of this paper. Hence, a lower-case "d" has been utilised, given the said focus on descriptive locators over identity markers. Moreover, the specificity of this non-English word is (for the purposes of this dissertation) confined here to the word's attribution, author and Elder, Ruby Langford Ginibi. This disclaimer is made (in part) in order to acknowledge the plethora of additional words and identity markers (for example: "gubb/a" (Ginibi 2007:296), "yirralee" (Moran 2004:191) or "yirahli" (Gordon in Hoff 2006:250)), which similarly function as effective descriptions of the author's position – as a non-Indigenous author originating from within "Bundjalung" land (Ginibi 2007:1).

The author's use of the word "dagay" (Ginibi 2007:295; 1994:213; Sharpe 1994:7) is thus specifically confined to the written text of this paper alone and the academic protocols thus involved. In other words, the author of this paper wishes to honour their use of the written word "dagay" (ibid. 2007:295;

1994:213; *ibid.* 1994:7) (and the mention of other non-English words) as strictly being for the specific and exclusive purpose of locating the author's position in accordance with the cultural context/s of this written paper. There is no intention within this paper for the word "dagay" (*ibid.* 2007:295; 1994:213; *ibid.* 1994:7) to be used outside the literal boundaries and limits of the paper.

The author is now positioned in two ways: as a non-Indigenous author generally and as a "dagay" author specifically (*ibid.* 2007:295; 1994:213; *ibid.* 1994:7). The intention is to contribute this discussion paper – the dissertation – from the author's specified position, while also respecting the position-less nature of the author's name-less personal identity. Therefore, the author proceeds from the position of a non-Indigenous "dagay" author (*ibid.* 2007:295; 1994:213; *ibid.* 1994:7).

### **Positioning the Paper**

Fundamentally this paper is positioned as a dissertation. As the written form of [a] discussion this paper is thus descriptive as opposed to prescriptive. At the same time, this dissertation is positioned such that it invites the *creation* of a new message – a supplementary message or 'agreement' shared by the reader. By forming agreements, those agreeing have thus created new knowledge. Moreover, this descriptive dissertation is motivated by the belief that the paper's message is relevant. Hence, this paper is positioned in what is believed to be the optimum place to achieve maximum relevance. That belief also carries the hope of, and invitation for, a new message, independent of the paper's current position – a new agreement – new knowledge.

Metaphorically, the paper's position is like the hub of a bicycle wheel. Just as the hub is positioned by the wheel's 'spokes', so too is each individual 'spoke' reciprocally positioned by the hub. By locating the paper using the following 'spokes' the author assumes that those spokes themselves each find some relevance in the hub/paper. The following spokes are thus the strongest influencing factors which combine to determine *where* the paper is positioned.

Let us first acknowledge one of the strongest ‘spokes’ locating this paper. That ‘spoke’ is the English language; which brings with it written English customs; and inevitably generic standards of European cultures in contrast to non-European cultures. The presence of the author themselves indicates voluntary participation with that spoke of Europe generally and England’s national language specifically. As such, this paper is both positioned by, and is specifically relevant to, an English reading readership.

The paper’s location is also positioned by the philosophical ‘spoke’ of traditions such as analytic rationalism. That is, analytic in the sense of “logical and linguistic analysis” (Urmson and Ree 1989:11) and rationalism in the sense that knowledge is possible via “pure reasoning” (Urmson and Ree 1989:272; see also: Popper 1963:7; Saul 1992). By devoting a large portion of this paper to a discussion of ‘rational knowledge’ the paper is thus positioned by (and assumes that it is relevant to) the philosophical tradition of analytic rationalism.

The paper is located politically by Australia’s democratic monarchy. This political context is relevant principally because *Southern Cross University* sees its “role and function as the conscience and critique of society” (Atkinson 2005). Indeed, if this paper is to contribute to such a “role and function” then it is relevant to at least mention the related political context governing *Southern Cross University*’s “society”. This paper is thus politically positioned by (and assumed to be relevant to) Australia’s democratic monarchy.

Capitalist colonisation is how the paper can be positioned economically. In these terms, it can be further positioned by considering what is actually meant by one’s use of the word wealth. This is especially referring to “economics” as a “branch of knowledge concerned with the production, consumption, and transfer of wealth” (Oxford 2002:282). The term “capitalist colonisation” embodies apocalyptic-like human experiences including neurological, ecological, spiritual, relational, cultural, judicial, trans-generational and economic trauma (Atkinson 2002; Trudgen 2000). Given its Australian colonial context, the paper is thus positioned by capitalist colonisation, and moreover, assumed to be relevant within that economic context.

In legal terms this paper is positioned by the ‘spoke’ of legislated secularism. This identifies a statutory framework which informs the law, lore or rules of human conduct. It is a legal spoke with many parallels with the ‘spokes’ already referred to above. Secularism in particular is relevant to the non-corporeal guidance of human behaviour or what some call the “divine sources of knowledge” (Popper 1963:12). Hence, the paper is positioned by, and is assumed to be relevant to, this secularism which emphasises the legacy of church/state separation in legal terms.

Several major ‘spokes’ have now been described which each help to position the paper. While each ‘spoke’ has a unique influence, they each combine to locate the paper in its particular position. The connection of multiple ‘spokes’ via a metaphoric wheel-hub locates some of the most common human experiences associated with reading the paper. Generally speaking, the author and paper combine here to describe for the reader, the topic and message of “knowledge as agreement” in the form of a discussion – a dissertation. Moreover, one may also see the paper itself embroiled in a life-like process of creation, influence and contribution (Barthes 1977). Therefore, independent of an author and reader, the paper is subsequently respected throughout as embodying [a] personality *capable of personal relationships*.

### **Key Resource-texts in the Paper**

The paper often refers to the writings of Leroy Little Bear. Little Bear is most relevant to the paper principally because of the author’s own experiences of Little Bear’s classes, teachings and dialogues at the *University of Lethbridge*, in the *Blackfoot Nation*, Canada (Little Bear and Wadsworth 2006). These experiences have added significant personal meaning to what has been derived from the texts of Little Bear. As such, Little Bear’s writings were used in this paper primarily because of that prior relationship between the author and Little Bear. The author is honoured to have had the opportunity of referring to Little Bear’s writings throughout this paper.

Of Little Bear's writings, the chapter *Aboriginal Paradigms* (2004a) is most heavily attributed. Given that culture has such a significant influence throughout this paper, Little Bear's definition of "culture" in particular, is acknowledged here as key. Little Bear's own cultural paradigm is also described in the chapter, which informs this paper by emphasising the value of interrelationships. Little Bear's chapter has been a guiding light for this paper.

Another significant text studied in the course of this paper has been Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). Foucault's book supports the dissertation's author because of its position at the meeting place of many factors influencing the paper. Given Foucault's position between the traditional corpus of European philosophies and the emerging philosophies, views, and positions of previously marginalised human groups, Foucault generally helps the author to link pre-twentieth century philosophy with post-twentieth century philosophy. The growing academic empowerment of previously disempowered philosophies is well characterised by Foucault. As such, Foucault has helped greatly to validate the paper's topic as a relevant message.

Other important reference materials include: Flew and Speake 1979; Horton 1994; McConchie 2003; Perry et al. 2007; Thieberger et al. 2006; and Urmson and Ree 1989. In particular the collection of essays by David Bohm published as *On Dialogue* (1996b) has been a significant reference for this paper because it offers a detailed discussion of exactly how the topic (knowledge as agreement) can most effectively be achieved. As the cornerstone of the paper's guiding methodology, this text is of significant influence.

The authors Little Bear, Foucault, and Bohm, combine to contribute the three most influential resource-texts for the present paper. Little Bear's *Aboriginal Paradigms* (2004a) principally helps to form a context for the paper. Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) helps to verify knowledge as agreement. Bohm's *On Dialogue* (1996b) empowers the methodology with which knowledge can be achieved as agreement. In combination, the three texts named above help respectively to discuss where, what, and how, knowledge *may* be achieved as an agreement between relations.

## Why a Context?

Discussing a context helps the author to clear a space, making room for a topical discussion. Here a context should also give the reader actual cause to appreciate the paper as relevant. If described well, the paper's context should encourage genuine engagement and curiosity about what the author has to say. This paper sees that a context is an assumed agreement, made to help the author and reader *recognise something of each other* before subsequent agreements can be broached.

Effectively, a context should be a *non-coercive* option, for the reader's consideration. To begin with, this context needs to assume the possibility of a comfortable agreement between author and reader. In the later stages of the paper this "preliminary agreement" is similarly discussed as an "inferred (and chosen) objectivity". Though at this point, our agreed context is effectively the "common ground" (Bird 1997:3) which gives cause for author and reader to respect their respective subjectivities. By grounding those respective subjectivities within a nominated objectivity (the paper's context), this context should thus facilitate the beginning of a respectful and relevant discussion and relationship. This shared "common ground" provides the subsequent relational strength needed to collectively pursue, collaboratively create, and meaningfully maintain the constructions that are new agreements – new knowledge.

Constructing new agreements is the intention and invitation of this paper. This 'construction site', however, requires some trust between those participating. Qualities such as "trust" (Johnson 1977) are needed to help build new agreements (Lewicki and Wiethoff 2000) because of the interrelatedness of those building. Thus, this paper values trust, or more specifically "knowledge-based trust" (Lewicki and Bunker 1995) as a vital part of pursuing knowledge as agreement. Indeed, the role of trust in pursuing knowledge as agreement runs parallel to what Lars Hertzberg suggests as "the role of our believing others in learning" (1988:308). Acknowledging the role of trust between author and reader is a significant first step in forming a context for this paper.

## **Why a Cultural Context?**

An intentional choice has been made to offer a context described by the word “culture” (Oxford 2002:213-4). Culture is suggested as the optimum way to contextualise this paper primarily because cultural considerations are the best way to position the author and paper in *relation* to the reader. Implied is a preference for the value of interrelationships. Inside this relationship therefore, exist some of the author’s responsibilities, or what Shawn Wilson calls “relational accountability” (2008:97). For example, the author is responsible for respecting the mutual autonomy of both the author’s and the reader’s experience/s, and thus accountable for their (the author’s) intention to be part of the reader’s experience/s. If such responsibilities and accountabilities as these can be respected, then a cultural context will be the best way to relate the reader to the author. Indeed the author’s presumption of relevance derives from the experience of a common culture. Within a cultural context both author and reader can be relations.

A cultural context has been chosen from among alternative contexts such as a “paradigm” (Capra 1996:6; Little Bear 2004b; 2005:9), “language” (Little Bear and Wadsworth 2006), “discourse” (Foucault 1972; Hester-Jr. 2004:263; Muecke 1992:35), “conjecture” (Popper 1963), and a “world-view” (Atkinson et al. 2010; Martin 2008:65). While these were considered carefully, overall a *cultural* context was chosen with which to initiate a relational position with the reader. As Bergquist succinctly said, “a culture does not exist for itself; rather, it exists to provide a context” (1992:3).

## **What is Culture?**

This paper uses a very specific definition in its contextualisation of knowledge as agreement. The following definition of culture is thus offered as the context within which this dissertation occurs:

Culture at its most fundamental is a collective agreement ... regarding the nature of reality. ... Culture includes philosophies, customs, and values. Philosophy is, more or less, the theoretical (and sometimes rather esoteric) part of culture. Customs and ways of doing things are the functional and practical applications of the philosophy, belief system, and ways of thought. Values are those mechanisms a society builds into its culture that say ... “If you subscribe to and pursue these values, you will be rewarded, recognized, and given prestige. But if you do not, you may be the object of criticism, ostracism, jokes, and the like” ... Culture is a way to explain reality. (Little Bear 2004a:26-7; 2006)

Little Bear’s definition highlights three core components: a culture’s philosophies (theories), customs (applications), and values (mechanisms). Consequently, this paper is constructed as a ‘theoretical’ discussion intended for a specified culture. The paper also represents functional ‘applications’ of *that* culture’s philosophies. Moreover, if it is to be a worthy contribution, the paper would serve as a ‘mechanism’ contributing to the values of *that* culture.

In addition to the definitions contributed by Little Bear and others (such as Bhabha (1994) and West (2000:214-6)), one of the most “widely cited” (AnthroBase 2011) conceptions and definitions of culture has come from Edward Tylor. As opposed to Little Bear, Tylor defines culture as follows:

Culture, or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (Tylor 1871:1)

The above definition of culture has deliberately been negated in this paper. Firstly, while one may respect the socio-political environment of the era, Tylor equates “culture” with “civilization” which demonstrates a colonial and out-dated perspective. Tylor’s choice of the word “civilization” has pejorative connotations and for many non-western people “remains the story of the west” alone (Smith 1999:63). Secondly, the author sees in Tylor’s definition an attempt at *absolute* objectivity. This is suggested by Tylor’s use of terms such

as “wide ethnographic sense”, “complex whole”, and “man as a member of society” which invoke the *imposition* of a reality – an imposed objectivity. In contrast to Tylor’s definition, Little Bear describes an innately subjective experience of “reality” – and hence implies reality’s innate subjectivity – by his preference for terms such as “collective agreement” (2004a:26).

### **What/Which/Whose Culture?**

Let us now name ‘a’ culture within which to position the paper specifically. By choosing and naming a particular culture the paper can frame an *actual* context within which both author and reader exist (or at least are assumed to exist). The aim of specifying this context is to inspire (but not coerce) the reader to feel included and involved in *the same* context as the author. Indeed, the author now assumes responsibility for naming a context that will not only invite the reader in, but actually involve the reader willingly. It is thus incumbent on the author to anticipate a readership, or assume who the potential readership might be. As such the author makes the necessary assumption that the reader/s of this paper will be reading from *within* the culture of ‘academia’.

This paper specifies the culture of ‘academia’ as the particular cultural context within which to discuss the topic. Subsequently, inverted commas (‘’) signify the word academia used strictly in the sense of ‘academia’ being a culture. The author in part assumes and in part experiences (though fundamentally *subscribes* to) what is being located here as ‘academia’. ‘Academia’ is chosen in an attempt to assume the greatest possible preliminary agreement between author and reader. The assumption being made is that the reader of this paper is reading under the auspices of ‘academia’ – professionally and/or voluntarily.

### **Who Says ‘Academia’ is a Culture?**

Let us now briefly survey some of the contemporary places where ‘academia’ has been explicitly referred to as a culture. For example, Rapp, Rhodes, and Stocks (2002:37) co-authored the article *Journey to the Centre of the Graduate Experience*, in which they begin by referring directly to “the culture of

academia”. Similarly, academics from Australia and elsewhere make direct reference to the “academic culture” in their respective publications (Bongiorno 2011:1; Giroux 2001:7; Grayzel 2007:187; see also: Marshall 1999). Generally, the author’s research has found that most references to “the culture of academia” (Piper 2007) are made in the course of critiquing “academic institutions” and “faculty” (Austin 2002; Kerr 1994). Gardner (2008:331) especially refers directly to “the culture of academia” and goes further by identifying sub-cultures *within* the culture of ‘academia’. ‘Academia’ is assumed to be relevant to the academic reader and thus forms the name with which the author will now refer to the paper’s cultural context. The above references to ‘academia’ as a culture allow for an analysis of “what can be called academic culture”, moreover “this culture [academia] can best be understood in relation to the structure of academia” (Martin 1998:26).

### **How/Why is ‘Academia’ a Culture?**

The author’s consultations with colleagues, and revisions of the literature, have found a scarcity of references actually analysing how/why ‘academia’ can or should be considered as a culture itself. Many authors use the word culture and the word academia concurrently – as if to say there is a genuine relationship between the two words. However, unfortunately this paper finds that too few authors have explicated why one should feel secure in considering ‘academia’ as a culture *per se*. Therefore, this author recognises that the question of ‘academia’ as [a] culture remains a potential avenue of important further analysis outside the scope of the present paper.

In order to define ‘academia’ as a culture the paper needs to attribute qualities of ‘academia’ with the paper’s previously declared definition of culture (Little Bear 2004a:27). Hence, the paper will now demonstrate coherent references to ‘academia’s’ philosophies, customs and values – in order to satisfy the said definition of what a culture is. By referencing the “philosophies”, “customs”, and “values” of ‘academia’ the paper will be able to therefore describe respectively the “theory”, “application”, and “mechanism” of ‘academia’ (Little Bear 2004a:27) – thus illustrating ‘academia’ as a culture.

Firstly then: What were the philosophical foundations upon which ‘academia’ may be considered a culture? By “recognising that each culture can only be adequately understood in the context of its historical roots” (Bergquist 1992:4) let us therefore initially consider ‘academia’ in a broad historical sense. Most overtly, the legacy of Plato (428 – 348/7BC) included the establishment of what was called an Academy in about 385BC (Urmson and Ree 1989:241). As a dedicated “search for the absolute nature of all things” (Bowen and Hobson 1974:20) Plato’s academy certainly achieved enduring philosophical respect. As the “theoretical ... part of culture” (Little Bear 2004a:27) Plato’s academy offers a classic example of ‘academia’s’ philosophical foundations. Given Plato’s legacy as the “greatest philosopher of all time” – some philosophers say that “all philosophy is merely a footnote to his work” (Perry et al. 2007:28) – one may rest assured that the culture of ‘academia’ exists in profoundly *philosophical* terms.

Secondly, this paper must also consider: What are the customs of ‘academia’? As the “functional and practical applications” of its philosophies, the author has necessarily therefore considered ‘academia’s’ customs in direct reference to ‘academia’s’ philosophies (Little Bear 2004a:27). Whether it be for the purposes of Plato’s “search for the absolute nature of all things” (Bowen and Hobson 1974:20) or as the “conscience and critique of society” (Atkinson 2005) or indeed, the purposes of a “pursuit of knowledge” (Little Bear and Wadsworth 2006), it is customary for members of ‘academia’ to actually form classes, tutorials, assessments, seminars, and generally collaborate in order to functionally and practically apply ‘academia’s’ philosophies. As such, ‘academia’s’ customs include the physical classrooms, offices, literatures, computers, schedules, conferences, papers, forums and other structural practices that manifest the “functional and practical application” (Little Bear 2004a:27) of ‘academia’s’ philosophies. These examples of customary practices demonstrate that ‘academia’ harbours extensive customary practices. Indeed, the actual reading of this paper is itself a functional and practical application of ‘academia’s’ customs. In experiential terms, one may feel secure in appreciating the culture of ‘academia’ with reference to its *customs*.

Finally, to identify 'academia' as a culture this paper must also locate 'academia's' values – or “those mechanisms a society builds into its culture that say ... “If you subscribe to and pursue these values, you will be rewarded ... if you do not, you may be the object of criticism”” (Little Bear 2004a:27). One of 'academia's' core values is the value of education, which generally holds a central place among the values which constitute 'academia's' culture (West 2000:166). Other current values of 'academia' include: “writing, professionalism, innovation, social justice, morality, sustainability and collaboration” (SCU 2011). Yet another example (of particular interest to this paper) is the value of knowledge. Values are a great way for any group, corporation, society or culture to locate what their most important existential objectives are. Existentially, values are negotiated by 'academia' to determine what should be common to all its members. 'Academia' is subject to a continually changing variety of values, as is the customary nature of a culture. As the “mechanisms” of culture, 'academia's' values inform the philosophies and customs of 'academia'. In combination with its philosophies and customs 'academia' may now also be considered as a culture because of its *values*. Since Plato's “academy”, the author sees that 'academia' has become one of the English speaking world's clearest expressions of culture *per se*. Hence, this dissertation proceeds in accordance with the philosophies, customs and values of the cultural context that is 'academia'.

## **Chapter Two: Discussing Contrasts**

*Ngangatja apu wiya, ngayuku tjamu –*  
This is not a rock, it is my grandfather.  
(Tinamin 1984:5)

The academic value of knowledge is of specific concern to this discussion. Hence this paper asks what is ‘academia’s’ “theory of knowledge” or epistemology (Flew and Speake 1979:109) and in turn, responds to questions of *how has, how does* and *how can* ‘academia’ value knowledge. In order to discuss knowledge as agreement specifically, the paper will contrast two forms of knowledge, such that the contrast itself may inspire and invite subsequent discussions. Contrasts are considered by the author as a means through which *something* can be created *in addition to* the things being contrasted.

### **Rational Knowledge**

From its very beginnings, the first academy quickly valued a theory of metaphysics in an effort to “get beyond rhetoric” and subsequently this helped to nurture the “syllogistic reasoning known as logic” contributed especially by Aristotle (385/4 – 322BC) (Bowen and Hobson 1974:23, 21-5, 81-8). Indeed it was Plato’s academy that produced the “best analytical thinker there has yet been, Aristotle” (Flew and Speake 1979:3; Urmson and Ree 1989:241-5). As indicators of rational knowledge, metaphysics and logic have therefore been highly valued by ‘academia’ through to the present day. This paper thus respects metaphysics and logic particularly because they underpin what can be referred to as the value of rational knowledge – ‘rational’ being derived from the word reason. The word rational is being used by this paper to refer to the idea of knowledge having quantifiable, static, reasoned and definable value. That is, the kind of “rationalism” which claims “the right of reason” (Popper 1963:7; see also, Saul 1992). Moreover, this paper sees rational knowledge as including the idea of knowledge coming from a person as opposed to passing through people. By these means, the paper is able to discern a specified form of knowledge located here as rational knowledge.

To draw out a rational/relational contrast the paper will discuss three themes. Each theme is directly related to both rational knowledge and relational knowledge. Firstly therefore, the author discusses how these themes demonstrate ‘academia’s’ value of rational knowledge *per se*. Secondly the author will contrast each of these three themes with three concurrent alternatives demonstrating ‘academia’s’ value of relational knowledge. In this way, the paper attempts to contrast *rational* knowledge with *relational* knowledge, within the context of ‘academia’.

### Theme 1/3: non-religious knowledge

‘Academia’ grew partly from an emergent value of distinguishing between the practices of the church from the affairs of the state (see discussion in: Battiste and Henderson 2000:86-96; see also: Burkhart 2004:18-9). This ideological separation tended to privilege the governing of civil affairs over what might otherwise be interpreted via religious spheres. For example, Socrates’ life was motivated by very religious convictions (discussed later in the paper), however when Socrates was deemed to have committed a legal offence, he was not charged because of his beliefs, but for his type of beliefs – “not believing in *the city’s* gods” (Flew and Speake 1979:3; Urmson and Ree 1989:241-5: emphasis added). This idea that the state’s authorities could dictate what were, and what were not, acceptable religious beliefs was at the centre of an increasingly normalised separation of church from state. Epistemologically, this value may be articulated here as the value of non-religious knowledge. While acknowledging a myriad of factors influencing the occurrence and growth of ‘academia’, it is this value alone which the author now refers to. Since its originating context, ‘academia’ has generally maintained its value in non-religious human pursuits. Over time it became normal for ‘academia’ to value the knowledge that came from the corporeal world alone, devoid of religion. In the living memory of some people, this has manifested as “missionary or religious schooling ... followed later by public and secular schooling” (Smith 1999:64). This corporeal or non-religious knowledge is a defining legacy of ‘academia’s’ origins.

The effects of a non-religious pursuit of knowledge are many. In this paper specifically, the discussion focuses on the effect of relational negation. The involvement of religion in the pursuit of knowledge has for millennia mediated what is not known with what is known (knowledge with its absence there-of). It is within that mediation, where one's pursuit of knowledge becomes embroiled in a network of relations, not excluding, but involving religious entities or "divine guarantors of the truth" (Popper 1963:12). This paper is not suggesting that religion is equivalent to relationships or *vice versa*, rather simply that the negation of religion necessarily involves a negation of relations. Furthermore, this suggestion includes the view that it is the absence of [some] relationships (not religion's absence) which [can] make/s 'academia's' pursuit of knowledge a non-religious pursuit. In other words, as one's pursuit of knowledge begins to value non-religious knowledge, so also begins the value of negating relationships.

There are many individuals who could be reviewed, in order to demonstrate 'academia's' epistemological shift towards non-religious values. However, given the limited scope of this paper the author has chosen to reference just some. Aristotle and Descartes are cited because of their central importance to the story of 'academia' and because they have argued that ideas of reason intrinsic to the mind are *the only* source of knowledge (Flew and Speake 1979:109). In order to link the origins of 'academia' with more contemporary forms of 'academia' the paper especially focuses on the work of Rene Descartes (1596-1650) (Urmson and Ree 1989:72) – "one of the greatest philosophers and mathematicians of all time" (Perry et al. 2007:171).

As a rationalist (Carriero 2009; Flew and Speake 1979:109; Kenny 1968), Descartes' pursuit of knowledge is therefore pre-disposed to a negation of "religious belief or emotions" in preference for "opinions and actions based on reason" (Oxford 2002:746). Reason will be discussed more earnestly later in the paper, but for now let us consider Descartes' pursuit of knowledge for the purpose of highlighting some other epistemic values which also help to inform 'academia's' rational knowledge.

### Theme 2/3: individualistic knowledge

Descartes began his own pursuit of knowledge from a position of innate doubt. Subtly different to Socrates' style of doubting, Descartes' doubt was universal (Popper 1963:21-2). "I can justify the rejection of all my beliefs if I can find some ground for doubt in each" writes Descartes (1641:171). Descartes' pursuit begins from a reclusive starting point, which assumed nothing and doubted everything. From that basis Descartes claims to be able to resolve, 'clearly and distinctly' that which can be known. Descartes' fundamental methodology for the pursuit of knowledge thus became popularly known by academic philosophers as "Cartesian Doubt" (Kenny 1968:14-39). In the process, Descartes' efforts to "overthrow all beliefs" are interpreted as the occurrence of "thinking, and thought alone" – Descartes, it is said, could not doubt that at least he himself was "a thing that thinks" (Descartes 1641:171-4). While Descartes' proposition remains one of the most revised premises of epistemology (Kenny 1968:40-95), the point being made here is simply that Descartes' premise privileges an "intensely individualistic standpoint" (Flew and Speake 1979:90; see also: "individualism" in: Popper 1963:10). In an attempt to find certainty, Descartes found himself. Hence, Descartes' influential legacy values "the self" (Francks 2008:45) and helps (along with many other contributors) to normalise "individualistic Western cultures" (Alfred 2005:188) as a foundational conviction within 'academia's' pursuit of knowledge.

Descartes' methods in *Meditations in First Philosophy* (1641) provide a classic example of an individualistic pursuit of knowledge. Having highlighted Descartes' legacy of individualistic certainty, one may now discuss more earnestly Descartes' later resolutions regarding reason. As a philosophical substitute for religion, reason endures in the culture of 'academia' as a value that is commonly held second only to (and sometimes supplanting) knowledge itself. With himself as an established certainty, in his pursuit of knowledge, Descartes then turned his attention towards all that was not himself (Francks 2008:129; Kenny 1968:96-125). By shifting attention away from himself

Descartes was drawn specifically and thoroughly towards an inquiry about the existence of “God” (Descartes 1641:177). Moreover, the present paper acknowledges that this so called ‘Cartesian rationalism’ – “the doctrine that our intellect is a source of knowledge because God is a source of knowledge” – has a history extending back to others (for example Homer and Hesiod) before Descartes’ time (Popper 1963:11).

From a non-religious perspective the consideration of God’s existence by Descartes might well be seen as evidence of Descartes overtly valuing religion. Though simultaneously, from a non-corporeal perspective Descartes’ questioning of God’s existence might also be seen as evidence of religion’s inculcation of Descartes. Indeed, philosophers prior to Descartes championed the pivotal role of theology in philosophy (for example see: Anselm 2007; Aquinas 2007). For the purposes of this paper, no conflict exists between these two views. Nor in Descartes’ study of God does the paper attribute evidence for Descartes’ religious values. Irrespective of Descartes’ motives, this paper is open to the possibility that Descartes’ philosophical inclusion of God actually demonstrates God’s inclusion of Descartes. Indeed, this paper sees (via relational knowledge) that Descartes’ consideration of God is evidence itself of a broader reality which includes both God(s) and non-religious/individualistic Cartesian rationalism.

### Theme 3/3: dualistic knowledge

In this theme, Descartes’ pursuit of knowledge by dualism is highlighted because it stands in stark contrast to a pursuit of knowledge by agreement. Descartes was not the ultimate instigator of dualistic thinking (for example see Aristotle 384-322BC). However, Descartes in particular is referenced here as a figure from which to further conceive of dualism’s influence over today’s ‘academia’. The word dualism is referring to the *actual* distinction of items – hence, an epistemic emphasis on dualism effectively neglects the realm of what is *between* items. In contrast, the word agreement does effectively refer to a realm existing between items.

Throughout Descartes' pursuit of knowledge there is evidence of the pervading effects of dichotomous thinking. For example, Descartes' "doctrine that animals are automata" clearly dichotomises animals as machines and human beings as not machines (Kenny 1968:200). Another, example is Descartes' distinction between "mind" and "body" (Descartes 1641:189) or "thinking substance" and "extended substance" respectively (Urmson and Ree 1989:85). This 'paper' itself and its dichotomised distinction between 'the author' and 'the reader' is one of many examples which illustrate 'academia's' customary dichotomy between 'the self' and what is 'not of the self' – a consistent theme throughout the culture of 'academia' (Ford 2010:38-9).

Overall, a primary result of dichotomous thinking is that a pursuit of knowledge consequently tends to be a rational pursuit, as it is in 'academia' (Martin 2008:51-2). 'Academia' among other cultures, has come to embody this value of rational and non-rationally derived, dualistic or binary knowledge. As a major contributor to 'academia's' mathematics, science, logic, analysis and epistemology, Descartes is a prime exemplification of the dichotomous thinking currently valued by the culture of 'academia'.

For continued illustration, one may further consider the respective relationships between 1 dualism, 2 logic, 3 reason and rationality. As the doctrine of dichotomous thinking, dualism (1) has its most efficacious expression through the binary or biconditional function underwriting logic (2) (Flew and Speake 1979:46; Girle 2008; Hyde 2009; Oxford 2002:1002) and "measurement" (Little Bear 2000:ix-x). Reciprocally, it is the *perceived* dichotomy (1) between subject and object which creates logic (2) and/or the experience of "learning to describe things without learning of them" (Cress 1998:10). In turn, the English word logic itself (2) originates from the Greek *logike tekhnē* or the 'art of reason' (Oxford 2002:531). This then brings us to reason and its derivatives: rationality and rationalism (3). One may now see links (in grammatical if not experiential terms) between 1 dualism, 2 logic, 3 reason and rationality. With dualism at its core, the human capacity for reason and rationality has become especially valued by the culture of 'academia'. Moreover, let us also consider Gregory Cajete who says:

As the rational mind develops further and language becomes literacy, the metaphoric mind becomes significantly differentiated from the rational mind and that of social conditioning. This differentiation has become compounded in Western society, with its overt focus on scientific rationalism. (2000:28)

Cajete highlights here the specific value of *scientific* “rationalism” as being especially valued in the academies of “Western society”. For example, consider the following observation of ‘academia’s’ discourse on the subject of forestry: “... youth who pursue university training in forestry are inculcated with a scientific ... perspective that is largely incompatible with their own communities’ knowledge systems” (Battiste and Henderson 2000:269). With its dependency on scientific rationalism (Popper 1963:291-335) the culture of ‘academia’ most certainly values dualistic pursuits of knowledge.

### **Rational Knowledge in Summary**

‘Academia’s’ core value of knowledge has been located here in non-religious, individualistic and dualistic terms. These three themes combine to demonstrate ‘academia’s’ enduring emphasis on rational knowledge. Inclusively, the view that rational knowledge can be effectively contrasted with empirical knowledge, is simultaneously dismissed, and considered by this paper as simply an “old quarrel” contended between rational knowledge and “empirical” knowledge (Popper 1963:4-11) – where “empiricism” means the view that all knowledge derives from experience alone (Flew and Speake 1979:104; Oxford 2002:292). For the purposes of this paper, *both* of these (rational and empirical knowledge) are effectively contrasted with the value of relational knowledge as discussed over the page. Essentially, the author sees a fundamental flaw in rational knowledge or “rationalism” (including empiricism) (Popper 1963:7) because of what Morris describes as an innate “problematic interplay between knowledge and power” (1992:74). Rational conceptions of knowledge do not appropriately accommodate the idea of “knowing as having the right to be sure” (Ayer 1956:31). Therefore the following section considers relational knowledge as a more relevant pursuit of knowledge within the cultural context of ‘academia’.

## **Relational Knowledge**

Relational knowledge locates the value of knowledge as a relational pursuit (Cajete 2000:226; Wilson 2008:137). Each of the three themes above can be effectively contrasted with evidence and testimony valuing relational knowledge. As such, a non-religious pursuit will be contrasted with a non-corporeal pursuit; individualistic pursuits of knowledge will be contrasted with collective pursuits; and dualistic pursuits of knowledge will be contrasted with [a] holistic pursuit/s of knowledge. Together, these three themes or qualities of non-corporeal, collective and holistic pursuits of knowledge combine to offer *relational* knowledge as the paper's alternative to *rational* knowledge.

This paper locates relational knowledge as the agreements between entities. In so far as entities are related, agreements are thus formed between relations. The implication is that *all* entities are somehow related. From a wide variety of sources (including: McConchie 2003; Perry et al. 2007; Waters 2004a) the following references have been chosen especially because of how they speak both from and to the context of 'academia'.

### Theme 1/3: non-corporeal knowledge

Let us first return to 'academia's' formative years, and specifically Socrates' conviction of "not believing in the city's gods" as cited previously (Urmson and Ree 1989:241). This reference to Socrates was used to distinguish non-religious or secular pursuits of knowledge, with religious or non-corporeal pursuits of knowledge. However on this occasion, the fundamental epistemic role of non-corporeal knowledge can be considered by looking at how Socrates actually *defended himself* against that "impious" accusation and conviction (Flew and Speake 1979:239).

While Socrates was sentenced to execution for not acknowledging or rather "failing to revere" (Critchley 2008:xx) the city's gods; Socrates *was* however, far from a non-religious philosopher. Consider Plato's portrayal of Socrates'

final few words: “even to this day, I still go about seeking out and searching ... in obedience to god ... indeed, because of my service to god, I live in extreme poverty” (Plato c399BC:31). Socrates went on further to account for his belief in god/s specifically by asking: “Is there anyone who acknowledges that spiritual phenomena exist, yet does not acknowledge spirits? [No] Well now ... I do at any rate, by your [own] account, acknowledge spiritual beings ... gods of some sort” (ibid. c399BC:34). Hence, it was not the religious presence of god in the city, but instead the city’s authority over (or presumed knowledge of) god’s presence, that attracted Socrates’ philosophical pursuit of knowledge. “I have the greatest fondness and affection for you, fellow Athenians, but I will obey my god rather than you” says Socrates “I shall never give up practising philosophy ... my orders from my god ... all I do is go about persuading you ... to care for ... the greatest possible wellbeing of your souls” (ibid. c399BC:35-6). Moreover, as Socrates says:

If I tried to persuade and coerce you with entreaties ... I clearly *would* be teaching you not to believe in gods; and I would stand literally self-convicted, by my defence, of failing to acknowledge them. But that is far from the truth: I do acknowledge them, fellow Athenians ... and I trust to you, and to God, to judge my case as shall be best for me and for yourselves ... (Plato c399BC:39)

The above reference is a poignant summary of Socrates’ paradoxical defence against the charge of failing to acknowledge the city’s gods. The purpose of involving a non-corporeal narrative is not therefore to involve religion – but is explicitly for positioning knowledge as a relational pursuit (Martin 2008:92). Nor is the intention to introduce a theological discussion here. Religion has been involved simply because of how the religious, or “non-corporeal” world (Atkinson 2002:216), is intrinsically a *relational exercise*. Religious considerations in an epistemic discussion are valuable because religion indicates “relationality” and the “knowledge accessed through the narratives shared within the group” (Ford 2010:153).

Non-corporeal values have had a persistent presence throughout 'academia' since the time of Socrates. After the Roman Empire fell, the practices of Mediterranean 'academia', continued within the Arab world and the monasteries of today's Europe (Gray 2009:2). Monks such as Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) are important links between the pre-Roman era of Socrates and the 'academia' of post-renaissance philosophy (Aquinas 2007:80; Gray 2009:3). Subsequently, non-corporeal values have been expressed through such significant authors as Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677).

Spinoza lived during Descartes' era and has been credited as the author of "one of the greatest books of philosophy ever written" (Critchley 2008:135). Moreover, some authorities consider Spinoza, along with Descartes, as both "classical examples of rationalism" (Popper 1963:4; Urmson and Ree 1989:272). In particular, this paper is interested in Spinoza's "use of the term 'God' to refer to an impersonal (as opposed to a personal) being" (Flew and Speake 1979:336). Spinoza does this by defining God as a "being absolutely infinite" (Spinoza 1677:1), which stands in contrast to Descartes' personal or individualised notion of God.

Crucially non-corporeal values also inform the knowledge/s of many cultures. 'Academia' has been consistently informed by a variety of human cultures or what Popper described as "the authority of tradition" (1963:7). In Australia, many of those cultures have endured since "the Dreaming, or as your archaeologists say, for over 40,000 years" (Mudrooroo 1995:237-8). Given the ravages of colonization that contribute to this paper's context, the author is therefore extremely privileged by the opportunity to bring to this discussion the work of David Ngunaitponi Unaipon (1872-1967). Unaipon has been described as one of the greatest philosophers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Mudrooroo 1995:46). Unaipon himself describes the value of non-corporeal relations in 'academia' (or as Unaipon says: an "educated" pursuit of knowledge), by referring to "belief in a Supreme Being" which is "universal and belongs to every age". Unaipon goes on to say:

There are evidences that go to prove that man is a worshipping creature ... there arose ... a great teacher, Narroondarie; he was an elect of the Great Spirit.

This knowledge develops the soul ... to this end the little boys and girls are ... to be educated. (1924:11-2)

Thus it is today that ... the Great Spirit is in all things and speaks through every form of Nature. (1924:151)

The above quote demonstrates a perennial presence of non-corporeal belief systems in both human and “educated” pursuits of knowledge. Unaipon reminds us that as a “discursive practice” (Ford 2010:21; Foucault 1972:208-9) concerned with the “non-corporeal” (Atkinson 2002:88) world, “religion was” a “spiritual journey through relationship” (Cajete 2000:157). Margaret Somerville describes this as evidence of “an interdependent world ... that I hope might convince you of the importance of using the full richness of our human ways of knowing” (2007:2). In contrast to the idea of non-religious knowledge, non-corporeal knowledge demonstrates the innately relational nature of pursuing knowledge.

### Theme 2/3: collective knowledge

One significant problem with individualistic pursuits of knowledge is that they involve an “agenda that privileges the rights of individuals over collective rights” (Moreton-Robinson 2009:2). One solution to this problem comes by virtue of Michel Foucault (1926-84) who champions knowledge as anything but an individual pursuit. Foucault’s *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) has been a significant contribution to the culture of ‘academia’. By discussing some of Foucault’s work here, one necessarily considers the negotiations between relations, as literally being the pursuit of knowledge itself.

For Foucault, ‘knowledge’ is considered as two distinct things (from Foucault’s native French – “*connaissance*” and “*savoir*”). This distinction is worth noting, for it helps one see how agreements about what is known (knowledge) actually take place both in the form of relatively localised agreements (*connaissance*) as well as relatively generic agreements (*savoir*).

Savoir means: “conditions that are necessary in a particular period” for the aforementioned localised agreements (*connaissance*) to be formulated (Foucault 1972:15). Outside that acknowledgment, this paper simply uses the English word ‘knowledge’ inclusively as a referent to agreements both in a specified (*connaissance*) and/or generic (*savoir*) sense.

Foucault’s pursuit of knowledge is a powerful antidote to the value of an individualistic pursuit of knowledge, and it may be described broadly as a contextual or collective pursuit. In particular, Foucault’s work privileges the: “interpretative ... contingent ... situational ... [and] political” aspects of knowledge (Atkinson et al. 2010:4; Attwood 1992:i-ii). To further describe Foucault’s view of knowledge, let us consider Foucault’s words themselves:

[a] group of elements, formed in a regular manner by a discursive practice ... can be called *knowledge*. Knowledge is that of which one can speak in a discursive practice, and which is specified by that fact ... knowledge is also the field of coordination and subordination of statements in which concepts appear, and are defined, applied and transformed ... knowledge is defined by the possibilities of use and appropriation offered by discourse ... there is no knowledge without a particular discursive practice; and any discursive practice may be defined by the knowledge that it forms. (1972:182-3)

The above extract exhibits in particular how, for Foucault, knowledge is entirely dependent on *discourse*. Indeed, Foucault’s use of discourse is akin to what this paper has defined as culture. Moreover, this relationship between culture and discourse is a question for potential further research.

A context of history is also used to frame Foucault’s pursuit of knowledge – for Foucault “history distinguishes what is relevant” (1972:6). Indeed, Foucault positions the “archaeological description of discourses” within a context of “general history” (1972:164), and in doing so helps position the value of knowledge within a context of historical discourses. Importantly though, Foucault’s use of historically conceived contexts is not without its suggestive connotations. Historical contexts are inevitably fraught with connotations of colonial conflict between peoples of differing cultures, though this is often not

explained. Foucault's work is not beyond the reach of such connotations. In this respect, the present discussion would be deficient without mentioning what Linda Tuhiwai Smith calls the "*Colonizing [of] Knowledges*" (Smith 1999:58-77). Indeed for some, Foucault's contribution to 'academia' is overtly diminished by a Eurocentric perspective (Bhabha 1994:243).

Within the limitations of this paper, however, Foucault's contribution remains of significant value. Foucault's "group of elements, formed in a regular manner by a discursive practice" (1972:182) stands in stark contrast to the pursuit of "knowledge" by "withdraw[ing] alone, free ... to overthrow all beliefs" (Descartes 1641:171). Foucault's legacy offers a poignant and contrasting alternative to individualistic pursuits of knowledge.

Likewise, George Hegel was also well known for pursuing knowledge from within a "preoccupation with history" (Urmson and Ree 1989:128). More specifically, Hegel seems to recognise a certain value in "the authority of tradition" (Popper 1963:7) when he says: "Although it is true that all great men have formed themselves in solitude, they have done so only by assimilating what had been created by the state" (Urmson and Ree 1989:128). Hegel postulates a distinct connection between relationships and knowledge by saying: "Consciousness simultaneously *distinguishes* itself from something, and at the same time *relates* itself to it ... and the determinate aspect of this relating ... is *knowing*" (1807:52). Together, Foucault and Hegel position the value of knowledge as a contextually dependent pursuit – or in other words, dependent on what Foucault calls: "profound continuity" (1972:201). Accordingly, the pursuit of knowledge is not an individualistic, but principally a collective (or "archaeological") exercise. Being collectively dependent, knowledge as a "structure of repetition" (Bhabha 1994:152), is thus pursued relationally, and hence achieved as an agreement between relations.

One of the most explicit rejections of individualistic pursuits of knowledge has come from Viola Cordova. In the essay *Ethics: The We and The I* (2004) Cordova speaks from an ethicist's perspective about the value of community and one's inherently social nature. The relevance of any given knowledge is

created by the ethics of its pursuit. Indeed, Cordova highlights for us how the foundation of ethics is “based on the fact that human beings do not exist as isolated, or solitary, beings” (2004:173). In pursuit of knowledge, the pursuer “acknowledges that [one] is a part of a natural process that has led to [one’s] existence as well as to the existence of all other things” including knowledge itself (Cordova 2004:177). It should also be noted that this “participant observation” has also been described elsewhere in the academy as a “method for acquiring knowledge” (Moreton-Robinson 2004:85). The work of Cordova among others locates the value of knowledge as a collective pursuit – in contrast to an individualistic pursuit of knowledge. It is critical that one’s epistemology values non-individualistic pursuits of knowledge (Alfred 2005:24,149; Cajete 2000:64-83; Deloria-Jr. 2004:10-1; Everett 2003:58-62; Harrison and McConchie 2009:59-78; Martin-Hill 2008:7-13; Moran 2004:ix; Mudrooroo 1995:90,112; Nakata 2007:182-92; Timpson 2009:89-90; West 2000:106-14; Wilson 2008:73-7; see also: Cordova 2007; Little Bear 2005).

### Theme 3/3: unifying knowledge

The value of unifying knowledge stands in contrast to what was described earlier as the theme of dualistic knowledge. The unifying nature of Spinoza’s pursuit of knowledge is of particular interest. As previously noted, some authorities clearly describe both Spinoza and Descartes together as “important representatives ... of rationalism” (Flew and Speake 1979:298). However, Spinoza is especially important in this discussion, because Spinoza overtly rejects Descartes’ dualism or “dichotomosis” (Little Bear 2004b:xiii). For Spinoza “there cannot be two substances in the universe as Descartes proposes with his distinction of thinking things like us and extended things like trees, rocks and stars” – indeed for Spinoza “there is only one substance in the universe and all versions of dualistic thinking are rejected” (Critchley 2008:136). Moreover, Spinoza simply describes an “intellectual love of God” (ibid. 2008:135; see also: Urmson and Ree 1989:303). It was this cognitive symbiosis that became Spinoza’s enduring contribution to the value of *inter-*relationships (the relationships between relations), or the *unification* of items as an integral ingredient for quality pursuits of knowledge.

Since Spinoza's era, Edmund Husserl has also found unification among what "appears to consciousness" (Moran 2005:1). Husserl especially does this by valuing experiences themselves, precisely as they are experienced (Husserl 1954; Kockelmans 1967; Urmson and Ree 1989:233) – that is *before* any dualistic interpretation is applied. Divorced from experiences, the dualistic interpretation of phenomena is purely an abstract exercise. Moreover, in recent centuries 'academia' has increasingly favoured such theoretical abstractions over actual experiences (Burkhart 2004:24). An example illustrating this trend may be broached by briefly considering the shift in meanings associated with the ancient Latin term *a priori*.

The current use of the term *a priori* is very removed from its original meaning. Without reference to experience, the original Latin meaning of *a priori* was "from what comes before" (Urmson and Ree 1989:19). The term was introduced into philosophy in the "late scholastic period to translate [one of] two technical phrases in Aristotle's theory of knowledge" (ibid. 1989:19). However, "from the seventeenth century" (ibid. 1989:19) the term increasingly meant: knowledge despite the absence of experience. Currently, the English definition of *a priori* knowledge refers to knowledge "based on theoretical reasoning rather than actual observation" (Oxford 2002:39) or in other words "necessary and wholly independent of experience" (Urmson and Ree 1989:19).

By valuing experience, one is able to involve a relational pursuit of unifying knowledge, in contrast to Descartes' dualism (Martin 2008:81). Indeed, "the unity of a discourse", as Foucault reminds us, "does not lie in the visible ... it resides ... in the system that makes possible and governs that formation" (1972:72). It is exactly that "system" which this paper locates as the formation of an agreement. Indeed, other members of 'academia' similarly reject dualism in their respective pursuits of knowledge (for example see: Burkhart 2004:23-6; Cajete 2004:45-51). This rejection is often, though not always, in preference for what Anne Waters views as "nondiscrete nonbinary dualism" (2004b:97). Moreover, contrasting alternatives to rational knowledge, suggest that "entities in the physical and social universe are related and understood through their

innate qualities, rather than through their identifiable properties ... these relationships cannot be deduced through logic ... they are givens” (Christie 1985:41). Alternatively, unifying knowledge supports a pursuit of knowledge that values “the whole” in contrast to valuing “the parts” (Capra 2005:20).

David Bloor’s pursuit of knowledge expresses eloquently how “the word ‘knowledge’ [can be reserved] for what is collectively endorsed” (Bloor 1976:5). In doing so, Bloor (see also: 1983) emphasises what Little Bear describes as a “collective agreement” (2004a:26) – that is, an agreement *between*, not *about*, items. Furthermore, Little Bear has been “involved in the academy for many years” (2005:9) and has throughout those years shared with his students and relations a “paradigm” which includes the “ideas” that:

there is constant motion/flux, that all creation consists of energy waves, that everything is animate, that all of creation is interrelated, that reality requires renewal, and that space is a major referent. (Little Bear 2004a:27)

Little Bear’s above description of a “Plains Indian perspective” involves multiple “ideas” (2004a:26-7). In addition, Little Bear also explicitly includes in that perspective the “idea” that all things are “imbued with spirit” (2005:9; 2004b:viii-ix; 2000:x). For the purposes of this discussion, the author is simply drawing the reader’s attention to “interrelationships” (Little Bear 2000:x), or “inter-relatedness” (Martin 2008:69), or “groups of relations” (Foucault 1972:72) as being of paramount importance for pursuing an agreement. Via an “exercise in cognitive heuristics” (West 2000:14) the “ontological premise of relatedness” (Martin 2008:69,92) is emphasised here as being centrally important for appreciating the pursuit of knowledge by virtue of unity among relationships, and moreover the knowledge itself as an agreement *between* relations. As Colin Pardoe states, “*it is possible* to accept an inclusive worldview of knowledge” (1992:140: emphasis added). This is a key point for illustrating the broader experience of *relational* knowledge in contrast to *rational* knowledge.

There is a risk however, that should the value of unifying knowledge be over-emphasised then the very individualism and dualism which was previously avoided may potentially re-emerge. As Bastien describes it, striving for unity risks “the dissociated self” which is the result of “conceptual abstraction in an objectified, separate world” (2004:165). In linguistic terms, the word ‘unity’ is very closely related to the word ‘unit’. Existentially the inclusive implications of ‘unity’ are innately threatened by the exclusive implications of the ‘unit’. This paradox essentially locates “how a metaphysics of otherness, as articulated by Heidegger, can give rise to a loss of identity” (Verney 2004:139). The extensive work of Foucault further demonstrates the diversifying (not unifying) effects of archaeology in one’s pursuits of knowledge (1972:159-60). Such a vexing philosophical inquiry is beyond the scope of this paper. Though what is being suggested here is that this acknowledged risk need not deter one’s preference for *relational* knowledge over *rational* knowledge.

The innate risks of excluding new information (due to one’s focus on the unification of knowledge) need not inhibit one’s pursuit of new knowledge. Whether it is a relational or rational pursuit, one’s pursuit of knowledge inevitably produces what could be called a “tendency towards complexity” (Roberts 2003:550). It may be tempting to consider this “tendency” as being reason enough to abandon one’s pursuit of knowledge all together. However, this author holds the view that despite unification’s potential exclusion, one may be reassured by what Aileen Moreton-Robinson calls an “embodied subjectivity” (2003:36). The suggestion is that one’s innate subjectivity will remain intact – despite one’s pursuits of agreed/unified knowledge. Subjectivity remains due to one’s inherently unique perspective: subjectivity is not subject to objectivity. As attributed below, many in ‘academia’ continue to articulate epistemologies privileging the value of unity, in holistic (non-dualistic) and/or relational pursuits of knowledge. Experiences of togetherness continues to inform ‘academia’ and its consistently morphing styles of pursuing knowledge (Atkinson 2002:39; Battiste and Henderson 2000:35-56; Bloor 1983:182-4; Bohm 1996a:125-45; 1996b:55-69; Capra 2005:18-29; Ford 2010:45-52; Jojola 2004:90-6; Marika and Yunupingu 2003:38-43; Martin 2008:71-6; Randall 2006:film; Verney 2004:134-9).

## Clarifying the Contrasts

The author has now contrasted three main themes. Together, these themes fit neatly under a broader contrast between *rational* and *relational* knowledge. Firstly, the value of knowledge as a non-religious pursuit was contrasted with the work of Socrates and Unaipon among others, and their respective value of *non-corporeal* knowledge, derived from a relational pursuit. Secondly, the value of knowledge as an individualistic pursuit was contrasted with the work of Foucault and Cordova among others, and their own value of *collective* knowledge, being part of a deeply relational pursuit of knowledge. Thirdly, the value of knowledge as a dualistic pursuit was contrasted with the work of Spinoza and Little Bear among others, and their particular value of *unifying* knowledge, within a relational pursuit of knowledge. The author has therefore referenced these three distinct themes of non-corporeal, collective, and unifying values. Each of these three themes or values offer unique contributions to ‘academia’s’ overall value of knowledge.

As a relational pursuit, knowledge has now been discussed as occurring by virtue of relationships. From earlier in the paper one may recall how rational knowledge was considered inclusive of empirical knowledge<sup>2</sup>. Echoing that here, relational knowledge is like-wise considered inclusive of experiential knowledge – including such emerging epistemic alternatives as “phenomenology” (Moran 2005). Implied, is an underlying sub-contrast between empirical knowledge and experiential knowledge. Unfortunately, any discussion of this underlying sub-contrast is beyond the scope of the present paper, and is simply acknowledged here as a necessary implication resulting from the contrast between rational and relational knowledge. The overall message however is simply that experience imbues knowledge with a dependence on agreement. Knowledge is experiential in the sense that experience is necessary but not sufficient for knowledge to occur.

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<sup>2</sup> This inclusion was acknowledged earlier in the paper under the heading *Rational Knowledge in Summary* and described as an “old quarrel” between rationalism and empiricism – referenced to pp.4-7 in Popper, K. 1963, *Conjectures and Refutations: the growth of scientific knowledge*, Routledge Classics 2002 edition by Routledge, London, UK.

By highlighting relational knowledge, the author has thus responded to the question of *why* agreements should be considered as knowledge. Relationships make knowledge relevant via agreements. By referring to some of ‘academia’s’ most influential rational values, and offering contrasting alternatives to those values, the pursuit of knowledge by virtue of relationships, is therefore located as the negotiation of agreements between relations. Included in that view, is the perspective of rational knowledge as ‘information’ and ‘knowledge’ as agreement. The paper’s topic of knowledge as agreement though also begs the question, exactly *how* should one nurture a quality and genuine agreement.

### **Chapter Three: Concluding Discussions**

Respect – for others, for land, for nature – is at the heart  
of traditional Aboriginal teaching.  
(Moran 2004:x)

Quality agreements occur via a culture. Culture, as previously defined, sees itself as an agreement about how “to explain reality” (Bergquist 1992:2; Little Bear and Wadsworth 2006). Otherwise, culture may be described as a “language”, a “set of norms”, as “pervasive tacit infrastructures”, or as a “collective agreement” (Little Bear and Wadsworth 2006; Little Bear 2005:11; 2000:x; 2004a:26). Culture can also be thought of as a realm of the known, or one’s realm of knowledge. Given knowledge as agreement then, a culture (as a “collective agreement”) locates what is knowledge (and conversely helps to refer to that which is *not* knowledge). In this sense, culture can be the generic term which refers to knowledge as agreement. Culture is the *presence* of something known – the presence of agreement. For this paper therefore, culture locates knowledge.

As the location of what is known, culture offers an effective means by which to think about how knowledge occurs. It affords the opportunity to discuss how agreements can be formed – a method of resolving agreements. Indeed, this may also be described as: “the places where one’s discourse is only made possible by its relation to the Other” (Muecke 1992:43). Moreover, by valuing knowledge as agreements this paper is especially honouring the circumstantial or subjective quality of the known. Implicitly, whether it is so or not “depends upon the circumstances of the particular case” (Ayer 1956:32). Individuals know things, while collectives have knowledge. Therefore knowledge can be formed by the coming together of what is known or “the sum of what is known” (Oxford 2002:502) – the coming together of individuals in the formation of cultures. This “coming together” is what the author views as the communicative process of dialogue.

## Dialogue

Quality agreements can be formed through dialogue. Essentially, dialogue is a way of communication. In turn, the formation of cultures can most broadly be described as the application of communication. As such, the word communication embodies one of the most fundamental experiences of the human condition. Therefore this word is of central importance to a discussion of dialogue and this paper's title. Communication, as in "creating something new together" (Bohm 1996b:3) depicts the very essence of *how* an agreement can be formed. An agreement is something new – something that did not exist prior to its formation – each agreement is therefore innately unique. Hence, the communicative process or "meaning-making" of "dialogue" (Stewart 2009:75) is referred to by this paper as the premium methodology for achieving agreements (Bird 1997; Craig and Muller 2007).

In particular, this paper refers to one particular elaboration of 'dialogue' over others (for example see: Buber 2002). Specifically, this paper refers to the style of dialogue located by David Bohm (1917-92). Bohm may be introduced as follows:

As a physicist, his life was dedicated to understanding a participatory universe where meaning is continually unfolding. As a human being, he believed [in] a unique opportunity to bring that same sort of understanding into the centre of human affairs. (Senge 2004:xiv)

Hence, for Bohm "dialogue [was] a multi-faceted process, looking well beyond typical notions of conversational" communication; indeed Bohm's view held that "dialogue [was] aimed at the understanding of consciousness *per se*" (Nichol 1995:xv, xx). Let us now consider more closely what was actually meant by Bohm's unique use of 'dialogue', and see the extent to which 'dialogue' may be a good methodology for relations to form agreements – thus forming knowledge.

It can sometimes be tempting to see dialogue as being limited to an exchange between two items alone (as the author inferred from Chapnick and Meloy 2005:121-31). However, the word dialogue “comes from the Greek word *dialogos*. *Logos* means “the word,” or in our case we would think of the “meaning of the word” and *dia* means “through” – it doesn’t mean “two”” (Bohm 1996b:6). This origin of ‘dialogue’ invokes for us “a *stream of meaning* flowing among and through us and between us” (ibid. 1996b:7). Furthermore, “intervention into the conversational flow is a voluntary and active learning act premised on a trusting relationship” (Ford 2010:154). Trust is a vital component of ‘dialogue’ and was also highlighted earlier in the description of the paper’s context (see also: Hertzberg 1988; Lewicki and Bunker 1995; Lewicki and Wiethoff 2000). As also mentioned previously, a culture is a “collective agreement about the nature of reality” (Little Bear 2004a:27). However, “in [a] culture there are vast numbers of opinions and assumptions which help make up that culture ... if we defend opinions ... we are not going to be able to have a dialogue” (Bohm 1996b:12-3). Thus, the scene is set and [the] culture is calling for a “deeper tacit process which is common” where entities are coming together for what is “*mainly a cultural question*” (ibid. 1996b:16,18). A “*culture* – which implies that we share meaning” – is the core motivation for ‘dialogue’ (ibid. 1996b:22). Indeed, it is exactly this [cultural] form of *shared meaning* that is the agreement experienced as knowledge.

One of Bohm’s core concepts is the practice of suspending assumptions (ibid. 1996b:22-4). By “suspending assumptions” Bohm means being aware of one’s assumptions, or in other words, “you don’t believe them, nor do you disbelieve them; you don’t judge them as good or bad” (ibid. 1996b:23). Bohm further describes this as, a kind of suspension without suppression (1996b:87) – akin to what others have coined as “stillness” (Long 1995) in order to describe the same style of human “observation” (Bohm 1996b:24). This preliminary part of Bohm’s ‘dialogue’ simply asks participants to hold up in front of themselves their assumptions so that “the whole group now becomes a mirror for each person ... to simply see what the assumptions and reactions mean” (ibid. 1996b:23). Knowledge in this manner is thus appreciated here as something innate – something truthful *without needing to be made true*.

Knowledge was also broached earlier (page 37) as something innate, by Socrates when he said: “if I tried to persuade [you of “gods”] ... I clearly *would* be teaching you not to believe in gods [and to believe in me and my persuasion instead]” (Plato c399BC:39). Here, Socrates’ knowledge of “gods” was self-evident, and any convincing or argument, manufactured by Socrates, only served to *disconnect* (not connect) a person from the knowledge of “gods”. Socrates in this sense was humble enough to *not* position himself as a “god” or claim that his persuasions were “god”-like in nature. Socrates’ knowledge (of god) was in this sense, innate knowledge. Moreover, the word “fact” itself, comes from the root Latin word *factum* – meaning *what has been made*, as in *manufactured* (Bohm 1996b:66; Oxford 2002:320). Indeed, says Bohm: “there is no need to defend [actual] knowledge” because it is by its very nature self-evident; though unfortunately “people are caught up all the time in defending it” (1996b:89). It is by observing one’s thinking that one can start to “become more familiar with how thought works” (Bohm 1996b:24). Learning more about one’s own thinking is the core mechanism for efficacious ‘dialogue’ in a quality pursuit of knowledge as agreement.

As one begins to pay more attention to the way one thinks, personal thought starts to become accountable. This style of ‘dialogue’ encourages the accountability of thought, for the things thus derived, such as the effects (and affects) of thinking. In other words, “thought has to be in some sense aware of its consequences” (ibid. 1996b:28). This brings forth one of Bohm’s key terms, which is borrowed from neurophysiology called “proprioception” (ibid. 1996b:27-9, 91-5). This term helps locate within ‘dialogue’, the vital ingredient of thought being “aware of itself in action” (ibid. 1996b:91). Just as one’s healthy body is aware that it itself, is responsible for the physical movements of its limbs, so it is also healthy (advantageous) for one’s thought processes to be aware of their own thinking. Bohm advocates proprioception in the following way: “In the process of thought there should be the awareness of that *movement*, of the *intention* to think, and of the *result* which that thinking produces” (ibid. 1996b:91). Bohm continues by suggesting those results may be both “outside” and “within” oneself and can even involve a self-awareness

of how one's thinking "affects perception" (ibid. 1996b:91). The purpose of exercising one's proprioceptive abilities in 'dialogue' is because "thought participates ... *thought is not proprioceptive but requires proprioception*" (ibid. 1996b:95). Therefore, proprioception effectively allows 'dialogue' to nurture knowledge as agreement.

The proprioception of human thought provides the potential for collective thinking. The proprioception of a 'dialogue' helps people to think together, because it provides participants with the ability to be aware of how their thoughts are impacting on themselves and those around them. Thinking together, in turn brings us to the ultimate objective of 'dialogue' – "common participation in thinking – as if it were all one process" (ibid. 1996b:45). It is in this "being together" (Senge 2004:xiv), "collective representation" (Bohm 1996b:69), or "common ground" (Bird 1997:3) where a quality dialogue really takes effect. Other issues, beyond the scope of this paper, such as "sensitivity in dialogue" are also discussed in detail by Bohm (1996b:45-8); though overall the central purpose of Bohm's 'dialogue' is:

To listen to everybody's opinions, to suspend them, and to see what all that means ... then we are *sharing a common content*, even if we don't agree entirely ... out of this whole thing, truth emerges unannounced – not that we have chosen it. It's not like a mob where the collective mind takes over – not at all, it is something *between* the individual and the collective. ... We can at least dialogue among ourselves ... or you may by yourself. That is the attitude of dialogue. (Bohm 1996b:30-1, 41)

Above, Bohm overtly describes the mechanism of 'dialogue' in action which values listening at its core. For Bohm the human practice of listening is profoundly important, not least of all, because within one's attempted listening is the potential for listening itself to be a source of new information and new meanings. Over the page, Lee Nichol's observations further clarify the significance of listening for a Bohm-style dialogue:

The essay [*On Dialogue*] is prescient in its treatment of “listening,” an issue that is frequently misunderstood in the process of dialogue. “Listening” in dialogue is often taken to mean thorough, careful, empathic sensitivity to the words and meanings of group members. While this is indeed a *part* of dialogue, Bohm here outlines a listening of a different order, a listening in which the very *mis*-perception of one’s spoken intent can lead to new meaning that is created on the spot. Grasping this point is essential ... (1995:xxi)

Nichol’s observations confirm listening as the centre-piece of Bohm’s ‘dialogue’. Indeed, other academics also prioritise the quality of listening as paramount for effective participation in dialogue. For example, Ford’s research found: “Listening is active; people follow the train of thought being developed through other’s speech acts, and enter into the dialogue as they feel ready without being directed to do so” (2010:154). Furthermore, this value of listening provides a direct link between ‘dialogue’ and what has been attributed as ‘*dadirri*’ (Atkinson 2002:15-22). By referring to the following extract from Elder Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, ‘*dadirri*’ is thus suggested by this paper as an equally advantageous alternative to, and a more ancient version of the Bohm-style ‘dialogue’ previously discussed:

In our language this quality [something like what you call contemplation] is called *dadirri*. It is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness. *Dadirri* recognises the deep spring that is inside us. ... There is no need of words. A big part of *dadirri* is listening. ... In our Aboriginal way, we learnt to listen from our earliest days. ... Our people have passed on this way of listening for over 40,000 years ... live[ing] for thousands of years with Nature’s quietness. ... To be still [and to listen] brings peace – and it brings understanding. (2002)

This citation demonstrates the relevance of ‘dialogue’ to the Australian continent generally. “The suggestion is that knowledge – which is thought – is moving autonomously: it passes from one person to another” (Bohm 1996b:59). Specifically, “*dadirri*” illustrates how ‘dialogue’ can be used to form agreements between *all* “relations” (Little Bear 2005:10). Referencing ‘*dadirri*’ is a way of attributing the oral traditions, or what could perhaps more

accurately be described as the “aural tradition[s]” (Alfred 2005:199) – or how “the participatory cultures thought” (Bohm 1996b:97). This reference provides a supplementary example of what can be aimed for in ‘academia’s’ attempts at dialectically forming agreements in its pursuits of knowledge.

The paper has now discussed ‘dialogue’ as locating the optimum methodology for creating the agreements that constitute knowledge. Some specific aspects of ‘dialogue’ have been discussed in order to describe how contemporary communications, and political methods, could happen more coherently (ibid. 1996b:89-90), and thus operate more authentically as a culture’s manifested “collective agreement” (Little Bear 2004a:27). The topic of knowledge as agreement itself though, is often criticised for apparently disregarding the notion of objectivity. Let us then consider next a response to that criticism.

### **Finding Common Ground**

Broadly speaking “knowledge as agreement” is criticised for favouring subjective interpretations of reality and not upholding the value of “objectivity” (Byrne 2011; Oxford 2002:617). Objectivity may find its greatest relevance when helping to establish one’s “moral opinion” (Flew and Speake 1979:343), however, objectivity also exists as one of ‘academia’s’ most fundamental values. As Battiste and Henderson explain, “objectivism ... is the dominant method in Eurocentric educational transmission” (2000:93). As such, objectivity, as a phenomenon of human experience must be canvassed, if this dissertation is to be considered meaningful within an academic context.

Objectivity need not be abandoned or devalued in one’s pursuit of knowledge as agreement. On the contrary, valuing objectivity is actually *a deeply integral part* of this pursuit. This suggestion implies a relationship between objectivity and subjectivity, in the sense that a pursuit of knowledge (in the form of an agreement) actually requires objectivity just as much as it requires subjectivity. As Fajans said, “these two forces” between what is objective and what is subjective are “in a dialectical relationship with one another” (Maddison 2009:83).

Given that perspective determines the presence of objectivity in pursuing knowledge, it is pertinent to ask *whose agreement is knowledge*. This question is discussed here within a cultural context – within the context of a “collective agreement” (Little Bear 2004a:27) – hence, it is the collective’s (a culture’s collective) agreement that is knowledge. A collective agreement is subjective in the sense that the agreement is *subject to the members* of that collective (subject to the members agreeing to that collective agreement). A collective agreement is also subjective in the sense that that collective agreement is *subject to other collective agreements* outside that collective agreement. This is what allows the following phrase to be considered an oxymoron: ‘to share our knowledge with others’. This phrase may be seen as self-contradictory, in the sense that it implies the “other” is necessarily excluded from “our”; and in doing so, therefore infers (assumes) that what the “other” knows will *not* contribute to “our knowledge”. Alternatively, it would then be more accurate for one to say: ‘to share what we know with others’. Discernable entities know things, while multiple entities have the potential for knowledge. The difference is as subtle as it is important.

A collective agreement is also objective in the sense that, once agreed upon, the agreement is implicitly static (agreed), *experientially independent* of the collective’s members, or objectively the case, until further negotiations (often ongoing negotiations). Indeed, objectivity is often used deliberately in the sense of eliminating any individual perspective. Agreements imply the absence of disagreement, thus one’s act of agreeing implies the creation of something unchanging. Without the implication that new agreements have at least some degree of autonomy, participants would lack the motivation to reach agreements at all. Hence an agreement is objectively so, by definition, until such time as the agreement is re-negotiated with new information in subsequent pursuits of new agreements – fresh pursuits of additional knowledge. From the perspective of each participant, the collective agreement is objective in the sense that it is collectively agreed to.

One's agreement with their collective is a volitional act of sacrificing one's own subjectivity, based (partly) on one's *willingness* to agree with the collective agreement. For the members of a collective agreement, the agreement is objective; for those entities outside that collective, that same collective agreement (seen as the foreign collective agreement) is experienced subjectively. Whether a collective agreement (agreed knowledge) is objective or subjective depends upon one's [chosen] perspective. Objectivity *per se* thus exists by virtue of an agreement being *dependent* on entities *agreeing* to the agreement. Thus, the mechanism and formation of agreements innately imply that an entity may *choose* to not agree. Choice, or volition, is thus involved here within the meaning of the word agreement. An agreement is not a genuine agreement if the relations agreeing do not have the option of disagreeing.

For any agreement to become an agreement about what is knowledge – knowledge as agreement – it must necessarily include a [sub-] agreement about what is objectively so. The members of a collective agreement must infer an agreed objectivity (a sub-agreement) in order to participate in the primary or implied collective agreement. In other words the creation of knowledge occurs only if the agreeing entities are also *willing* to agree on what is objective.

For example, an agreement that the sun rises in an easterly location and sets in a westerly location is in the first instance just that, an agreement. For that initial agreement to become knowledge *per se*, the agreeing entities must also agree on something more foundational – something that can be willingly described as *objective*. To continue with this example, the agreeing entities might agree [on it being objectively so] that [the] Earth spins on its axis in a west-to-easterly direction. As a consequence, it becomes fundamentally agreed to consider [the] Earth's spin as objective. From that agreed objectivity, the agreeing entities (the inferring members) are then able to treat the primary agreement (regarding the sun's rising and setting) as not simply an agreement alone, but indeed, as an agreement in the form of knowledge. That is, the agreement has achieved the status of knowledge by virtue of an inferred agreement about what is objective. Objectivity is thus implied by the collective agreement (implied towards those *without* the agreement) and inferred by those *within* the agreement.

The point being made here is that objectivity is a volitional exercise. In considering what one “would wish to associate [one’s] self” with, one is inevitably embroiled in considerations of what is or might be objectively so (Flew and Speake 1979:343). This is what makes objectivity something chosen, through a people’s decision making processes. Objectivity, then, may be seen as not strictly innate, inert, over-bearing, or unchanging but instead as a volitional creation, built in the form of, and as the function of what is chosen to be objectively so.

It is only through forming preliminary agreements about what is objective that subsequent agreements can then be formed about what is knowledge. Like a pearl initially needing a nucleus in order to grow, knowledge as agreement needs something objective to first be agreed upon and inferred. In broad terms, humans necessarily exist *on* Earth, and thus it is Earth upon which humans form agreements. In other words, one’s agreements are quite *literally based upon* Earth – the present planet. Often (though not always) negotiations about knowledge are entered into with the inference that Earth is what is objective. Planet Earth is often considered to be objectively so, and thus many subsequent agreements are considered as knowledge, because of this underlying inference about Earth’s objectivity. Rather than negating objectivity, knowledge as agreement is actually more prone to taking objectivity for granted. Furthermore, it is this risk which underlines the importance of what was previously discussed in the paper as proprioception.

Knowledge as agreement *requires* inferred agreements as objectivity. As members of, and items upon planet Earth, entities can enter into negotiated agreements only once a prerequisite agreement about Earth is first conscientiously agreed to, sanctioned, resolved or otherwise inferred. This paper suggests that such inferences are experienced as objectivity. It is an objective agreement which must first be inferred before subsequent agreements can be implied – objectivity is inferred, while subjectivity is implied. Knowledge as agreement in turn does not exclude but actually requires the human experience of objectivity.

### **From where should objectivity be inferred?**

If volition is to be valued when pursuing agreements, then what factors ought to *influence* one's decisions of what to infer as objective? In response, the paper proposes a new word, or rather a new meaning for an existing word. This new definition invokes a similar meaning to the definitions of the words "localization" (Oxford 2002:530), "Indigenology" (Doxtater 2001:265-6), and "Onkwewonwenha" (Alfred 2005:199). By defining a previously undefined meaning the author is thus assuming personal accountability for that new definition of this word. Hence, the author avoids subsequent accusations of misappropriating the words, ideas or cultural property of others (Battiste and Henderson 2000: 241-4). The word being *redefined* is *topology*.

### **Topology**

The English word topology has an existing definition located strictly within the Euro-western scientific discipline of mathematics (Oxford 2002:965). However, this existing definition is not relevant to the paper's topic, mainly because the existing definition is not apparently related to the word's innate two-part structure. The author's new definition is thus based on the word having two distinct parts: "topo" coming from the Greek origin *topos* meaning "place" (ibid. 2002:965); and the suffix "-logy" also having a Greek origin *logos* meaning "word" and subsequently defined as "a subject of study or interest" (ibid. 2002:532). The word 'topology' may therefore be defined as: *the study of place, especially the study of belonging to a place.*

This new definition of 'topology' locates a response to the above question regarding what factors ought to *influence* one's decisions of what to infer as objective. 'Topology' should be the overall influence guiding one's inferred objectivity. One's topology should be how experience influences agreements. In other words, the place *where* entities are agreeing is most objectively important. The physical place where one is, is the "common ground" sought in communication (Bird 1997:3) – the common ground sought, is indeed beneath

one's feet (Newcomb 1996). Therefore an interest in, and study of, the *place* where one is – one's 'topology' – should be valued as the best means by which to arrive at a decision about what agreements to agree with, and what agreements to not agree with. An example demonstrating this "study of place" can be found in the reference list ("*References*") of the present paper<sup>3</sup>. Within this list (pages 61-9), Australian publishers have (where possible) been located within Australian Indigenous language groups. The author considers that those language groups each embody quality links to physical areas of Australia – as located via the reference map "*Aboriginal Australia: language map*" (Horton 1994). In this example, the paper demonstrates the use of 'topology' by taking each publisher's physical location or address and positioning that location within its respective and relevant Indigenous language group. In this manner, the Australian publisher is thus located within a place specified by an Australian Indigenous language group/s. As a consequence, each of those publishers then becomes effectively related with a physical area, landscape, geography, place or what Johnson refers to as a "topography" (2007:ix; see also: Sharpe 1994:9). This example illustrates the use and worth of 'topology' – study of place. It is 'topology' which should guide one's inferred objectivity and inform one's implied subjectivity. The suggestion is that 'topology' ought to create the objectivity needed in one's pursuit of knowledge.

This dissertation began by introducing some fundamental concepts which included positioning the author, positioning the paper, acknowledging major resource-texts, and specifying the paper's context. The paper is presented as an invitation, and motivated by the hope that reader and author will continue to discuss the topic of knowledge as agreement. Notably, the author's position highlighted an important difference between descriptive locators and identity markers. In the form of a dissertation, the paper was then positioned using the metaphor of a bicycle wheel. Furthermore, the paper was also contextualised specifically within the culture of 'academia'. The dissertation's introduction was primarily intended to invoke the topic's relevance and assume a preliminary relationship between the author and the reader.

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<sup>3</sup> The name of each language group has been underlined in the paper's reference list (entitled "*References*") to make their use in this example more explicate.

In the middle of the paper a contrast was explicated between rational and relational knowledge. This contrast was used as a foundation from which to appreciate knowledge as agreement. The contrast was made using three distinct themes. The first theme located a contrast between non-religious and non-corporeal knowledge. The second theme facilitated a contrast between individual and collective knowledge. The third theme helped to contrast dualistic and unifying knowledge. In combination, these three themes substantiated an overt contrast between rational and relational knowledge.

Finally, the paper described how agreements can be effectively nurtured; responded to a major source of criticism; and recommended *a place* upon which to build agreements. The preferred method for forming agreements was discussed as dialogue. Various aspects of the word dialogue were described and parallel examples were referenced, but overall, the paper privileged Bohm-style dialogue. The most significant criticism of the paper's topic was nominated as its presumed disregard for objectivity. This however was responded to, by describing the subjective and volitional experience of objectivity as a necessity in one's pursuit and formation of knowledge as agreement. Ultimately, the paper discussed a new definition for the word topology, as a way to locate *a place* from where objectivity should be inferred prior to the pursuit of knowledge as agreement.

By contrasting the rational with the relational this paper supports the value of interrelatedness in one's yearning for knowledge. The fulfilment of that yearning is proposed via dialogue. The paper carries relevance inferred from 'academia' and implies relevance to one's pursuit of new knowledge. As a contribution to shared pursuits of knowledge, this paper invites the manifestation of something that would have never otherwise existed. As a personal message from the author to the reader, this paper embodies the hope that a new relationship will create something more than the sum of its parts – a new agreement – a unique piece of knowledge, born of a unique relationship.

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